



Volunteer Cynthia Stevenson's newfound companionship with nursing home resident Patricia Masten benefits both.

A refugee family's move to Cazenovia shows that residents of the Madison County community truly welcome refugees.

Cash donations collected by InterFaith Works are turned into gift cards to help refugee families on Syracuse's North Side.

Instead of providing their guests with momentos of their big day, the Shandorfs chose to honor them with a gift to InterFaith Works.



On Common ground

1010 James Street, Syracuse, NY 13203
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FALL / WINTER 2018

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Save the Date — April 30, 2019

InterFaith Works will celebrate our community's visionaries at the InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner (ILAD) to be held on Tuesday, April 30, 2019.

Selected as ILAD honorees for their visionary programs and projects that have enhanced our community are:

- **Mustafa Awayda, MD**, Co-founder of Muslim American Care & Compassion Alliance and the Rahma Health Clinic
- **Sally Curran, Esq.**, Executive Director of Volunteer Lawyers Project of Onondaga County
- **Karin Franklin-King**, Consultant, Journalist and Performer
- **Alan Goldberg, PhD**, Professor Emeritus at Syracuse University School of Education and Director of the Holocaust and Genocide Initiative

- **Vincent Love**, President of 100 Black Men of Syracuse
- **Ed Riley**, Developer and Owner of Marriott Syracuse Downtown
- **Melissa Spicer**, President and CEO of Clear Path for Veterans

We're Celebrating Visionaries

"Our 2019 ILAD honorees embody innovation, courage, confidence, trust-worthiness and devotion," said InterFaith Works' Development Director Denise Jochem-Robertson. "Our honorees see a need and dedicate themselves to doing something about it."

For more information regarding sponsorships, advertising or tickets, call 315-449-3552, ext. 120 or email drobotson@interfaithworkscny.org.

LOOKING AHEAD:

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2019

World Interfaith Harmony Assembly

Southern Missionary Baptist Church
Syracuse, NY
6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019

Racial Justice Awards

Syracuse Stage
Syracuse, NY
Starts at 5:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2019

InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner

SRC Arena, Onondaga Community College
Syracuse, NY
Starts at 5:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2019

Duck Race to End Racism

Inner Harbor
Syracuse, NY
Noon to 4 p.m.

100-Plus Years In the Making

Rooted in Thrift, Doing Social Good, Grimm Family's Gift Sets Example for Others

The story of the Grimm family's gift to InterFaith Works stretches across three generations and more than two lifetimes. The ending hasn't been written yet as the story continues to this day with refugees and others served by InterFaith Works.

At the opening chapter of our story is Norman Grimm, then living in Chicago. Norman put aside 25 cents each week beginning in 1911 while in high school to purchase stock in the company where he was employed stocking supplies. He would work his way up to become vice president of sales. By the 1940s, the company, Pfizer, had grown to become a world leader in the production of penicillin and is now one of the world's largest bio-pharmaceutical companies.

"He continued buying stock his whole life at the company," Michael Grimm said, recalling his grandfather's savings habits. It added up, leaving a small fortune to Michael's father, Robert.

"It was part of his (Robert's) mission to give it all away," said Karen Grimm of her father-in-law and his inheritance.



Robert and Roberta Grimm devoted their lives and resources to their faith community and refugee causes.

Unlike his father, Robert's pursuits were focused outside of business. He believed in supporting justice work, according to Karen, whose own long history of volunteerism includes assisting refugees, leading sewing classes and organizing the giveaway of refurbished bicycles at InterFaith Works.

"Even more than dad, church was very important to mom,"

Michael said, remembering his mother, Roberta, who died in 2017 and outlived her husband, Robert, by eight years. "There were church suppers, and going to church every Sunday was expected. That's what you did if you were one of the Grimms."

Today, Michael owns and operates a landscaping and tree service business in Central New York.

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"Lots of refugees called them grandpa and grandma. They hosted many people in their home over the years."

Despite Times, We Remain Grateful



Beth A. Broadway
President/CEO

Are you feeling the stress of an unstable time? I sure am. As I write this, my heart is full of grief for the Jewish community in Pittsburgh, for the families separated at the border, for the refugees waiting in a pipeline that is

essentially closed and for our nation's future.

But also in my heart, I feel gratitude and amazement at the people that are part of InterFaith Works, many of whom you will meet through this issue of the newsletter. We have never had a more dedicated and active staff, developing new programs and serving large numbers of people.

We have never had more inspiring volunteers who teach English and citizenship preparation, who facilitate courageous dialogues on critical issues, and who care for the needs of frail elderly throughout Central New York. We have never had more dedicated and generous donors who are keeping us in business through the hard times.

These two chambers of my heart are connected. People tell us that they are deeply grateful that this agency is here, a beacon of light and an island of decency to them and the neighbors we serve. In the hard times, our agency gives hope and profound love to many.

Our Mission

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

So I hold on to that and to each of you knowing that we are stressed, yet we are together. We grieve and rejoice in equal measure. We put on our work boots every day to get the job done, and we don't give up. There is much to be grateful for, and we are reminded that the arc of the universe bends towards justice. I would add that it bends towards love.

"Live as though the world can be entrusted to you."

— Wendell Berry

I turn towards writers and thinkers for inspiration, and today I turn to Wendell Berry who exhorts us to "live as though the world can be entrusted to you." This work is a heavy lift. We see a lot of suffering, but we can absorb pain in order to exude calm, love and a way out. I am reminded daily to also turn towards those that are in some way different from me and to embrace my own humanity in a broader and deeper way by embracing that difference. Every dilemma that seems insurmountable lies in the center of our hearts, and when I allow my heart to break for the suffering of the world, it actually just keeps getting bigger and broken open, not more broken.

Thank you for deciding to live as though the world can be entrusted to you. Thank you for caring about "the other" and for embracing the pain and the job that has been given to each of us in equal measure.

Wendell gives us the last word: "I take literally the statement in the Gospel of John that God loves the world. I believe that the world was created and approved by love, that it subsists, coheres, and endures by love, and that, insofar as it is redeemable, it can be redeemed only by love.

"I believe that divine love, incarnate and indwelling in the world, summons the world always toward wholeness, which ultimately is reconciliation and atonement with God." ❧

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Your Legacy Continues Through Our Endowment Fund

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How Do I Make a Gift to the Endowment Fund?

Gifts to the Endowment Fund may be made during your lifetime or planned as part of your estate. There are several ways to make a gift to InterFaith Works' Endowment Fund. These include:

Donating Now: You may provide for the future needs of InterFaith Works by making an outright gift now. Examples include cash gifts made by check, credit card, appreciated stocks, bonds, mutual funds, certificates of deposit and paid-up life insurance.

Pledged Gift: You may make a pledge now to the Endowment Fund and fulfill it over a specified period of time.

Planned Gift: You may make a gift to the Endowment Fund as part of your estate plan. Planned gifts are often attractive because they do not impact your current standard of living, and may permit you to make a larger gift than what was possible during your life. Examples of planned gifts include a bequest in your will (e.g., a specific amount or a percentage of your estate), as well as designating the agency as a

beneficiary on a life insurance policy or a retirement plan (including IRAs, 403(b) and 401(k) accounts).

What if I Have Already Designated InterFaith Works in My Estate Plan?

If you have already included the agency in your will, trust, life insurance or other type of estate plan, please let us know. We'd like to thank you.

A gift to the InterFaith Works' Endowment Fund will help meet the future needs of the agency and those it serves.

Who Should I Contact to Make a Gift or for More Information?

If you would like to receive more detailed information about the Endowment Fund or how you can participate, please contact:

InterFaith Works of CNY
Attn: Denise Jochem-Robertson
Director of Development
1010 James St, Syracuse, NY 13203
Call or email:
315-449-3553, ext. 120
drobertson@interfaithworkscny.org

InterFaith Works staff and professionals at the Central New York Community Foundation are available to discuss the ways you may make a gift to the Endowment Fund now or create a planned gift that will benefit the agency in the future while continuing to meet your current financial goals. As with any financial decision, please consult your professional advisors to discuss what type of gift is best for you. ❧

Off to a Great Start

We thank the following individuals for their support of the Endowment Fund. Gifts to the fund also may be made in honor of or in memory of someone special:

- Ellen M. Broadway
- Roberta J. Grimm Charitable Trust
- Madalyn Smith

If you prefer to remain anonymous in your giving, we would be pleased to honor your wishes.

Cazenovia

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community by sponsoring public forums at the local library, the VFW, and Cazenovia College. Former refugees spoke at the forums.

"What we're about is creating a sense of community," Cargo explained as mattresses, furniture and other household items were carried up a staircase to the second-floor bedrooms.

During a break on moving day, Rzgar Othman expressed his appreciation for *Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees* and said InterFaith Works' Center for New Americans was instrumental to his family's resettlement, helping to complete immigration documentation, find housing and secure employment.



Rasan Othman settles in at her new home.

In August, he was hired for a job in Cazenovia, only six minutes away from his new home.

"Everybody should be able to live in the home (country) they're born in," he said, "but what makes you a refugee is the system and regime that work in

those countries. Once you get a chance for leaving and your kids being safe, (you come to) America. Yes, once they tell you you're welcome to the United States and you can get into that great country, the greatest country in the world, you will be so proud."

Editor's Note: The family's story and the help they received from Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees have earned wider attention with a published story in Congregational Development, a publication of the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York. To read the full story, go to <https://bit.ly/2qD5PHu>. ❧

2018 Honorary, Memorial Gifts

Honorary

In honor of Jim Brule, the Rev. Jim Kerr-Whitt and Mohamed Khater
Plymouth Congregational Church/
United Church of Christ

In honor of Daryl Files
Helen Clancy

In honor of Cara and Joe Steiner
Rose Cregg
Gloria & Scott Manuel
Norma Sjoblom

Memorial

In memory of John D. Brule
Cathy Dutch & the Rev. William
Redfield

In memory of Barbara Kiernan
Drs. Lois & Ted Schroeder

In memory of Nona Stewart
Cazenovia College Visual
Communications Department

Patricia Delledera
Joanna Donahoe
Fayetteville-Manlius High School
Building Association

Virginia Frey
Phyllis Fye
Patricia & Peter Garner-Richards

Margo & Don Kotten
Edward Luban
M. Kathleen Lynn

Denise Mahns
Martha & Donald Nicholas
Mary & William Padgett

Anne Redfern
Marguerite Ross
Hollis Strong

Peggy West

In memory of Peggy West
Gail & Dennis Baldwin
Carolyn Blakely

Lucille & John Conway
Mary Anne Cramer
Cheryl & David Gandino

Nancy Glenn
Judith Grabau
Lisa Hafner

Ola & John Hoover
Jodi Jones
Melissa Kardish & Lowell West

Chrissy & Kerry Lynch
Joan Markle
Joyce Moore

Lois & Myron Schaffer
Mary & Charles Smith
Katherine Stewart

Lesa Worsham



Following their wedding, Patrick and Kate Shandorf made a gift to InterFaith Works. "I consider Kate to be a kind, loving person who always puts the interests of others above her own," said Patrick Shandorf, "and I like to think that I try my best to do the same."

Newlyweds' Gift Benefits Agency

One of life's happiest occasions is a wedding, and Patrick and Kate Shandorf decided to share their joy with InterFaith Works. The newlyweds made a donation to the agency in honor of their wedding guests.

"As we went through the long planning process, it became clear that instead of spending money on mementos for our guests, we preferred to do something that could actually have a meaningful and useful impact," explained Patrick Shandorf when InterFaith Works reached out to thank the couple.

Shandorf said he was first inspired as a child to do something in meeting the needs of refugees by Kathleen Kelly, a family friend who worked tirelessly to help bring peace to Northern Ireland through Project Children. In his teenage years and through young adulthood, he watched as his sister got involved in Catholic Charities by working at after-school programs with young children, many of whom were refugees from around the world. His home parish, St. Vincent de Paul Church, was a hub of refugee resettlement activity in those days. It was here that Shandorf admired another family friend, Carl Oropallo, who spent countless hours helping hundreds of refugees resettle in Syracuse and become acclimated to a new life far away from home.

"Being exposed to all of this helped give me great perspective, enhancing my worldview beyond my insulated bubble," he explained.

Shandorf says that he had been familiar with InterFaith Works for a number of years, and in making the decision to donate, "I felt that now, more than ever, the work being done by your organization is critical to helping break down certain barriers and divides that have come about from the endless rhetoric, misinformation and outright hatred from certain individuals and organizations.

"I've always believed that we as humans are prone to fear the unknown, and different religions, different cultures, and different ways of life can be intimidating or frightening to someone who is uninformed. By developing programs specifically identifying and addressing these misunderstandings, organizations like InterFaith Works are, in my opinion, our best hope for creating and maintaining a more accepting and peaceful world."

InterFaith Works is grateful for and inspired by those who support its mission with their gifts of time, talent and treasure. On behalf of all those we serve, we thank the Shandorfs and wish them every blessing in their lives together. ❧

Grimm Family Gift

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Robert, who served in the Navy during World War II, met Roberta Pauline Johnson at Denison University in Ohio. Bob and "Bobbie" would go on to raise a family with six children. (Son Michael and daughter Leslie Grimm Archer are the only two of the six still living in the Syracuse area.)

Robert graduated from Colgate Rochester Divinity School and became pastor of his first church in South Dakota. He soon chose to focus his career on interdenominational and ecumenical ministry, serving as executive of the South Dakota State Council of Churches and then the Council of Churches in Erie, Pa. Robert's ministry continued in Syracuse from 1965 to 1976 and finally in Buffalo from 1976 until his retirement in the 1990s. The organization that Robert served in Syracuse was first called the Syracuse Area Council of Churches, then became the Syracuse Area Interreligious Council, which was the direct predecessor to InterFaith Works.



Michael and Karen Grimm in the backyard at their home in Lafayette.

"They traveled a lot during those years," Michael said of his mother and father, explaining their travel was mostly connected to religious gatherings. Though they traveled throughout the U.S., the Grimms also visited Palestine and Israel, as well as South Africa and Zimbabwe, and developed an interest in the plight of refugees.

What's Your Legacy?

InterFaith Works Establishes New Endowment Fund

"A man has made at least a start on discovering the meaning of human life when he plants shade trees under which he knows full well he will never sit." – D. Elton Trueblood

The Grimm family's generous gift to the InterFaith Works' Endowment Fund (see the article on page 1) will fulfill their wish of providing for the agency and supporting its mission for many years to come.

Every day, InterFaith Works affirms the dignity of each person and every faith community and builds bridges of understanding. By partnering with those who share these values, we—and

you—can secure the future of the agency for years and for generations.

Why Has InterFaith Works Established an Endowment Fund?

The agency has created an Endowment Fund to help ensure it has the financial resources to meet its needs years and even decades from now.

What Is an Endowment Fund?

InterFaith Works' Endowment Fund is a permanent fund that provides for the future needs of the agency and those it serves. Gifts to the fund are invested for growth and a portion of the fund may be used to sustain the agency's programs or to fund new programs or projects as the need arises.

While a donor may contribute a gift to the agency for immediate use (such as a donation to the year-end appeal),

"Lots of refugees called them grandpa and grandma," Karen Grimm said of her in-laws. "They hosted many people in their home over the years."

In their later years, Robert and Roberta Grimm would establish a charitable trust managed by the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo. After their passing, the proceeds would benefit the organizations they supported. A portion of those funds were bequeathed to InterFaith Works of Central New York.

The gift from the Roberta J. Grimm Charitable Trust is serving several purposes. The vast majority is directed at the agency's Endowment Fund (see article on page 3). A portion is helping InterFaith Works' Center for New Americans meet the immediate needs of refugees served by the agency. And, a smaller amount was added to the principal of the Nona Stewart Fund for Refugees held at the Central New York Community Foundation.

"Dad always said he was going to give all the money away so we wouldn't be bothered," Karen fondly recalled. "He used to say that all the time." ❧

a gift designated to the Endowment Fund is an investment in the agency's future.

The Central New York Community Foundation was selected to hold the fund, invest the fund's assets for growth and provide its experienced staff who are available to assist those making gifts to InterFaith Works' Endowment Fund, if requested. The Central New York Community Foundation, established in 1927, serves as a permanent community endowment for the betterment of Central New York and is the largest charitable foundation in the region.

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Connections With the Elderly Made One to One

By Brianna Delaney
Colgate University intern

Nearly 50 percent of older adults living in nursing homes experience depression. One to One, InterFaith Works' newest volunteer program, is growing to bring joy and rekindle a sense of connection among the elderly in Onondaga County's nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

One to One was created by the agency's Senior Services office, working with local elder care facilities, to begin serving some of the estimated 2,800 long-term care residents at risk of isolation in the Syracuse area. The program matches nursing home residents who have no regular visitors with volunteers for personalized weekly visits.

According to staff at The Nottingham, a senior living community in Jamesville and a pilot site for One to One, the program has been a valuable resource for residents. "As we grow older, we lose our support systems and many of the family and friends that are integral to our lives," explained Kara Gemmill, director of Lifestyles.

"Elderly people are at risk of becoming socially isolated, and that isolation often leads to depression and anxiety. We can really see a difference when people are connected, even if it is for just an hour or two each week."



Volunteers like Cynthia Stevenson, left, (seen here with Patricia Masten) are especially needed to meet the demands of InterFaith Works' One to One program.

Cynthia Stevenson can gladly attest to the program's benefits. She has served as a One to One volunteer for more than a year. Every Friday afternoon, she visits Patricia Masten at her apartment in The Nottingham. Masten is in her late 90s and her family no longer lives in the area, so Stevenson is one of her only regular visitors. The pair usually spend their time together reading and chatting.

"I truly look forward to my visits with her every week," Stevenson said. "She's very bright, so we have long

conversations about the news, her past as a community leader, our travel experiences. We've become good-friends. She's really enriched my life and brought me joy."

When it comes to Masten, the feeling is mutual. Stevenson says that each time she calls to ask Masten if she'd like a visit that week, her response is always the same: "Oh, I would love that!"

Masten said when The Nottingham staff asked if she'd like to participate in the program, she was excited.

"It sounded like a good idea," she remembered. "I look forward to Cynthia's visits each week."

As the program expands, One to One is seeking additional volunteers interested in dedicating at least one hour each week to visiting a nursing home or long-term care resident. All participants attend a pre-service training session.

"It's not the kind of commitment that demands a lot of a person," Stevenson said. "You just need an open heart."

For more information about the One to One program or to volunteer, email Senior Services Coordinator Toma Tracy at ttracy@interfaithworkscny.org or call her at 315-449-3552, ext. 203. ❧

Thank You

We thank the following foundations for their recent support of InterFaith Works' programs:

Central New York Community Foundation Carriage House Foundation Fund: \$19,956 to support the capture and analysis of data to identify triggers (e.g., aging) that contribute to homelessness in order to help to maintain refugees' housing stability

The Health Foundation for Western and Central New York: \$93,000 to support new programming to address the needs of refugee seniors and their caregivers

J.M. McDonald Foundation: \$10,000 to support the purchase and renovation of a home for refugees with short-term, special housing needs

The Dorothy and Marshall M. Reisman Foundation: \$15,000 and The Jewish Federation of Central New York: \$2,000 for the One to One Program, which trains volunteers to provide friendship and support to isolated nursing home residents who have no regular visitors

Women's Fund of CNY: \$7,500 to support Thrive, a new support group for refugee women who experience domestic abuse ❧

Grocery Chain's Gift Cards Help Refugee Families

by Jeff Kramer

A \$50 gift card won't reunite a refugee with family members back home. Nor will it overcome the linguistic and cultural challenges that confront new Americans. But for the handful of people beating the political odds and fleeing chaotic homelands for new lives in Syracuse, a monthly gift card means more than a few extra items in their shopping basket. It's a sign someone cares—even if it's someone they've never met.

"They (the cards) come from someone who is kind and wants to help," said Abdul Manan Azizi, 27, a Syracuse Lyft driver and father of three who worked in Afghanistan as a translator with the U.S. military. "I really appreciate the people who are doing this."

An average of 10 InterFaith Works-sponsored refugee families have been receiving the monthly gift cards since May 2017. Credit InterFaith Works' volunteer coordinator Daryl Files for moving quickly when she spotted an opportunity. Family-to-Family, a downstate hunger-relief non-profit group, started offering gift cards to struggling refugees, and Files wasted no time reaching out.

"I've always believed the early bird gets the worm," she said.

Family-to-Family was already providing gift cards and other services to hard-pressed native-born families, and continues to do so. But as anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies became the norm in Washington, the group's leaders felt an urgency to act. "Based on what was going on politically, that was part of it," founder and executive director Pam Koner said.

Regardless of recipients' country of origin, the Hastings-on-Hudson-based organization keeps its mission simple: Connect families that are able to help with families who have nearly nothing. To help create a bond that goes beyond writing a check, donors receive information about the client family such as first names and last initials, birthdays of children and hobbies/interests, as well as the family's general location. Donor



Yusleydis Torrez Gonzalez and her son, Rodriquez Segura, show off a gift card they will use at a TOPS Friendly Markets store on the North Side of Syracuse.

"We get upset at the silliest stuff and then you hear stories from these people. The dad goes hunting for a week and comes home with enough food for a few days—and he doesn't get to eat."

— TOPS Store Manager Ed Walker

families can also send extras such as holiday packages or children's books.

"There's nothing generic about it," said Nancy Hennessee, Family-to-Family program director. "It's one-on-one."

The program works a little differently at InterFaith Works due to the agency's strong relationship with the TOPS Friendly Markets' Pond Street store on Syracuse's North Side where many new immigrants reside. Instead of immigrants receiving gift cards directly from Family-to-Family, InterFaith Works accepts the cash equivalent and converts the money into \$50 TOPS gift cards, which are then distributed to InterFaith Works' clients on an as-needed basis. Ed Walker, manager of the Pond Street TOPS store, is used to seeing new

Americans strolling the aisles, some of them still adjusting to the packaging and abundance of a modern supermarket. He said new immigrants, some of whom end up working at the store, never complain and help him keep things in perspective.

"We get upset at the silliest stuff and then you hear stories from these people. The dad goes hunting for a week and comes home with enough food for a few days—and he doesn't get to eat."

The gift cards help families make ends meet by filling in the gaps created by restrictions on food stamps, which cannot be used for many nonfood and prepared food items. But they're also a psychological boost. Many new arrivals bring with them an intense work ethic and a reluctance to accept government assistance. The cards are more palatable that way. After all, they're a gift.

Manan Azizi, the Lyft driver, credits the \$50 monthly influx with allowing his family to purchase shampoo and diapers and for easing the burden of unexpected expenditures.

"I want to be self-sufficient, but at the beginning it's going to be difficult for us," he said.

Locally, gift card philanthropy seems to be catching on. Donations of gift cards to InterFaith Works have come from the Refugee Club at Jamesville-DeWitt High School, Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church and Trinity Episcopal Church, among others. Those connections are precious to InterFaith Works, and now the center has a new ally outside of Central New York.

"It's a new relationship," Files said of Family-to-Family. "It shows a collaboration."

To learn more about Family-to-Family and InterFaith Works of Central New York, visit www.family-to-family.org and www.interfaithworkscny.org.

Jeff Kramer, a former newspaper journalist and humor columnist, currently volunteers as an English instructor for InterFaith Works of Central New York's Center for New Americans. ❧

Volunteer Jeff Kramer: A Man of Written, Now Spoken Words

Seventy-two hours ago, Jeff Kramer was near the end of a family vacation to the Galapagos Islands, a treasured place on planet Earth made famous by Charles Darwin as the inspiration for his theory of evolution. Kramer's nine-day stay in one of the world's most diverse biological eco-systems had left him full of stories to tell. There were the giant tortoises, iguanas, sea creatures and birds of all sorts on display. Penguins, too. And after all, his prior career as a journalist, playwright and columnist makes him more than able to talk and write about them. But that would mostly have to wait for another day.

Kramer, a bear of a man who played football in college, appeared unfazed with no apparent ill-effects from jet lag. He jokingly credited 18 hours of sleep during the long return trip to Syracuse for his rested look. Now, two days after his arrival, he was back in the office of InterFaith Works, volunteering his time as he does twice a week teaching English to refugees and other immigrants for the agency's Center for New Americans.

"I come from an immigrant experience," he said, in explaining why he volunteers. "My dad fled Nazi Germany with his parents when he was 12 years old. In some ways, it's an exceptional story. And in other ways, it makes him like every other American, other than Native Americans."

Another part of his motivation to volunteer, he recalls, was the 2016 elections.

"I felt this president has attacked American values on all fronts. So I



Jeff Kramer prefers a one-on-one approach to teaching English.

asked myself, 'what front was most important to me?' As I thought about it, immigrants. I consider them not an evil, but a source of incredible good, incredible strength. I feel like immigration has given us a leg up over other countries economically, competitively and culturally."

Olive Sephuma is director of the Center for New Americans. She said the center is always seeking role models and mentors to work with and provide companionship to new American families.

"This allows us to not only teach new American families about U.S. culture, laws and how to navigate through life in the U.S., but also show them through actions and examples," Sephuma said. "Jeff has been this ambassador, giving invaluable time, companionship and support to help new Americans thrive. We are grateful for his service and are proud to have a role model like him."

Yeison Gomez arrived in the United States from his native Columbia in February speaking virtually no English. Almost immediately upon landing in Syracuse, he enrolled in an English as a Second Language class held at InterFaith Works, where he met Kramer. Gomez recalled that even though Kramer was an instructor and didn't know him very well, he would drive the young man to class over the next four months. At first, when they conversed Gomez did not understand Kramer at all because he would only speak to him in English.

"He trained in English, always," Gomez said, "because he wanted to teach English, not Spanish. When I didn't understand something, he taught me in whatever ways that worked. He tried again and again until I understood all the words he was saying." Today, Gomez credits Kramer and the InterFaith Works' classes for building his English skills to the point he was able to secure a new job at a pharmacy warehouse here in his newly adopted country.

In his 20s, Kramer lived a year in the Basque region of Spain where he found a job teaching English. He developed an appreciation there on how difficult it is to be in another land where you don't speak the language. His strength as an English instructor, he said, is working one-on-one with people who have "some" level of English.

Interested in becoming an InterFaith Works volunteer? Call Daryl Files at 315-449-3552, ext. 208 or email her at dfiles@interfaithworkscny.org. ✉

Community, InterFaith Works Help Refugee Family Move to Cazenovia

Cazenovia's tranquil, small town pace of life evokes a time from another era. Big selling points are its small shops and historic buildings nestled alongside its namesake picturesque lake. But make no mistake, the people that comprise the tapestry of this Madison County community and call it home are growing. It's a process that's transforming a community fueled by the welcoming spirit of a group of residents of different ages, faiths, and business and professional backgrounds that banded together two years ago under a coalition called *Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees*.

On a warm day in late July, a dozen volunteers from the group helped a family move to Cazenovia. The first step in their move actually began thousands of miles away in Iraq, where the family's father served as an interpreter for the U.S. Army. The family was allowed entry to the U.S. on a special immigration visa for refugees who assisted the U.S. military.

"This is going to be the best birthday, ever," Rasan Othman quipped as her mother, Ivan Mohammed Ameen, and father Rzzgar Othman carried boxes, while younger sisters Rinad and Iman scurried about amid the commotion. Rasan turned 9 in late-September. She had spent months dreaming of the big day in her new home at the "the manse," which the family is renting from the First Presbyterian Church located next door. When asked why her ninth birthday was to be so grand, she simply said, "because we're here."

Scenes like the Othman family resettlement in Cazenovia have been severely reduced around the U.S. because of the federal government's severe limits on legal immigration and refugee entry into the United States. In this fiscal year, the Administration capped refugee admissions to the U.S. at 30,000, the lowest in the history of the nation's refugee resettlement program.

This impact is playing out closer to home: InterFaith Works, which provided the truck and driver that helped

The Othman family received more than a hand from InterFaith Works and members of the group Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees in completing the move to a new home in the Village of Cazenovia. They received a new start.



load the vehicle in Syracuse for the Othman family, resettled just two refugees in July and six in August. During the same two months just one year ago, the agency resettled nearly 100 people.

"In these hard times for refugees all around the world, *Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees* has given hope to not only the Othman family, but to all of us who work with refugees," said Beth Broadway, who is president and CEO of Syracuse-based InterFaith Works and a resident of Cazenovia.

"Seeing this community come together across faith traditions, civic organizations and educational institutions in such a powerful way has renewed our agency's staff. CWR not only settled a family; they are moving the minds and hearts of a whole community towards compassion, service and openness. We look forward to many years of working together with this coalition and

share the family's appreciation for all involved," said Broadway, who is also a member of the CWR coalition.

The move to the manse, erected in 1870 and the former home of the church pastor, took place on a busy morning as First Presbyterian hosted a marriage ceremony and the village's weekly farmers' market attracted visitors across the street. Caroline Cargo and Cindy Sutton are co-facilitators for *Cazenovia Welcomes Refugees*. According to Cargo, the Othman family's move to the manse was the result of months of planning, a partnership with InterFaith Works and was not a one-time event for the community-based initiative.

"This is the start of building a community here of new Americans," she said, adding the group had spent a year educating and preparing the Cazenovia

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Program Puts U.S. Citizenship Within Reach

Nearly 60 aspiring American citizens have signed up since March for classes offered by InterFaith Works' Center for New Americans. *Path to Citizenship*, one of the center's newest programs, helps current and former refugees prepare and meet the requirements for becoming a naturalized American citizen.

Classes are provided over several months at InterFaith Works' James Street office.

The program is funded by a grant from U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services. For details, call Silvana Rowe at 315-449-3552, ext. 209 or email her at srowe@interfaithworkscny.org. ✉



El-Hindi Center for Dialogue Earns National Honors

InterFaith Works of Central New York's Ahmad and Elizabeth El-Hindi Center for Dialogue was honored Oct. 18 in Washington, D.C. as a winner of the 2018 American Civic Collaboration awards or Civvys.

The center tied for first in the Local Category and was noted for its work in a variety of programs, most notably the Police-Community Dialogues, an initiative bridging the gap in understanding between the Syracuse Police Department and local community.

Event hosts—Bridge Alliance Education Fund, Big Tent Nation and the National Conference on Citizenship— noted the dialogues organized by the El-Hindi Center for having an immediate and lasting impact that presents a model for other communities to follow.

“Our work in leading deliberative dialogue for four decades has given our community and the people of our



El-Hindi Center for Dialogue Director Peter Willner, second from left, and InterFaith Works President/CEO Beth A. Broadway, second from right, accept the Civvys Award.

region the opportunity to find common ground in polarizing times,” said

Beth A. Broadway, InterFaith Works president and CEO. ❧

The 28th annual event provided disaster guidance to local spiritual caregivers.



Spiritual Care Day 2018

More than 90 chaplains, ordained clergy and congregational lay leaders recently received a healthy dose of insight and advice in meeting the complexities of serving as spiritual caregivers during a disaster. The 28th Annual Spiritual Care Day, organized by InterFaith Works and held at Crouse Hospital's Marley Education Center, was presented on Oct. 25 with the theme of *Engaging Chaplains & Faith Leaders in Resilience and Crisis Response*.

“We want to equip our faith leaders with the tools to work with first responders and take a holistic approach to helping victims either in their own faith communities

or in other places where trauma occurs,” explained the Rev. Gracious Moyo, director of InterFaith Works' Interfaith Initiatives.

Attendees participated in a panel discussion and workshops, preparing themselves and their faith communities for a disaster. They also heard from keynote speaker Peter Gudaitis, president of the National Disaster Interfaith Network and executive director and CEO of New York Disaster Interfaith Services. Gudaitis provided information on training resources and best practices for spiritual caregivers. View an excerpt of his presentation on InterFaith Works' YouTube channel. ❧

70½ or Older?

Support InterFaith Works, Reduce Taxable Income With Qualified Charitable Distribution

If you're 70 ½ years or older, you may want to consider making your year-end donation to InterFaith Works using a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from your individual retirement account (IRA).

A qualified charitable distribution is made directly from your IRA and counts toward the required minimum distribution (RMD) that is required when the IRA owner turns 70 ½ years of age.

“Many people will no longer be able to take a tax deduction for their charitable contributions due to the increased standard deduction mandated by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act,” said Joe Lazzaro, a certified financial planner with CenterBridge Planning Group and member of InterFaith Works' board of directors. “For those with an individual retirement account who are over the age of 70 and a half, donating their required minimum distribution directly to a 501(c)(3) charity is an easy solution. Those with 401(k), 403(b) or deferred compensation plan may also be eligible.”

By making a qualified charitable distribution, the required minimum

distribution is not included in the gross income of the IRA owner, unlike regular withdrawals from an IRA. Many IRAs are eligible for qualified charitable distributions, including traditional, rollover and inherited.

Please note that a qualified charitable distribution must occur as a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian to InterFaith Works. The IRA custodian may also provide you with a check that is made payable to InterFaith Works, and you may give that check to the agency. However, if you receive a distribution from your IRA and later make a contribution to charity, that contribution does not count as a qualified charitable distribution.

For a qualified charitable distribution to count toward the current year's required minimum distribution, the funds must come out of your IRA by the required minimum distribution date of Dec. 31, 2018. Qualified charitable distributions are limited to no more than \$100,000 annually per taxpayer.

A qualified charitable distribution is one of the easiest and most beneficial ways to donate to InterFaith Works. If you are interested in making a qualified charitable distribution, please consult your IRA custodian. InterFaith Works' Development Office may be reached at 315-449-3552, ext. 120 or drobertson@interfaithworkscny.org. ❧

Sowing Seeds of Peace

Lara Shqair was among 30 high school students who attended Seeds of Peace Camp this summer in Otisfield, Maine. Seeds of Peace is a non-profit, leadership development organization cultivating new generations of global leaders in communities divided by conflict.

Locally, the program promotes cross-cultural understanding and conflict resolution and is supported through a partnership of InterFaith Works' El-Hindi Center for Dialogue, Syracuse City School District and Onondaga County.



Shqair, top, at Seeds of Peace Camp.

Read about Shqair's Seeds of Peace experience in InterFaith Works' Year-End Appeal letter, which arrives in your mailbox this month. ❧

Congratulations

Mariam Rufai, left, formerly of Somalia, and Rabija Adem, formerly of Ethiopia, were among 47 immigrants from 24 countries to be sworn in as new American citizens during a naturalization ceremony held in downtown Syracuse at the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York in August.

They were the first graduates of the InterFaith Works Center for New Americans' “Path to Citizenship” program to become naturalized citizens. (See the related story on page 8.)

