

SHARE THE PLATE/SHARE THE PORCH

In 2012 the Board of Trustees approved a plan to collect funds at Sunday services to benefit local non-profit groups that align with our UU justice values and that are consistent with the mission of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood. Fifty percent of monies collected on Sunday are designated to the social justice organization. In 2020, as a way to expand our giving, the Share the Porch initiative was added. This new dimension allows congregants to support organizations by giving material goods to those in need of help and enables families and youth alternative sharing opportunities. Plate and Porch giving alternates monthly throughout the year. The Share the Plate/Share the Porch program is administered by the Share The Plate/Share the Porch Team, part of the Wider World Circle.

The following guidelines have been developed to describe the process by which organizations for the Plate share are chosen. Porch share guidelines are listed separately. All are published on our USR website (uuridgewood.usr) under the Social Justice header.

I. Guidelines for the Application Form

Since there are more organizations that would like to participate than there are available Sundays, the Share the Plate/Porch Team of the Wider World Circle will carefully evaluate the applications and come to consensus on which organizations will be chosen in any given year. If an organization is not selected and meets the stated criteria it is encouraged to re-apply for the following church year.

(*Special Plate Collections: emergency requests for separate plate collections occasionally occur. If there is an emergency plate collection request the STP/STP team requests permission from the Board of Trustees to add the emergency request to the rotation.)

Applications may be sent to the USR office, care of Ann Pareti, Congregational Administrator. (usr.membership1@gmail.com)

II. Guidelines for Process

Publicity

The congregation is made aware of the program through:

- Announcements in the weekly Eblast
- Postings on the USR website
- Realm notifications
- USR Facebook page
- Sunday services and Zoom bulletin board

When an organization is approved, the applicant, with the help of a member of the Share The Plate/Porch Team, will be responsible for the following:

- Article in the weekly Eblast which remains the entire month
- Realm postings
- Requests to appropriate staff for a notification on the Sunday Zoom Bulletin Board
- Sending a short announcement with suggested wording for the Sunday reading to the Minister, Board President and Vice President. *One week's notice minimum.*
- Notifying the USR congregational administrator of the name and address where the check should be sent.
- Submitting a follow up article for the weekly Eblast indicating the amount of the collection and thanking the congregation.

III. Guidelines for criteria in selecting recipients

The criteria below are intended to help Share the Plate/Porch Team members think about the broad range of potential ways an organization might be evaluated.

Consistency with Our Mission and USR Focus

Does the organization help us fulfill the USR mission to be “a beacon for justice and love” in the world?

Does the organization support the work of any of our USR social justice interest groups? Or any organization founded by a member or friend?

Will there be synergy with other efforts within USR?

Is there synergy with UUA, Faith Action, or other affiliated organizations?

Will this organization/issue help promote USR in the larger community?

Urgency

How urgent is the need?

Will our contribution make a difference?

Can we offer the assistance at a time when it would really help?

New or Repeating Causes

Is the organization a smaller, local group where our donation would really matter?

Have we given to this organization before?

When was the last time?

Do we want to repeat this giving now? Every year?

Will the congregation continue to be motivated to give?

Is the issue a new issue that is important for us or is it very similar to the issue covered by other organizations?

The Requesting Person

Is the requesting person a member/friend of USR?

Is this a person who has made other requests and have we been able to help before?

Is this a person we want to support because the requester has made a significant impact at USR or at an outside organization?

IV. Guidelines for Selection

The STP/STP Team makes its selection based on the above criteria and votes by secret ballot.

The information on the application form shall be the basis for discussion and voting. No personal presentations shall be allowed. If the application is made by a member of the Team, that person may participate in the discussion, but not bring in additional information that may disadvantage other applicants not so represented.

