

# Reflection, by Phoebe Mussman and Colleen Lee



This July, we attended **Youth Midwest Leadership School (YMWLS)**, a week-long UU leadership camp for youth in Beloit, Wisconsin. It was the best week of our lives.

We arrived with little preconception about the week's activities. We hoped for fun and eye-opening experiences. What we encountered was far more than we could have hoped for, particularly the relationships we developed with 28 other open-minded UU youth. We created a unique UU community where together we pursued acceptance, spirituality, communication, peace, equity, and unconditional love. We bonded until

the idea of leaving sounded impossible. **We departed feeling we'd evolved into new and better versions of ourselves who had experienced a real taste of what community, spirituality, and love truly means.**

Daily life at YMWLS involved attending worship twice a day, examining the UU principles and their meaning in our lives, exploring the origins and evolution of the UU faith, building leadership skills, bonding with peers, and exploring and sharing our beliefs in CREDO groups with 5-6 peers, plus one youth and one adult leader.

CREDO writing provided daily time for personal spiritual contemplation. We were given questions to ponder about our lives, UU faith, our existence, and our ultimate purpose. Each night, we gathered with our CREDO group to share our reflections. Sharing our deep insights with our peers enabled us to connect through mutual acceptance and respect for each other, and helped clarify our own beliefs and values.

Since our time at YMWLS, we're seeking to create a more inclusive and understanding youth group environment here at Eliot. We want to help others at Eliot develop their beliefs, just as we did during YMWLS. **And there's much more we want to bring from our YMWLS experience to Eliot:**

- Leading others who seek guidance and direction
- Putting forward our best effort in everything we do
- Communicating & sharing our ideas with the Eliot community
- Being open to sharing and receiving feedback
- Sharing the load of responsibility
- Tending to those in need



There's one other thing we learned at YMWLS we're excited to share with our Eliot community.

***"It IS our job to make the world a better place."***



With Unconditional Love,

*Phoebe Mussman & Colleen Lee*