



Williamsburg  
Unitarian Universalists



### ***Education (LFD) Small Group Meeting Notes***

February 25, 2014

#### **Overview of Programs**

- Nursery every Sunday
- 2 Sunday mornings classes for pre-K thru 2nd grade (Fahs)
- Small tables & chairs/art supplies
- 3/4/5 graders meet at Fahs LR
- Art happens in part of kitchen
- 6/7/8 graders meet at Parker – either upstairs or basement
- 2 flat screen tv's – one upstairs and one downstairs
- 7/8/9 graders in OWL (12 session program)
- Other 2 Sundays – 1 with all ages/ 1 children's chapel in Fahs (20 to 22 could be as large as 35)
- High school kids meet at 4 PM in Parker - games, sports, instructional, discussion, religion subject matter (eastern, all)

#### **Problems/Issues/Concerns with Current Amenities**

- No space for adult education on Sunday
- Religious education now is same as it was 25 years ago – flat growth – is this due to size limitations?
- Do demographics affect how many families with young children join WUU?
- Recent growth of RE programs (younger children) over last 4 years
- Does quality of space reflect less value being placed on RE for children (Fahs, playground, etc.)?
- Capacity of sanctuary and classrooms is a negative
- Separate classrooms from church is a problem
  - New members & guests have difficulty connecting when they need to “check” the kids out of Fahs house
  - Older kids want to head back to sanctuary space on their own – safety issue
- Security issues for checking kids in and out – check in process by teacher – difficult with merged classes
- Noise from small kids' area into big kids' area
- Tight spaces - too crowded
- Children's chapel
  - Currently, CHAOS! Not enough space for this, currently.
  - Music important – little space for performance

- Participation now by singing – would like to have them up, moving, singing, playing

### **LFD Needs/Wants**

- Guest speakers – need to accommodate presentations – high schoolers as well as other classrooms
- All rooms need IT A/V – smartboards – want students to be interactive
- Need enough classrooms so all can meet at same time
- Dedicated teen space needed
- Multi-generational events and projects
- Comfortable seating allows kids to open up and interact
- Beanbags & comfortable couches
- Craft spaces important – easy to clean up
- Lighting? Natural, non-harsh
- More space for social activities together – spaces to gather with each other during the week – other than Sunday morning
- Community outreach space for social activities
- Amphitheater space?
- Navigators need space – once per month – now meet at Fahs
- Outside Services - need some level of protection for families with kids and buffer from Ironbound Road noise
- Space sizes:
  - Pre-K thru 2nd grade: 22 to 30
  - 3/4/5 grades: 18
  - Popcorn theology 6/7/8: 12 (8 of these are in OWL)
  - High school: 20
  - College students – young adults (18 thru 35): no programs now
- Approximately 12 rooms for all (children and adults)
  - 5 kids – 2/1/1/nursery
  - 1 Adults
  - 1 Covenant group room
  - 1 WALT
  - 1 Eastern Philosophy room
  - 1 Navigators/other (high school, young adult?)
  - 1 extra

### **Nursery & Young Children's Spaces**

- Infants through 3 years
- Need space to “ween” them into the older kid areas
- Children sized toilets for nursery and younger kids
- Family restrooms with changing stations
- This experience should not feel like school – special space for kids – just like sanctuary is sacred space for adults
- Special entrance – special gate – special door

- Spaces need to be together
- Tension of shared spaces vs. dedicated spaces

### **Playground & Other Outdoor Spaces**

- Covered seating/picnic area
- Outside space important – like to be outside playing!
- Need more swings
- A playground that can be used during the week – use as a draw to families to WUU
- Playground is crowded with little kids – where can the older kids go?
- Maybe separation of playground into age groups
- Accessible for those with disabilities
- Playground adjacent to nursery
- Maintain/provide a natural feeling in outdoor spaces
- Save the trees – sacred spaces
- Outdoor gardens – how can they be retained in the new plan? Perhaps a community garden for WUU members?

### **Storage Needs**

- Paper, paint, costumes, story kits, all craft items
- Outside toys
- Outdoor equipment storage

### **Adult programs**

- Eastern philosophy space – meditation and other eastern religion – yoga – special finishes, special treatments
- Monday meditation (Buddhist) has 30 attendees
- Acoustics, lighting important – daytime and evening
- WALT dedicated space – some classes are simultaneous
  - WALT groups have around 12 participants
  - WALT administrator space
- Covenant groups – currently meet in homes (may continue this) – how do we create comfortable spaces at WUU that could have the same feel as the home environment?
- Other adult spaces needed during the week
  - i.e., One Year to Live group
  - UU orientation
  - Odyssey
  - Compassion Deep Study
  - Arts group
  - Parents as Spiritual Teachers
  - Use spaces for more than one purpose
  - Typical group size 10 to 12
  - Access to kitchen for meals and refreshments

### **Other Thoughts/Ideas**

- Bringing outside groups here gets the word out about WUU
- How do you have a space that allows projects to be carried on after one Sunday? Multi-purpose spaces don't allow this to happen
- Consider dedicated craft space/studio space? These spaces can be inspirational and instill respect for others