

Announcing the Ahmad and Elizabeth El-Hindi Center for Dialogue

What if someone gave you a gift that was so magnanimous that it allowed you to dream your biggest dream? What if that gift not only impacted you, but also impacted your ability to do your life's work? How do you possibly say THANK YOU in a big enough way?

Ahmad and Elizabeth El-Hindi, through their family's foundation, have made such a gift to InterFaith Works (IFW). Their daughter, Maryam Wasmund, is a member of the IFW Board of Directors, and approached our agency this year to let us know that she and her family wanted to support our work and enable us to begin to enact our new vision for the agency.

Their gift of \$275,000 is the largest single gift our agency has ever received. It is allowing us to establish the Center for Dialogue, a multi-faceted effort that will marshal the resources of the community to address the most complex social problems we face.

Through the Center for Dialogue, dialogues on ending racism and on building interfaith understanding will continue, and more sustained dialogues where there are strained relationships will be initiated. Dialogues on critical public and community issues will be developed.

The dialogues will reach children, teens and adults throughout our community, and engage volunteer facilitators from the Maxwell School's Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC). Faith



Elizabeth and Ahmad El-Hindi (front row, seated center) with their supporting extended family at the 2012 InterFaith Works Leadership Award Dinner, where Ahmad was an honoree

communities and the community at-large will be drawn into the work of hosting and facilitating. These same volunteers will be tapped to lead our dinner dialogues, and to facilitate community issue forums on a multitude of topics. Catherine Gerard, the PARRC Director, will build this bridge with us.

Each year, a steering committee will establish a list of community concerns that require thoughtful, multi-cultural citizen engagement. Building community understanding about an issue – the facts, the complex nature of the issue, why we haven't yet been able to "fix" the problem, and why we may be divided as a community about how to address the problem will all be part of the dialogue.

Using national models such as Kettering Foundation's National Issues Forums and Everyday Democracy, we will craft dialogue guides that help our community members have a rational, balanced discussion on these critical issues that bridge the divides of political parties, ethnic divisions, or divergent points of view.

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Side By Side Join Us in the Year End Appeal

In 2012, InterFaith Works is recognized nationally as a unique non-profit doing critical work right here in our region. We have taken major steps to not only fulfill that mission, but to deepen and broaden the mission and vision. We are at a significant turning point in our organization's life. As we rededicate ourselves to our past and our future, the new InterFaith Works Center for Dialogue and our expanded Center for New Americans will build upon InterFaith Work's long established capacities.

See included in this Newsletter a donation envelope provided for your convenience. At this time of growth and new possibilities, please walk side by side with us by making a contribution to our 2012 annual campaign - thousands of positive futures will benefit, and with your generosity we will continue to build bridges of understanding in our community.



The InterFaith Works Hunger Project

Most of the time, we want to beat the percentages – have higher numbers than the other guy. But not when it comes to child poverty and hunger. *The Post-Standard* recently reported that in our city, 53% of our children are living at or below poverty, while the New York state figure is at 19%. This gives us the dubious distinction of having the highest poverty rate among Northeastern cities over 100,000 in population. Whoa!

I am a member of the local FEMA Board. FEMA, the federal program that provides food for area feeding programs and food pantries, as well as emergency and homeless shelter grants, cut its funding to Syracuse by almost 33% this year, while at the same time, the number of people seeking food at area pantries and feeding programs has risen by almost 30%. The need has far exceeded the resources. Many food pantries are based in our faith communities around town, and you know the strain of increased demand at the grassroots level. In August, many pantries had literally run out of food and are only now building back up as winter comes upon us.

The meeting where we distributed the FEMA funds changed my own purchasing habits. When I got our family's groceries that night, I added an extra bag with cans of beans, peanut butter, boxes of pasta, jars of sauce, macaroni and cheese to take to my church's pantry. I also gave a bigger donation to the Samaritan Center this year. These things help, I know, but they only give a moment's relief in what is a tide of need.



So the InterFaith Works (IFW) Round Table of Faith Leaders, a group of 25 pastors, priests, imams, rabbis and more, who meet monthly to build relationships and understanding across the faith communities, has decided to take the food stamp challenge. One in seven citizens nationwide now uses food stamps. Food stamps in CNY provide a little over \$4.00 per day. That's \$30 per week to feed one person. Led by Rev. Dr. Tiffany Steinwert and Rabbi Daniel Fellman, we are called to face these hard facts in the center of our being – our hearts and stomachs.

Starting on January 27, 2013, at the Interfaith Harmony Assembly, and concluding on February 2, 2013, you are invited to join with the Round Table and eat only the food that you can purchase at the food stamp level. Do this as part of your faith community, in concert with others and talk about hunger. Write about it. Blog about it. Do this in solidarity with people all around our community who eat this way year in and year out. IFW will have a simple dialogue guide on our website by January 10, 2013 that you can use to help with our community's understanding of this great need.

2012 • BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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2012 • ROUND TABLE OF FAITH LEADERS

Convener of Round Table of Faith Leaders:
 Rev. William C. Redfield
 Rev. Bud Adams
 Rev. Kevin Agee
 Ms. Linda Alexander
 Imam Yaser Alkhoody
 Mr. Douglas Anderson
 Rev. Jill Andrews
 Mr. Narinder S. Bains
 Elder Melvin Baker
 Rev. Darryl Barrow
 Rev. Nebraska Carter
 The Venerable Roko Sherry Chayat, Abbot
 Mr. Marc Clay
 Br. Ed Falsey
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 Mr. Ralph Singh
 Ms. Madalyn Smith
 Rev. Tiffany Steinwert
 Rev. Jon Werner
 Rev. Victor Wilson

Emeritus Members:

Rabbi Daniel Jezer
 Dr. James B. Wiggins

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The El-Hindi Center for Dialogue (continued)

We have already begun working with Sandra Barrett of the Onondaga Citizens League to identify critical community issues, and we are making plans to craft such a dialogue with them based on their new community study on refugees. “Welcoming the Stranger – a Community Dialogue on Refugee Resettlement,” is our working title, with the intent to bring refugees, American-born neighbors, refugee-serving agencies, community leaders, and faith communities to collectively find ways to make Syracuse a more welcoming community - both for people who have come here to start over after war and political repression, and to make better use of the deep talent pool, ambition, and earnestness of resettled refugees.



Photo: Chuck Wainwright

Ahmad El-Hindi is honored at the 2012 InterFaith Works Leadership Award Dinner for his many years of work in cultivating community dialogue

Another dialogue on police-community relations is also in the works. Syracuse Police Chief Frank Fowler shared his desire to mend and strengthen community support for police, and to build understanding between police and community members. We will start in our area schools where police are posted to serve and protect students, creating dialogues that breakdown stereotypes and increase understanding between parents, faculty, students and officers.

Through dialogues, we can see each other’s desire in new ways and find better methods for collaboration. We seek common ground from which the disparate parts of our community can come together. How we get there is through deliberate, democratic dialogues that call upon the deepest wells of our intelligence, the strongest parts of our hearts, and the vision of community that is based on liberty and justice for all.

The gift of the Ahmad and Elizabeth El-Hindi Foundation is not a gift just to our agency. It is a gift to our region and community. It is a gift to our future. THANK YOU!

The Hunger Project (continued)

What you can do... You can give the money that you might normally spend on food to your local pantry or feeding program. Make a small sign for your lapel with the words “CNY Hunger Project” on it, and let people know what you are doing and why. Invite others to join you.

Our hope is to make this a discernment process about poverty, hunger, its causes, and its cures. We know that much can come from this, and we will convene those of you that participated on February 26, 2013, in the IFW community room to share your experience and to talk through the role of the faith community in ameliorating hunger. Watch our website at www.interfaithworkscny.org, and read the blogs of our faith leaders as they take this journey. We want to hear from you!

Please come to the InterFaith Harmony Assembly at St. John the Baptist Church 406 Court Street in Syracuse, on Sunday, January 27, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., with a reception to follow, where we will kick-off the IFW Hunger Project. Bring a canned good to share with the Northside food pantry. See the article on page 8 about the Harmony Assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth A. Broadway". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beth A. Broadway
Executive Director

Building Blocks

Spotlight on InterFaith Works historical leaders and events

As InterFaith Works embarks on a new phase in its history and future, we have been reflecting on the diverse history of the agency. In this and the coming 2013 issues of the Newsletter, the *Building Blocks* feature will look back on the people and historic events that have been instrumental in shaping the road traveled, building the bridges of understanding, and inspiring the new direction of the agency.

The Reverend Dr. Jon Regier

Before helping found InterFaith Works (IFW), Rev. Dr. Jon Regier was the Executive Director of the NYS Council of Churches, and a staff member of the National Council of Churches during the civil rights era. During this time he worked with NAACP, Urban League, Howell House and the NCC Social Action Committee.

One event from that era that moved Rev. Regier was a meeting among 28 prominent Protestant religious leaders from across the country. "Every night on TV, you saw the police dogs and fire hoses attacking people in Birmingham," he recalls. "You also saw fires in the urban areas of the U.S." These leaders came together with the same motivation - something had to be done to provide support for those in need. That Memorial Day weekend, the top Protestant religious leaders in America entered New York City's Harlem YMCA at midnight on that Friday. This meeting was organized by Dr. Kenneth Clark. Rev. Regier remembers, "At about 1:30 a.m., Bishop Corrigan of the Episcopal Church leaned forward and said, 'Are we saying we have to lay our lives on the line? Tell me when and where.' There would be no march on Washington DC without that impactful meeting."

Even though the Civil Rights Movement encouraged this type of positive activism, it did not erase racism. As Rev. Regier states, "The Civil Rights Movement energized a lot of people, but also set the stage for what I call insidious racism. It's not the old racism, it's very subtle, and we still have that today. It's very hard for us Europeans to accept the rest of the world, and yet we're becoming a minority in the United States. But it's still hard for us to accept. Thank God for groups like InterFaith Works. They have done a lot of work with interreligious dialogue and with high school students. At 90, my hope is that there is a ferment among our youth about wanting to do something better." I think the timing of InterFaith Works coming to where it is right now, at this point in time, couldn't be more important or perfect. This is a time to move."

Rev. Regier came to Upstate New York in 1963 when he worked for the NY National Council of Churches. This

was during the time of Vatican II, and communication was opening up relations between Catholics and Protestants. In Central New York, the Catholics and Protestants met to discuss the possibility of starting an organization. Rabbi Ted Levy of Temple Concord attended one of the meetings and thought the area Jewish constituencies should be involved as well. Because they were forming a more broad inclusive organization, as opposed to a faith-based worship organization, Rev. Regier suggested the name reflect the objective of inclusion - and it officially became the Syracuse Area Interreligious Council.



Joyce and Rev. Dr. Jon Regier enjoying the 2011 Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism Duck Race

IFW has many accomplishments to its credit, as Rev. Regier points out several significant IFW achievements. "The Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism Program is a positive thing they've done," he says. "I think one of the most significant things it will be doing is under the new strategic plan. InterFaith Works is going to have a center for dealing with issues in the Syracuse area, and apply the skills they've learned from the racial dialogue program. The Refugee Program is one of InterFaith Work's great achievements," he continues.

"They began with a rescue approach to refugees, and then eventually beyond rescuing them, developed the program to help them become American citizens. I'm excited about the efforts, currently, about getting into more of a religious dialogue so that

people from all religious backgrounds will speak together, and learn from each other in a safe and trustworthy environment."

For a man with such a rich history, it is inevitable that there are a few significant events in Rev. Regier's life that have left a profound impact on him. While he was in seminary, he learned that God is not a God of judgment, but a God of love. After seminary, he attended the University of Michigan for social work. While there Rev. Regier studied under Dr. Arthur Dunham, one of the founders of the

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Building Blocks (continued)

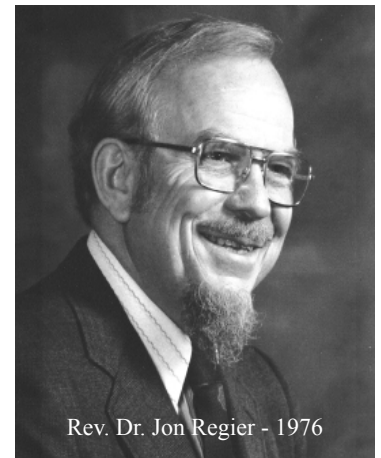
community organizing movement in America. He learned from Dr. Dunham that building the initial foundation of any organization requires finding out what people want to do and what they can do with it.

The final event that impacted Rev. Regier's life was more of an epiphany, "As I began running against more brick walls, I never really got defeated, but I often didn't accomplish anything, I came to realize though, that I'm not held accountable for what I accomplish, I'm held accountable for what I try." He continues, "I got my kicks out of going to demonstrations, because I think they're needed. But one of the greatest gifts I have is a wife who is gutsy, and knows when to say 'cool it.'"

Rev. Regier is currently involved with IFW, and has committed a legacy gift to our future. He also created the Farm Work Ministry, and is active in the local Peace Council, Planned Parenthood Syracuse, and Henderson Harbor Yacht Club, where he sailed and is a past commodore. He tells how all of these organizations tie together, and what they say about him: "There are two

things: I believe in justice and I'll fight for it. I also believe in enjoying yourself. I have never had anything in my life more enjoyable than my wife and sailing. It's just you and the universe out there."

Rev. Dr. Jon Regier has been connected to IFW for over 36 years and modestly explains, "It's really been mostly because it's reached out to me like no other organization I helped create, and I've created a few. They trusted me and I had some experience. Very few people have witnessed the things I have. I've been blessed in that way." Without Jon Regier's commitment to interreligious dialogue and a passion for bringing people together, IFW would not be where it is today.



Rev. Dr. Jon Regier - 1976

The Senior Companion Recognition Luncheon

The 26th annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon was held in September to honor our 62 Senior Companions serving in Onondaga, Cayuga, and Madison Counties. The gala event was held at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool, the perennial favorite venue for the Companions.

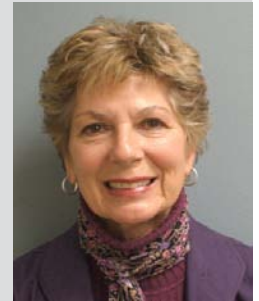
Special thanks were given to this year's sponsors, who generously provided funds that make the luncheon a special event. They are: At Home Independent Living, Staffings Healthcare Systems, Alzheimer's Association of CNY, Christopher Community, Seniors Helping Seniors, Syracuse Jewish Family Service, and Haylor, Freyer & Coon. The Senior Companion Program Advisory Board was also very generous, which allowed us to present a gift to each of our Companions.

In his remarks, Senior Companion Director Larry Crinnin summarized some of the special achievements reached during the previous year, including the first full year of a United Way grant that recognizes the valuable work done by the Companions. Mr. Crinnin also informed the attendees of the Program's receipt of a grant overseen by the Onondaga County Office for Aging for contributing to the "Step Up to Stop Falls Prevention," a program that helps keep frail elderly safe from falls through education and home safety assessment.

With an estimated 60,000 hours of service performed annually, the Senior Companion Program is a lifeline to hundreds of seniors who might otherwise live in isolation and suffer from loneliness and depression. The Companions serve as friendly visitors, offering empathy and understanding.

Barbara Blok: Companion to the Companions

Barbara Blok, Volunteer Coordinator for the Senior Companion Program, recently celebrated 20 years serving the program. At the annual Senior Companion Volunteer Recognition Luncheon in September, Barbara was honored with roses, heartwarming words from InterFaith Works Executive Director Beth A. Broadway, and a standing ovation from current and former companions in attendance. "Barbara has long been appreciated and loved for her steadfast devotion and advocacy to the companions. We certainly wouldn't have such a successful program without her," proudly explains Larry Crinnin, Director of the Senior Companion Program. Thank you Barbara!



Building Bridges Through Photography

Photography can tell the story of InterFaith Works' programs and events through powerful images. Here is a sampling of some exceptional images captured at program events in 2012.



Interfaith Harmony Day

Photo: Chuck Wainwright

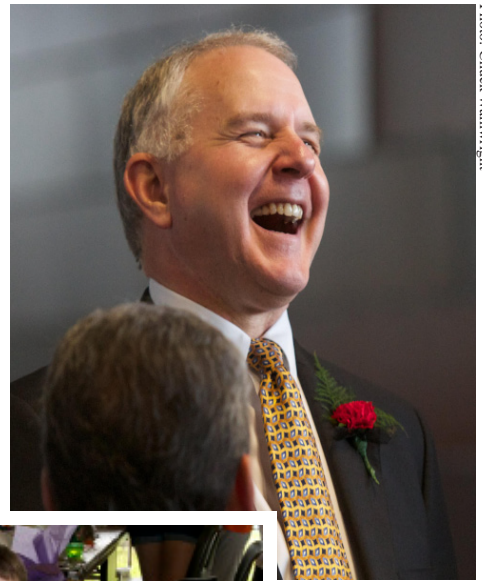


Photo: Chuck Wainwright

ILAD



Photo: Mindy Lee Tarry

World Refugee Day



Photo: Chuck Wainwright

Duck Race to End Racism



Photo: Mindy Lee Tarry

World Refugee Day



Photo: Chuck Wainwright

ILAD

The Seeds of Peace Program Update

By Derrick Dorsey

This collaborative project started in the spring of 2011 with the support of the Say Yes to Education Foundation. The goal of this project is to bring refugee and American-born urban high school students together to build strategic relationships, conflict resolution skills, tools to address bullying, and the assets to improve their school communities.

For the past two summers Say Yes to Education has sponsored 39 Syracuse City School District students to attend the Seeds of Peace Camp in Otisfield, Maine for two weeks. While at camp the students participated in dialogue circles to develop the skills to reach the goal of the project, and to experience dialogue as a process to address conflict while building bridges of understanding. The students attend Nottingham, Henninger, Corcoran and Fowler High Schools and we are currently recruiting students from the Institute of Technology at Central Tech.



Ella Neville (right) speaks at the Rotary Club of Syracuse about her Seeds of Peace experience

Recently, first-year Seed Ella Neville and I spoke at the Rotary Club of Syracuse luncheon held at Drumlins Country Club. She spoke of how partaking in the Seeds of Peace this past summer changed her life. She mentioned that meeting the teens from Maine and participating in dialogue was one of the best experiences of her life, and would recommend it to all her friends at Nottingham.

The Community Wide Dialogue staff and I are very excited about this school year; recruitment is up and the level of commitment and support that we've received from Say Yes to Education and the Syracuse City School District has been outstanding.

We're looking forward to great things from the Syracuse Seeds in the new year in their respective schools - in being change agents and "Seeds of Peace."

Spiritual Care Day Features Dr. Edward Tick

Key note speaker addresses the healing of military veterans

Over one hundred clergy, chaplains, pastoral visitors, social workers and caregivers attended the 22nd Annual Spiritual Care Day event on October 25th at the Crouse Hospital-Marley Education Center. Edward Tick, Ph.D., an expert in the treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, shared a new understanding of the spiritual nature of the warrior's wounds, and how everyone in the community is responsible to help them heal, not just adjust, when they return home. Dr. Tick is the co-founder of Soldier's Heart, a program of direct care that works with veterans and their families in the healing process. At Soldier's Heart they understand that "caring means sharing the burden."



(Left to right) Executive Director Beth A. Broadway, Dr. Edward Tick and Spiritual Care Director Rev. Roberta Yackel at the 22nd Annual Spiritual Care Day event

This annual educational program of the InterFaith Works Spiritual Care Program is truly a community effort! The planning committee is comprised of chaplains who serve in area hospitals, nursing homes and correctional institutions. In addition, the event received resounding support from the community through generous sponsorships. Our heartfelt thanks go out to everyone who made this extraordinary event possible!

Many Thanks to the Spiritual Care Day Sponsors:

The Dr. Lee R. Stoner & Ruth H. Stoner, RN Fund at the Crouse Hospital Foundation
Crouse Hospital

The Episcopal Diocese of CNY
The Welch Allyn Foundation
Syracuse University Hendricks Chapel
Onondaga Community College
St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center
LeMoyne College
Immaculate Conception Church
Temple Concord
Holy Cross Church
Iroquois Nursing Home
Upstate Medical Center
Auburn Community Hospital
Onondaga County Sheriff's Office
The Genesee Grande Hotel



World Interfaith Harmony Assembly

Join InterFaith Works and Women Transcending Boundaries for the World Interfaith Harmony Assembly on Sunday January 27, 2013, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., at St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church, 406 Court Street in Syracuse. Experience this unique event of expressing and honoring faith traditions in our community with song, dance, traditional dress, prayer and poetry. A free-will offering and canned donations will be accepted, and a social hour will follow the program.

For more information contact Jim Dessauer at jdessauer@interfaithworkscny.org, or (315) 449-3552.



THE PROGRAMS OF INTERFAITH WORKS

OUR MISSION: InterFaith Works, through education, service, and dialogue, affirms the dignity of each person and every faith community and works to create relationships and understanding among us.

Center for New Americans - Assisting refugee individuals and families in beginning new lives in America and serving as a resource and cultural center.

Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism - Stimulating dialogue on racism to bring about racial justice and healing.

InterFaith Housing and Community Initiatives - Providing low income housing options and stabilizing neighborhoods.

InterFaith Education & Engagement Program - Linking city and suburban congregations to promote interfaith relationships and citizen participation.

Senior Companion Program - Providing friendship and compassionate care to the homebound elderly.

Spiritual Care Program - Offering spiritual care for hospital patients, nursing home residents, inmates, and troubled youth.

If you would like to get involved in any of these programs, visit www.interfaithworkscny.org for more information.

Sunday January 27, 2013
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church
World Interfaith Harmony Assembly
Tuesday, January 29, 2013
Racial Justice Awards
Syracuse Stage - Sutton Pavilion & Archbold Theater
6:00 award ceremony, 7:30 Syracuse Stage show
Tuesday, April 30, 2013
InterFaith Works Leadership Award Dinner (ILAD)
Saturday, June 8, 2013
Duck Race to End Racism
Syracuse Inner Harbor
12:00 - 4:00

LOOKING AHEAD



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