

2012 InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner

The 2012 ILAD honorees embody the mission and vision of InterFaith Works

InterFaith Works is deeply honored to celebrate the lives and work of The Honorable Minna Buck; Mr. Ahmad El-Hindi; Mr. Louis Kriesberg, Ph.D.; Dr. Anis Obeid; and The Reverend Thomas V. Wolfe, Ph.D.

For 25 years and more the honorees have been building bridges of understanding. By affirming the dignity of all people and all faith traditions, and addressing deeply embedded social divisions, they have found common ground on difficult issues and continue to lead the way to the creation of a more equitable and loving community. Our ILAD honorees have done this using the important tools of sustained dialogue, courageous conversations, and support for others to do the same.

The 2012 ILAD will be held at the new SRC Arena & Event Center on the Onondaga Community College campus, Tuesday, May 15, 5:30 - 9:00 p.m. Please contact the InterFaith Works administrative office for tickets, tables and sponsorship opportunities.



The 2012 ILAD Honorees (left to right):

Dr. Anis Obeid, Mr. Ahmad El-Hindi, The Reverend Thomas V. Wolfe, Ph.D., Mr. Louis Kriesberg, Ph.D., The Honorable Minna Buck



Courageous Conversations

Dear Friends,

How do we open our minds and hearts to people who are different from us? How do we reach across the divides of culture, class, and color, across the divides of stereotypes and misunderstanding, and truly find each other? How do we listen long enough and deeply enough to points of view that are different from ours so that we can find common ground on which we can stand together? How can a courageous conversation move us towards a life-changing experience that forever opens our hearts and minds?

The 2012 ILAD honorees have done all of this. They embody the mission and vision of InterFaith Works – building bridges of understanding to affirm the dignity of all people and all faith traditions, to address deeply embedded social divisions and find common ground on difficult issues that lead to actions for the creation of a more equitable and loving community. And they have done this using the important tools of sustained dialogue, engaging in courageous conversations, and supporting others to do the same.

This year we honor five individuals Dr. Anis Obeid, Mr. Ahmad El-Hindi, The Reverend Thomas V. Wolfe, Ph.D., Mr. Louis Kriesberg, Ph.D., and The Honorable Minna Buck, whose distinguished careers in medicine, business, religion, academia and the law would alone be enough to bring them great honor. Yet each of them has also dedicated their lives and time to the engagement of interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue as a tool towards deeper understanding of social injustices and action for change. All have participated in SAMED, a twenty-five year dialogue project addressing critical issues in the Middle East, and specifically the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One has written extensively on the use of dialogue as a tool to address international relations in all parts of the world. One has worked with 3rd graders here in Central New York to break down urban/rural stereotypes. One has changed the landscape of the university campus through dialogues that address racism and white privilege. One has been a major philanthropist, supporting many causes that lead to understanding and peace. One has become a religion scholar and a poet in English and Arabic, bridging the divides of language.

We will honor them for their notable careers and contributions to our community. We will honor them for their commitment to faith. We will honor them for their courage to engage in difficult conversations that have led them on a path of understanding and a search for peace.

We invite you to join us.

Sincerely,

Beth A. Broadway
Executive Director

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President: Mr. Charles Beach
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 Rev. Louis Sogliuzzo, S.J.
 Mr. Robert Sykes
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 Ms. Carolyn (Chris) Welch

INTERFAITH WORKS ROUND TABLE OF FAITH LEADERS

American Baptist Churches in New York State
 Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
 Church of Latter Day Saints
 Episcopal Church in the Diocese of CNY
 Evangelical Lutheran Church In America
 First Church of Christ, Scientist
 Franciscan Ministries at Assumption
 Gobind Sadan USA
 Islamic Society of Central New York
 Northeastern District Baptist Association
 Presbyterian Church (USA)
 Rabbinical Council of Syracuse
 Rangrig Yeshe, Dzochgen Ali Ling Center
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse
 Sikh Foundation
 Syracuse Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
 The Salvation Army
 United Church of Christ
 United Methodist Church
 Zen Center of Syracuse, Inc.

Emeritus Members:
 Rabbi Daniel Jezer
 Dr. James B. Wiggins

Goma Karki Helps Refugee Program: Sew What?

Goma Karki is a mainstay of the sewing program at the Center for New Americans. The class, organized by Women Transcending Boundaries, is designed to teach useful sewing skills and help refugee women interact with Americans. When Goma started in the class, she had some sewing skills, but she wanted to sew “the American way.” Goma now attends class to socialize and assist the newest students as they master the intricacies of sewing machines.

A native of Bhutan, Goma arrived in Syracuse three years ago after eighteen years in a Nepalese refugee camp. She and her family fled their homeland to escape religious and ethnic persecution. Most of Goma’s married sons and daughters have now come to Syracuse, but a daughter remains in Nepal, waiting to join her family.



Goma Karki displays four of the draperies she made, ready for the apartments of arriving refugees.

Each arriving refugee family is placed in a furnished apartment. Patrick King, the Housing Manager for InterFaith Works Center for New Americans, explained, “Often the vacant apartments we rent do not have curtains or blinds for the windows. The work of Goma and Women Transcending Boundaries not only meets the basic privacy needs of our clients, it can also transform an average house into a heartfelt home for refugees and their families.”

Goma recognizes the benefits her family received and wants to help the newest refugees by using her skills to help furnish their homes. Each week after class she takes home a quantity of fabric and thread, returning the next week with a stack of neatly completed draperies, which now number in the dozens. In making beautiful and necessary window coverings for the newest members of the refugee community, Goma is passing on the benefits that her own family received, and providing her community a model of volunteering.

Please consider donating your time as a volunteer in the sewing class on Thursdays from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. on days the Syracuse School District is in session. Donations of fabric, notions, and machines are always welcome. Contact Jennifer at (315) 633-2817, or robertscrittenden@verizon.net for more information.

2012 United Nations World Interfaith Assembly Meets in Syracuse

On October 20, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously established the World Interfaith Harmony Week through a resolution first proposed by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, who has been an international leader for his peace initiatives.

When the UN called for a week of interfaith harmony, it was done to affirm that mutual understanding and interfaith dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace. In places where these dialogues have taken place, there is more community cohesion and better connections for addressing serious community issues.

The World Interfaith Harmony Week is based on two common fundamental religious Commandments: Love of God, and Love of the Neighbor. The World Interfaith Harmony Week extends the Two Commandments by adding ‘Love of the Good, and Love of the Neighbor.’ This formula includes all people of goodwill, those of other faiths, and those with no faith.

In Syracuse, this second annual event was hosted by Rabbi Daniel Fellman at Temple Concord, a collaboration of InterFaith Works and Women Transcending Boundaries. With an audience of almost 400 people, fourteen faith communities presented song, prayer, story, or a part of their ritual of faith. Together, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Pagans, Hindus, Sikhs, and Baha’i sang the Harmony Song created by Dr. Joan Hillsman. The event celebrates and strengthens the interfaith movement by building ties among the many faiths of our community, educating ourselves about each other, and helping the Central New York community appreciate the beauty and diversity of the faith traditions in our midst.



Young World Interfaith Harmony Assembly participants join in song

(See more World Interfaith Harmony Assembly photos on pages 4 and 5)

Building Bridges Through Photography

Photography can tell the story of InterFaith Works' programs through powerful images. Here is a small sampling of the exceptional images captured at recent program events.

World Interfaith Harmony Assembly



World Interfaith Harmony
Assembly attendees

2012 Racial Justice Awards



Syracuse Children's Chorus



World Interfaith Harmony
Assembly attendees join in song



Racial Justice Award Recipients

World Interfaith Harmony Assembly



Almost 400 people attended the 2012 Assembly



Traditional Bhutanese dance demonstration



Traditional Sudanese dance demonstration



St. Lucy's choir



Our interfaith future



The Bains family

Housing and Community Initiatives

By Michael Collins

This past fall, the InterFaith Works Housing and Community Initiative program participated in a meeting with the Burmese refugee community and several concerned agencies and organizations. Members of the Burmese community, the Syracuse Police Department (SPD), and the Syracuse City School District (SCSD) were looking to address concerns about struggles some Burmese youth were experiencing in their neighborhoods and schools. The SPD enlisted the involvement of multiple agencies to address the problems. Together with the refugee resettlement program at Catholic Charities, InterFaith Work's Center for New Americans, Housing and Community Initiatives, the Community Wide Dialogue (CWD) program and two programs within the SCSD, a meeting of approximately 130 members of this ethnic community was organized.

Subsequent meetings occurred with the dual purpose of addressing the immediate concerns, and organizing the Burmese community to create a sustained capacity to support them. In the last large meeting of the community, several people were nominated as leaders, with four of them accepting the nomination, including a high school junior. The groundwork is being established for what may grow into a Burmese ethnic community association capable of lending support to newly arriving Burmese refugees learning to adapt to their new country. Such associations exist in many other ethnic communities providing support systems with classes in adult literacy and citizenship, after school tutoring, translation assistance, and social opportunities for their own ethnic communities.



Michael Collins
InterFaith Works Director of
Housing & Community Initiatives

Through the fall and winter multiple community meetings have taken place. Dedicated teachers from the school district attended, enabling parents to meet with them and arrange future meetings. This may seem to be a basic function, but in a new country with different languages, cultures and education systems, understanding how to interact with a school and support a child's education is not easily understood. This was an important step towards providing the best chances for academic success for these students.

The meetings also provided a forum for the Burmese and city police to discuss the conflicts occurring in the neighborhoods. As these were between Burmese youth and African American youth, InterFaith Work's CWD program has been involved to listen and see where their expertise may be applied to relieve tensions. As Burmese leaders listen to their community and organize around the community's wants and needs, CWD is able to offer support around the issues of racial conflict.

Due to InterFaith Work's multiple unique programs, a truly organic approach to this endeavor has been developed. Rather than dictating how the Burmese should organize, or for what purpose, time and effort has been taken to assess both the needs and desires of the community and work within the framework that provides. InterFaith Works is able to train based on the identified needs and desires in the refugee communities. In this case, everything starts with the community elders, which is common among many cultures. Community efforts addressing the immediate concerns that initially drew all the supporting entities together, needs that were recognized by the school district and police department, are now working toward resolving the issues that also existed with the Burmese community, but did not have a way to be addressed. All the agencies and organizations involved are very excited to see where this initiative goes.

2012 Annual Appeal Campaign is 'Over The Top'

The InterFaith Works Annual Campaign is 'over the top,' with a contribution total of \$103,716 as of early March. This exceeds the \$100,000 Campaign goal, and is the second highest amount raised in agency Annual Campaign history. The Campaign provides essential support for all InterFaith Works programs, so this is very good news for the many constituents we serve in the community. Very special thanks go to contributors, the diligent and determined Campaign Committee - the Chairs, Fr. Ronald C. Bill and Dennis R. Baldwin - and staff who made the Annual Campaign endeavor a great success!

2012 Racial Justice Awards



Michael Crinnin
2012 Racial Justice Award



Abdullahi Ibrahim
2012 Racial Justice Award

Michael Crinnin was the founding Director of ARISE, Inc., and is the current Executive Director of AIDS Community Resources. He also serves as Treasurer of the New York State UP-State CSP Association, and is a member of the Steering Committee for the Human Services Leadership Council.

A native of Somalia, Abdullahi Ibrahim earned degrees from Onondaga Community College and Syracuse University. He is a member of the National Association of Social Workers, and the Somali-Bantu Community Association of Onondaga County.

In Memoriam: Sheryl Aiello

A long-time supporter and friend of InterFaith Works and the Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism program (CWD), Sheryl Aiello passed away in January, 2012. Sheryl received the 2012 Racial Justice Lifetime Achievement Award from CWD for her years of service to the program, and was able to personally receive the award in hospice prior to her passing before the scheduled public ceremony on January 31.

Sheryl's services to CWD were many, but she will be remembered most for her positive outlook and spirit in her service and in life. Over the last decade she contributed significantly to many of the CWD programs, including Courageous Conversations About Race Initiative, the Starting Small Program, and the Duck Race to End Racism.

Sheryl retired from the Syracuse City School District in 2002 after 30 years of service as an educator and advocate for children and families. Her many contributions to the CWD education and school oriented programs were a natural extension of her life's work, and her experience in the public education system was invaluable in developing and guiding the many fledgling CWD school programs that now flourish today. Her work with the CWD Education Committee included reviewing all materials, guides and evaluations to help improve the experience for the program participants, in addition to supporting the quality of service by program mentors, trainers, facilitators and teachers.

"This work comes naturally to me... To cheer others, not to judge, and accept people for who they are - I hope the world could be like that. It would be a better place." - Sheryl Aiello



Sheryl Aiello
Lifetime Achievement Award

InterFaith Works Dinner Dialogues Event



2011 Dinner Dialogue participants engaged in discussion and enjoying home cooking

InterFaith Works invites you to be part of the 2012 Interfaith Dinner Dialogues that will take place on Tuesday, March 20, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

What happens at an Interfaith Dinner Dialogue?

Participants gather in homes of volunteer hosts who offer a meal and hospitality, and observers of many and different faiths engage in groups of eight to ten in relaxed, friendly, and facilitated conversation.

Who are the participants?

People of any faith or spiritual tradition - and also those who do not identify with any particular tradition - are welcome to participate, as each person in conversation respects the dignity of others and seeks to promote understanding among us.

Rajinder Bains characterizes the program this way: "The Dinner Dialogues are not a way of promoting our faith, or defending our faith, or even about comparing faiths, but an opportunity to deepen respect for others as we learn how each of our faiths has been a source of guidance and inspiration."

How do I sign up to participate?

Anyone desiring to register for the Dinner Dialogues may do so now on the web at www.interfaithworkscny.org

To register, or for more information, contact Kim Wolfe at (315) 449-3552, ext. 106, by email at kwolfe@interfaithworkscny.org, or fax (315) 449-3103.

New Staff - New Responsibilities

Melvin Baker is just the right addition to the Community Wide Dialogue (CWD) program as a Program Associate. His involvement in CWD's Central Village Project is also allowing him to return to the community where he grew up. Melvin, a Christian minister, brings a diverse background in community development and organization, having been involved in various community initiatives, including programs at Syracuse University and LeMoyne College.

"Melvin brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the CWD team," says CWD Director Derrick Dorsey. "His community organizing and leadership skills will not only enhance the Central Village Project, but help build bridges of understanding and a stronger sense of community."

Dorine Deapo, who celebrated 30 years employment with InterFaith Works in 2011, has been promoted to Accounting Manager. Dorine served as the Office Manager while also carrying out myriad accounting responsibilities for the last 11 years, and will now focus primarily on accounting duties as the agency's growth requires more full time accounting attention.

Gwen Sanders, who served the CWD program as a Program Assistant for almost three years, has been promoted to Office Manager, filling a position vacated by the InterFaith Works administrative reorganization. Gwen will thrive in her new position, as she was an indispensable and pivotal figure in organizing major CWD projects and programs, including the annual Duck Race and volunteer programs.



Melvin Baker



Dorine Deapo



Gwen Sanders

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.

Tuesday, March 20, 2012
InterFaith Dinner Discussions
Various Volunteer Residences
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 15, 2012
InterFaith Leadership Awards Dinner
SRC Arena & Event Center, OCC Campus
5:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 9, 2012
Duck Race to End Racism
Syracuse Inner Harbor
12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 23, 2012
World Refugee Day
Northside Parade, Hanover Square Festival
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 18, 2012
Senior Companion Volunteer Luncheon
Electronics Parkway Holiday Inn
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

LOOKING AHEAD



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