



**Standing on the Side of Love**  
*2010 Report*

Since its launch in 2009, Standing on the Side of Love (SSL) has become a national presence in bringing our Unitarian Universalist (UU) values into the world. Through community activism, [social networking](#), and [media outreach](#), Standing on the Side of Love has equipped and mobilized people across the nation to counter fear with messages of love and compassion. With growing brand recognition and social networking engagement, Standing on the Side of Love is at the forefront of public debate.

To harness love's power to stop oppression, Standing on the Side of Love has engaged in issues of marriage equality, immigration reform, work for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights, solidarity with marginalized Muslim communities, and much more!

### **Re-imagining Valentine's Day** (Nationwide - February 14, 2010)

On Sunday, February 14, 2010, the very core of the Standing on the Side of Love campaign came to life when over 100 communities [Reimagined Valentine's Day](#) and celebrated International Standing on the Side of Love Day. Rather than focusing on a single issue, goal, or tactic to build the movement, the day celebrated a single *value* that thousands of people boldly wove into the fabric of their communities: love. Standing on the Side of Love offered worship materials, small group ministry curricula, religious education curricula, sample press materials, and a congregational organizing toolkit to support congregations' events.



*Valentines for a State Senator who voted against marriage equality.*



*A young member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ogden, UT Stands on the Side of Love.*

Each participating community focused on issues of local importance. Rev. Theresa Novak and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ogden, Utah, hosted a town hall style meeting addressing the need for local anti-discrimination ordinances to protect members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

In Potsdam, NY, the State University of New York hosted a Reimagining Valentine's Day event featuring State Assemblywoman Dede Scozzafava, a supporter of marriage equality. Potsdam Rally Co-Organizer Austin Kenyon was quoted on local television news saying, "This weekend is a symbol, it's done purposefully, to re-imagine Valentine's Day ... not as just a

holiday of candy and Hallmark cards, but as a day of love and acceptance for everyone.”

Members of First Parish Cambridge, MA held a worship service called “To Haiti, With Love.” They hosted members of the Haitian community, filled out postcards in support of comprehensive immigration reform, and signed up to volunteer at legal clinics helping Haitian immigrants register for temporary protected status. They completed their service by singing on the steps of the church.

These communities, and the dozens of others that held special services and events or wrote Valentines to their elected officials and community members, transformed Valentine’s Day into a celebration of love and justice. Reimagining Valentine’s Day events garnered nationwide press coverage in dozens of news outlets, including the [Washington Post](#), [Huffington Post](#), [Richmond Times-Dispatch](#), and [Beliefnet.com](#).

### National Day of Non-Compliance with SB 1070 (Phoenix, AZ - July 29, 2010)



*UUA President Rev. Peter Morales prepares participants for the protest.*

On July 29, 2010, UUA President Rev. Peter Morales, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, minister of the UU Congregation of Phoenix, and 27 other UU clergy and laypeople were arrested in downtown Phoenix, AZ for acts of peaceful civil disobedience. They were among 150 UUs, many from out of state, who came to Phoenix for actions in support of immigrant families on the National Day of Non-Compliance with SB 1070, a controversial bill that encourages racial profiling by police. Consistent with the UU beliefs of the inherent worth and dignity of all and of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, these dedicated UUs

stood on the side of love with people of color who are being targeted and threatened by this law. Standing on the Side of Love joined with Puente, an Arizona-based human rights partner, and the National Day Laborer Organizing Network to protest the bill and demand civil and human rights for all.

Kim Bobo, founder and Executive Director of [Interfaith Worker Justice](#), covered the protest for *Religious Dispatches*. In her article, “[A Primer on Activism from Unitarian Universalists](#),” she



*UUA President Rev. Peter Morales and Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray are interviewed while demonstrating in front of the Maricopa County jail.*



describes Standing on the Side of Love as visual, committed, and effective: “Of the several hundred religious leaders who showed up, only the Unitarian Universalist Association seriously committed staff, money, and organizing talent to the struggle...the Unitarian Universalist Association offered an example in Arizona of what can and should occur.”

Press coverage of the event also included two articles by UUA President Peter Morales in *The Huffington Post* and several videos posted on Standing on the Side of Love’s blog and YouTube channel, one of which was viewed 2,263 times following the event.

UUs around the country also responded to the event and press coverage:

*This coverage even made it to our local news here on the Central Coast of CA... It was awesome to see those shirts, popping out visually, signifying faith in action, walking our talk, and setting an example! Thanks SSL for the best campaign that UUA has ever created!*

- Gina Whitaker  
Arroyo Grande, CA

*I was SO impressed with the level of organization, commitment and support for all of us who came to join the fight. I truly felt part of something awesome and inspiring and felt so proud to be a UU in my yellow shirt! This campaign is transforming our faith - providing ways to get involved knowing there will be help and support from the denomination.*

- Sara LaWall, Director of Religious Education,  
Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church in Pasadena, CA

*I feel this is a turning point for Unitarian Universalism... It was phenomenal to be a part of a coordinated effort of civil disobedience with Unitarian Universalists from every corner of this country.*

-Rev. David Miller,  
UU Fellowship of San Dieguito in Solana Beach, CA

Standing on the Side of Love’s strong partnership with local grassroots organizations, its ability to mobilize in large numbers, and its powerful message made the SB 1070 protest a shining example of what this campaign can achieve. As those quoted above shared, Standing on the Side of Love is unifying UUs and making our values heard in the public square.

### **September 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Solidarity Events** (Nationwide - September 2010)

Through Standing on the Side of Love, more than 100 individuals and congregations registered events, interfaith programs, worship services, and vigils in solidarity with the Muslim American community and in support of religious freedom, surrounding the September 11th anniversary.

Here are several examples of how congregations participated:



Rev. Amy Zucker Morgenstern of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto penned a letter to the editor, writing in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "We honor the dead on Sept. 11 by working for a world where the beautiful variety of human religions no longer divides us but brings us peace and joy, and we urge everyone to do the same through service, justice and education."

Rev. Carie J. Johnsen, of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta, Maine, wrote in the *Kennebec Journal*: "We can best honor the lives lost and the lives forever changed by standing on the side of love, by reaffirming our commitment to religious freedom, and by recommitting ourselves to the fight for justice and equality."



*Members of First Unitarian Congregational Society of Brooklyn, NY at a Rally for Unity & Solidarity with Muslim People in New York City on September 11<sup>th</sup>.*

The UU Church in Canton, NY placed an "Eid mubarak" banner (the Arabic greeting for Eid al-Fitr) on their front lawn with "Wishing You a Blessed Holiday" written underneath the Arabic words.

Local press took notice of the solidarity events, and several UU congregations were featured in local news. In Florida, the *Northwest Florida Daily News* reported on the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Emerald Coast's plan to hold a special service titled "Celebrating the Qur'an." Denny Lauer, Congregational President, told reporters that this action was part of the UUA's Standing on the Side of Love campaign, and added, "By

committing to the campaign, Standing on the Side of Love, we reaffirm our quest for tolerance, understanding and compassion."

Across the country, UU congregations received recognition for their acts of solidarity, encouraged and supported by Standing on the Side of Love. Half a dozen local papers also featured letters to the editor about diversity and multiculturalism written by UU clergy.

After the events, Standing on the Side of Love received correspondence from appreciative and enthusiastic participants. Rev. Marian E. Stewart, of Northlake Unitarian Universalist Church in Kirkland,



*Susan Leslie, UU Congregational Advocacy and Witness Director, and others stand in solidarity with Muslim Americans at a press conference at the Massachusetts State house September 7, 2010.*



WA wrote: “We had [Standing on the Side of Love] signs everywhere at our interfaith event and the banner on the front railing... We are a small congregation (121 members) and we had 300 in attendance for the 9/11 interfaith event. All week we had excellent TV and news coverage... It was amazing!” The solidarity events fostered interfaith ties and promoted awareness of UU values in participating communities.

### **Transgender Day of Remembrance (Nationwide - November 20, 2010)**

Friday, November 20th was the Transgender Day of Remembrance - a time of remembering the transgender people around the world who have been killed in the past year simply for being themselves. Standing on the Side of Love collected signatures on the Petition for Full Equality for LGBT people and is using them to help pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act and other legislation that will help protect and improve the lives of transgender people.

Standing on the Side of Love recently featured an appeal from Allison Woolbert, a transgender advocate and gender educator, who educated Standing on the Side of Love’s online community about transgender issues and asked people to host or participate in vigils in their communities.

As of December 1, 2010, many have already responded to Allison’s message, thanking her and Standing on the Side of Love for bringing transgender issues to light. Stephanie Hanzel Cohen responded to Allison’s letter on the Standing on the Side of Love blog by writing, “Thank you for making me aware of how seriously marginalized the transgender community is.” Karen Von Fossan said, “I will be talking with my own beloved UU congregation in Bismarck, ND, about how we can honor Transgender Day of Remembrance.”

### **Campaign Branding: “The Love People”**

Visibility is a powerful tool when countering fear and oppression. Standing on the Side of Love has successfully harnessed this tool in recent months. Bright yellow T-shirts, banners, and signs that identify Standing on the Side of Love supporters as a united group have gotten local and national media attention. During the protests of SB 1070 in Phoenix, Arizona, for example, Standing on the Side of Love participants became known as “the yellow shirts” and “the love people”.



*Standing on the Side of Love supporters show their colors.*

Dan Furmansky, Standing on the Side of Love Campaign Manager, reports that in September 2010 alone, eight large banners, 577 T-shirts, 498 buttons, 146 rally signs, 400 brochures, and 3,400 wallet cards that describe Standing on the Side of Love’s message were purchased and incorporated into actions and events. Since the



beginning of the campaign, 200 banners have been purchased, which means nearly one in five UU congregations have a Standing on the Side of Love Banner. Standing on the Side of Love's merchandise has been so successful that the campaign expanded their [online store](#) in December 2010.

### Social Media Activity



Standing on the Side of Love has developed a consistent following on their Facebook page, website, and blog. Since the campaign launched, more than 21,000 people have “liked” Standing on the Side of Love on Facebook. Standing on the Side of Love receives an average of 135 comments on their Facebook wall each day. These online connections raise awareness and engagement in the campaign's activities.

The number of visitors to the Standing on the Side of Love webpage has been highest surrounding the SB 1070 protests in Phoenix, AZ and the September 11<sup>th</sup> solidarity events. These events also inspired the highest email open rates and click-through rates from Standing on the Side of Love emails.

Whether in physical solidarity or strategic online support, Standing on the Side of Love has brought UU voices into crucial public debates over the past year.

### Thank You for Standing on the Side of Love

Standing on the Side of Love is succeeding in educating and mobilizing people to support UU values. Each time a new initiative is launched from the campaign, committed supporters answer with words and actions that influence public attitudes and public policy. Those who engage in the campaign and join the UUA in Standing on the Side of Love are truly changing the face of our faith in the world. For the thousands of people who support Standing on the Side of Love with words, deeds, and donations, we are grateful. Thank you for carrying our UU values out into the world.



*Standing on the Side of Love at the Capitol Building in Washington, DC.*

*The Standing on the Side of Love campaign is made possible through the generosity of donors. Please consider making a gift in support of this important work at the [Standing on the Side of Love secure online donation page](#). To learn more about the campaign, please visit [www.standingonthesideoflove.org](http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org).*

