



# Interfaith Philadelphia

Dare to understand.

**2019 ANNUAL REPORT** 

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR ••••••

#### **Dear Friends:**

Interfaith Philadelphia's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary year arrived in a political and social climate fraught with harsh and polarizing debate over issues crying out for solutions. The corrosive effect of discourse that demeans and dehumanizes people is unfortunately familiar territory for those laboring in the field of interreligious understanding.

In was in this climate that we decided to dedicate 2019 to offering an antidote, A Year of Civil Conversations. With deep gratitude to Krista Tippett and the On Being Project, we worked in partnership to roll out a process that invites us to dive deeply into the complexity of the issues of our day, sharing stories that evoke our common humanity. We drew on a decade and a half of bridge-building programming and trusted community partnerships to chart a course that is here to stay. For, as Krista Tippett says, "as we learn to speak together differently, we learn to live together differently."

Several years ago, we sought an image that would depict our call to action: Dare to Understand. We wanted to place this message prominently on the streets of Philadelphia, in a neighborhood that embodies all that is possible when we come to know, understand, and embrace our neighbors. With thanks to Mural Arts Philadelphia, the Aquinas Center and artists Jared Bader and Rashidah Salam, the bold and colorful image on the cover challenges us to make this vision a reality in each and every corner of our region.

As revealed in the pages of our 2019 Annual Report, the core work of Interfaith Philadelphia is the pro-active foundation we build to help create a climate of respect in our region. But we cannot do this alone. So we invite you to join us as interfaith travelers – to experiment with our *Passport to Understanding* – individually or in your own setting. Together we can make a difference through five core commitments: Be curious. Venture out. Welcome in. Stand tall. Stand with.

We are grateful to the community partners, diverse program participants, and donors who invest in helping bring to life a healthy, religiously diverse democracy. It is with all of you that we challenge this region's citizens to dare to understand one another.

With deep gratitude and respect,

Abby Steinelman Hocky

**Abby Stamelman Hocky** 

**Executive Director** 



# **COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

Our community programs bridge divides through workshops, trainings, arts, and immersive interfaith experiences.



## VISIONARY WOMEN Rooted in Faith, Committed to Justice

Visionary Women is an inter-generational program engaging issues at the intersection of religion, gender, and social justice concerns. Since 2016, 50-75 women per year have participated in this experiential dialogue and skill-building initiative. Sessions offer immersion in five religious settings and draw on peer to peer learning. Visionary Women are encouraged to continue their interfaith learning and collaboration and offer programs within their own communities.

Visionary Women now boasts more than 180 alumni!



# ENCOUNTERING OTHER FAITHS

Encountering Other Faiths facilitator training is a day-long workshop to equip individuals to lead interfaith dialogue in their own settings. The day is spent building skills, sharing best practices, visiting a local faith community, and discussing the joys and challenges encountered in interfaith contexts.

## **WORKPLACE DIVERSITY**

Interfaith Philadelphia is one of the few organizations in the country that helps employers build competence and understanding around religious diversity. We offer organizations, companies, hospitals, schools, and government organizations a flexible mix of trainings and seminars that promote understanding, cooperation, and positive relationships between individuals of all faiths or none.



## **GATEWAY TO RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES**



Gateway to Religious Communities is a series where local congregations and religious faith open their doors to welcome curious visitors. Participants have the opportunity to cross the threshold into a new community, experience worship services, meet with community leaders, ask questions, and expand their interfaith insights.

# PUBLIC ART INITIATIVE

Interfaith Philadelphia is proud to work with Mural Arts Philadelphia to harness the power of art to inspire and challenge us. This year, we collaborated with members of the South Philadelphia community and local artists Rashida Salaam and Jared Bader to install a new *Dare to Understand* mural at the Aguinas Center.

Dedicated in September 2019, the mural will continue to serve as a site for arts and interfaith programming.



Mural Arts Philadelphia

# ART OF CONNECTION

Featuring workshops, performances, and artist talk-backs, this new public series explored how dancers, musicians, and writers throughout Philadelphia are using art to build relationships across lines of religious and cultural difference. Through this program, participants learned more about how artists around our region use their art to better understand themselves and one another.



## **ART OF INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING**

Art of Interfaith Understanding explores the intersection of art and religion through guided tours at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Participants engage with art in new and creative ways, drawing insights about faith traditions around the globe.





# YOUTH INITIATIVES

Our youth initiatives equip young people with the skills, experiences, and resources necessary to live in a diverse world, deepen their own self-knowledge, and break through the walls that divide them from others.

# WALKING THE WALK®

Our Walking the Walk youth initiative is a nationally-recognized peer-learning experience. Teens who participate in this program engage in exploration of their own identities, and learn how to more deeply relate to people of other religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. This initiative continues to bring together students from a variety of schools and congregations across the region for a year of exploration and dialogue.



There are now more than 700+ alumni of Walking the Walk!



## **ALTERNATIVE BREAK**

Our alternative break program for high school and college students provides young adults with a unique opportunity for an immersive experience in interfaith engagement. Interfaith Philadelphia hosted students from 10 schools throughout the year for a week of learning, curiosity, service, reflection, and fun.

# **MOSAIC**

A mosaic celebrates both the uniqueness of an individual tile and the beauty of many tiles arranged together. This is the driving vision behind *Mosaic*, a one-week summer camp for middle school students in South Philadelphia. This year, 25 middle schoolers took field trips to local faith communities and engaged in creative arts projects and educational workshops around identity and leadership.



This program is made possible with the generous support of the Mary Beth Gallagher Youth Legacy Fund.

The Mary Beth Gallagher Youth Legacy Fund was established to ensure that young people in their most formative years have the opportunity to be a part of a meaningful interfaith experience.





# CRITICAL TABLES

To create vibrant networks of interfaith connections across the region, Interfaith Philadelphia convenes critical tables of religious and community leaders dedicated to fostering mutual respect and understanding.



# **RELIGIOUS LEADERS COUNCIL**

Co-convened by Archbishop Charles Chaput, Imam Anwar Muhaimin, Rabbi David Straus, and Bishop Daniel Gutierrez, the Religious Leaders Council has 33 member communities and represents more than two million people of diverse faith traditions throughout the Greater Philadelphia region.

#### REPRESENTED COMMUNITIES

African Methodist Episcopal Church

Al-Aqsa Islamic Society

American Sikh Council

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Black Clergy of Philadelphia

Board of Rabbis of Greater Philadelphia

Congregation Mikveh Israel

Council of Korean Churches of Greater Philadelphia

Delaware Valley Association of Reform Rabbis

Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church

Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

Franconia Conference of the Mennonite Church USA

Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity

Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

Masjlis Ash-Shura of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley

Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia

Mosque of Shaikh M.R. Bawa Mahaiyaddeen

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ

Philadelphia Gospel Movement

Philadelphia Leadership Foundation

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Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA

Unitarian Universalist Association, Central Eastern Region

Won Institute of Graduate Studies



# **INTER-SEMINARY INITIATIVE**

Through retreats, presentations, site visits and other creative programming, we create opportunities for interfaith learning among students, faculty and administrators. The Inter-Seminary Initiative helps to educate and encourage future leaders to develop the skills to build collaborative relationships, bridge differences, and work for the common good.



## **ZONES OF PEACE**

The Religious Leaders Council strives to make our region "a zone of peace, free of fear, filled with respect, and marked by deeds of kindness." In that spirit, the Council began the *Zones of Peace* initiative in 2015 to honor houses of worship, schools, and community-based organizations creatively addressing the root causes of violence.

There are now 80+ recognized organizations in the Zones of Peace network.





# A YEAR OF CIVIL CONVERSATIONS

Through facilitator trainings, local conversations, and public events, A Year of Civil Conversations helped people across the Greater Philadelphia region challenge the deep polarization of today's public discourse by sharing authentically and listening respectfully to one another.



# **FACILITATOR TRAINING**

This half-day training gave participants the skills to organize conversations across lines of difference in their congregations, workplaces, and communities. During the course of the training, trainees listened to an episode of the On Being podcast that sparked conversations, participated in a facilitated conversation, explored case studies developed by Interfaith Philadelphia, and practiced skills for navigating conflict.

Interfaith Philadelphia trained 439 people to lead conversations in their own schools, congregations, workplaces, and communities.

**180 FROM CONGREGATIONS** 

119 FROM NONPROFITS & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

83 FROM SCHOOLS & UNIVERSITIES

26 FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES (SEMINARIES, STUDY GROUPS, ETC.)

22 FROM BUSINESSES & CORPORATIONS

9 FROM OTHER SECTORS (INCLUDING FOUNDATIONS, GOVERNMENT, MINISTERIUMS)



WE HAD TRAINING ATTENDEES FROM ALL OVER, INCLUDING:

DELAWARE, KANSAS, NEBRASKA, MARYLAND, MINNESOTA, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, NORTH CAROLINA, VERMONT, VIRGINIA, PENNSYLVANIA



**13 TRAININGS** 

439 PEOPLE TRAINED



FACILITATOR TOOLKIT DEVELOPED



EXPANDED ONLINE RESOURCES CREATED





Reported stronger mediation, listening, leadership, and communication skills.



Said the training furthered their knowledge and confidence to plan a Civil Conversation event.



Said that they were planning to organize a Local Conversation.



"Several sensitive issues came up at a recent neighborhood gathering, and the training made a huge difference in my approach. Without the training I might not have had those conversations, but with it I was able to calmly express some of my own views on difficult topics and have a productive exchange."

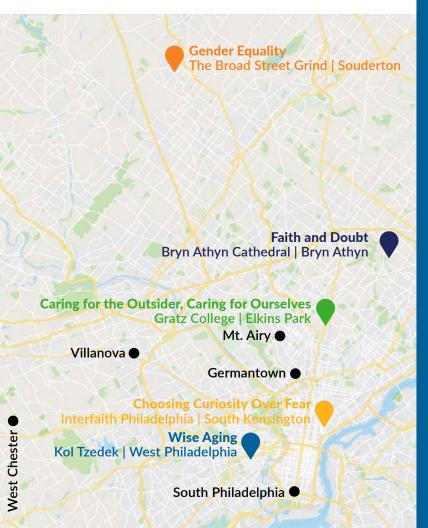
- Priscilla Taylor-Williams, Retired Religious Educator

# LOCAL CONVERSATIONS

Local Conversations gave participants a chance to experience deep and respectful conversation, often focused on divisive subject matter. These events offered the opportunity for people to lean into one another, in a season fraught with voices attempting to polarize.

Interfaith Philadelphia supported and accompanied trained facilitators in hosting over 50 Local Conversations throughout the region.

See the map below for a few examples of the diverse settings and topics that were explored during these Local Conversations:





# LOCAL CONVERSATIONS ..... SPOTLIGHT .....

"Facilitating Civil Conversations once a month has been a privilege. A small piece of humanity is restored to us after these times together, as we seek to understand. We leave realizing these issues are all deeply complex, as are we."

- Megan Briggs, Local Conversation Facilitator

"I've learned that a big part of trust is that it's a two-way street. If you want to hear someone, you have to be willing to share a part of yourself as well."

- Chris Braganca, Villanova Student

# ••• PUBLIC EVENTS•••

Interfaith Philadelphia sponsored a series of moderated conversations engaging topics that are current, potentially divisive, and connected to the theme of interfaith understanding.



Live Recording of *On Being* to a 700-person audience, featuring conversationalists Shane Claiborne and Ambassador Omar Saif Ghobash later broadcast to millions of listeners on over 400 NPR Stations





The vast majority of people attending public events said that the event promoted understanding among individuals and communities in the region.

#### **IDENTITY & BELONGING**



3/4 said that after attending this event, they were more likely to speak up when people from other religions are being targeted or discriminated against.

#### **RACE & FAITH**



2/3 said that after attending this event, they were more likely to seek out conversations with people from other religions.

#### **RELIGION & THE MEDIA**

100% said this conversation promoted understanding among individuals and communities in the region.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT 2018-2019**



FOUNDATIONS/FUNDS: \$258,130

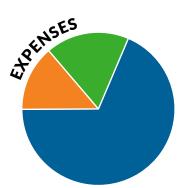
**INDIVIDUALS: \$255,895** 

PROGRAM FEES: \$63,598

**RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES: \$52,865** 

CORPORATIONS: \$30,700

TOTAL: \$661,188



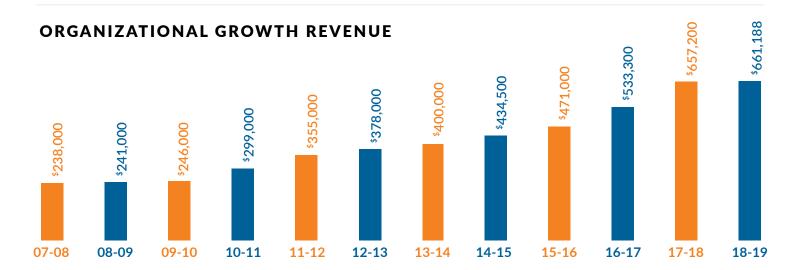
**PERSONNEL:** \$452,159

PROGRAM: \$116,316

**ADMINISTRATIVE: \$91,443** 

**TOTAL: \$659,918** 

NET INCOME: \$1,270



# FUNDRAISING EVENTS

#### **Dare To Understand Award**

Since 2012, Interfaith Philadelphia has recognized individuals of distinction who, through their actions, reflect the agency's commitment to diversity and challenge barriers to understanding. The 2019 Dare to Understand Award was presented to Krista Tippett, founder and CEO of the On Being Project.

### Love ALL: Get on Court, Build Bridges, Connect Hearts

Championed by former professional tennis player Fazal Syed, and in partnership with Level 7 Tennis, we hosted our second annual interfaith tennis event: Love ALL. This event included youth and adult tennis clinics and a pro tennis exhibition.



## **FUNDER AND DONOR REPORT 2018-2019**

#### PREMIER (\$50,000)

The John Templeton Foundation

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# LOOKING FORWARD: Passport to Understanding

Passport to Understanding is a new initiative supporting Interfaith Philadelphia's commitment to equip individuals with competencies for interfaith engagement, build authentic relationships of mutual trust and solidarity, and advance interfaith understanding in the public sphere.

Learn more about the Passport and the Interfaith Peer Learning Network at: interfaithphiladelphia.org/passport



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## **OUR MISSION**

In order to promote social harmony and inter-religious understanding, Interfaith Philadelphia equips individuals and communities for interfaith engagement, builds collaborative relationships, and stands in solidarity with our diverse neighbors.



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