

OUR WHOLE LIVES
OWL Collaboration
Unitarian Universalist Churches of Greater Lynn and Salem

September 22, 2021

Dear Parents of Seventh, Eighth and Ninth-Graders,

The Unitarian Universalist churches of Greater Lynn and Salem will join together to offer the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program to seventh, eighth and ninth-grade youth beginning with a mandatory parent orientation to the program on October 3rd! **The parent orientation and all classes will take place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn.** OWL is an excellent program that integrates sexuality education and values from the perspective of our Unitarian Universalist community. Youth learn about sexuality in a positive and supportive atmosphere. The program will be taught by leaders from both churches that have all completed an official OWL training course.

Overview of the Our Whole Lives Program:

The OWL program is written for seventh to ninth-graders and is part of an “all ages” UU curriculum concerning human sexuality education. It is important to provide our youth with accurate, timely information about sexuality and to help them strengthen their values at this important time in their lives. The program we are offering is part of the UUA’s [Our Whole Lives \(OWL\) Lifespan Series](#) which is based on the following assumptions:

- Sexuality is a good part of the human experience.
- All persons are sexual.
- Sexuality includes much more than sexual behavior.
- Human beings are sexual from the time they are born until they die.
- People engage in healthy sexual behavior for a variety of reasons, including to express caring and love, to experience intimacy and connection with another, to share pleasure, to bring new life into the world, and to experience fun and relaxation.
- Sexuality in our society is damaged by violence, exploitation, alienation, dishonesty, abuse of power, and the treatment of persons as objects.
- It is healthy for young adolescents to postpone sexual intercourse.
- It is natural to express sexual feelings in a variety of ways.

These assumptions are explored in relation to values, communication and understanding of the full scope of human sexuality — physical, emotional and social. The goals of the program, the program assumptions and values, and the structure and content of the program will be described more fully at the parent orientation.

Parent Orientation:

Parents are required to attend the mandatory Parent Orientation **Sunday, October 3rd from 6-8pm.** After the orientation, we will need your written permission for your teen to participate.

- At the orientation, OWL leaders will provide an overview of the program and will tell you why we believe it is so important, and you’ll have ample time to ask questions of the leaders. Additionally, visuals that will be shown to youth during the OWL program will be shown to you during the orientation. (*Orientation is mandatory partly because we require parents to see the visuals before giving permission for their youth to attend OWL and view them.*) While we

encourage everyone to sign up for the program in its entirety, it is possible to take OWL and decline having your youth see the slides.

COVID-19 Prevention Strategies:

This excellent program can only be offered in its entirety in person. To mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission we ask that all who are able to receive the vaccine do so. The class will take place in a large room with sufficient space to socially distance, and we will utilize multiple HEPA air purifiers. Participants will be masked at all times, food and beverages will not be served, and all participants will be asked to stay home if anyone in their family unit has any of the symptoms now associated with COVID-19.

Structure & Schedule

- The whole program runs from October 3, 2021 through May 22, 2022 at the latest.
- Participation in each session is mandatory with the exception of illness of course. If there is a schedule conflict that you are aware of please reach out to me and we can discuss an alternative.
- Following the Parent Orientation on October 3, there will be at most 19 Sunday evening sessions and 7 Thursday evening sessions, **all running from 6-8pm**. The Thursday evenings were necessary as we have taken care to avoid holiday weekends and public school vacations.
 - October 3 Parent Orientation (parents only, no youth please)
 - October 7, 17, 24, 28
 - November 7, 14, 21
 - December 5, 12, 19
 - January 6, 13, 23, 30
 - February 6, 13
 - March 3, 13, 20, 27
 - April 3, 10, 28
 - May 5, 15, and 22

We are looking forward to a terrific program. If you are new to OWL, we particularly encourage you to ask questions. We would be happy to talk to you, and our trained OWL leaders and parents of former participants are also good resources for any questions. Please do mark your calendar with the dates above including the October 3rd mandatory parents' orientation date and first class, October 7th. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Chris Scheller
Director of Community Life and Learning
Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn