

Unitarian-Universalist Society youth expand community service activities

Photos

Zoom



Courtesy photo

Middle school and high school students in the Unitarian Universalist Society youth group spent April vacation building an amphitheater meeting area and doing general repair work at Camp Starfish in Rindge, N.H.

By Staff reports
GateHouse News Service

Posted Aug 19, 2010 @ 06:58 AM

Recommend Be the first of your friends to recommend this.



Wellesley — Sometimes a story captures the spirit of a place or community: “The Starfish Thrower,” by Loren Eiseley, is such a story. In it, a young boy asserts his ability to have an impact on the world despite the fact that he can’t save it all. He throws individual starfish back into the ocean even though he knows he has to leave thousands stranded on the beach. “I made a difference for that one,” he declares as he throws one in.

As part of the religious education program at the Unitarian-Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills (UUSWH), children express their personal and community values by doing activities that make a difference to some small part of the world. Whether baking dessert for homeless guests or collecting pennies for overseas schools, making cards for gift recipients or doing clean up in New Orleans, these activities can have a profound impact on how children and youth view their place in the world.

This year, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills congregation, spearheaded by a youth service trip, has adopted a place and its mission: Camp Starfish, in Rindge, N.H. As in the story, this special camp “makes a difference for that one.” It pairs children with emotional and behavior problems with counselors who can give them the freedom of a summer camp experience, away from the stresses of everyday life. Middle school and high school students in the UUSWH youth groups spent April vacation building an amphitheater meeting area and doing general repair around the camp. In the fall they will return to help the camp close up for winter, and then again for a Halloween event with the campers. Camp Starfish has emerged as a project with intergenerational appeal, with capital funds being raised and adults joining to lend a hand.

Community service and social justice projects are key pieces of the UUSWH program for children and youth, but not the entire experience. On Sunday mornings the “Cooperative Church School” (taught by parents and other volunteers) offers classroom curricula for preschool through eighth grade. Other elements include an opening chapel conducted by the new Acting Director of Religious Education, Rev. Jack Lewis), music, and school-wide

Preparing Our Patients for Success

The Center for Weight Loss Surgery at Newton-Wellesley Hospital



NEWTON-WELLESLEY HOSPITAL



866-NWH-DOCS or [CLICK HERE](#) for more info

activities on selected Sundays. Childcare is available for infants and toddlers. This year the seventh- and eighth-graders are participating in OWL (Our Whole Lives), a comprehensive, values-based sexuality and relationship curriculum.

Jack Lewis comes to Wellesley from St. Louis, Mo., where he recently graduated from Eden Theological Seminary. He was ordained on Aug. 1 and looks forward to fostering a community of shared values for the youth of the UUSWH.

For more information, contact Jack Lewis at 781-235-7423 or jlewis@uuwellesley.org.

Copyright 2010 The Wellesley Townsman. Some rights reserved