



**InterFaith Leadership  
Award Dinner (ILAD)**

Thursday, September 9, 2021  
SRC Arena and Events Center

*"What are the American ideals? They are the development of the individual for his own and the common good; the development of the individual through liberty; and the attainment of the common good through democracy and social justice." – Louis D. Brandeis, Supreme Court Justice (1916 – 1939)*

“Where, after all, do universal  
human rights begin?”  
In small places, close to home...”

– ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

The Stickley team congratulates  
**InterFaith Works** on 45 years of  
commitment to our community  
and its people!

Congratulations and thanks to:

**Dan Cummings**

**Imam Mohammed EIFiki**

**Pastor Daren C. Jaime**

**The Honorable Van Robinson and  
Linda Brown-Robinson**

**Elaine Rubenstein**

**The Honorable James Tormey** (*posthumous*)

**The Honorable Ben Walsh**



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# 2021 InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner



## Welcome

Karin Franklin-King, *Tonight's Emcee*

## Procession of Agency Leadership, Faith Leaders, Honorary Event Co-Chairs and Tonight's Honorees

### Opening Prayer

The Most Rev. Douglas J. Lucia, *Bishop, Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse*

## Welcome

Maryam El-Hindi Wasmund Paul Wasmund

*Event Presenting Sponsor: The Mark and Maryam Wasmund Family*

Casey Johnson, Esq., *Chair, InterFaith Works Board of Directors*

## President's Message

Beth A. Broadway, *InterFaith Works' President/CEO*

## Dinner

### Tribute Video

### Award Presentations

Maryam El-Hindi Wasmund

Paul Wasmund

Beth A. Broadway

Casey Johnson

### Our 2021 Honorees

#### Dan Cummings

The Most Rev. Douglas J. Lucia, Bishop,  
*Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, presenting*

#### Imam Mohammed ElFiki

Dr. Baljinder Singh,  
*Sikh Foundation of Syracuse, presenting*

#### Pastor Daren C. Jaime

Alberto Bianchetti, *National Grid, presenting*

#### The Hon. Van Robinson and Linda Brown-Robinson

Bishop Colette Matthews-Carter, *NAACP, presenting*

#### Elaine Rubenstein

Michael Balanoff, *Jewish Federation of CNY and  
The Jewish Community Foundation of CNY, presenting*

#### The Hon. James Tormey—accepted by Susan Tormey

William Byrne, *presenting*

#### The Hon. Ben Walsh

Aminy Audi, *Stickley Furniture | Mattress, presenting*

### Remarks on Behalf of Honorees

Pastor Daren C. Jaime

#### "Hold on to Love"

The Rev. Max Jones

Dr. Joan Hillsman

Philip Rose

The Rev. Dr. Peter Shidemantle

The Rev. Phil Turner

### Closing Prayer

Madalyn Smith, *Rangrig Yeshe, Dzogchen Ati Ling Center*

### 2021 InterFaith Leadership Award Honorees



#### Dan Cummings

##### **News Anchor, NewsChannel 9**

Broadcast journalist Dan Cummings came to Central New York in 1977 as a young reporter, and is now managing editor, co-anchor and reporter on WSYR's The Morning News and noon news. He also can be seen every week on Newsmakers with Dan Cummings, NewsChannel 9's weekly public affairs program.

Cummings is a long-time friend of InterFaith Works, having participated in dialogues, often lending his voice to the agency over the years both as a reporter telling the story of the organization, and narrating numerous videos produced by the agency. "I've admired the work of the organization and stayed close to its mission knowing what it does for this community in terms of fostering ecumenical growth," he says.

He values the agency's core mission of affirming the dignity of all people and faith traditions. "Affirming dignity means saying 'yes.' It means that you say yes to the fact, in any faith tradition, that we are all born in the image and likeness of our creator and the spark of divinity is within all of us."

Cummings believes that journalism has an important role to play in creating the informed electorate that makes democracy in action possible. "I'm a local news guy," he says. "Research shows that there is more trust in local news than national news at this time, and we need to work to preserve that trust, not only by covering the episodic events but also by providing information that the electorate needs to be informed. We need to give people the information to make solid, sound judgments about where they can get involved, and make the decisions in their own lives to preserve and protect our democracy."

He sees journalism as a sacred trust. "The stories we choose to tell every day need to have the broadest possible impact of good and truthful information. It's difficult in this digital age to go deep enough in any one area so that people can be informed, but we keep trying."

Cummings continues to do that job with dedication and integrity. In 2013, he was honored with a regional Edward R. Murrow Award for best news documentary for "Saints Among Us," which told the stories of newly canonized Saints Marianne Cope and Kateri Tekakwitha, women with deep roots in Central and Upstate New York. The New York State Broadcasters Association has twice given Cummings the "Best Documentary" award for his reporting on Syracuse Honor Flight, telling the stories of veterans as they visit the monuments in Washington honoring their service to America.

He has been honored twice with the Syracuse Press Club's Professional Standards Award, and in 2018 was named to the Press Club's Wall of Distinction, along with numerous other awards during his 44 years in radio and television news around Central New York.

Receiving the InterFaith Leadership Award is deeply meaningful to Dan Cummings. "It leaves me almost speechless. To think that they have included me on a list of honorees who have done so much in this community is one of the greatest things that has ever happened to me. It means that an organization that I have admired so much thinks that my work means something too. And that's just awesome."

*"We need to give people the information to make solid, sound judgments about where they can get involved, and make the decisions in their own lives to preserve and protect our democracy."*

*Dan Cummings*



*"If I think about the cornerstone of our democracy, it is elections. Everybody should vote, everybody's vote should count and everyone should be heard."*

*Imam Mohammed ElFiki*

## Imam Mohammed ElFiki

***Imam, Islamic Society of Central New York  
Member, InterFaith Works Round Table of Faith Leaders***

Mohammed ElFiki arrived in Syracuse in January 2017 to serve as the Imam of the Islamic Society of Central New York. Shortly after his arrival, Executive Order 13769, aka the Muslim Ban, went into effect across the United States. On that day, tens of thousands of Americans protested in airports across the country, including Syracuse Hancock International.

"I was advised by some to keep a low profile," Imam ElFiki recalls. "'You don't have to go,' they said. But if faith leaders keep a low profile, then we shouldn't ask others to stand up for what they believe is right."

So, he went to the airport and joined the protest, even stepping up to the microphone to address the crowd. "I couldn't resist the urge to say something, mainly thanking them because if I'm not mistaken, 99 percent of those who were protesting were not going to be affected in any way by the decision. They were just standing up to declare that they believe that it's not right, and they were there to support people whom they didn't know. It was amazing."

This experience set the tone for Imam ElFiki's sermons in his first months at the Islamic Society.

"I could see and sense the fear in my community, and that was something not to be ignored or taken lightly. My first sermon was to tell my community that the ban shouldn't take away from their dignity and honor. Second, I said, we shouldn't be afraid because we are in a country where law is respected and people are equal before the law. Finally, I told them, we are in a country where you will find so many privileged people who are not affected in any way by this law, but will stand up and support you. And that actually happened."

For Imam ElFiki, civic engagement is at the core of democracy in action. "If I think about the cornerstone of our democracy, it is elections," he says. "Everybody should vote, everybody's vote should count and everyone should be heard. The majority of my community came here as refugees. Most of them are people of color. For one reason or another, they were never enthusiastic about participating in elections. So one thing I have been working on is encouraging everybody to vote, to listen to candidates and to make their voices heard. That's how we, together, build our community and make it a better place."

To better serve his community, Imam ElFiki also completed his MA in the Falk College Department of Marriage and Family Therapy at Syracuse University.

Imam ElFiki joined the InterFaith Works Round Table of Faith Leaders shortly after he arrived in Syracuse. "It is round because it does not have a head or a leader. We are all equal there. It's really fascinating that different faith leaders can sit together, have a very constructive dialogue and work together on what they have in common — which is much — and have one goal in mind which is the betterment of this community and hopefully the world."

As a member of the Round Table, Imam ElFiki shares InterFaith Works' mission of affirming the dignity of all people and all faith traditions. "I believe mankind is inherently honorable," he says. "I found this in my Quran, my holy scripture, and I think that in every faith, mankind is honorable. So with the phrase *affirm dignity*, we are not empowering people. What we are actually saying is that's the way it is, and the way it should be, and that itself is honorable."

But, Imam ElFiki does not believe that affirming dignity is strictly the job of the clergy. He believes it is up to all of us.

"Start talking to someone who doesn't look like you," he says. "You will be surprised to know they are not different in any way — only at the surface. Get to know people around you: their concerns, what makes them happy, unhappy; what are they afraid of. Ask 'how can I help?' One man, one woman cannot make a difference, but when we get together, we can."

"I urge my community members to be highly involved through volunteerism. I have also set an example to others by being an organ donor and have encouraged them to do likewise. I have always urged my community to join their fellow Americans in causes to which they also are committed. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and the only way we can make change and transform our community is by being involved."

Imam Mohammed ElFiki is proud and thoughtful about receiving the Interfaith Leadership Award. "It is one of the greatest honors of my life," he says. "Yet, it means more responsibility."



*“A healthy church creates a healthy neighborhood. Our community development work is a strong part of what we do. We want to make sure that our community gets better one block at a time.”*

*Pastor Daren C. Jaime*

## Pastor Daren C. Jaime

### **Pastor, The People’s A.M.E. Zion Church**

On his first day as a ball boy for the New York Knicks, teenage Daren Jaime experienced a defining moment. He was assigned to assist the legendary Detroit Pistons’ point guard, Isiah Thomas. Nearing the end of the practice, Thomas missed a jump shot, and young Jaime picked up the ball to put it away. At that moment, Thomas called him back and said, “You never end without making a basket; you finish what you start; you make mistakes, and you try very hard to correct them, but you finish what you start.” That theme has been a mantra for Pastor Jaime ever since.

As the pastor of the People’s A.M.E. Zion Church, Pastor Jaime frequently partners with InterFaith Works and shares the agency’s commitment to affirm the dignity of all people.

“Affirming dignity means letting people know that they matter, that their life makes a difference regardless of race, creed or economic status. The work that InterFaith Works does in affirming the dignity of other — those who are considered the least but are regarded with the best — is what affirming dignity means here.”

People’s A.M.E. Zion Church has partnered with InterFaith Works on numerous projects, including its Police-Community Dialogues, a program that is especially important to Pastor Jaime who serves as chaplain for the Syracuse City Police Department. “These dialogues are really meaningful because you have officers and the community come together in a non-hostile environment. I think the police walk away with a greater understanding and I think our community residents walk away with a greater understanding. That’s what dialogue is supposed to be about. You don’t have to agree, but it’s about understanding and perspective, and that can be the difference maker.”

Pastor Jaime is no stranger to making a difference. Under his leadership, People’s A.M.E. Zion Church has become a hub of community and economic development, creating small businesses, and will soon launch a culinary arts training program and a café. “The mission of The People’s Church, and that God has given me in being the pastor, is that a healthy church creates a healthy neighborhood. So, we are becoming stakeholders and property owners of community development properties, and trying to change the economic landscape of where we are. These are some of the ways that we have been thinking about putting democracy in action. So, our community development work is a strong part of what we do. We want to make sure that our community gets better one block at a time.”

Another facet of Pastor Jaime’s vision of democracy in action is his work in broadcast journalism. He hosts a weekly cable television program in the Bronx and was formally heard locally on iHeartRadio with his show Power Perspectives. “It’s really my way of giving people a voice. I have come to realize that part of my passion is giving a voice to the voiceless. The scriptures say our people perish because of a lack of knowledge. I translate that to a lack of exposure. When you know better, you do better. I’m just a bridge behind the microphone,” he says.

Under his leadership, People’s A.M.E. Zion Church has approached democracy in action on local, national and global fields.

On the local level, the church has a full menu of service programs, including backpack giveaways and free haircuts for children. Nationally, the congregation travels annually to Flint, Mich., to provide ongoing support in the face of the water crisis, delivering bottled water and providing ministry to the people affected by the crisis. Globally, Pastor Jaime has traveled extensively to places such as the Bahamas, Jamaica, Great Britain and most recently Africa to preach and engage in mission work.

“As a pastor, I believe that Jesus made himself available. He met people where they were. He talks about the poor. He talks about making disciples of all nations. I’m passionate about that,” Pastor Jaime says.

“I’m thankful to InterFaith Works for giving me the award and helping to reaffirm my work,” Pastor Jaime says. “It puts gas in the tank because it’s a really long road we have out there, but it’s awards such as this that give us the ability to go forward, go the distance, and finish what we started.”



*“We have to do everything we possibly can to make the credo e pluribus unum (out of many, one) come true.”*

*The Hon. Van Robinson and Linda Brown-Robinson*

**The Hon. Van Robinson**  
**Former President, Syracuse Common Council and NAACP Syracuse and Onondaga County**

**Linda Brown-Robinson**  
**Immediate Past President, NAACP Syracuse and Onondaga County; Regional Director, Western Region NAACP**

The Hon. Van Robinson and Linda Brown-Robinson are a couple whose names are synonymous with racial justice in Syracuse. They were among a small group of community leaders who launched the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People of Syracuse and Onondaga County in 1978. They have been leading the organization in its charge to “secure the political, educational, social and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons” ever since.

That final clause in the mission statement is very important to the Robinsons. “The NAACP is here for all people,” says Brown-Robinson. “We are all in this together.”

The Robinsons have been with each other and in the community for more than 40 years.

Robinson went on to become the president of the local chapter of the NAACP and now serves on its board. He was the first African American to serve as president of the Syracuse Common Council.

Brown-Robinson is the NAACP’s immediate past president and was recently elected regional director of the Western Region NAACP. Her deepest hope is to see the day “when the NAACP goes out of business because it is no longer necessary.” But, she doesn’t expect that will happen soon.

The Robinsons have long been involved with InterFaith Works. Robinson first became active in the early days of the organization when it was called the InterReligious Council. He has served on the advisory board and received the agency’s Racial Justice Award. Brown-Robinson has been involved with InterFaith Works for 15 years with a particular focus on the Community-Wide Dialogue to End Racism and the Duck Race to End Racism. The Duck Race, she says, “is a fun way to bring the whole community together to address an issue that isn’t fun at all.” She finds its spirit of affirmation one of its great strengths.

This couple has firsthand experience of the atrocities of racism. When they moved to Syracuse, the real estate agent only showed them properties in Black neighborhoods and explained, “Five years ago, I wouldn’t even have been able to show you these.”

The discrimination they have witnessed and endured has engendered a hunger for justice. After facing discrimination in the military, Robinson was determined to make a difference, first with the Urban League and later with InterFaith Works before making the transition to elected office. His experiences of racism helped shape the course of his life.

“They hardened me to the fact that we have to do everything we possibly can to make the credo e pluribus unum (out of many, one) come true. So, that has enforced my attitude — not to get revenge, but to ensure that discriminatory practices are completely done away with.”

The Robinsons hold serious concerns about racial attitudes surfacing in our country today. “What we have been striving for over these many years is slowly slipping away,” Robinson says. “You hear things now that you would never have heard five years ago or even a year ago.” In the face of these attitudes, they see democracy in action as a moral imperative.

“We need to have a frank discussion about the issues. Dialogue Circles are a perfect example. If we can sit down and understand why people have those beliefs and then when they hear our side, then perhaps they’ll understand us and we’ll understand them. If we had more Dialogue Circles, maybe we wouldn’t be such a hurtful country,” says Brown-Robinson.

Robinson also says: “We don’t want to go back and have some of those things we have fought to overcome return; we don’t want to go back in history. We’re supposed to be moving forward. Our young people don’t seem to understand that if we don’t respect the past, we are doomed to repeat it.”

The Robinsons are deeply committed to InterFaith Works’ mission of affirming the dignity of all people and all faith traditions.

“It stands for everything I was brought up to believe in— that you should be able to practice whatever religion you choose to,” Brown-Robinson says. “Affirming dignity means that I can stand tall with my head held high and not be afraid to say what I need to say and that I have people behind me who share those same beliefs.”

Receiving the InterFaith Leadership Award came as a surprise to both honorees. “It’s something I never expected, nor did I seek it. I thought there were others who were more deserving,” says Robinson.

“We don’t join organizations because we want to be recognized; we join them because there’s a need, and there’s a feeling in your chest that you’ve got to make this world better,” says Brown-Robinson. “I know it’s over-used, but when I leave this world, I want to leave it in a better place than it was when I got here.”



*“Democracy is freedom — the freedom to have a good education, access to health care, to find employment, and to be part of the government in a very democratic way.”*

*Elaine Rubenstein*

**Elaine Rubenstein**

***Board Member, Museum of Science and Technology (MOST); Member, Syracuse Area Middle East Dialogue (SAMED); Past President, American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam (Oasis of Peace); Former Board Member, InterFaith Works of Central New York***

If you ask Elaine Rubenstein what constitutes democracy in action, she will boil it down to two key components: education and dialogue. That’s why she has dedicated much of her life’s work to supporting access to these opportunities. “Democracy is freedom,” she says, “the freedom to have a good education, access to health care, to find employment, and to be part of the government in a very democratic way.”

Rubenstein serves or has served on numerous boards, including InterFaith Works of Central New York, Syracuse Area Middle East Dialogue (SAMED), Crouse Hospital, and the Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science and Technology (MOST), which is named in memory of her beloved husband. She also served as president of the Board of American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, a village in Israel known as Oasis of Peace. Comprised of an equal number of Israeli Jewish and Arab families living and working together, Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam is home to the School for Peace, which provides bicultural, bilingual education to its students in an atmosphere of diversity and respect. At the heart of that venture is a commitment to dialogue that Rubenstein sees as a critical means of understanding and appreciating those whom we think are different from us.

As a lifelong Syracuse resident, Elaine graduated from Nottingham High School and attended Syracuse University. She began her career in marketing and advertising in Syracuse’s retail department and fashion stores. In 1953, she married Milton Rubenstein and soon after became the marketing manager for the family business, United Radio. She worked with Milton to establish BeepCall in 1954 (originally called Syracuse Radio Call), which became the largest beeper company in Central New York. Later, as a leader in the development of cell phone technology in the 1980s, she assisted in the establishment and marketing of the region’s first cellular telephone company for which Milton provided the engineering expertise. After her husband passed away in 1986, she continued to operate BeepCall with her son who took over the technical aspects of the business.

A long-time board member of the MOST, Rubenstein considers the museum not merely an educational resource, but a symbol of democracy in action. “When I go to the MOST and see the street lined with school buses full of children, I am just thrilled that we are doing our mission. Here are students from the city’s schools, and from schools all over Central New York, who are coming and enjoying the opportunities to learn about science. It really stimulates their interest and inspires them to go further in their own education and to, hopefully, fill positions here and stay within this local community. It’s the same feeling I get when I walk into InterFaith Works and see the lobby filled with immigrant families from everywhere. I say to myself, ‘We are here, doing our mission; we are enabling them to become citizens, learning what they can do to have a job in this community, giving them housing, health care, helping them to be part of the community and part of the economy here.’”

Rubenstein served on the InterFaith Works Board of Directors for 12 years and deeply values the agency’s mission. “To affirm dignity is the ability or commitment to respect the value of every person and to do what you can to make that happen.” She is especially drawn to the InterFaith Works’ dialogue programs. “It goes back to Stephen Covey’s motto of seek first to understand and then to be understood,” she says. “It’s important to talk to other people and to learn that people who are apparently different from you are very much like you. The more you have the opportunity to listen and to understand the cultures of other people, the more you have the opportunity to talk about your own interests, and this makes for democracy.”

Rubenstein is very happy to receive the InterFaith Leadership Award. “I am really honored to be among the group that has been chosen, and I look at it as an opportunity to talk about my admiration for this organization. I think it is important. I think we have a lot of work to do in terms of creating awareness of our programs, and that’s part of the hard work of raising funds that make this work possible. I think this is my opportunity to say this is a great place to be involved.”





The Hon. James Tormey

**Administrative Judge, Fifth Judicial District; Justice, New York State Supreme Court; Former Syracuse City Court Judge; Former Member, Onondaga County Legislature**

The Hon. James Tormey III loved justice, his family and Green Hills donuts. A much beloved jurist, Judge Tormey served 19 years as Administrative Judge for the Fifth Judicial District, which encompasses a six-county area and more than 300 judges and 600 court employees from the town and village level to the Supreme Court.

Judge Tormey is remembered by his wife, Susan Tormey, as a man who believed fervently that the courts should be “a place of healing.” Judge Tormey passed away on June 22, 2019, two days before his 69th birthday, but he leaves a legacy of democracy in action that will be long remembered by the thousands of people whose lives he touched through his commitment to fairness and respect for all.

Judge Tormey served as a County Legislator for 10 years prior to joining the bench where he served the Syracuse City Court to the Supreme Court for 32 years.

“I think that shows the faith that they had in him and in his character,” says Mrs. Tormey. “He was instrumental in creating specialized courts to deal with specific issues— such as the opioid crisis, domestic violence, human trafficking, youthful offender, and using innovative approaches, including alternative sentencing and community service to help address these issues. The goal, statewide, in establishing these special courts is an example of understanding what people are going through — the problems that they face, the needs that they have.”

Judge Tormey also saw the courts as a place to celebrate the joys of democracy in action. His two favorite ceremonies to preside over were National Adoption Day, celebrating families adopting children out of the foster care system, and Naturalization ceremonies.

“To be able to administer an oath and welcome people to our community and embrace them was something that he considered the best part of his job,” recalls Mrs. Tormey. “He just loved that and encouraged all of the judges across the district to participate in those ceremonies.”

“Temper justice with mercy” and “Justice delayed is justice denied” were two of her husband’s favorite quotes, according to Mrs. Tormey.

Mrs. Tormey, who runs the Office of Government Relations for Onondaga Community College, offers insights into Judge Tormey’s views on democracy in action and his commitment to affirming the dignity of all people and all faith traditions.

“For Jim, affirming dignity meant treating everyone fairly — with respect and with compassion. He really turned the courts in this community into the people’s courts. He didn’t want the courts to be frightening. He wanted people to come to be healed, no matter what the difficult situation was.”

When asked how Judge Tormey would have felt receiving the InterFaith Leadership Award, Mrs. Tormey, says:

“Whenever he received awards, people would congratulate him and he would say, ‘This is not my award; this is for the employees who work in this district because they are the ones who are getting the job done,’” she recalls. “In terms of my accepting it for him, it’s humbling for me and for our family. Jim’s faith, his compassion, his fairness, and his desire to make a difference in people’s lives throughout our community will be his legacy. I’m honored to accept it on his behalf.”

Mrs. Tormey wants people to remember her husband’s legacy as a jurist. However, she also wants them to remember his joyful spirit. “We lived in the Valley for 38 years and Jim’s favorite store was Green Hills. He knew everybody there by name. His favorite department was the bakery. Wherever he went, he took donuts — his favorite was the Bismark. It was his trademark. Everywhere he went, he brought his smile, he brought his wit, he brought a funny story, and he also always brought Green Hills donuts.”

At his Feb. 10, 2020 State of the County Address, Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon announced the naming of the City-County Criminal Courthouse located at 505 South State Street to be forever named *The Honorable James C. Tormey III Criminal Courthouse* and the Onondaga County Legislature voted unanimously to confirm the designation at their April 7, 2020 Legislative session.

*“His two favorite ceremonies to preside over were National Adoption Day, celebrating families adopting children out of the foster care system, and Naturalization ceremonies. To be able to administer an oath and welcome people to our community and embrace them was something that he considered the best part of his job.”*

*Susan Tormey*



### The Hon. Ben Walsh

#### **Mayor, City of Syracuse**

Ben Walsh is the 54th mayor of the City of Syracuse. His approach to leadership was shaped by growing up on the West Side of Syracuse in a family of proud public servants. His own call to public service came into focus during his time at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, where he earned his master's degree in public administration.

Mayor Walsh is an ardent believer in democracy in action:

"During my first three and a half years as mayor, I have tried to show what democracy in action looks like in the way that I govern and the way in which I engage with my constituents. I take it very personally and very seriously that as the mayor of the City of Syracuse, I represent everyone, not just those who voted for me, but everyone who resides here regardless of their gender, race, geography and citizenship.

"Therefore, in the actions that I take and that our administration takes, we need to ensure that everyone is represented and that my administration is reflective of the diversity of the population we serve. That was goal No. 1. I felt that what ultimately got me elected was my ability to bring together a broad and diverse coalition of citizens, and my challenge was taking that broad coalition from the campaign trail to City Hall."

Mayor Walsh's commitment to build coalitions is one of the reasons he is such a strong supporter of InterFaith Works and its mission of affirming the dignity of all people and all faith traditions.

"Affirming dignity is a very active term," he observes. "It's one thing to talk about treating people with dignity, and it's another thing to actually do it. InterFaith Works is always a great partner in bringing people together to enact dialogue and, ultimately, to make a positive change in the community."

Mayor Walsh was always drawn to a life of public service. "I was very blessed as a child to be surrounded by people who were very active in the community and true believers in what democracy represents. That's not just through my family members who were elected officials. There were also community volunteers, board members, teachers, lawyers and medical professionals.

"All of those functions are critical to a true full-functioning democracy. Being surrounded by people who were so active in our democracy was inspiring to me," he says. "By growing up in the family that I did, I was given certain privileges, and with those privileges come the responsibility to ensure that others can benefit from those privileges. So the combination of feeling that obligation and responsibility and then seeing it in action from those around me really set me on a course that I have been on for 40 years, whether I knew it or not."

Mayor Walsh is honored to receive the InterFaith Leadership Award because of what the organization means to him.

"I want to be judged on my actions and the positive changes that I bring to the community," he says. "When I look at InterFaith Works, I see an organization that is consistently and constantly bringing positive change to our community, affirming the dignity of all who live here. If the work I do can be seen as supportive of that mission and, more importantly, the people this organization serves, then that is something I am very proud of."

*"I have tried to show what democracy in action looks like in the way that I govern and the way in which I engage with my constituents. I take it very personally and very seriously that as the mayor of the City of Syracuse, I represent everyone, not just those who voted for me, but everyone who resides here regardless of their gender, race, geography and citizenship."*

*The Hon. Ben Walsh*

# InterFaith Leadership Award Honorees (1983-2021)

1983	Rhea Eckel Clark	2009	Aminy I. Audi	2016	<b>Radical Empathy</b> Charlie and Beth Beach Tanweer Haq Dr. Rhea Jezer Clarence Jordan The Hon. Langston McKinney Dr. Frederick and Virginia Parker The Rev. William Redfield
1984	Chancellor William P. Tolley	2010	Kathy Goldfarb-Findling Marilyn Higgins Taywana James Maria Revelles	2017	<b>Inextricably Bound Together</b> Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program Centro Christopher Community, Inc. Crouse Health Syracuse City School District Syracuse Police Department Tops Friendly Markets Wegmans Food Markets
1985	Dr. Franklyn S. Barry	2011	Dr. Debbie Sydow	2018	<b>Creating a Civil Community</b> Keith Alford, PhD Dennis Baldwin The Rev. Frederick Daley Rabbi Daniel Fellman Melanie Littlejohn Peggy Ogden The Rev. Dr. Peter Shidemantle Yusuf Soule, PhD
1986	Dr. Ernest L. Sarason	2012	<b>Courageous Conversations</b> The Hon. Minna Buck Ahmad El-Hindi Dr. Louis Kriesberg Dr. Anis Obeid The Rev. Dr. Thomas Wolfe	2019	<b>Celebrating Visionaries</b> Mustafa Mohammad Kamel Awayda, MD, MPH, FACP Sally Fisher Curran, Esq. Karin Franklin-King Alan D. Goldberg, PhD Vincent B. Love Edward M. Riley Melissa R. Spicer
1987	Rabbi Theodore S. Levy The Rev. Dr. Jon Regier Bishop Thomas J. Costello	2013	<b>A Lifetime of Service</b> The Rev. Msgr. Ronald C. Bill Roslyn Bilford The Rev. Dr. Nebraska and Mrs. Fannie Carter Bob and Ruth Colvin Mike Moss Nona Stewart	2020/21	<b>Democracy in Action</b> Dan Cummings Imam Mohammed ElFiki Pastor Daren C. Jaime The Hon. Van Robinson and Linda Brown-Robinson Elaine Rubenstein The Hon. James Tormey (posthumously) The Hon. Ben Walsh
1988	Peggy and Frank Wood	2014	<b>New Lives, New Leaders</b> Diana Alvarez Fuentes Hamad Haroon Om Katel Immaculee Kyondwa Muheyidin Shek Mohamoud Joseph Mpinga Hussein Musa Abdulbasit Salman Mirza Tihic Ismael Wedesso		
1989	Charles Chappell, Jr.	2015	<b>Contribution &amp; Commitment to Community</b> Allyn Foundation Central New York Community Foundation, Inc. The Gifford Foundation The Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York, Inc. The Dorothy and Marshall M. Reisman Foundation The John Ben Snow Foundation United Way of Central New York		
1990	Mildred Eggers				
1991	The Rev. Msgr. Charles Borgognoni Jean Dougherty				
1992	Horace Landry, CPA				
1993	Anne Pietrafesa				
1994	Betty and Tracy Ferguson				
1995	Faye and Henry Panasci				
1996	Nancy and David A.A. Ridings				
1997	Kathy and Robert Bennett				
1998	Edward Green Dean William Pollard				
1999	W. Carroll (Nick) Coyne				
2000	Judy and Eric Mower				
2001	Charlotte and Alexander Holstein Provisions Bakery Hopps Memorial CME Church				
2002	Noreen and Michael Falcone				
2003	Nancy and William Byrne				
2004	Mary Ann and Kenneth Shaw				
2005	Bishop Thomas J. Costello Rabbi Daniel Jezer				
2006	Nancy and Stephen Rogers				
2007	Kathryn Ruscitto Marilyn Pinsky				
2008	Chancellor Nancy Cantor				



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The following generously gave their 2020 ILAD support as a charitable donation to InterFaith Works when the event was cancelled due to Covid-19:

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## Acknowledgements

We thank the following individuals who helped make the 2021 InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner (ILAD) a success:

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### IN MEMORY

**Mark W. Wasmund**  
(1959-2021)

Mark William Wasmund was a man of few words, but the words he did speak, spoke volumes.

One of his favorite dictums as he said good-bye to his family of seven each morning was, "Have a productive day."

Mark was known for his productivity — in his personal and professional lives. He resided with his family, including quadruplets, in the Fabius-Pompey area for 20 years where he was an avid supporter of the community, serving as an assistant coach for the Fabius-Pompey Central School District varsity boys' basketball team for more than 15 years, as well as a volunteer coach with the Central Western AAU basketball program.

Mark was an arbitrator in the Syracuse City Court for the Onondaga County Bar Association, and volunteered as treasurer and board member of the Fair Housing Council of Central New York, and as a past board member of the National Kidney Foundation of CNY.

Among Mark's volunteer commitments was serving as co-chair of InterFaith Works' 2020 InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner. The dinner's theme, Democracy in Action, resonated with him. "Democracy just doesn't happen," he said, "it's continual work, continual engagement in the community."

Mark graduated from Syracuse University and later its College of Law. Professionally, he began his career as the Risk Manager for the city of Myrtle Beach, SC, and went on to private practice in 1986 before joining the Mackenzie Hughes Law Firm in Syracuse, where he was employed for more than 10 years and focused on real estate transactions and business law.

Mark was known as a steadfast and dependable friend. He was known for being quick-witted. He was meticulously organized and faithfully dedicated to his legal work and his clients.

We, along with the Central New York community, are grateful for the friend and colleague we had in Mark Wasmund. We thank his immediate family—wife Maryam El-Hindi Wasmund and children Paul, Elizabeth, Peter, Mark, John—for sharing him with us.

## In Gratitude

We are grateful to the following members of InterFaith Works' staff, Board of Directors, Round Table of Faith Leaders and Faith Partners who work tirelessly on behalf of those we serve:

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Congratulations  
to this evening's honorees:

**Dan Cummings**

**Imam Mohammed ElFiki**

**Pastor Daren C. Jaime**

**The Hon. Van Robinson and**

**Linda Brown-Robinson**

**Elaine Rubenstein**

**The Hon. James Tormey (posthumously)**

**The Hon. Ben Walsh**

for your devotion to  
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and your vision  
of a community that affirms  
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*The Hon. Van Robinson and Linda Brown-Robinson*  
*Elaine Rubenstein    The Hon. James Tormey    The Hon. Ben Walsh*



The SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
congratulates InterFaith Works for all it has accomplished during  
45 years of striving to bring the community together.

The ESF family extends its congratulations and thanks to InterFaith  
Leadership Award honorees Linda Brown-Robinson of the ESF Board  
Trustees, the Honorable Van Robinson and all the honorees for their  
dedication to advancing democratic freedoms and basic human rights.

We are grateful for your service to our community.

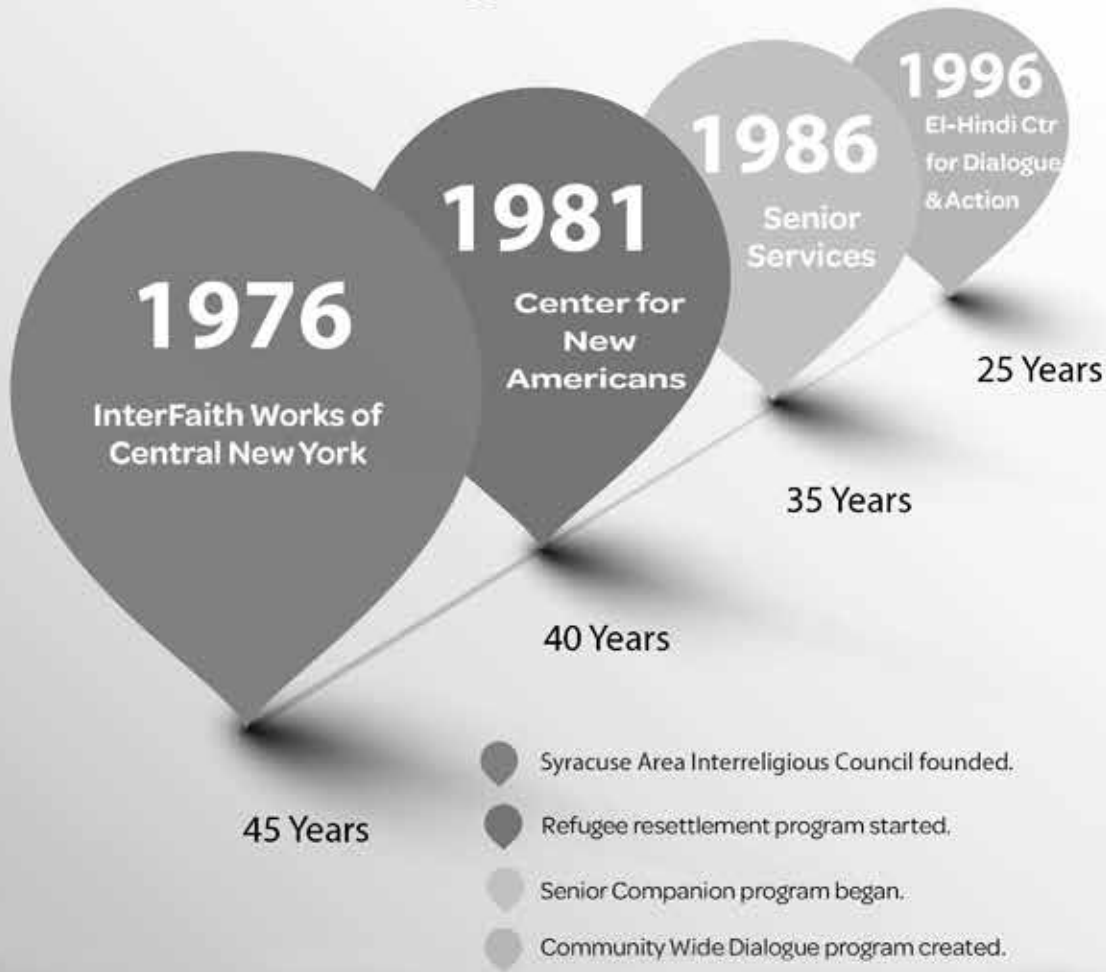


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The Diocese of Syracuse congratulates  
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Pastor Daren C. Jaime • Elaine Rubenstein  
The Hon. Van Robinson and Linda Brown-Robinson  
The Hon. James Tormey (posthumously)  
The Hon. Ben Walsh

*Among her friends and family,  
She's thoroughly adored.  
We're all so proud of her tonight,  
Accepting her award.*

*When we chose our mom and grandma,  
We picked ourselves a jewel.  
And do not fear. We're quite sincere.  
This is no April fool!\**

*Congratulations to Elaine Rubenstein  
and to all of the exceptional honorees tonight!*

*From Elaine's children and grandchildren  
Jeff, Julie, Amy, Gary, Jayne, Larry,  
Ben, Mike, Max, Abbey, and Leo*

\* Note: This event was originally scheduled for April 1, 2020

# Mazal Tov

To our very own,

## *Elaine Rubenstein*

For this most deserving honor bestowed on you by the  
InterFaith Works of CNY!

Your commitment and *Chesed* are an inspiration to our entire  
Temple Concord Congregational Family and you are a  
shining example for our Community.

*Mazal Tov* to all of the honorees.

Rabbi David Katz, Cantor Kari Eglash, President: Jeff Lefkowicz,  
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**Congratulations to our  
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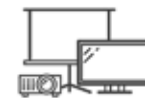
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AWARD DINNER  
SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2021



**Dear Friends,**

Congratulations to all of tonight's awardees and to InterFaith Works of Central New York on your 45th founding anniversary!

Thank you all for your work in advancing democratic freedoms and basic human rights, and your dedication to the community.

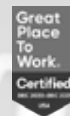
paid for by ben walsh for syracuse

**BEN**   
**WALSH**<sup>'21</sup>  
KEEP RISING

**The Awayda Family salutes the Democracy in Action honorees being recognized at the 2021 InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner and InterFaith Works for their relentless commitment to the community, and for embracing social justice and democracy.**



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# **InterFaith Works Leadership Award Dinner.**

**Thank you for your passion and dedication to improving  
our community and the lives of its residents.**



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THE HON. VAN ROBINSON AND LINDA BROWN-ROBINSON  
ELAINE RUBENSTEIN  
THE HON. JAMES TORMEY (POSTHUMOUSLY)  
THE HON. BEN WALSH

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK IN ADVANCING DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND  
BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. BY AFFIRMING THE DIGNITY OF ALL PEOPLE, YOU  
HELP ENSURE THE HEALTH OF OUR DEMOCRACY.



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## Welcome to the Club!

*From former honorees, we deeply appreciate the well-deserved honors being awarded to our dearest friends, Van and Linda.*

*Congratulations — Daniel & Rhea Jezer*

# Congratulations to tonight's honorees:

Dan Cummings  
Imam Mohammed ElFiki  
Pastor Daren C. Jaime  
The Hon. Van Robinson and Linda Brown-Robinson  
Elaine Rubenstein  
The Hon. James Tormey (posthumously)  
The Hon. Ben Walsh



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for Your Devoted Service  
to Our Community



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Fayetteville, New York

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Msgr. Ronald Bill  
Rev. Philip Hearn



Onondaga County Legislature  
**DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS**  
*Linda R. Ervin, Democratic Floor Leader*

LEGISLATORS:  
Peggy Chase  
Linda R. Ervin  
William T. Kinne  
Mary T. Kuhn  
Christopher J. Ryan  
Vernon M. Williams, Jr.

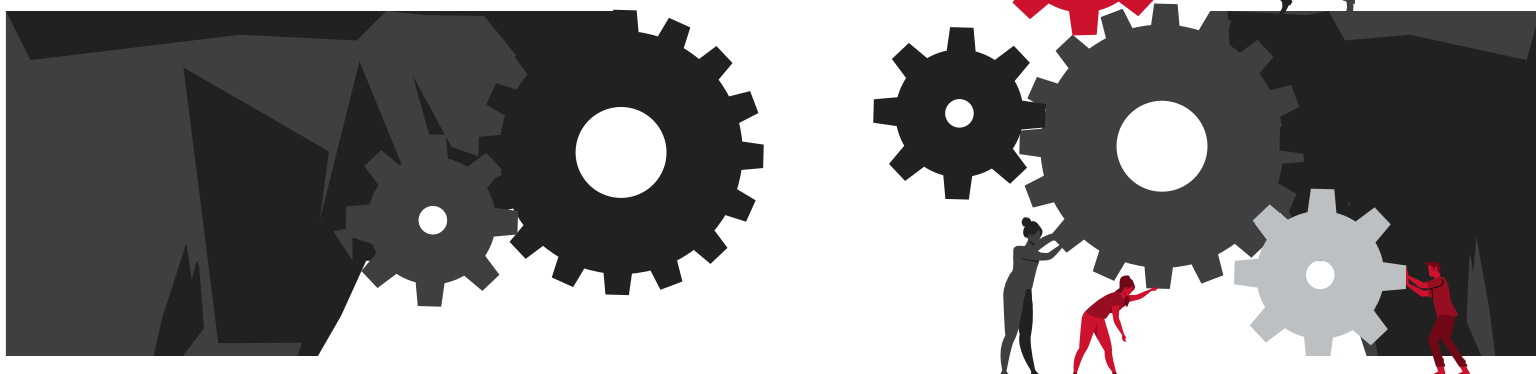
## The Democratic Caucus congratulates the InterFaith Leadership Award Honorees!



*Thank you  
for celebrating  
with us  
this evening!*



FACING  
CHALLENGES  
TAKING ACTION



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# The Year in Review

Like most years, InterFaith Works entered 2020 with the goal of reaching more of the communities we serve in as efficient a manner as possible. Citizenship classes were full and wait-listed. Case workers were meeting directly with refugee families, driving them to appointments and job interviews. Volunteers were traveling to homes and nursing homes to provide companionship and respite services for older adults. Ending racism dialogues were underway in schools and on campuses. Chaplains comforted hospital patients and their families as well as provided religious services inside correctional facilities.

Then, events took an unprecedented turn in March with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. In compliance with the governor's lockdown order, we quickly adapted to serve thousands of clients and community partners. The free flow of open doors gave way to "appointments only." Our employment team became the "unemployment support team" as low-wage earners without computer access lost jobs and needed assistance. Tele-chaplaincy and Zoom became primary service delivery vehicles. Refugee services continued in full force but behind plexiglass screens and in outdoor meetings.

The pandemic showed us what the agency is made of. The agency's response to the crisis has deepened and transformed our work. With the support of the Central New York Community Foundation's COVID-19 Community Support Fund, we modified our offices and vehicles so we could continue to serve clients. We also added a full-out COVID emergency food and digital literacy effort to the work we were already doing with refugees and seniors. With the help of the Gifford Foundation, we embraced disruption and designed an agency-wide capacity improvement plan, with more staff serving more people in more profound ways.

A great example is seen in our new emergency food programs. COVID revealed the deep stream of hunger in our city, as well as the need for the distribution of healthful food to people ill with the virus. Through the American Dairy Association and Human Services Leadership Council, staff and volunteers distributed thousands of gallons of milk to churches, mosques and refugee communities, and then added boxed produce so elders, families with children, and others who had lost jobs would not go hungry. It grew quickly with more than 1,000 families benefitting, and now a grassroots network of faith-based inner city pantries is working closely with us, along with the Interreligious Food Consortium and The Food Bank.



*Karin Franklin-King, longtime host of the Duck Race to End Racism, hosted the event's 2020 virtual edition.*

The Community Campaign for Love (CC4L), an initiative of the Round Table of Faith Leaders, started as a counter narrative to the divisiveness, hate speech and attacks on faith communities and immigrants. It now encompasses work to address the racial inequities of food insecurity, building a new community garden with Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, and energizing a city-suburban partnership of pantries that are bridging racial divides while making sure people do not go hungry. CC4L is building friendships with the Onondaga Nation and addressing racism and anti-Semitism in its many forms.

## InterFaith Works' New Mission Statement

InterFaith Works affirms the dignity of each person and every faith tradition, builds racial and religious equity, and creates bridges of understanding among us.



The death of George Floyd and the public cry for racial and social justice reaffirmed our commitment to racial equity and moved us to build our racial equity lens internally and outwardly. We organized faith leaders to march, built relationships, and made commitments to each other. We presented the Duck Race to End Racism virtually, an InterFaith Works' first.

Against this backdrop, the Board of Directors updated the agency's mission statement to better reflect InterFaith Works' commitment to shaping a future that affirms the dignity of each person and every faith tradition.

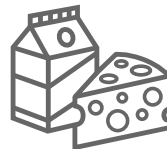
While 2020 proved to be a year like none other, the tremendous support InterFaith Works received from the community and our donors enabled our staff to meet ongoing needs and implement the innovations that continue into 2021. We are especially grateful for our dedicated donors who continued to support the InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner, which had to be postponed, the faithful individuals who gave personal gifts, and the many foundations that provided funding for COVID-related client needs, as well as InterFaith Works' programmatic, capital and capacity needs.

To all of you, we offer our gratitude.



Milk was gladly received by clients!

## MILK/PRODUCE DELIVERIES



### MILK/PRODUCE DELIVERIES

**April 2020-June 2020: Mostly milk, some produce**

14,000 gallons of milk  
5,000 pounds of produce

**July 2020-September 2020: Produce boxes with some milk available separately**

13,500 gallons of milk  
37,000 pounds of produce

**October 2020-December 2020: 1 gallon milk per box**

1,450 gallons of milk  
24,650 pounds of produce

### Food Pantries Opened

July 2020 – September 2020: 8  
October 2020 – December 2020: 9

Casey Johnson  
Chair, Board of Directors

Beth A. Broadway  
President/CEO



Casey Johnson  
Chair, Board of Directors



Beth A. Broadway  
President/CEO

# Ahmad & Elizabeth El-Hindi Center for Dialogue

InterFaith Works' El-Hindi Center for Dialogue (CfD) promotes racial and social equity using a dialogue-to-action model. CfD works with communities, schools and organizations to foster mutual understanding and trust, by discussing difficult topics using a racial equity lens. It brings together disparate groups of people to find new ways to work together for the betterment of the entire community. Dialogue programs address community issues and encourage understanding across racial, ethnic, religious and community differences.

CfD incorporates the ongoing work of the Community Wide Dialogue to End Racism—now the longest-running anti-racism dialogue in the nation. Since 1995, more than 18,000 people have participated in more than 625 dialogue circles.



Members of the Syracuse chapter of Seeds of Peace continued their participation in the leadership program through a Team Adventure training exercise.



Quackers, the Duck Race to End Racism mascot, went poolside to choose the winners of the Community Duck Race as the family-friendly festival transformed to a virtual event in 2020.

## The Challenge

*The El-Hindi Center for Dialogue faced the daunting task of keeping the momentum and successes of its dialogue programs moving forward in a COVID-19 environment. An online platform and infrastructure was needed to bring people together to deliver programs effectively without the benefits derived from meeting in a common physical location. We made it work!*

## 2020 VIRTUAL DUCK RACE



### 2020 VIRTUAL DUCK RACE TO END RACISM

- 1,430 viewers
- 250 individual community and youth race participants
- 1,810 engagements on social media

## Facing Challenges: Taking Action 2020 Program Highlights

- **Online Dialogues:** CfD had to quickly adapt because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Center is now able to deliver 100 percent of its programs virtually. This change has built the capacity to expand the Center's footprint geographically. As a result, more individuals and organizations, as well as other private and public entities previously unserved because of distance, time or other constraints can now receive the benefits of CfD's dialogue model.
- **Seeds of Peace:** Seeds are students from each of the five Syracuse City School District high schools who participate in leadership training, dialogues, and peace-building projects in their schools, in partnership with other schools, and in the community. The Seeds of Peace has been supported locally by InterFaith Works for the past 10 years, and 130 students participated this year, developing their conflict resolution skills and achieving new levels of understanding with students from other backgrounds.
- **School Exchange Programs:** Bridging the divide between city and suburban schools, 116 Onondaga County youth and 28 adult allies participated in paired interactions, first in person and then virtually. Syracuse City School District students are paired with a suburban or rural school district to share facilitated dialogue sessions, breaking down racial and ethnic stereotypes and building bridges of understanding. The exchanges occur at the high school and middle school levels. A new effort was launched to bring together the school-based adult allies from partner schools in the Syracuse City School District and Onondaga County school districts. Twenty-eight adults participated in the effort with the support of five facilitators.



*InterFaith Works' School Exchange Program continued to bring together urban, suburban and rural students during the year.*

- **Racial Equity Strategic Planning for School Districts:** A new partnership with Peaceful Schools was formed to address racial and social equity in schools, including a pilot program with the Charter School for Applied Technologies in Buffalo.

- **Syracuse University's College of Engineering and Computer Science:** The Center's two-year work concluded with 400 students, staff and faculty participating in dialogues to address social and racial inequities. Changing the culture toward understanding and inclusion took everyone's involvement, but respect is now evident throughout.
- **Syracuse University:** Dialogue work is expanding through a new partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, with the dialogue process expanding beyond the College of Engineering to the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, as well as SU's School of Architecture and David B. Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics. More than 40 facilitators were trained in the fall of 2020, and six dialogue circles were convened, with another nine dialogues circles and three facilitator trainings planned in 2021. The center's work at the university also led to a set of recommendations for reforming SU's Department of Public Safety (DPS), which addressed concerns about the department's behavior toward students, especially students of color, handling student complaints about sexual assault or harassment, communication issues and unease surrounding DPS' possession of firearms.



*Police-community dialogue circles, like the one pictured, continued on a remote basis.*

- **Columbus Circle Action Committee:** At the request of Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh, the Center facilitated an Action Committee, convening a diverse group of 26 community leaders to more deeply understand the impact of Columbus on our community and develop recommendations on the new Heritage Education site at the current Columbus Circle. The committee's report documents the process and outcomes of a three-month exploration representing multiple opinions about Columbus Circle.
- **Corporate Training:** Hueber-Breuer used InterFaith Works' dialogue model as training for its 50-person staff, to reinforce its new community commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- **Cross Agency Programming:** InterFaith Works' Senior Services and Center for New Americans worked with the Center to assist with racial equity training for the Aging Services Coalition, and "Community Conversations" that focus on the refugee and immigrant experience.

# Center for New Americans

InterFaith Works' Center for New Americans (CNA) provides resettlement and crucial post-resettlement services to help refugees re-establish their lives and overcome the barriers necessary to successful integration in the United States. Since its establishment in 1981, the Center had annually resettled 200 to 600 refugees. However, severe limitations imposed on refugee and immigration admissions to the U.S. in 2020 resulted in some of the lowest resettlement numbers in the Center's history.

Despite a low number of arrivals, the Center for New Americans served more than 1,300 individuals—former refugees and immigrants—as individuals and families continue to need housing, interpretation, medical, employment, literacy and citizenship assistance for several years after arrival.



Case Work Aid Justine Nshombo, right, helps Rachelle Nikiande locate a new ironing board during the Center for New Americans' furniture giveaway in October 2020.

## The Challenge

*Meeting the needs of newly arrived refugees is personal. It happens as case managers meet face-to-face with families, handing over bundles of donated diapers, or as class participants practice for the citizenship test. With the pandemic making such interactions risky, CNA's challenge became one of how to remotely continue a child's education, secure enough food to keep hunger at bay and meet other emotional, social and basic needs for refugee families.*



*Citizenship coaching, like the one volunteer Marty Phillippe offered to Hortence Ngarissona, was among the services that the Center for New Americans' Path to Citizenship program continued to provide virtually after COVID hit.*

## Facing Challenges: Taking Action 2020 Program Highlights

- **Helping Resettle Refugees:** InterFaith Works, as an affiliate of Episcopal Migration Ministries, resettled 70 refugees in 2020 despite complications from the COVID-19 pandemic and limitations imposed on refugee arrivals by the U.S. administration. The refugees came from Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Nepal, Somalia, Syria and Ukraine. We found them a home, school, and job, and supported their new life.
- **Finding Jobs and Connecting with the NY Department of Labor:** Despite challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has created for employment, 138 New Americans were placed in jobs during 2020, equaling pre-COVID levels. Additionally, 32 clients participated in job readiness classes, and 45 households received help with their applications for unemployment benefits due to job loss during the early stages of the pandemic. During 2020, several companies hired eight or more refugee clients. The companies included a myriad of warehouses, including those specializing in cold storage, electronics assembly, and food production.
- Funding received from the City of Syracuse and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development **enabled 275 clients to avoid homelessness and utility disruptions.** Clients were linked with essential government and private programs that enabled them to stay safe and warm in their own homes and avoid further complications of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Through **Matching Grant and Employment Placement**, 23 individuals were provided alternatives to public assistance benefits. For the second year, Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church provided space for the Match Grant Store, which allows clients to receive extra supplies to furnish their homes.
- The Center's **Intensive Case Management Program** delivered support to 40 refugee clients who needed assistance with navigating their way through the American medical and mental health systems. Additionally, the program provided \$4,000 in food gift cards, \$2,000 in cash cards, biweekly groceries, personal protective equipment, transportation, and emergency housing assistance as part of its COVID-19 response to vulnerable refugees.
- The Center's **Path to Citizenship Program** provided citizenship preparation classes to 57 individuals. Two InterFaith Works' staff, accredited representatives of the U.S. Department of Justice, provided immigration services to 233 clients, while assisting 63 individuals to complete their naturalization applications. Help was provided to 134 individuals in completing their Green Card applications.
- **Internship Opportunities**--real work experiences--were provided to 41 undergraduate and master's level students from Syracuse University, University of Buffalo, Le Moyne College, SUNY Oswego, Onondaga Community College, SUNY Morrisville, Catholic University of America, and Bryant and Stratton College.
- **Food and Supply Boxes:** Since the pandemic began in early 2020, the Center for New Americans team provided 18 quarantined families (95 individuals) with weeks of culturally appropriate groceries, medication and supply boxes, including sanitization materials, using safe, contactless delivery methods.
- **Technology Distribution:** The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation made it possible for CNA to provide technology that improved access to remote learning and education for refugee children. Ten televisions and 32 laptop computers were purchased and installed, serving 75 individuals across 14 households. Another 86 individuals across 15 households received \$216 for four to six months of pre-paid internet, allowing uninterrupted digital and internet access for children and families to connect with online learning and educational platforms. A Technology Coach taught the families how to use their laptops.



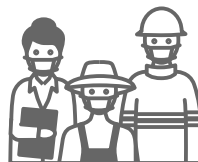
*Refugee clients continued to receive free diapers during a distribution at InterFaith Works in early November 2020.*

## DIAPER BANK & REFUGEES

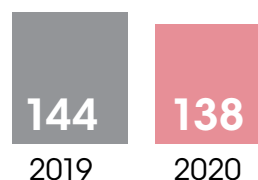


### DIAPER BANK

In 2020, the agency's diaper distribution program served 234 families, 361 children, and distributed 171,620 diapers. Since its inception in 2018, CNA's diaper distribution program has provided 250,530 diapers to refugee and immigrant families saving them \$75,159.



### 2019 AND 2020: REFUGEES PLACED IN JOBS



# Interfaith Initiatives

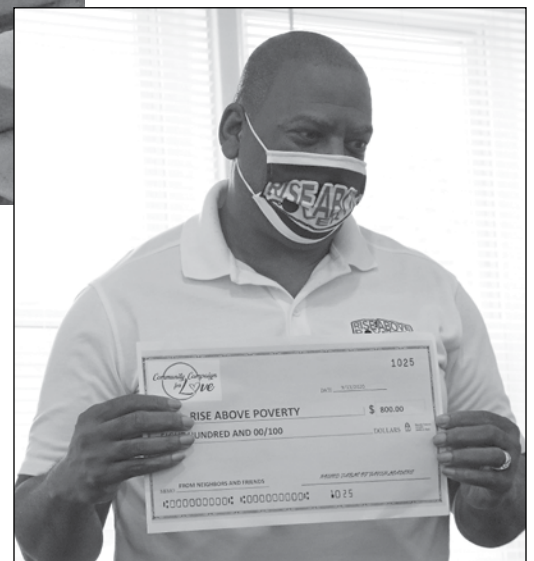
Interfaith Initiatives promotes interfaith cooperation and understanding through dialogue and action projects that build community. Interfaith Initiatives is where “faith and justice intersect,” providing a framework for racial healing and understanding. Additionally, the department provides chaplaincy services to two medical institutions, two nursing homes and three correctional facilities. Interfaith Initiatives organizes weekly community prayer vigils and collaborates with Crouse Hospital on Spiritual Care Day, which offers training and support to chaplains, caregivers and others supporting the community’s spiritual well-being.



*InterFaith Works’ food distribution efforts expanded to include a network of places of worship where food was distributed on an often-weekly basis, serving families like the one pictured here in October 2020.*

## The Challenge

*Interfaith Initiatives’ efforts were impacted by the pandemic, with the chaplaincy program pivoting to tele-chaplaincy and the annual Spiritual Care Day program held virtually. Interfaith Initiatives faced the challenge of bringing individuals and communities together without the face-to-face contact and “human touch” that transforms the hearts and minds of people of all ages and backgrounds.*



*Rise Above Poverty’s Reggie Kelley received a symbolic check, representing the amount of cash donations, at the kickoff event for InterFaith Works’ Community Campaign for Love in September 2020. In total, more than \$1,700 was donated to Rise Above Poverty.*

## Facing Challenges: Taking Action

### 2020 Program Highlights

- Through the American Dairy Association and Human Services Leadership Council, Interfaith Initiatives delivered 55,000 gallons of milk and 163,000 pounds of food to 17 faith communities during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interfaith Initiatives and the Center for New Americans staff teamed up to deliver milk and dairy products to 50 to 70 New American families and 20 faith communities on a weekly basis.

This outreach evolved into the new Pantry Partners program, connecting suburban faith partners with urban faith partners to bolster neighborhood food pantries. The program is developing relationships with the Food Bank of Central New York, Interreligious Food Consortium and area farmers so nutritious food is available in food deserts throughout Syracuse.

- The **Community Campaign for Love (CC4L)**, launched by InterFaith Works' Round Table of Faith Leaders, is inspired by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call for "Beloved Community": an "all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood where love and trust triumph over fear and hatred." CC4L's initial "Act of Love" addressed the needs of housing-insecure children with donations of two full vans of toiletry items for city of Syracuse children, distributed through Rise Above Poverty, a community organization that provides Syracuse youth with basic necessities.

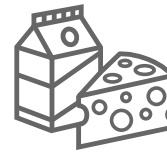
To promote the Community Campaign for Love and solicit community support, billboard space donated by Park Outdoor Advertising featured the messages "What does love look like?" and "Love looks like this." The digital signage was on display for months in prominent locations in and around the city of Syracuse.

- Building United Communities (BUC)** integrates New Americans/refugees with established American religious congregations. The program assisted three Central New York churches to integrate their congregations and developed a national model adaptable to other congregations.

- The Round Table of Faith Leaders hosted weekly **Community Prayer Vigils** within the city of Syracuse. At the vigil sites, up to 25 participants gathered to pray for peace in the streets with justice and health for the city. The participants were Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Black, Brown, Middle Eastern and White. During the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic and the worst winter storms, they convened virtually with the same singular purpose.

- InterFaith Works' chaplains continued to provide **Spiritual Care Services** via tele-chaplaincy during the year. Their services maintained spiritual care within Onondaga County correctional facilities, a youth detention center, nursing homes and in local hospitals.
- "**CNY Inspirations**," a long-running series penned by guest columnists and managed by Interfaith Initiatives, continued unabated throughout the year and can be found Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays in *The Post-Standard* and posted on [syracuse.com](http://syracuse.com) and [interfaithworkscny.org](http://interfaithworkscny.org).

## MILK/PRODUCE



Interfaith Initiatives delivered 55,000 gallons of milk and 163,000 pounds of food to 17 faith communities for distribution to those in need during the COVID pandemic.

*Park Outdoor Advertising helped raise the visibility of the Community Campaign for Love by donating billboard space at several high traffic areas in and around the city of Syracuse.*



*Members of the Round Table of Faith Leaders participated in weekly socially distant but deeply connected prayer vigils all year. This one is on Syracuse's Near West Side.*

# Senior Services

InterFaith Works' 30-plus year history of serving older adults is distinguished by its ability to promote social connectedness and community engagement. During that time, the agency's Senior Services division has been a leader in organizing activities, socialization and life-long learning opportunities that address the isolation, depression and other emotional health issues that afflict many elders. In keeping with the agency's mission, Senior Services programming also builds racial equity and economic justice, creates bridges of understanding among diverse older adults throughout Central New York, and promotes respectful care for elders.

In 2020, Senior Services directed its efforts like a laser beam on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Across all project areas, the division kept older adults socially connected, provided food and other supplies to meet basic needs, built access to digital technology, and promoted COVID health and safety practices.



*Zoraida Kimpel was among the Senior Companion volunteers who provided in-home visits to older adults and caregivers when it was safe to do so.*

## The Challenge

*At the start of the pandemic, Senior Services found itself in a dilemma. To protect the health of older clients, in-person visits and other activities provided by volunteers were abruptly suspended. How could the services many clients and their caregivers had come to depend upon continue? How could seniors stay engaged with the outside world and avoid the feelings of isolation and loneliness that too many experience without putting their health at risk?*



*Senior Companion volunteers attended the agency's Digital Inclusion classes held in 2020 to improve their technology skills, enabling them to help their clients overcome the "Digital Divide" that cuts off older adults from experiencing the benefits of new technologies.*



## Facing Challenges: Taking Action

### 2020 Program Highlights

- **Senior Companions:** Senior Companion Program volunteers helped 137 older adults in Onondaga, Cayuga and Madison counties stay socially connected during this time of social distancing. Volunteers made regular telephone “visits” and wellness phone calls as well as delivered meals through Meals on Wheels. Senior Companion volunteers helped their clients live independently in their own homes, stay active, and do more of life’s essential tasks. Senior Companions also provided respite to family caregivers who needed time for themselves.
- **One to One:** Although nursing homes were closed to most visitors for nearly all of 2020, the One to One Program continued to bring joy and social connection to residents through virtual musical performances, conversation groups, holiday cards and decorations, and donated artwork. Due to the remote nature of these events, staff reached hundreds of volunteers from around the nation, growing the volunteer base to unprecedented numbers. Several hundred offered to join the program’s 59 local volunteers in providing virtual companionship and help with online donation drives.



Students from Parkview Junior Academy, participating in InterFaith Works’ One to One Program, bagged trail mix during a service project in late February 2020 with residents from The Nottingham.

- **Remote Services:** Throughout the pandemic, Senior Services continued to offer remote socialization and recreation programs to older refugees. Two 12-week English classes were held that focused on conversational English to help these elders do more of the things they want to do in the community, including working toward citizenship. A series of COVID-education workshops were provided to help them better understand the pandemic, keep themselves healthy, and gain access to the resources they need. Senior Services also hosted seven workshops with community members and aging services providers, to educate them about the needs of older refugees and how the broader community can partner with InterFaith Works to be more “refugee friendly.”
- **Coalition Building:** To build capacity in addressing social isolation, racial inequity and economic injustice, Senior Services co-founded the Greater Syracuse Aging Services Coalition. The Coalition is a partnership with other aging

services providers, including Vera House, Onondaga County Office for Aging, Black Health, and a network of community centers, non-profit organizations, and faith leaders. In November, staff launched a 24-person Action Planning Team to develop a strategic vision and future work of the Coalition.

- **Mental Health:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Senior Services staff developed new services to meet the basic needs of clients and support their mental health and wellness. New COVID response and recovery services included:
  - A daily Senior Chat Line to enable older adults to stay connected and enjoy an hour of daily, telephone-based group recreation. The Chat Line, a partnership with National Grid’s “Grid for Good” program, successfully connected isolated seniors during the pandemic, allowing them to enjoy games, wellness tips and a good laugh.
  - Supportive listening services for isolated older adults with chaplains and counselors, alleviating stress and anxiety during the pandemic. Over a six-month period, 16 seniors received more than 73 hours of supportive listening services.
  - Addressing the impact of the “Digital Divide” and helping older adults better access services and connect with family and friends. Through a Digital Inclusion Program, 10 low-income older adults were enrolled in a 12-week course focused on helping them confidently email, participate on video calls, perform online banking and shopping, and engage with sources of entertainment. Course participants were provided free computer tablets to keep, and free internet access for the duration of the course. All reported they felt more confident using online technology because of the class.

## SUPPORT PROGRAMS



### SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

- 137 older adults in Onondaga, Cayuga and Madison Counties stayed socially connected
- 47 Senior Companions provided in-home and virtual visits to older adults and caregivers



### ONE TO ONE PROGRAM

- 59 residents received regular, weekly friendly calls and exchanged letters with volunteers
- 15 remote social events were organized at nursing homes



### COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY SERVICES

- 120 older clients received wellness calls
- 120 clients received “Basic Needs Baskets”

# Thank You to Our Donors and Funders

The following donations were received between Jan. 1, 2020 and Dec. 31, 2020.

## **\$50,000+**

ARISE/DSRIP

Catholic Charities of Onondaga  
County/Refugee Services

Central New York Community  
Foundation

Health Foundation for Western &  
Central New York

The Parker Family, in honor of John  
and Shirley Mills

## **\$10,000 - \$49,999**

Ahmad and Elizabeth El-Hindi  
Foundation

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Nancy and Bill Byrne

Episcopal Diocese of Central New York  
Family to Family, Inc.

The Gifford Foundation

The John Ben Snow Foundation

National Grid

Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse

Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse

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## **\$5,000 - \$9,999**

Allyn Family Foundation

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Maureen and Jim Bowers

Christopher Community, Inc.

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Elaine and Steven Jacobs

The Rev. Howard Rose

Sikh Foundation of Syracuse

Dr. Baljinder Singh and Gurvinder  
Kaur

## **\$1,000 - \$4,999**

AARP

Bishop Skip and Bonnie Adams

Dr. Fatme Allam and Dr. Mustafa  
Awayda

Anonymous

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Ellen and David Bacon

Dr. Shawky and Lauren Badawy

Gail and Dennis Baldwin

The Rev. James and Joyce Bresnahan

Martine Burat and Anthony  
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Mercy Works, Inc.

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MOST Museum of Science and  
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Kenneth Moulton

Judy and Eric Mower

The Hon. James and Alice Murphy

North Side Learning Center

Oneida Association - United Church  
of Christ

Onondaga Community College  
Foundation

Operation Northern Comfort

Karen and Anthony Ortega

Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Edwin and Louise Potter

Rebecca and Robert Reed Kantrowitz

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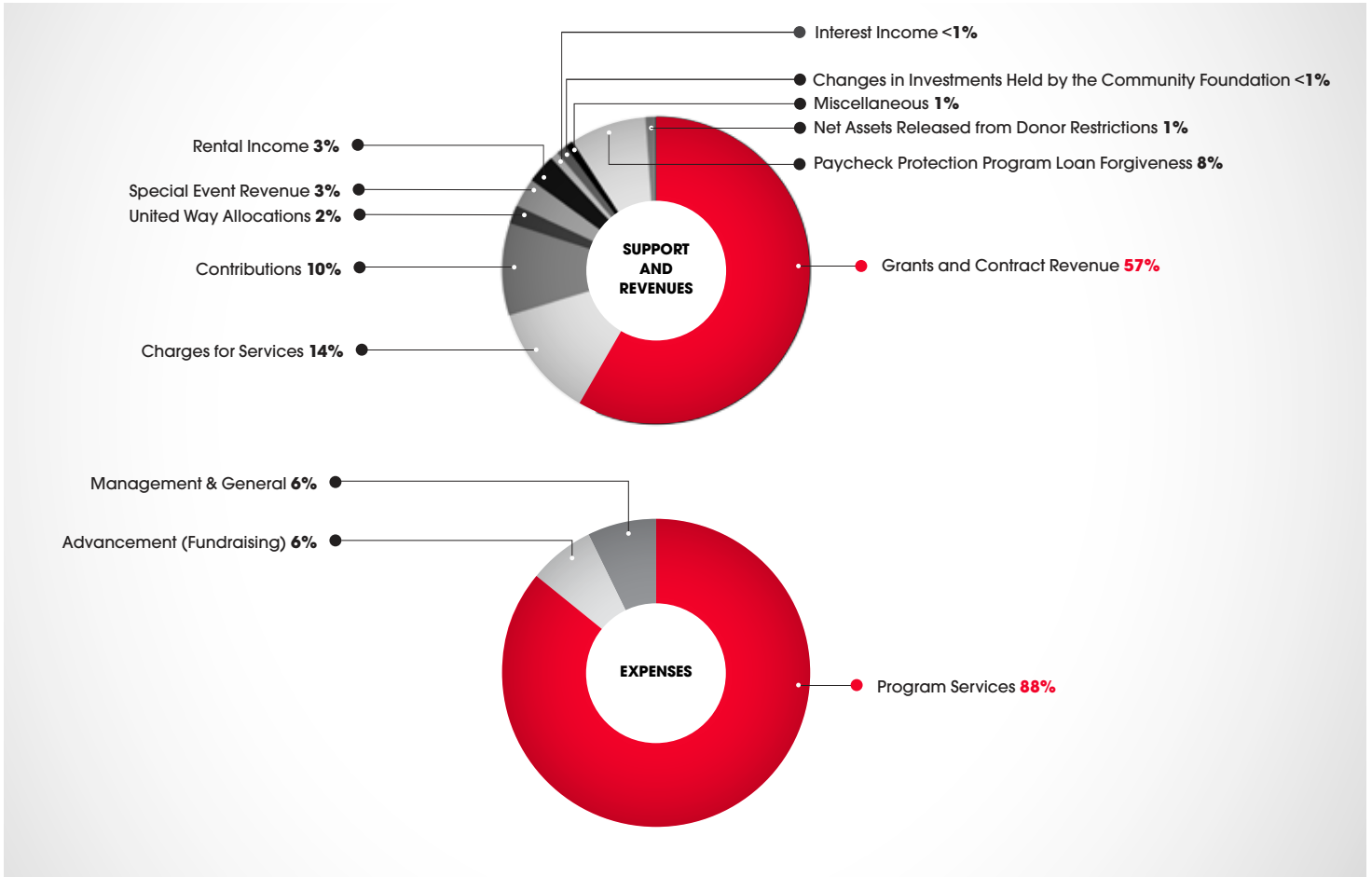
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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of our donor lists. If you believe there is an error, please contact the Development Office at 315-449-3552, ext. 114 or email [kobrien@ifwcnny.org](mailto:kobrien@ifwcnny.org).



# Financial Summary

Jan. 1, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2020



## NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

### SUPPORT AND REVENUES:

Grants and Contract Revenue	\$2,438,832
Charges for Services	\$613,807
Contributions	\$423,032
United Way Allocations	\$94,525
Special Event Revenue	\$127,200
Rental Income	\$144,032
Interest Income	\$1,746
Changes in Investments Held by the Community Foundation	\$16,388
Miscellaneous	\$37,628
Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness	\$322,600
Net Assets Released from Donor Restrictions	\$64,195
<b>Total Support and Revenues</b>	<b>\$4,283,985</b>

### EXPENSES:

Program Services	\$2,818,674
Supporting Services:	
Management & General	\$196,566
Advancement (Fundraising)	\$203,192
Total Supporting Services	\$399,758
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$3,218,432</b>
<b>Transfer Out</b>	<b>(\$20,000)</b>
<b>Increase in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>\$1,045,553</b>

## NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Contributions	\$8,839
Transfer In	\$20,000
Restricted Grants	\$0
Changes in Investments Held by the Community Foundation	\$7,647
Net Assets Released From Restrictions	(\$64,195)
<b>Increase in Net Assets With Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>(\$27,709)</b>

**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS** **\$1,017,844**

NET ASSETS BEGINNING OF YEAR \$2,410,002

**NET ASSETS END OF YEAR** **\$3,427,846**



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### **Mission**

InterFaith Works affirms the dignity of each person and every faith tradition, builds racial and religious equity, and creates bridges of understanding among us.

---

### **Vision**

InterFaith Works builds bridges of understanding to affirm the dignity of all people in Central New York. Working with the different faith communities and the diversity of the region's people, we address deeply embedded social divisions. Informed and influenced by the values and ethics of the faith traditions, we work with the community to find common ground on its issues. Using the tools of interfaith and cross-cultural dialogue, we create life-changing experiences that lead to actions for the creation of a more equitable and loving community.

InterFaith Works of Central New York  
1010 James Street, Syracuse, NY 13203  
Telephone: 315-449-3552  
Website: [www.interfaithworkscny.org](http://www.interfaithworkscny.org)





In Loving Memory of Our Mother  
**Elizabeth “Betty” El-Hindi**

August 20, 1925 - March 20, 2021



This photograph from 1997 was taken in Northern Syria.

The children flocked around our mother as they displayed their embroidered birds and beamed as she admired their handiwork.

Our mother is dearly missed but her spirit lives on along with her dedication to the Mission of InterFaith Works.

*To Mom with Love from All Your Children*





The Sikh Foundation of Syracuse congratulates the 2021 InterFaith Leadership Award Dinner honorees. The foundation's mission is to support the welfare of all humans; preserve and promote Sikh heritage, history and philosophy; and prepare youth for tomorrow's world by virtue of the Sikh ideals of universal equality, utilizing a contemporary world perspective that promotes peace and harmony. The foundation provides a Learning Center (Gurudwara Sahib) in Liverpool, where the religious and spiritual needs of the community are met.



Dr. Baljinder Singh,  
Gurvinder Kaur  
and Family



*Dr. Baljinder Singh is presented a copy of "Prominent Sikhs of USA" by Congressman Jerry Mc Nerney in Washington, DC, on Jan. 28, 2020. Dr. Singh was recognized for his inclusion in the book, which celebrates the achievements and contributions of prominent Sikh Americans.*

**InterFaith Works of Central New York**

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