

ACM REPORT: Youth Conference

by Christine Michell, CanUUdle V Co-Dean

I had the time of my life in Hamilton

After months of planning, organizing and anticipation, the CUC youth conference – CanUUdle V – had finally arrived. Youth hugged and squealed with excitement as they greeted their friends from across the country. As a co-dean of the conference (like a co-chair), I ran around taking care of last-minute details, and organizing the Pride Rainbow Project banner for the Ingathering. But nothing felt real until we walked into the hall to the sound of the choir singing, and I saw how beautiful the banner was, held up by youth, junior youth and adults from across the country.

Almost 60 youth, aged 14–20, attended CanUUdle V (and 11 Junior Youth, aged 12–14, attended the first ever Junior Youth Rally). We spent most of our time in the Hamilton Church, doing workshops, worships and other activities. We also held a business meeting, elections, a dance, a murder mystery dinner, a coffee house – plus we went swimming!

In addition, we joined the main CUC conference three times, for the Ingathering, Multigenerational Day, and the Closing Ceremony.

The Multigenerational Day was a highlight. It included workshops, (I attended the Child Haven workshop, and helped run the Pride Rainbow Project one), the Empty Bowls dinner, and a youth-led worship for the whole ACM.



A total of 59 youth and advisors attended CanUUdle V in Hamilton. Below: youth and others carry the 500-foot-long Pride Rainbow Project banner at the conference Ingathering.

The PRP workshop spontaneously came up with the idea of sending pieces of the banner home with participants to be featured in Pride Parades across the country in the weeks following the conference!

The Youth-led Worship was very thought-provoking and spiritual. Youth leaders got attendees to sit with someone they didn't know, and then asked everyone to consider a few questions (What are you afraid of? What are you proud of? What is most valuable to you?), and share their answers with the stranger sitting next to them. The room was filled with hushed whispers and the sounds of good listeners.

Overall, I thought it was the best CUC youth conference of the three I've attended – and the ACM itself was more youth- and child-friendly than ever before. Next year I hope there is more interaction between the junior youth, the youth, and the young adults, and I hope we continue the tradition of the Multigenerational Day.

At the closing ceremony there was a Transitions ceremony for youth entering young adulthood, which four youth participated in (including me). I found it very powerful, especially at the end of the ceremony, when all the youth came and stood behind us and sang "Time Of Your Life" by Green Day.

Each time I attend one of these conferences I forge new friendships, rekindle old ones, and feel more like a true *Canadian* Unitarian Youth through the ties that extend across the country. It is an experience that I will always treasure, and I'm glad I had the opportunity to help run one of these amazing conferences. [U](#)

