



Contributed Photo

The Reverend Sidney Peterman of Wilmington, Delaware, district consultant for the Unitarian Universalist Association, recently presented Upper Delaware Unitarian Universalist Fellowship President Thomas Rue, to the left of center, with a symbolic check noting the award of a \$4,500 grant from the Fund for Unitarian Universalism, for use by The River School. To the left of Rue is Fellowship Treasurer Carmen Hernandez Rue. Also taking part in the presentation, from the left, were Ann Rue, David Koepke, Jill Koepke, Bud Rue, the Rev. Raymond J. Pontier (center), Jesse Ballew, Marjeana Howard, Colette Cohen Ballew, and Barbara E. Pontier.

Unitarian Universalists Granted \$4,500 for School

MILANVILLE, PA — The River School, a parent-run Montessori elementary school sponsored by the Upper Delaware Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, received a boost recently in the form of \$4,500 from the Fund for Unitarian Universalism, an arm of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA). Both the fellowship and the River School make their home at the former Innisfree Youth Hostel in Milanville.

According to UUA funding program administrator Katherine Kelly, the proposal on behalf of The River School was one of 31 received. More than \$368,000 was requested. In the end, the panel funded 15 projects for a total of \$104,550, Kelly stated.

The grant was earmarked for renovations to the school building which is housed at the former Milanville hostel, said local UU fellowship president Thomas Rue of Monticello. Modifications to the Innisfree dormitory building have been made by River School parents, to create a large open-space area for multi-aged classes. Further structural renovations are planned for next year, under the direction of construction committee chairperson and River School parent Zeke Boyle of Callicoon.

This grant represents the largest single donation to The River School from any one source to date, although school representatives express hope this first grant will prime the pump for

additional corporate and foundation support. The school opened its doors this past September. Classes range from age 6 to 9, and from 9 to age 12. With an enrollment of 15, organizers say they believe that figure will double by next year.

While The River School's curriculum does not and will not include formal religious education, school parents recently signed Articles of Agreement with the fellowship pledging to educate students in accordance with the local fellowship's Statement of Purpose.

That statement includes a commitment to the creation of a caring, open environment for learning and spiritual search, as well as the all-important freedom to share convictions and doubts.

The Upper Delaware UU Fellowship and The River School are also united in their intent to: "...work for the vision of a better world peace, and seek to protect the earth's environment

through our respect for the interdependent web of all living things."

Unitarian Universalism is a non-sectarian denomination which welcomes people of all faiths, including Christians, Jews, pagans, Buddhists, agnostics, and others. The grant from UUA was made based on the promise that The River School will operate exclusively on non-sectarian and non-discriminatory principles.

The Upper Delaware fellowship meets Sundays at 11 a.m. in Milanville. The Reverend Raymond J. Pontier of Narrowsburg speaks once per month, with a variety of programs scheduled on remaining Sundays. For more information or directions, call 252-7553 or (717) 729-7197.