

Join Us for the 32nd Annual InterFaith Works Leadership Award Dinner

New Lives, New Leaders

Tuesday, May 6, 2014

5:30-9:00 p.m.

**SRC Arena & Event Center at
Onondaga Community College**

Join event Co-Chairs Dominic Robinson and Jonnell Robinson as InterFaith Works pays tribute to ten individuals who arrived in Syracuse as refugees and have built new lives as inspirational leaders in their new community.

InterFaith Works extends sincere thanks to
St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center, Presenting Sponsor for the 32nd Annual ILAD

Each year, the InterFaith Leadership Award is bestowed on a select group of individuals in the Central New York community who have shown extraordinary commitment to service, faith and career. The award is given at the annual InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner (ILAD) event – InterFaith Work's (IFW) largest fundraising event of the year. The 2014 ILAD event will be on Tuesday, May 6, at the SRC Arena & Event Center on the Onondaga Community College campus, from 5:30-9:00 p.m.

2014 marks the 32nd year of the ILAD event - this year's theme is "New Lives, New Leaders." The event will honor the contributions and

accomplishments of ten individuals who arrived in Syracuse as refugees from some of the most distressed regions in the world. Many have overcome unimaginable obstacles to escape

violence or persecution in their home countries. Their stories embody the mission of IFW, and the very essence of the recognition award. IFW will also recognize many of the local institutions,

organizations and agencies that have helped them along the road to success and self-sufficiency, including employers, health-care and educational institutions, and service agencies. Join us as we celebrate and honor these special community members.

For more information, or to purchase tickets, tables, or support the event through sponsorship opportunities, contact Development Director Nora Heaphy at (315) 449-3552, ext. 120, or email nheaphy@interfaithworkscny.org.



Hussein Musa and nine of his refugee constituents will be honored at the 2014 InterFaith Works Leadership Award Dinner

USA: You Start Again



Beth A. Broadway

Syracuse has been a refugee resettlement city for nearly 35 years. Since the early days when the United Nations began its quest to safely settle people who had lost their countries due to war, political repression, and disasters, over 20,000 people have come from all around the globe to start over in Syracuse.

InterFaith Works and Catholic Charities have together been the force behind this extraordinary humanitarian effort that is at the core of all of our faith traditions – to welcome the stranger, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry. Our work as Syracuse's formal resettlement agencies is mirrored in sixty other cities where refugees are welcomed.

Life in a refugee camp can be brutal physically and emotionally. It feels temporary: everything from the canvas walls of your new home to the faint hope that gets dashed again and again, that you will one day be able to return to your homeland, fields, and work.

Life in a new country can also be brutal; with so much to learn, the confusion of a different culture, language, and social structure can overwhelm even the best and brightest human. Confronting Americans who are angry that these strangers are among us, fearing the police, misunderstanding directions and mail from social service agencies, or finding a job that will support a family can cause a refugee's spirit to flag. But no matter how hard it is to make this transition, refugees are categorically grateful to be in the US and motivated to succeed. The safety they feel here is greater than the threat of the past, and they have come here to make a new life for themselves, and especially for their children.

I recently spoke with Krishna, a Bhutanese man who spent 18 years in a refugee camp in Nepal. He fled with his family when the government forced out his ethnic group. He holds a master's degree in human resource management, but now is working as a licensed practical nurse (LPN). I asked him why he didn't go into his former field of work, and he shrugged, "because USA really stands for You Start Again. When I came here, I was ready to do anything." As a refugee, credentials and degrees don't transfer. And so you start again.

Refugees start again in so many ways. The old ways, villages, paths, mountains, and homes are gone, and they will never return. I watch the young refugee teens become Americanized, their clothes and manners of speech ready to adopt the ways of their peers. Yet their parents, many of whom are still learning English, hold them fast to the countries across the ocean, encouraging them to continue to speak the old language, learn the old dances, pray in the old ways. Caught between the lives their parents knew and the lives they know now, they struggle to bloom in this new place.

Our Seeds of Peace program builds a bridge between refugee teens and their American-born peers, teaching respect and dignity, the importance of communication and justice for all. I walk away from every encounter with these young people enriched.

We are thrilled to be honoring ten refugees at our InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner this year for their courage, commitment to community, to faith, and to their budding careers. We could not be happier to have St. Joseph's Hospital as our presenting sponsor, as they are in the center of the life of refugees, providing medical services, jobs, and a new way to start over for so many. We will be honoring our counterparts in this important work, and we think this dinner will be an extraordinary event. We hope you will join us for the festivities this coming spring.

Spring is a time of renewal, a time to start again. For many of us, we are still waiting for spring. For refugees, spring has already come.

- Beth A. Broadway
Executive Director

The Onondaga Citizens' League (OCL) produced *The World at Our Doorstep*, its 2012-2013 study on refugee resettlement in our community. This excellent document can be viewed at the OCL website at www.onondagacitizensleague.org.

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Interfaith Education and Engagement

World Interfaith Harmony Assembly Showcases Local Religious and Cultural Flavor

InterFaith Works (IFW) and Women Transcending Boundaries (WTB) collaborated to present the 4th Annual World Interfaith Harmony Assembly on February 9, at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Liverpool. The event represented the Central New York community's participation in World Interfaith Harmony Week—an initiative formally established in 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Each year, during the first week of February, the UNGA encourages nations and communities across the globe to engage in interreligious dialogue, to spread the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill, and to promote greater acceptance of people of all faith traditions.

Beth A. Broadway, Executive Director of IFW, and Rev. Edith Washington, Vice President of WTB, made introductory remarks, welcoming as many as 400 attendees with great enthusiasm. "Look around to your left, and to your right," said Ms. Broadway. "Here and now, today, as in life, make an effort to seek love and harmony."

Rev. Washington continued, "This is what humanity looks like. Recognize and celebrate our harmony and oneness together. Traditions separate us, but our goals of harmony bring us together."

16 faith and cultural communities participated. The event's theme, the "Golden Rule," supported UNGA's common objective: "Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbor." Participants shared perspectives on their own faith traditions through song, poetry, storytelling, and dance. Local student members of the Syracuse Chapter of Seeds of Peace read the "Golden Rule" as observed and translated through different faith mantras.

The Assembly was capped off by Rev. Dr. Tiffany Steinwert, Dean of Syracuse University's Hendricks Chapel. She announced InterFaith Works Round Table of Faith Leaders' participation in the national SNAP Challenge—held during the week of February 9th-15, 2014.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

Program (SNAP – formerly called Food Stamps) makes a difference in the lives of many, but the benefits received are often too low for families to purchase nutritional foods on a regular basis. Dean Steinwert challenged the audience to join her and other faith leaders in living on the average weekly per-person allotment -- currently \$29.40 per week. "By joining those who participate in the SNAP program for one week, we can not only stand in solidarity with them, but also advocate with them for better, more just policies that adequately address the pervasive plague of hunger in our nation," writes one blogger on the CNY SNAP Challenge website (www.cnysnapchallenge.org). Steinwert also asked attendees to donate the remainder of their typical weekly food budget to a local food pantry or to other organizations working to address hunger in the local community.

IFW and WTB would like to acknowledge the kindness and hospitality of President Marc Clay and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints staff, the hosts, ushers, and attendants. Many thanks for support from the Northside Tops Friendly Markets, and to Dr. Joan Hillsman for her musical accompaniment and inspiration.



The Syracuse University Hillel chorale group Oy Capella performs at the World Interfaith Harmony Assembly celebration.

"This is what humanity looks like. Recognize and celebrate our harmony and oneness together. Traditions separate us, but our goals of harmony bring us together."

- Rev. Edith Washington
Vice President
Women Transcending Boudaries

Many thanks to attendees and participating faith communities:

Sikh Foundation of Syracuse
Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church
Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
Unity of Syracuse
Bhutanese-Nepali Hindu Community
Goddess Path/Wicca
Islamic Society of CNY
Ba'hai Community of Syracuse
Church World Service
Alleluia Choir of Liverpool First United
Methodist Church
Zen Center of Syracuse
Oy Capella of Syracuse University Hillel
The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints
Golden Rule Readers: Syracuse Seeds of Peace

2014 Racial Justice Awards: Youth is Served, and a Former Syracuse Community Catalyst is Honored

Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism

A Latino cheer, acknowledgements in Arabic, Amharic (Ethiopian), Tigrinia (Eritrean), Affar (Djibouti language) and warm hugs welcoming back an old friend were highlights of InterFaith Works (IFW) 2014 Racial Justice Award ceremony, held at Syracuse Stage on January 28. The positive energy was palpable as people of many ages, races, religions and cultures joined together to celebrate efforts to address issues of racial inequality in the Central New York (CNY) community.

The event was organized by IFW's Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism (CWD). The longest running program of its kind in the United States, CWD brings together people from diverse backgrounds to dialogue about race and to build bridges of understanding under the guidance of trained facilitators. Since its inception in 1997, CWD has reached over 8,700 adults and youth in CNY. The program's dialogue guide has been adopted for use by communities across the country.

The annual Racial Justice Award event provides an opportunity to honor individuals who have worked in earnest for racial justice, and to celebrate the local community's continued commitment to racial equity. The crowd of more than 150 were reminded of the power of youth as principals from two local high schools and an IFW staff member presented the Racial Justice Awards in the youth category.

Cimone S. Jordan, a junior at George W. Fowler High School, is highly active in CWD's High School Exchange Program, which brings together students from urban and suburban schools across CNY. Participants visit each other's schools to engage in facilitated dialogue sessions, to break racial and ethnic barriers, and to form friendships across urban/suburban divides. This past year, Fowler High School partnered with Skaneateles High School, and Cimone was an active participant. Cimone has also participated in

Seeds of Peace—a collaboration between CWD and Say Yes to Education, in which 40 American-born and refugee students from Syracuse City School District (SCSD) lodge at the Seeds of Peace International Summer Camp in Otisfield, Maine. While there, youth participants build relationships with peers from different backgrounds and learn how to become catalysts for racial justice in their schools and communities. Cimone attended the Seeds of Peace Summer Camp each of the last two summers, and has worked tirelessly to spread seeds of peace and equality back home in Syracuse.

William Matthews, Principal of the Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central (ITSC), introduced Wilauer Mateo, another honoree in the youth category. Principal Matthews described how Wilauer, a senior in the Media Communications program at ITSC, has inspired him to be a better person. Wilauer is also a Youth Advisor Board Member for the Near Westside Initiative, and has also participated in the Superintendent's Cabinet, the Youth Summit, Nosotros Radio, Inc. Homelessness Awareness Video Project, the Skills USA Competition, and Teen Institute.

Dr. Jose Cossa, IFW's Seeds of Peace Coordinator, presented the final youth award to Ella Kathleen Neville—a senior at Nottingham and an active participant in CWD's Seeds of Peace Program. Ella attended the Seeds of Peace Summer Camp in 2012 and returned as a Peer Support Leader in 2013. She also served as a Peer Facilitator with CWD this past fall and volunteers regularly at Jowonio Pre-School, helping special needs students.

Abdulilah Al-Dubai received the Racial Justice Award in the adult category for helping to address the needs of the local refugee community. He came to the United States as a young adult in 2004. By overcoming early obstacles and adjusting quickly to a new culture, he has been able to give back to the CNY community in numerous ways.

(Racial Justice Awards continued next page)



Rev. Kevin J. Agee



Abdulilah Al-Dubai



Cimone S. Jordan



Wilauer Mateo



Ella Kathleen Neville

Racial Justice Awards Continued

Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism

He serves as volunteer refugee coordinator for the Islamic Society of Central New York. He also co-founded the North Side Learning Center, where he volunteers as the Assistant Director, and serves as a nationality worker at SCSD. Speaking five languages has enabled him to communicate effectively and comfortably with people from many different countries and different cultures. He is a valued community mentor called on regularly by refugees and immigrants alike.

The ceremony culminated with the presentation of a special Catalyst Award to The Reverend Kevin J. Agee, former Pastor of Hopps Memorial CME Church in Syracuse. Award presenter Dr. Shiu-Kai Chin underscored Rev. Agee's tireless commitment to racial justice. "Reverend Agee truly embodies the definition of a catalyst—one who brings about change without being consumed in the process," said Dr. Chin.

Rev. Agee served the community in many capacities during his six-year tenure in CNY. He was President of Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS), Chair of the Clergy Caucus of ACTS, Vice President of the Board of Directors of InterFaith Works, President of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Syracuse & Vicinity and advisor to SCSD Superintendent Sharon Contreras, and Mayor Stephanie Minor. He has been recognized as a Legacy Leader by both the Gamaliel Foundation in Chicago, Illinois, and ACTS for his efforts in congregation based community organizing. He has also received numerous awards for his social justice advocacy. "Everyone and every organization blessed to have been with Pastor Agee is better off because of his efforts, insights, and wisdom." said Dr. Chin.

One Song



Photo: Mike Greenlar - Syracuse.com

Inspiring traditional music selections united attendees at the 2014 World Interfaith Harmony Assembly.

All religions,
all this singing is One song.
The differences are just
illusion and vanity

The sun's light looks
a little different on this wall
than it does on that wall,
and a lot different on
the other one, but
it's still One light

We have borrowed these
clothes, these time and place
personalities from a light,
and when we Praise, we're
pouring them back in.

Rumi – 13th Century
translation by Coleman Banks

Spiritual Care Day: An Inspiring Experience



Spiritual Care Day keynote speaker Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle (center), with Spiritual Care Director Rev. Roberta Yackel (left), and Executive Director Beth A. Broadway

InterFaith Works and Catholic Charities Collaborate on the First Ever Refugee Summit

“We’ve come a long way as a community in developing effective practices for helping newcomers.”

- Beth A. Broadway
Executive Director
InterFaith Works

Spiritual Care Program

Over one hundred clergy, chaplains and caregivers attended the InterFaith Works 23rd Annual Spiritual Care Day event on October 24, 2013. After enjoying breakfast and fellowship, the keynote speaker, Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle, inspired participants to approach dementia care from a spiritual perspective. Participants were reminded that, in spite of appearances, the soul can never be diminished by disease and that connection is always possible.

InterFaith Works’ Spiritual Care Program contracts with chaplains of different faith traditions to provide personal, emotional and spiritual needs to those in acute and long-term care, correctional, and psychiatric facilities. Since its inception, the program has provided support to thousands of individuals in Central New York. The Spiritual Care Program also addresses important life issues through educational events such as the annual Spiritual Care Day and the Chaplains’ Roundtable.

Ms. Hoblitzelle shared her personal experience, offered periods of contemplation and led a lively discussion. She shared discoveries made with her husband Harrison (Hob) as they traveled the road of his progressive dementia together. Both teachers and therapists with many years of Buddhist meditation practice between them, the Hoblitzelles made the decision to approach his diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease through the lens of the Buddhist teachings of mindfulness and compassion. She imparted insights gleaned from their unique journey and gave practical tips to help minister more effectively to persons living with dementia and their caregivers. Her book, *Ten Thousand Joys and Ten Thousand Sorrows*, was available for purchase, and many had their copies signed by the author.

Syracuse Refugee Summit

“If I can survive a civil war in Somalia, I can survive my life in Syracuse,” said Marian Gedow during her presentation at the Refugee Summit held on October 17, 2013 at the Central New York Community Foundation’s Philanthropy Center. The event - the first of its kind in Central New York (CNY) - was co-sponsored by InterFaith Works (IFW) and Catholic Charities of Onondaga County. “We wanted to bring together individuals who have the biggest stake in helping refugees settle into their new lives here in Onondaga County,” said Beth A. Broadway, IFW’s Executive Director. “We also wanted to put a human face on all the statistics. Refugees and those who interact with them have incredible success stories to tell. It’s not all bad news. We’ve come a long way as a community in developing effective practices for helping newcomers.” The event attracted more than 100 attendees including Syracuse City School District (SCSD) personnel, elected officials, service providers, among others.

More than 700 refugees, on average, are resettled in Syracuse each year and an estimated 7000 refugees have made new homes in the City in the last decade. They must learn English, find jobs, adjust to new customs and navigate complicated bureaucracies. “We understand that this large influx of refugees can place a heavy burden on essential services in Syracuse, like schools, public assistance and local law enforcement. We wanted to let people know what to expect. When we know how many new refugees will arrive in the coming year, we can plan together and provide services more effectively,” said Broadway.

Dodie Wheeler, New York State Refugee Coordinator with the Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, delivered the key-note address, providing the audience with details about current and expected refugee resettlement trends at the national and state level. “There are 15 million refugees worldwide. New York State will see approximately 7,000 of these individuals in 2014,” she reported. “Syracuse is second only to Buffalo in the number of refugees it resettles each year. You are truly a model for other cities to follow,” she said enthusiastically.

Wheeler’s address was followed by two presentations from local community members: Marian Gedow arrived as a refugee from Somalia more than 15 years ago. She is one of only 3% of Somali woman fortunate enough to attain post-secondary education in her home country. In 1982, she earned a BA in economics from the Somali National

(Refugee Summit Continued Next Page)

“I now see that every refugee who arrives is a thread in the fabric of who we are as a society.”

- Dan McMahon
AMD Management, LLC



Photos: Mindy Lee Tarry

The annual World Refugee Day in Syracuse celebrates refugee heritage and culture.

About the InterFaith Works Refugee Resettlement Program

The InterFaith Works Center for New Americans Refugee Resettlement Program typically resettles 500-600 new refugees each year, and annually serves an additional 1,200 families who have been in the U.S. for less than 5 years. The largest refugee populations that have resettled in Syracuse since 2010 include Burmese, Iraqi, Bhutanese, and Somalis. The program coordinates and provides initial resettlement activities; develops self-help capacities for resettled populations; and helps to foster understanding and appreciation between refugees and the larger community.

University, and was teaching at the same institution in 1991 when civil war broke out. She tried desperately to stay, but circumstances began to deteriorate. In 1995, she was forced to flee for safety with her mother and children. They eventually made their way to Pakistan, where she served as an advocate for other refugee women before being transplanted to the United States. Gedow's story exemplifies the circuitous route that thousands of refugees often take when fleeing war and conflict in their home countries. Jai Subedi, another presenter at the Summit, was just 12 years old when he was evicted from Burma by a government intent on cleansing the country of ethnic-Nepalese. He crossed over the border into neighboring Nepal, where he spent the next 20 years in a refugee camp before arriving in Syracuse in 2000.

Fifteen years later Gedow is working at the Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement office in Syracuse as a full-time case manager. All four of her children have graduated from college. Subedi holds a full-time position as a translator and case worker with IFW. He owns a small grocery store on the Northside, and bought his first home in 2012. In February, 2014, he celebrated his new status as a U.S. Citizen. Gedow and Subedi represent the thousands of other refugees who have built productive lives in Syracuse, and who are now actively giving back to the community in meaningful ways.

Wheeler also noted that refugee resettlement is often held up as a strong economic development strategy. “However, let’s not forget that resettlement is a humanitarian effort first and foremost. It’s what we do for human beings every day that really matters,” she said. Yet the positive economic development outcomes for the city are hard to ignore. Refugees have indeed helped to stem the drastic decline in population in CNY, and they are stabilizing the local economy in important ways. Rob Didio, Director of Human Resources, and Mehudin Krdzic, Human Resource Specialist with L. & J.G. Stickley Furniture Company in Syracuse, provided strong evidence of this in their presentation. The company has managed to survive years of economic decline in Syracuse, crediting part of this success to their workforce. For years, Didio and his staff have worked closely with IFW and Catholic Charities to place refugees in jobs. As a result, Stickley is one of the top employers for refugees seeking work in CNY. Out of more than 1,000 employees, several hundred are immigrants. “Part of my human experience is to look at the entire world as one small place where, hopefully, all people can coexist, and there is an equal opportunity for all,” said Mrs. Aminy Audi, CEO and Chairman of Stickley, in a video clip shown during the Summit.

Dan McMahon, a local landlord, rounded out the Summit with his own personal testimony. As the owner of residential investment company AMD Management, LLC, McMahon has been renovating and leasing housing stock on the city's Northside for more than 17 years. In 2007, the national mortgage crisis hit his business hard. “In just two weeks the banks turned off the taps. We couldn't access the financing we needed to keep the business rolling,” said McMahon. Business was tough even before the crisis, he notes. “We owned about 80 units. We had a huge turn-over problem, and 50% of the tenants were continuously late with their rent. Many of the units were often vacant and in disrepair.”

At the same time, a large number of Burmese families were arriving in Syracuse from refugee camps in Nepal. IFW and Catholic Charities were eager to partner with trusted and responsible landlords like McMahon who would lease apartments to newcomers. “Since I started to lease homes to refugee families, I have been able to rebuild my business,” said McMahon. “I now own 63 units and only one is currently vacant. My current tenants are never late paying rent. The experience has adjusted my entire view of the landlord-tenant relationship. I now see that every refugee who arrives is a thread in the fabric of who we are as a society. The refugee families I know have a positive influence in the neighborhoods in which they live. They make our city safer and more vibrant for everyone.”

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 - Assists refugee individuals and families in beginning new lives in America, and serves as a resource and cultural center.

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

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

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

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



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Save the Date!

Tuesday, May 6, 2014
InterFaith Works Leadership Award Dinner
SRC Arena & Event Center
5:30-9:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 7, 2014
Duck Race to End Racism
Syracuse Inner Harbor
12:00-4:00 p.m.

LOOKING AHEAD



Affirm Dignity



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