

Daniel | UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

→ *Internship: Center for Nonprofit Leadership at Adelphi University, Garden City*

I worked with the Center for Nonprofit Leadership at Adelphi University this summer. The Center's mission is to empower nonprofits to strengthen their communities. The Center works with hundreds of nonprofits in New York State to help them better serve their communities and grow their operations. The Center offers a variety of master classes aimed at assisting nonprofits in expanding their operations, a series of roundtable discussions between nonprofits to stimulate problem-solving discussions, and a series of fellowships to promote equality and social justice within the workplace.

My main task was introducing our latest fellowship to hundreds of potential participants across New York State. The Anti-Oppressive Leadership Fellows Program (AOLFP) is a year-long fellowship in which cohorts of executives from various nonprofits will learn how to break down systemically oppressive leadership practices in their workplace and any other workplace they may be a part of. The act of breaking down systemic barriers in the workplace and promoting equality immediately reminded me of the *6th UU Principle*. *To have a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all, we must first break down all the barriers standing in the way.* This program, and others like it offered at the Center, starts the chain reaction of breaking down these barriers in the workplace. The foundation of this program, and the other work the Center does, also reminded me of the *2nd and 3rd Principles*. *The Center's work promotes justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.* Not only do we encourage these things values within our workplace, but we also teach others how to do the same in theirs. The Center's work also promotes *acceptance* between individuals or groups and fosters a sense of community in the nonprofit workplace.

However, the most remarkable part of this internship was the people I met and spoke with along the way. My supervisor, Dr. Daniel Kaplan, and other individuals at the Center are wholly dedicated to the mission of the Center. In addition to working with these amazing people, I also had the opportunity to connect with dozens of other people working toward similar things. I had the chance to speak with leaders of nonprofits of all different kinds and sizes. I spoke with leaders from both local nonprofits and national nonprofits, like the Make-A-Wish Foundation. It was an incredible opportunity to meet with all of these people. Current events make it seem like our society is suppressing all efforts to create a tolerant, just, and accepting society. However, that is not the case because I connected with dozens of people fighting for the opposite. Meeting all of those individuals and discovering the work they do was a great part of my internship. I am incredibly grateful that I was able to work with the Center for Nonprofit Leadership this summer. Everything about this internship was great, and I am so lucky to have been able to do it!

Danielle | UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

→ *Internship: Center for Women and Community Crisis Hotline, University of Massachusetts*

While training to become a Counselor Advocate for the UMass rape crisis hotline, the Unitarian principle of "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations" seemed most prevalent in my work. The hotline provides Amherst community members with a chance to speak their truth in a completely

non-judgmental setting. The goal of the advocate is to provide comfort and aid to those in crisis. One of the first things we are trained to provide is reassurance that the caller is worthy of love and compassion. This also fits quite well with the *1st Unitarian Principle: the inherent worth and dignity of every person*. When dealing with people in crises, it is extremely important to remind them that they are worthy of support of any kind. As an advocate, we are trained to ask them the type of resources they might want, ensuring justice, equity, and compassion for all callers.

Imogen | UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

→ *Internship 1: Workaway, Missouri*

My Workaway experience this past summer connected me with several of the UU Principles. A lot of my work reminded me of the *6th Principle (world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all)*, with a nice dose of the *1st and 2nd Principles (the inherent worth and dignity of every person and justice, equity, and compassion in human relations)* sprinkled in.

The organic farm where I did most of my volunteer work was connected to a food pantry that also provided meals for seniors on Tuesdays. Peggy was in charge of distributing some of the food to people in need and using the remainder of the food to cook delicious healthy meals for the seniors to share. Tuesday lunch was such a joyful event for the seniors and the volunteers! I got to celebrate Betty's 95th birthday with the group one week and share some zucchini bread I made the following week. I know that sometimes older adults feel isolated. It was so nice to see how this community, with Peggy's lead, had found a way to use a modest amount of donated food to help an often underappreciated segment of the population to gather weekly. It wasn't only the food that they enjoyed—Kaye donated her time to lead the seniors in chair yoga before lunch, and Ray hosted bingo afterwards. Various other people gave their time to do crafts, lead historic tours, try out recipes, or provide entertainment. This once-a-week senior luncheon was a social event for so many more people than just the seniors.

I feel like I really got to see a community functioning at its best and embodying UU Principles in the senior lunches that my main work on the organic farm contributed the food for.

→ *Internship 2: Bard at Simon's Rock Community Garden, Great Barrington, MA*

My volunteer experience this past summer at Bard at Simon's Rock connected me with several of the UU Principles. Much of my work reminded me of the *6th Principle (world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all)*, with some of the *2nd Principle (justice, equity, and compassion in human relations)* added.

The organic farm where I did most of my volunteer work was started about 10 years ago as a way to get healthier food into the kitchen of the school. I, with the help of another volunteer, hosted two farmers markets so that in addition to the healthier food being available to the cafeteria, it was also available to people in the community. It was a really nice experience, and I was happy to be able to bring people together to shop for healthy food.

I've grown so much since I started at Simon's Rock three years ago. I'm so glad I could give back a little to the community and learn more about farming and organizing events in the process.

Kasey | South Nassau UU Congregation→ *Deeper Life Fellowship Food Pantry, Freeport*

This summer, I volunteered at the Deeper Life Fellowship Food Pantry in Freeport. It's my first time working at the Food Pantry, but it's been my best adult volunteering experience yet, and after being separated from my community for years, it feels good to finally be able to give back to the hands of the people around me. I can tell that the Reverends and the Pastors that I work side by side with are exceptionally invested in Freeport and the greater area, and we are proud to have handed out 102 boxes of food to hungry families during the summer.

The principle I recognized and used the most was the *2nd Principle: justice, equity, and compassion in human relations*. My duties that best displayed the 2nd Principle were when I personally made home visits to hand out boxes of food to people. Not everyone can travel to the Pantry to receive food, so a Pastor and I would drive trips to houses to deliver food.

Along with the *1st Principle of the inherent worth and dignity of every person*, the *3rd Principle* came into play: *acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations*. Initially, I was worried our religions would clash as I am a UU and they're part of a Christian church, but even after I told them what I was, we still got along, and we all look forward to working together in the winter and summer of next year!

I'm so happy I had the opportunity to work with such a tight-knit community and share the love and acceptance with others. This is the most connected I've felt in a group outside of UU, so this has been a great way to get me out of my comfort zone and into the world by making new friends and connections!

Kayla | UU Congregation at Shelter Rock→ *Internship: Level Up Volleyball, Queens*

I had the pleasure of working with Level Up Volleyball for my 2022 summer internship. Being an intern, as well as a returner to this organization, it was very enjoyable to be back in a welcoming space. I felt very comfortable and confident in my skills to fulfill my duties, as they weren't too different from last year. I managed the social media accounts, assisted in T-shirt making, and attended tournaments where I helped set up equipment. I also had the privilege of assisting in the process of their new logo design, which was one of my favorite memories.

During my time at Level Up, it reminded me of a few principles of Unitarian Universalism. Our *7th Principle, the respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*, immediately came to mind. As we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, some players decide to play with face masks, and others don't. Whether a participant decided to or not, there were no questions asked. At the same time, I saw many new faces this year, along with old ones. It was very heartening to witness the change in participants since last year, yet the level of respect and inviting energy remained unchanged. There was never an instance of exclusion or impoliteness, which also reminded me of our *1st Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person*. Everyone had the commonality of enjoying their time playing volleyball and that in itself was enough to foster a positive environment.

My experience of working with Level Up Volleyball reigned just as fulfilling as it was last year. I realized through it that the UU principles present at this organization is the reason I was compelled to return in the first place. Overall, I'm very happy that I was able to continue to be part of a community that uplifts its people.

Erik | UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

→ [Multi-Cultural Solidarity \(MCS\) Long Island](#)

This summer, I had the opportunity of working with Multi-Cultural Solidarity Long Island, a nonprofit dedicated to fighting racism and celebrating diversity in all forms. I worked as a remote intern, taking care of various tasks and responsibilities from my phone and computer. I found out about working with MCS through my sister Fiona, who had worked with the group the previous summer. She had a very positive experience and nothing but warm things to say about the group's founder, Joel Diamond.

Through Multicultural Solidarity LI, I gained valuable experience in handling responsibilities associated with my role. After speaking with Joel over the phone, I was prepared to work by sending out emails and coordinating event scheduling between different groups. This summer I also worked during the week teaching martial arts classes, so it was difficult at times to keep everything organized concerning my remote work. It was a challenge at times to stay on top of everything, but every step of the way Joel was patient and would answer any questions I had. I was also able to make my own hours so that I could fit in internship work whenever I could in my schedule.

It felt rewarding to do work that would help people connect more deeply with others in their community with online and in-person events. MCS brings people together with a thriving community on their Facebook page and a monthly newsletter. As I reflect on my experience working with Multicultural Solidarity LI and how it relates to my UU faith, I believe that this group firmly embodies our Unitarian Universalist principles. The group emphasizes the *goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*. MCS recognizes *the inherent worth and dignity of every person*, and pushes for *justice, equity, and compassion in all human relations*. I am so glad I could work with Joel and his organization this summer and look forward to keeping up with the group while I'm away at school this year.

Vandana | UU Congregation at Shelter Rock

→ [UU Ministry for Earth \(UUMFE\)](#)

Working for the [UU Ministry for Earth](#) this summer has been such a pleasure. It's the first time I've been able to get a glimpse of what it's like to work in the field I'm actually interested in: grassroots organizing in environmental justice. What I'd like to do in the future is work with the NYSDEC (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation) or the EPA (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency) or something in that vein. Bridging the gap between science and the public is an important job that must be handled delicately in the age of politicizing basic human rights issues, and I feel that

working through UU is a fantastic way to begin doing that considering the *7th Principle (respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part)*. Being able to communicate environmental knowledge to both laypeople and policymakers is a key part of enforcing needed change.

During the summer I got to do all sorts of things! I started off by adding some content to the UUMFE blog and participated in my very first UU General Assembly (albeit online, as it was in Portland this year). I had no idea UUs were so connected from all over the country, and I got to hear new location-specific perspectives on climate resilience and how it affects different regions in different ways—and why solutions are not one size fits all. Later in the summer, I got to visit Fourth Universalist Society in Manhattan as I worked with a minister and a Religious Education director from the group NY UU Collaborates (Rev. Daniel and Ember!) to plan a series of panels focused on how individuals and their congregations can focus on environmental action through faith, knowledge, and community building.

Benjamin | South Nassau UU Congregation

→ *Internship: The Mary Brennan Interfaith Nutrition Network (The INN), Hempstead*

During the summer of 2022, for the fourth consecutive year, I volunteered at The Mary Brennan Interfaith Nutrition Network, located in Hempstead. The Mary Brennan INN is a soup kitchen, which also includes showers, a full-size pantry, a clothing boutique, and many other amenities available to help hungry and homeless people on Long Island.

This was my fourth year there, and the third year during the COVID-19 global pandemic. As a result, throughout the summer, there were various changes to the facility taking place during my shifts, both where I was working and elsewhere. Since March of 2020, the dining room at the soup kitchen has been closed to all guests, but as announced a few months ago, they hope to open it up again by October of this year. That is very exciting, as one of my favorite parts of the job when I started in 2019 had been interacting with the guests one-on-one and face-to-face.

During my shifts there, which were mostly three days a week, I was given various tasks to complete. These included making sandwiches, assembling snack and lunch bags, taking out and cleaning trash outside, and accepting and processing donations from the donors directly. No matter what my task(s) of the day was/were, I was always happy to do it/them, and did it/them well.

My work there truly aligned with many of the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism, as well as its values. One in particular would be the *6th Principle, the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*. At the soup kitchen, we seek to help people in the community who are in need, which can help us to create a more just and better society. This is shown when the guests receive the goods and resources that we and others at the soup kitchen provide them, and they often remark how thankful they are.

Overall, this was yet another amazing experience volunteering at The Mary Brennan INN. I share my gratitude towards everyone there and at the Student Activity Fund for allowing me to do work there, and I highly recommend it to anybody looking for a place to volunteer, donate, or visit!

Erin | UU Congregation at Shelter Rock→ *Internship: Hour Children Food Pantry, Long Island City*

When you work at the Hour Children Food Pantry, you quickly learn to expect the unexpected. No two days there are quite the same. You never know who you're going to meet or what you're going to see. Hour Children's main mission as an organization is to help incarcerated mothers reunite with their children when they are released from prison, but their role in the Long Island City community spans much farther than that. They are responsible for feeding and helping hundreds of people every day. Most of the people the pantry feeds are elderly or have disabilities but there are people from every walk of life on line every day.

One day, while I was restocking the pasta shelf, I met a 5-year-old named José. In Spanish, he told me all about how he was going to see snow for the first time, and he gave me a detailed explanation of how he was going to build a snowman like he had seen in cartoons. "You need to roll the snow in three balls, one for his head, one for his body, and one for his butt." He couldn't wait to go to school in America and learn real English. Little did I know at the time, José was one of many South American immigrants that I would meet over the next few weeks. Late in the summer, Governor Abbott of Texas sent busloads of immigrants from the border to New York to take the stress off of Texas's social services. Most of them had little to no money and spoke little to no English. Because of COVID-19 many of them were living in hotels near the food pantry. José and his family were one of the families sent our way. Our capacity had to almost double overnight. We went from serving 120 to 160 people per day to almost 250 regularly. It was overwhelming at first, trying to translate and communicate with so many people at the same time. Many of people I spoke to were super optimistic and excited despite their situation and it gave me a lot of hope. This summer I learned a lot in working for Hour Children. I really got to connect with my city and the people who love and care for it. I got to meet amazing people and learn about my community in a way I never had before.

Sierra | UU Congregation at Shelter Rock→ *Internship 1: Multi-Cultural Solidarity (MCS) Long Island*

As I complete my third summer interning with Multi-Cultural Solidarity, I feel both honored and proud to have continued to work with such a supportive team these past few months. Joel Diamond, my mentor, as well as the founder and one of the directors of MCS, is extremely dedicated to this growing nonprofit. His commitment is infectious and has inspired me to put my best work into my internship tasks. I find myself looking forward to taking notes for the monthly board meetings, attending the Zoom Diversity Circles, tending to the Facebook group, and managing the Instagram account.

MCS directly works towards the *6th UU Principle: the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*. Through its popular monthly Diversity Circles, participants focus on creating a safe, comfortable environment where significant discussions (such as racism, stereotypes, privilege, etc.) are confidential yet important. It is needless to say that Multi-Cultural Solidarity has kept me interested in pursuing a human-rights-related career. Because of my experience with this nonprofit, I

would like to pursue a career in social work. I am also happy to share that I plan to continue interning with MCS throughout the school year. This nonprofit will always have a special place in my heart, as I organically learned the impact I wish to have on others as a human being.

→ *Internship 2: Intervale Center, Burlington, VT*

This summer, I interned at the Intervale Center in Burlington, Vermont. I was familiar with the Intervale Center prior to starting my internship, as it is a popular place for our environmental field trips at the University of Vermont. This time, however, it was fun being able to “work” there and educate others about it instead of being a student! Some of my tasks included tending the People’s Farm, where I planted parsley and trimmed the tomato plants. I was also a trail steward, where I cleared the hiking trails, picked up trash, and refilled the doggy-bag containers. Lastly, on Thursday nights I checked community members in at Summervale, a night event with live music and local food from restaurants in Burlington. The Intervale Center resembles UU’s *6th Principle*, which is *the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*. The Intervale Center strives to strengthen community food systems through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), financially friendly programs, large-scale composting, and food hubs. I hope next summer I can intern at the Intervale Center again!

Alicia | UU Congregation of Queens

→ *Internship: The Book Fairies, Freeport*

This past summer I had the privilege to intern for The Book Fairies and their excellent staff and volunteers. During this internship, I learned that 1 in 4 New Yorkers cannot read past a fourth-grade reading level. This low level of literacy is interlinked with academic failure, delinquency, and crime. The Book Fairies’ mission is to provide a wide variety of reading materials to people of all ages to help bridge the gap between illiteracy and crime as much as possible.

While volunteering, I was assigned to partake in multiple tasks, including sorting through donated books to ensure they were organized by the correct reading levels, packing books into boxes to be sent to various locations around New York and overseas, and even handling some of the donated deliveries from organizations that provide jobs for people with special needs. By doing this, we practice multiple UU Principles, mainly the *1st and 2nd: the inherent worth and dignity of every person and justice, equity, and compassion in human relations*. Although I didn’t work directly with the children, youth, or adults receiving the books, I did volunteer with many different teachers who received them. They shared a variety of stories of how excited and grateful their students are when they get these books. Many of these students are from low-income and underprivileged districts that don’t have access to many books in general. In fact, one of those teachers had to literally build a whole library for her school as the school didn’t have the funds to provide the books themselves. Overall, this experience opened my eyes to how important it is for people to have access to books. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at The Book Fairies and am excited to continue my internship with them this fall.

Miranda | Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Shelter Rock→ *Internship: Friends of Garvies Point Museum & Preserve, Glen Cove*

This year being a conclusion to my experience with the Student Activity Fund, I have been able to reflect on not only the past year, but also my overall experience throughout my time in the program. I have been continually volunteering at the Friends of Garvies Point Museum & Preserve, where our job is to aid in educating students from ages 4 to 11 on our environmental world and how we as people play part in it. I have taught geology and Native American history, have taught very young minds the importance of being kind to our planet and each other, and have seen an abundance of collaboration between students across all ages, economic standings, and backgrounds. Garvies Point served as a warehouse of community between the children, allowing them to learn across all disciplines and find enjoyment in what they learn. It was quite a beautiful thing to witness and be a part of, and it gave me the opportunity to clearly reinforce my Unitarian Universalist Principles.

From my experience, especially this past year, *the inherent worth and dignity of every person (1st Principle)* has been emphasized, as we have seen every student's eyes light up as they learned new things. Every student, no matter their background or financial standing, gender, identity, etc., has a right to and is worthy of education and collaboration with others around them.

Teaching a variety of students of different ages is not an easy task, as there are often small arguments and dramatic occurrences. However, through listening and compassion, we come to an understanding and always resolve our small issues. We don't end with a person who was right and a person who was wrong; we end with two or more people who just want to learn and understand that we all are there to support each other and equally have fun. Through these certain conflicts, the organization emphasizes *justice, equity, and compassion in human relations, the 2nd UU Principle*. We can also see the *5th Principle* as we use *democratic processes* in society to resolve conflicts—as this is our *right of conscience*—and it allows for both parties to diplomatically talk through the conflict to find solutions. Additionally, through this nonprofit, we emphasize and practice the *respect* of all people and *for the interdependent web of all existence* that we are a part of, because through this interdependent web, we make a community which is essential for having a well-rounded environment to live in.

Through working with students and going to college for education, I continue to find my truth of my desire to support and teach students as a career. This organization has given me the opportunity to *freely and responsibly search for truth and meaning (4th Principle)*. There have been times where I've questioned whether teaching is my truth, but after working with kids and teaching throughout the summer, nothing compares to the sight of a student understanding and loving what they learn. And that is where I find my truth.

Children are profound, and some of them say the most meaningful and spiritual things without even being aware of it. Many of them have noted how precious the Earth is and how everything comes from nature, and they are able to elaborate on their own spiritual beliefs. As this is an educational program where we teach about nature and the environment, we don't talk much about spiritual opinions, but I am able to see the formulation of spiritual growth within students, and I support that. I support the freedom of thought and their ability to work through their own opinions. This means we

support one another and *accept and encourage* everyone to think through their own thoughts (*3rd Principle*).

As an organization, our goal is to teach all young minds about the environment we live in, our relation to it, and our importance living in it. We emphasize that we are all a community, and it is not one person that could make or break the environment. Rather, it takes all of us—with kindness, peace, and justice—to support such a strong-standing Earth and community. This reflects our *goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*, as stated in the *6th Principle*.