UU WORLDWIDE YOUTH NETWORK
UUWYN & the world wins

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For Immediate Release

CONNECTICUT-BASED NON-PROFIT SENDS LOCAL YOUTH TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN COLOGNE, HOLDS INTERNATIONAL COMEDY NIGHT IN HARTFORD AND EXPANDS TRANSYLVANIAN TIES

HARTFORD, Conn. — The Unitarian Universalist Worldwide Youth Network (UUWYN) (pronounced "You Win"), a Hartford-based nonprofit dedicated to global youth engagement, is:

- sending local youth to international conference in Cologne
- expanding its Transylvanian ties and
- holding an International Comedy Night in Hartford

Local Youth in USA Delegation Travelling to International Conference in Cologne

Last fall, UUWYN officially launched its Building Bridges campaign, which sent youth to the 47th Annual David Ferenc Unitarian Youth Association on October 24-26 in Cluj Napoca in the Transylvanian region of Romania.

UUWYN is now sending youth from various continents to the "Unitariertag" (Unitarian Days) conference in Cologne, Germany, May 22-25 including, as the USA youth delegates, Linda Petersen of Cornwall and Tallulah Alder of Wilton. Unitariertag the biennial, multigenerational conference featuring workshops, worship services, cultural programming and the official assembly of the German Unitarian community. "We are happy to invite youth from different continents to Unitariertag; our youth benefit immensely from these global friendships and shared commitments," asserts Finn Prem, the national youth leader of German Unitarians.

Cologne, Germany

International Comedy Night – Live from Hartford!

UUWYN is closing its whirlwind first year with two additional developments: the launch of its inaugural *International Comedy Night – Live from Hartford!* and significant strengthening

of its organizational ties to Transylvania, a region central to Unitarian history and contemporary Unitarian life.

UUWYN will host its International Comedy Night on **Saturday, March 28 at 7:30 p.m.** at the **Unitarian Society of Hartford**. Both in-person and livestream tickets are available for **$20** at *ticketleap.com/events/uuwyn* and *uuwyn.org*.

The lineup features nationally touring comedians and regional favorites:

- **HEADLINER: Noah Ryan** — "The Man of 200 Impressions!"; Laugh Factory Chicago, Mohegan Sun, Today Show (Australia), Hilarities (Cleveland)
- **Mat Orefice** — Runner-Up, Funniest Comedian in CT; Comic Strip Live, Stress Factory, Fairfield Theater Company
- **Laurie Yellow Sweater** — Ridgefield Playhouse, Caroline's on Broadway, Stand Up NY; 2nd Place, Last Comic Standing (Mohegan Sun)
- **Blaine Langberg** — Stand Up NY, Broadway Comedy Club, The Stress Factory, Ridgefield Playhouse
- **Paul Caplan** — Gotham Comedy Club, HnH Comedy, Sugar Hollow
- **Savanda Latrece** — Mohegan Sun, Funnybone, Stress Factory
- **Shahan Islam** — Broadway Comedy Club, Mohegan Sun, Ridgefield Playhouse (Event Host)

SCAN TO GET TICKETS

"At UUWYN, we believe in building community across cultures—and nothing builds community faster than laughing together in the same room," points out **Rev. Justine Magara** of Kenya, Vice President of UUWYN.

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Deepening Transylvanian Connections with Gabor Kiss Joining the Board

As UUWYN expands its global partnerships, the organization is strengthening its ties to Transylvania, the historic birthplace of Unitarianism and a vibrant center of contemporary Unitarian life. This work builds on a year of active international engagement and is anchored by the appointment of **Dr. Gabor Kiss** to the UUWYN Board of Directors.

Dr. Kiss, a Budapest-born Unitarian, has been active in international Unitarian circles for decades. He chairs his congregation's Partner Church Committee, maintaining long-standing relationships with their partner congregation in **Sinfalva, Romania (Transylvania)**. "Unitarians worldwide should be proud of the pioneering role of Transylvanian Unitarians in the enterprise of liberal religion, from the 16th century onwards" asserts Kiss, "it's an honor to help facilitate the discovery of this heritage among worldwide Unitarians."

Kiss has additionally served as his congregation's envoy to the **Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU/UNO)**—formerly led by UUWYN's own **Bruce Knotts**—and has been active with the **International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women (ICUUW)**, which maintains deep roots in Transylvania. A licensed pilot and retired scientist/engineer, Kiss brings as background a distinguished career in science and engineering.

A Year of Global Engagement

Dr. Kiss's appointment follows a year of substantial international activity at UUWYN, including:

- addition of national Unitarian leaders from **Germany, Kenya, and Indonesia**
- **Building Bridges** campaign sending youth delegates to:
  - **47th Annual David Ferenc Unitarian Youth Association Gathering** in Cluj-Napoca, Romania
  - Unitariertag in Cologne
- sponsoring inaugural **Global Worship Exchange** between the U.S. and Kenya, hosted by **Sister Souurce**, the first organization dedicated to Black Unitarians Universalist girls and women.

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Domestic Social Justice: Launch of NIGHTLIGHT

Alongside its international work, UUWYN is advancing domestic social justice through **NIGHTLIGHT**, a new Connecticut-based homelessness outreach initiative inspired by two decades of engagement with New York City's **Midnight Run**. NIGHTLIGHT – UUWYN

NIGHTLIGHT mobilizes worship communities and civic groups to conduct evening outreach runs ("Nightlight Missions")—to distribute food, clothing, and essential supplies to individuals experiencing homelessness. The inaugural NIGHTLIGHT MISSION will be on march 21. "Connecticut is facing its sharpest increase in homelessness in over a decade," said **Shahan Islam** of UUWYN, "cuts to SNAP and food benefits have intensified food insecurity statewide. NIGHTLIGHT will reduce hunger and cold exposure, prevent medical crises, ease strain on emergency services, and strengthen connections to shelters and support programs." Rev. Magara added: "Compassion is the principle that defines our Unitarian Universalist faith and our humanity. Blessed be those who give out of compassion."

About UUWYN

The **Unitarian Universalist Worldwide Youth Network (UUWYN)** is a Hartford-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to international youth engagement rooted in Unitarian Universalist values. UUWYN believes young people are not merely future leaders—they are essential contributors to today's conversations on justice, inclusion, and spiritual growth. Through global partnerships, cultural exchanges, leadership development, and social justice initiatives, UUWYN equips youth to build a more compassionate and interconnected world.

Donations to UUWYN
and NIGHTLIGHT
may be given here:

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