

INTERFAITH CENTER OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012



Dare to understand.

WWW.INTERFAITHCENTERPA.ORG



"Many look at the gathering here today and see the distinctions between our religious beliefs and practices. While we have distinctions that separate us, we have much in common. We gather together respectful of what divides us, and celebrating that which unites us in our love of God and Neighbor."

-His Eminence Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia and founding Co-convener of the Religious Leaders Council

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Community Partners and Friends:

As our country marked the tenth anniversary of 9/11, *We the People* of Philadelphia gathered together to re-dedicate ourselves to a unified vision of harmony and peace in our region. Civic and religious leaders signed onto this vision, published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on 9/11/11.



The Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia has been proud to be a new part of Philadelphia landscape that emerged in the last decade. We believe that eradicating prejudice, building trust and cooperation and reducing a culture of violence will not happen on its own.

In this retrospective of 2011-12, you will glimpse some of the Center's impact through work in neighborhoods and at leadership levels, including:

- Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Baha'i teens and their congregations in five neighborhoods embarked on a year-long journey of interfaith understanding and service through the *Walking the Walk* initiative.
- Twenty-seven faith communities, through the *Religious Leaders Council*, issued a strong statement and action plan in response to illegal gun sale, possession, and use in Philadelphia.
- Grassroots efforts were recognized as *Zones of Peace* -- this year's nominees ranged from groups addressing immigration issues, health care access, and gun violence to youth development, congregational mediation, and women's issues.

We are profoundly grateful for the generosity and breadth of donors – individuals, foundations, corporations and community partners -- that has enabled the Center to grow and flourish. Our work has achieved respect and recognition thanks to the talent, expertise, dedication and leadership of our extraordinary Board and Staff team.

Thank you!

Abby Stamelman Hocky

Abby Stamelman Hocky
Executive Director

Youth Service and Leadership

The Center creates and supports meaningful, effective and far-reaching programs to help today's youth as they shape the future of interfaith relations. Programs such as *Walking the Walk* are designed for both high school and college age students, and attract participants from the Greater Philadelphia area. Students from both Philadelphia and throughout the United States participate in our *Alternative Break* program. The Center continues to pilot new programs to meet the diverse needs of the community. In 2011, for example, we created and conducted *Know Thy Neighbor, Know Thyself*, a retreat for emerging Christian youth leaders.

Walking the Walk

Walking the Walk (WTW) is a nationally recognized initiative that brings together high school students from diverse faith traditions within the greater Philadelphia area. Students experience a variety of congregations and holiday traditions, work in community service, and engage in both structured and unstructured dialogue. Through this experiential approach to learning, students deepen their own identities while gaining invaluable perspectives into one another's backgrounds, interests, values and belief systems.

In 2011-12, the Center ran five WTW networks in the city and suburbs. Through WTW, 16 partner congregations and 49 teens dedicated over 1000 hours to serving local constituencies in partnership with Lower Merion Conservancy, Aid for Friends, SHARE Food Project, the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association, the Inglis House (a skilled nursing care facility), and Grumblethorpe (an historic house located in Germantown).

Our *Walking the Walk Goes Global* event on July 6th, held in collaboration with Amid East, a State Department funded initiative, brought together 25 international students and 18 American students, representing twelve countries in all. In its second year, *Walking the Walk Goes Global* offered students a unique opportunity to experience a variety of religious traditions and practices, while engaging in bridge building and dialogue activities.

Walking the Walk Alumni Program



Thanks to the interest and enthusiasm of many of our WTW students, our *Walking the Walk Alumni Program* continues to expand. This year, alumni participated in a number of activities and initiatives.

- Four WTW alumni became student group leaders.
- Christian WTW alumni took part in a "Know Thyself" weekend retreat that focused on religious identity in a pluralistic world. The "Know Thyself" program was made possible by a grant from the Eugene C. Bay Fund of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church.
- At our annual Spring Concert, alumni served on a panel in which they shared how their WTW experiences have impacted them.
- During our *Walking the Walk Goes Global* event, alumni helped facilitate and guide discussions, and led various dialogue activities.

Walking the Walk has inspired many of alumni to continue the inter-religious dialogue on their own. For example, two of our alumni have gone on to participate in Face to Face/Faith to Faith, an Auburn Seminary-sponsored interfaith summer camp for high school students. Other WTW alumni have become leaders of interfaith movements on their college campuses.

Youth Service and Leadership

Alternative Break

Adapted from the Center's *Walking the Walk* curriculum, our *Alternative Break* provides an interfaith immersion and service program tailored primarily to college students.

In 2011-12, we hosted Alternative Break programs for Temple University, St. Joseph's University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Wisconsin, and Blair Academy (a New Jersey Boarding School).

Each weeklong program includes site visits and worship experiences in five to six different faith communities, interactive case study and dialogue sessions, and hands-on community service work.

"We can stop interfaith hatred now, in our generation"

— Vikki, Student Team Leader, Temple University



Know Thy Neighbor, Know Thyself Retreat

In December 2011, 14 high school youth and six adults participated in a pilot program to provide emerging Christian youth leaders an opportunity to explore the topic, "Christian faith formation in a religiously pluralistic world."

The group engaged in team building activities, worship, bible study, creative arts and the sharing of faith stories. As part of the closing ritual, participants signed the following statement written collectively during the retreat:

We, the Christian 'Walking the Walk' retreat community of December 2011, are committed to:

- ❖ 'Love one another', as Christ has taught us.
- ❖ Know our religious neighbors and walk with them, without the intent of changing them.
- ❖ Open ourselves to the possibility of mutual transformation.
- ❖ Risk being honest about who we are and what we believe.

Adult Learning & Leadership

As interest in inter-religious dialogue grows throughout the region, the Center continues to expand its services in diverse ways to a wide range of constituencies.

Gateway to Religious Communities

In our *Gateway to Religious Communities* program, we invite people of all beliefs to step across the threshold of a new congregation or faith community to meet with clergy and other leadership and participate in a guided experience of the rituals, customs and worship. In the Fall, five West Philadelphia congregations opened their doors through *Gateway* to the community at large. In the spring of 2012, four congregations along Broad Street partnered in hosting a *Gateway* series, creating an exciting and hopeful new spirit of community in the neighborhood.



Religious Diversity in the Workplace

“More than ever, businesses, governments, non-profits and other organizations are finding it necessary to adopt a global mindset in order to remain viable and relevant in today’s global marketplace. As organizations recognize the importance of developing greater cross-cultural competence, diversity and inclusion practitioners are at the forefront.”

-Global Diversity and Inclusion: Perceptions, Practices and Attitudes, a Study for the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), 2009.

The Interfaith Center remains one of the few organizations in the country that helps private and public sector employers respond to workplace issues related to religious diversity and sensitivity. As demand for our services rise, the Center has responded by developing a flexible mix of customized workshops, training programs, and seminars. We also consult privately and offer confidential coaching on an as needed basis.

In 2011-12, the Center provided religious sensitivity training to Franklin Institute personnel and docents in preparation for a major exhibit featuring the Dead Sea Scrolls. We also led an interactive case-study workshop for employees of PECO’s Government and External Affairs division that focused on workforce issues related to religious and cultural diversity.

“It will definitely help us to associate and interact with our visitors in a respectful manner.”

-Participant, The Franklin Institute

“It was great to hear people speak openly about their beliefs.”

-Participant, The Franklin Institute

Religious Leaders Council



Founded and administered by the Interfaith Center, the *Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia* consists of the elected or appointed heads of 27 faith communities and/or denominations. Reflecting the Council's growing contribution to Greater Philadelphia, the Council:

- Led an interfaith service to mark Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter's inauguration
- Made significant contributions to the City's public commemoration of the tenth anniversary of 9/11 by hosting an interfaith prayer service and signing onto a public statement of unity (see page 9).
- Issued a timely and crucial statement and plan of action in response to illegal gun sale, possession, and use in Philadelphia.

Zones of Peace



The major, ongoing community-based initiative of the Religious Leaders Council, *Zones of Peace*, continues to recognize outstanding religious organizations, schools, and places of worship dedicated to stopping violence.

As they strive to create zones of peace in their communities, the work of this year's nominees ranged from addressing immigration issues, health care access and gun violence to youth development, congregational mediation, and women's issues.

In spring 2012, the Council recognized the work of three communities, Arch Street Friends Meeting, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, and Philadelphia Alliance Against Drugs and Violence. The Council received eleven nominations for future recognition, representing communities in West Philadelphia, Rawnhurst, Lawncrest, Kensington, North Philadelphia, and Jeffersonville.

Mayor Nutter's Inauguration

The Religious Leaders Council hosted a service honoring the inauguration of Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter.

Held at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul on the morning of December 28th 2011, the service was attended by city officials, religious leaders, and the general public.

The service served as a venue through which the diverse religious communities of Philadelphia could offer their prayers for those who serve our city while honoring the growing relationship between the Religious Leaders Council and the Mayor's office.

Other Programs

West Philadelphia Economic Development Program

For the second year, the Interfaith Center was honored to serve as a mentoring organization for three small non-profit organizations in West Philadelphia. The Center's Executive Director provided coaching and technical assistance to the leadership of these groups in order to strengthen their capacity to serve our community. This initiative was funded by a Federal Economic Redevelopment grant administered by the Mayor's Office of Faith Based Initiatives.

New CORE (Conversation on Race and Ethnicity)

The Interfaith Center collaborated on a series of inter-congregational dialogues on race among six *Walking the Walk* congregations in West Philadelphia and Suburban West. *New CORE* is an interfaith, interracial group dedicated to nurturing an honest, healing conversation among those who live in the region.

Business Leaders Roundtable

The Business Leaders Roundtable was convened in Fall 2010 by S.A. Ibrahim, CEO of Radian Inc., to engage area leaders as 'thought partners' with the Interfaith Center. Meeting semi-annually, Roundtable leaders explore topics related to managing issues of religious diversity in the workforce as well as their impact on the regional and global marketplace.

At its fall meeting, the Roundtable focused on how faith impacts the ethics of corporate leadership. During the spring meeting, presenters from Merck & Co and PECO, Inc. shared their organizations' respective models of diversity and inclusion.

Board Engagement Process

In 2011 the important work of the Interfaith Center was recognized by the Philadelphia Foundation, which awarded the Center with an Organizational Effectiveness grant.

Working with an organizational development consultant, the Center used the grant to conduct a comprehensive eight-month assessment of its Board and leadership development processes. The Center made the strategic recruitment of new Directors a top organizational priority by establishing a permanent, standing committee devoted to Board Engagement and Nominations. Board members conducted an in depth examination of various Board processes, resulting in numerous changes to support the Center's long-term strategy of building a governing body that can evolve with the changing needs of the organization.

Dare to Understand Spring Concert

Nearly 300 people gathered on March 5th to celebrate the work of the Interfaith Center, raising over \$90,000 to support our programs and initiatives throughout the Greater Philadelphia region.

The evening featured a moving tribute to former board member Thomas S. Stewart, who turned to interfaith work after tragically losing his son-in-law in the World Trade Center terror attack on 9/11/01. Mr. Stewart was honored posthumously and, as part of the tribute, the Interfaith Center created the *Dare to Understand* award (see below).

Tony Award-Nominated Broadway Star Ann Crumb and pianist James Bassi regaled guests with a variety of songs from Broadway and the world of Jazz. Guests also enjoyed meeting with *Walking the Walk* high school youth who provided stories and insights from their experiences as participants in the Center's interfaith service learning initiative.



The First Annual Dare to Understand Award

The Dare to Understand award is designed to recognize and honor an individual of distinction in the field of interfaith work. The recipient will through his/her actions reflect the Center's values of diversity and challenge barriers to understanding. With this award, we celebrate those who "dare to understand" in bold ways and applaud the courage it takes to cross lines of difference and work together for the common good.

Commemorating the 10th anniversary of 9/11

We the People....

The Interfaith Center of Greater Philadelphia was honored to play a central role in commemorating the tenth anniversary of 9/11, working hand in hand with Mayor Michael Nutter's Office, the Constitution Center and the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia.

Hundreds of area citizens participated in the 10th Anniversary Commemoration, which included a public memorial event on Independence Mall and an open prayer gathering at Arch Street Meetinghouse. After the Arch Street Meetinghouse gathering, people were invited to write messages of hope and healing on colorful ribbons that later became part of an artistic installation in New York City. Area citizens were also invited to share their stories, hopes, prayers and commitments to achieve a more perfect union on a specially designed website.



The ribbons, which will be included in a future art installation outside of Ground Zero, created a beautiful rainbow of visions for a future marked by respect and understanding.

Members of the organizing coalition, inspired and empowered by the sense of unity and hope engendered during the Commemorative events, placed a public message of hope and unity in the Philadelphia Inquirer on September 11th. Harking back to the preamble of the Constitution of the United States, the message was a stirring call to the citizens of Greater Philadelphia to keep working toward a better future for all (printed in full on page 9).

Thanks to the commitment of our corporate sponsors combined with the vision, dedication and hard work of the coalition of community partners convened by the Interfaith Center, the events were powerful reminders of the significant impact organizations like the Center have made in the last decade.



Commemorative activities not only honored those who lost their lives on September 11th, and their families, but also served to reinforce the values outlined in the pledge while calling on all to commit to serving their communities into the years ahead.

As we commemorate the 10th anniversary of 9/11,

We the People

of Greater Philadelphia

UNITE

in grief, remembrance and hope.

STAND

for justice, tolerance and compassion.

COMMIT

to building community, understanding and a more perfect union.

**To add your signature, hopes, prayers and commitments,
visit www.phillyuniteson911.org.**

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This message is a joint initiative of a coalition of Philadelphia leaders spearheading a local commemoration of the tenth anniversary of 9/11. The goal is to encourage citizens from all walks of life to share their signatures, hopes, prayers and commitments. The coalition's overarching mission is to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and dignity across lines of religious, ethnic and socioeconomic solemn occasion.



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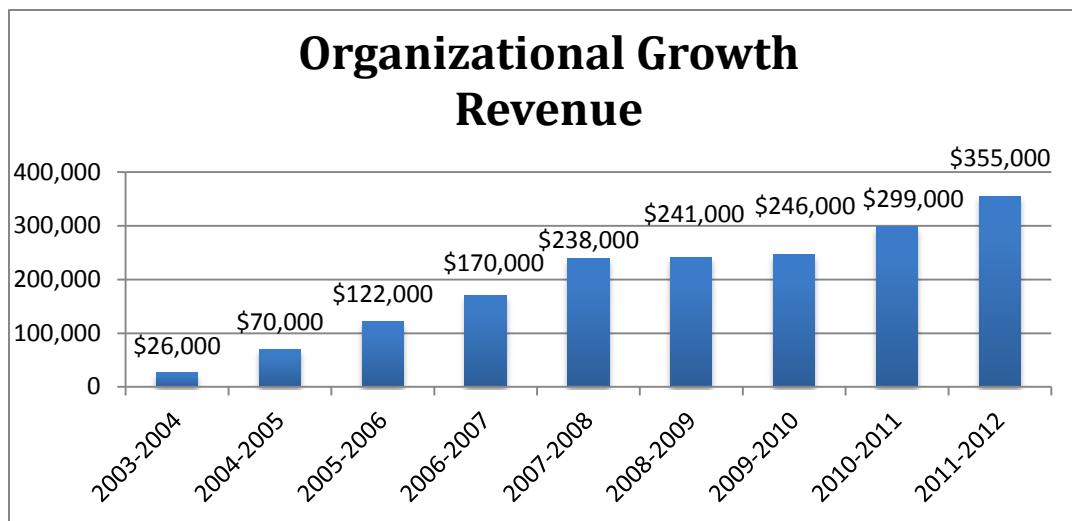
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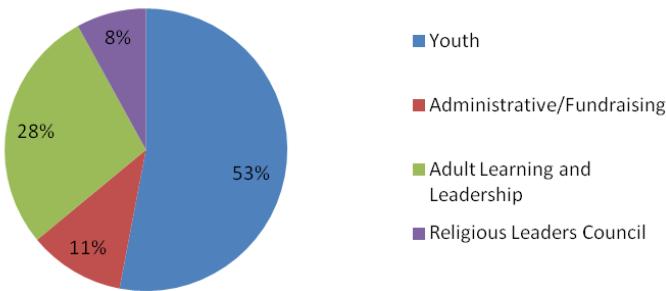


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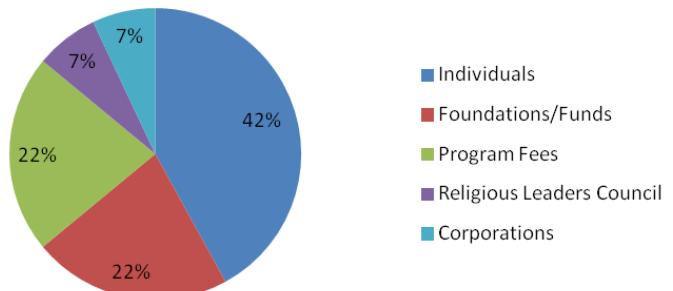
Finances at a Glance



Expense by Program Area



Sources of Revenue



Income		Expense	
Individuals	\$ 144,000	Personnel	\$ 276,000
Foundations/Funds	\$ 74,500	Program Materials	\$ 70,500
Program Fees	\$ 73,500	Administrative Expense	\$ 14,500
Religious Leaders Council	\$ 26,000	Total Expense	\$ 361,000
Special Projects	\$ 4,000		
Government	\$ 7,500		
Corporations	\$ 25,500	Net Income	\$ (6,000)
Total Income	\$355,000		

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