

# THE DRUUMM BEAT

OCTOBER 2018



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in Oakland CA

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## I BELIEVE HER

I believe her.  
I believe you.  
I believe me.

I believe every single one of us who has a story we have been too afraid, too ashamed, too uncertain, too unaware, too resigned, too hurt, too unable to put into words to share.

And I know that belief, though not enough, needs to be something we fight for, because without it, without people finally acknowledging the consistent, visceral, and violent reality that too many people - largely women, people (women) of color, trans siblings, and queer fam - have had to live in, it will not change.

Those among us who know this reality all too well and need time away, I hold you in a tender love and wish you rest and care today.

Those among us who know this reality all too well and are using this moment to speak out against it, I hold you in a tender love and wish you courage and safety today.

Those among us who are just learning of the insidious reality so many face, I hold you in a tender love and wish you commitment and transformation today.

Beloveds, I believe in her. I believe in you. I believe in myself. I believe in all of us fighting for this to change for as long as it takes.

*Rev. Ranwa Hammamy*  
President  
DRUUMM



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# LOCAL POC GROUPS

There is currently no available listing of UU People of Color local groups. Initial inquiries and word of mouth have generated this working list. If you are aware of other groups, will you please let us know!

- Cambridge MA
- Washington DC
- Tallahassee FL
- Durham NC
- Bellevue WA
- Oakland CA
- Mt Diablo CA
- San Diego CA
- Pasadena CA

# ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDERS GATHERING IN OAKLAND

DRUUMM's Asian/Pacific Islander caucus (APIC) held a community gathering in September in Oakland with Sunday worship at the Mt Diablo congregation. Rekindling the annual tradition after a break of several years, members came together for deep dialogue around identity, purpose, intersectionality and shared worship and meals over the weekend.

Rev. Leslie Takahashi welcomed the gathering to Mt Diablo where Kevin Hsieh gave a short homily. Rev. Ranwa Hammamy, DRUUMM President formally presented APIC founding member Karen Eng with the DRUUMM Melvin A Hoover Award for

Distinguished Service to UU Communities of Color. Karen served in leadership for many years with DRUUMM, as well as on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Lead organizer Kat Liu worked alongside Kevin Mann, Noah Lystrup, Noemi de Guzman, Claudine Tong, Rhiannon Smith, and Denise Varner.

California has been natural home for APIC gatherings over the years with a concentration of members, cultural resources and welcoming congregations. Look for more opportunities to come in 2019.



Karen Eng with Rev. Leslie Takahashi, Mt Diablo CA



# DRUUMM Congratulates Aisha Hauser, McLean Awardee for Excellence in Religious Education

# WHY POC NEED SPACES WITHOUT WHITE PEOPLE

by Kelsey Blackwell, reprinted with permission

I'm breathing deeply as I write this. What I'm writing about is charged. I feel this energy in my body. It's a heat in my throat and a rumbling in my belly. It's an intensity that's frustrated that these words must even be written. It propels me through my fears of backlash and worry about not getting it exactly right. What I say may anger you. You may disagree. You may feel more confused, and this, I would say, is good. It means the work can begin.

Breathing.

People of color need their own spaces. Black people need their own spaces. We need places in which we can gather and be free from the mainstream stereotypes and marginalization that permeate every other societal space we occupy. We need spaces where we can be our authentic selves without white people's judgment and insecurity muzzling that expression. We need spaces where we can simply be—where we can get off the treadmill of making white people comfortable and finally realize just how tired we are.

Valuing and protecting spaces for people of color (PoC) is not just a kind thing that white people can do to help us feel better; supporting these spaces is crucial to the resistance of oppression. When people of color are together, there can be healing. We can reclaim parts of ourselves that have been repressed.



We can redefine ourselves and support one another in embracing who we are. The necessity of these spaces is obvious to me as a woman of color learning to embrace layers of my own identity by being in community with other Black and brown bodies.<sup>1</sup> This has been especially important in my spiritual community, Shambhala Buddhism, where we are taught that surfacing vulnerability is the path to creating a more fair and just society. Yet, in my own organizing of a PoC meditation in Oakland and in conversations with other people of color in my sangha across the United States, I have been angered and baffled by the responses of white people to these spaces.

Though people of color are creating and envisioning spaces in which we may be together, our efforts are continually questioned, attacked, and made invisible within our communities. Spaces for people of color are ignored, even when they attract large numbers. They are marginalized from other community events and programming.

Community leaders find reasons to question the legitimacy of PoC groups and may interrogate organizers about what exactly we're doing when we get together. Some white people insert themselves into PoC spaces with reasons why they believe they should be included such as, "I identify more with people of color than with white people." There are people who accuse PoC spaces as being racist and segregationist.

Even if white people can't access an embodied understanding of why PoC spaces are needed, they can still cultivate genuine compassion for our experience of needing them, and they can trust our voices enough to support these spaces. If the presence of spaces for people of color engenders discomfort, insecurity, or anger, I hope those emotions will be seen as an opportunity to look deeper within oneself to ask why.

*Excerpted from "Why People of Color Need Spaces Without White People" published in the Arrow Journal. See the full essay here: <https://arrow-journal.org/why-people-of-color-need-spaces-without-white-people/>*



# LATINX OPEN LETTER TO UU WORLD

*In September, the worship planning team that led a Latinx centered service at GA wrote an open letter to the UU World regarding their coverage of GA. Reprinted with permission.*

Dear UU World Editors:

We are writing to express our outrage with the lack of representation of our Latinx presence at General Assembly as reported in your Fall 2018 issue.

This year, a group of Latinx ministers, religious educators and youth led the Thursday morning worship service at GA. It was the first fully bilingual service at General Assembly, an event decades in the making. In the current issue of the UU World, you have a three page spread with images and notes about different GA worship services. The lower left side corner of that spread has a couple of lyrics in Spanish, but none of the pictures on pages 24-26 represent our team (or any Latinx that we are aware of), and there is no mention of our service at all.

The erasure of the Latinx community in our movement isn't new. What we see replicated in this issue of UU World is a pattern that continues to ignore Latinx contributions to Unitarian Universalism. Given that barely any of our Spanish hymnals have been sold in the ten years since its publication, the worship team responsible for the bilingual service was severely limited in what we could select to center ourselves and not the predominately white UU's in attendance. The impact of your lack of intention is immediate upon opening the magazine and has rippled to the rest of our UU people of color community who join us in solidarity.

This service was conceived of, and delivered, as a gift to our faith as we yet again attempted to make inroads for our community which seems to consistently be made invisible. Knowing the pressure we faced as yet again being "the first", we intentionally set out to illustrate how bilingual worship could feed, recognize and celebrate everyone in the room. The effect of the UU World magazine's lack of inclusion presents the illusion that we weren't even there.



The wider UU community has no idea that we highlighted new music director Francisco Ruiz who played and sang beautifully. Has no idea that there was an intentional multigenerational worship planning team. Has no idea that Latinx Youth delivered a word of love and challenge to Unitarian Universalism. The General Assembly has never witnessed such a group of Latinas on the stage at the same time, showing that we are building in numbers. We also collaborated with our colleague the Rev. Jorge Espinel who serves in Colombia, South America, and could not attend for lack of funds. We share this to express how much our faith misses when it doesn't see the Latinx community. In this tender moment in our movement's history, when we as an institution say we are committed to dismantling white supremacy, it is particularly wounding to experience our erasure in your coverage.

We have no doubt that the editors of UU World will say that it was not your intent to erase our contributions and presence at GA. And we highlight that it is the impact of your actions that are at issue. We will not be erased. We encourage you to discuss this issue with your Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Multicultural accountability partners to discern how this happened, what the impact has been, how you will engage with being accountable for this issue and we look forward to being contacted by you to work on restoration.

Signed,

The Worship Planning Team (GA)