

## The Our Whole Lives (OWL) Program



Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula used by UU congregations as well as other congregational and secular groups.

In mid-April, with financial support from the staffing committee, I had the honor of attending a 7-12th grade-focused OWL training with other educators in Kalamazoo, MI. THANK YOU, UUCGT!

The dialogue and learning experiences were meaningful, fun, and compassionate. Together we explored many relevant topics including:

- Adolescent development
- Effective group facilitation techniques
- How to be more understanding and welcoming of transgender people
- Gender and sexual orientation terminology
- The circles of sexuality
- Issues around consent

Having taught the Michigan Model reproductive health curriculum in an 8th grade health class in 2018, my students' feedback was that the curriculum was outdated, needed more gender and identity inclusion, and was overall fear-based and negative.

After this training weekend, I can assure you that OWL offers a different approach. I walked away from the training weekend feeling equipped, inspired and hopeful.

"Honest, accurate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives." <https://www.uua.org/re/owl>

The Religious Education Committee has received quite a lot of feedback from parents in our community that they would like an OWL program to run this fall.

We are excited to be making plans to get students registered for this program, both from our congregation and the community, which I believe will be of great benefit to the entire Grand Traverse Region.

I'd be happy to engage with you about questions you may have or experiences you'd like to share regarding this program. Please see below for my contact information. I look forward to talking to you!



*Katie's Master's degree is in Curriculum and Instruction with endorsements in PE/Health Education and Special Education.*

*Katie has experience in teaching a wide range of health topics including self-care and reproductive health.*

*Please contact Katie with any questions you may have.*

*Katie can be reached at [katie.marie.tomczyk@gmail.com](mailto:katie.marie.tomczyk@gmail.com) or 231-349-6616*