



My General Assembly (GA) Experience:

By Cori Compton



General Assembly was a hectic, fast-paced five days full of constant planning, chaotic scheduling, and little sleep, but it was one of the best experiences of my life!

I was overwhelmed by the array of workshops. One workshop focused on revealing individual leadership skills through a superhero identity. **My inner superhero was “*The Conscience Observer*” -- one who sees the good and beauty in others and the world around her and helps others to see it, too (uber UU ... I know).** I was able to participate in a spirited, yet considerate debate on the issue of deportation, and I even took part in deciding the two Actions of Immediate Witness -- deportation and the Uganda LGBT railroad -- that would be supported by the Youth Caucus in the General Session.

But my primary goal at GA was to seek out workshops that might help me understand the next phase of my life at Eliot; the transition between youth and young adult. I hoped to find the tools to build a framework for the role of myself and my friends in a post-high school, pre-adult world. Because I am currently involved in creating a young adult group at Eliot, I attended a workshop focused on building group relationships. I shared my fears and hopes for the oncoming year in the “Young Adults” meeting for the previously-bridged. I listened to ideas from other young adults as to what they were looking for in a young adult group, like discussion of current issues both spiritual and political, taking action through community service, and organizing workshops and events in a more interactive way.

It was in these workshops that I met people my age from across the country who were exuberant, accepting, and compassionate. Though we had just met, I felt that we were a family; that we had known each other forever. We shared our concerns about an uncertain, uncharted future as young adults in the church.

But one thing is absolutely clear: We are all passionate Unitarian Universalists. **We believe in our church and each other. And we’re committed to strengthening and energizing our community at home and beyond.**

And I bridged.

Bridging was incredible. As a homeschooled student, it was like a graduation ceremony, only much more meaningful. I can't express the joy I felt as I walked across the stage with all of my fellow bridgers that I had fallen in love with over the week at GA. The audience was engaged, the speeches were beautiful, and the love that filled that giant stadium was overwhelming.

Every aspect of GA was enlightening and wonderful, but the people I met were by far the best part. In the first two days, I met people from Texas, North Carolina, Connecticut, and Ohio. Though I had only known them for about 24 hours, we were doing almost everything together; attending workshops, eating meals, and squeezing in as many workshops and events as we could. They may all live at least nine hours away, but we have been in constant contact since we were separated, teary eyed, in the GA parking lot.

And we will continue to talk about what we learned and how to navigate our upcoming UU years. I miss them, and they are the reason that I will walk to GA in Portland next year if I have to. I love them and the GA community. I love what it taught me about Unitarian Universalism and myself. **And I look forward to applying all that I learned to the Eliot community and all my future Unitarian Universalist endeavors.**

Love,
Cori

