INTERFAITH PHILADELPHIA 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Expanding Horizons



Our Mission

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

Our Vision

Since our founding in 2004, Interfaith Philadelphia has challenged people across sectors to dare to understand one another. Our bold vision is to have our region reflect the vibrancy of a religiously diverse democracy, one in which all people are valued, distinctive traditions are welcomed, and people of diverse backgrounds collaborate to shape a just and compassionate society.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

When we welcome people into our programs, we frequently hear stories of delight about how this work expands their horizons. Perhaps it was engaging with someone for the first time who is Muslim or Jewish, Bahá'i or Buddhist, Pentecostal or Religious Society of Friends. Perhaps they had longed for inter-generational conversation about race or faith, gender or secularism. Perhaps they stretched their listening and conversation skills, heard or shared stories of despair and doubt, or of spiritual practices that offer grounding and wisdom in uncertain times.

Interfaith encounters have a way of opening us to deeper and wider horizons. They offer ways of finding meaning together – of having conversations that tap our souls, spark our curiosity, and expand our awareness. Have you had this experience?

Research indicates that our workplace is the most common setting in which we encounter individuals with diverse religious orientations. And further research shows that it is a rare workplace that has added religious and spiritual identity to their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

In the pages ahead, you will see ways that Interfaith Philadelphia *expanded horizons* in 2023. We deepened existing and formed new partnerships with individuals, organizations, schools, and places of worship. We offered skills and knowledge to further fulfill our mission of promoting interreligious understanding in our region.

Abby Steinelman Hocky

Thank you for making this work dynamic through your engagement, vision, and financial investment.

Gratefully,

Abby Stamelman Hocky

Executive Director

YOUTH INITIATIVES







Alternative Break

This year, students from Bryn Mawr College, LaSalle University, Messiah College, North Carolina State University, and Penn State University joined us for *Alternative Break* trips. During their time with us, they visited 24+ faith communities while engaging in service projects to tackle important social issues such as homelessness, food insecurity, racism, and poverty. Their experiences included morning worship at Bethel AME Church of Ardmore, mindful meditation practice at Won Buddhism of Philadelphia, and organizing clothing and accessories as volunteers at the Career Wardrobe in Lansdowne.

"Respect is one of the most important things when entering into conversations with those who you may not agree with."

- Alternative Break Participant

Youth Initiatives foster understanding, respect, and collaboration among young people from diverse religious backgrounds.
Students explore faith traditions and cultures that make up our region, while gaining skills to engage across difference.

Mosaic Summer Program

This summer, students from five neighborhoods, five faith traditions, and a range of ethnicities participated in our Youth Neighborhood Mosaic Summer Program.

These students explored the Passport to Understanding, strengthening their identities while getting to know their diverse peers. Students brought sacred objects to show their new friends, engaged with leadership at St. Thomas Aquinas Church and the Praise Center, and learned about Islam and Judaism. Partners for this year's three Mosaic summer programs included St. Thomas Aquinas Church, the Praise Center, Gesu School, Community Partnership School, Hope Partnership for Education, and Vision Academy Charter School.





93%

OF MOSAIC PARTICIPANTS
SAY THEY FEEL MORE
PREPARED AND MOTIVATED
TO STAND WITH THOSE
WHO ARE DISCRIMINATED
AGAINST

Walking the Walk Youth Initiative®

Stepping into New Spaces

In our first iteration of this program for younger students, middle schoolers from White Rock Baptist Church and Masjidullah joined together throughout the Spring to learn about the Bahá'í Faith and Islam.



Interfaith Book Trail

We launched the Interfaith Book Trail in Delaware County, an opportunity for elementary school students and their parents to learn about different faiths through books and art, reflecting on important parts of their identities.

530+ YOUTH

School Partnerships

Pushing Boundaries

Schools pushed boundaries this year as they introduced their students to new ideas and faith traditions. While some schools may be oriented toward a particular faith, their student body is often diverse. This year, many institutions turned to Interfaith Philadelphia to help their students learn to thrive in a pluralistic world.

Gesu School's 7th grade students explored the five *Passport to Understanding* practices - Be Curious, Welcome In, Venture Out, Stand Tall, Stand With - as part of their new middle school program with Interfaith Philadelphia. During this five-week program, they learned to be proud of themselves and their identities, breaking down stereotypes that strive to place them into boxes.

Al Aqsa Islamic Society's and Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy's 9th and 10th graders visited one another's schools, observing prayer services, learning how to put on a hijab, exploring their own identities, and learning about the intersection between faith and culture.

Students at William Penn Charter School and the Bryn Athyn Church School participated in our *Navigating Difficult Conversations* workshop, gaining skills to identify values, feelings, and facts when engaging in a difficult conversation with family and friends.

Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School's 11th grade students embarked on *Junior Journeys*, visiting houses of worship and exploring the effects of stereotypes on how they carry themselves in the world.

Sixth graders at C.C.A. Baldi Middle School, after studying Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, learned from four panelists about prayer in their respective faith and spiritual traditions. Students asked questions, explored the *Passport to Understanding* practices, and participated in a meditation to connect to their spiritual selves.











LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Civil Conversations Facilitator Trainings

Cross-sector professionals gained skills to facilitate important dialogues in diverse settings around the region - in workplaces, schools, congregations, and beyond. We also offered a tailored training for youth professionals in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia.



Bridges Book Club

The Interfaith Philadelphia alumni book club met monthly, reading books that pushed them to understand the world in new ways. The authors of two of the books joined them in their discussions.

This Year's Books Included:

- Last Watchman of Old Cairo by Michael David Lukas
- Tattoos on the Heart: A Power of Boundless Compassion by Gregory Boyle
- Union: a Democrat, a Republican, and a Search for Common Ground by Christopher Haugh and Jordan Blashek
- Becoming Eve: My Journey from Ultra-Orthodox Rabbi to Transgender Woman by Abby Stein
- Before the Beginning: A Spirit and Sanctioned Mate Preguel by EJ Brock

Intended for professional and personal development, the Leadership Institute of Interfaith Philadelphia offers curated pathways to build skills, relationships, and knowledge for interfaith engagement.



Workplace Diversity

Our expert staff assist employers in addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion issues around religious diversity. This year, we consulted with a range of organizations, companies, hospitals, schools, and government entities, planning and facilitating workshops, training programs, and seminars to foster understanding, cooperation, and positive relationships among individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Navigating Difficult Conversations Workshop

Adults and youth explored values, feelings, and facts and the role they play in difficult conversations in all parts of their lives. They learned skills for navigating these situations through several workshops this year.





Build Religious Literacy

In this multi-session cohort program, nearly 50 participants studied a variety of faith traditions, learning from practitioners in a "living library." The program explored the Sikh religion, Evangelical Christianity, Islam, Judaism, the Baha'i Faith, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After the completion of the virtual course, one cohort gathered in person for a shared meal and continued community-building.



In this new interactive workshop, participants learned skills for interrupting harm and practiced how to respond in scenarios of discrimination. Attendees left with the confidence to *stand with* people in their communities and workplaces.

Dialogue Face-to-Face

Speakers from different faith perspectives came together for several hour-long conversations on special topics, finding wisdom, humor, and connections along the way. Topics included spiritual urgency, conviction and restraint, and deconstructing and reconstructing scripture.



Foundations of Interfaith Leadership LIVE New Partnership Leads to National Reach

We joined forces this year with Interfaith America to launch Foundations of Interfaith Leadership LIVE. This exceptional online learning opportunity pairs our facilitated skill-building sessions with Interfaith America's asynchronous learning course. 60 participants were equipped with the essential skills and knowledge needed to excel in interfaith leadership while fostering unity and understanding among aspiring interfaith leaders.

"This is by far the most diverse Zoom group or any group I've ever been a part of. It was mind-blowing. We had about 50 people there and it was probably about 50 different takes on life — [different] regions, world views, races. I genuinely thought, I'm going to learn just by listening to the people in here."

Foundations of Interfaith
 Leadership LIVE Participant



LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE





Gateway to Religious Communities

Local congregations and religious communities opened their doors to the public to share their faith traditions with curious visitors. Visitors ventured into the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia, Bryn Athyn Cathedral, Germantown Jewish Centre, and an interfaith *iftar* with the Islamic Society of Greater Valley Forge.

Travel With Others (TWO)

The TWO program matches participants with interfaith "buddies" for monthly discussions related to faith and spirituality. The pairs came together twice as a large group. At one gathering, the group wrote a collective poem based on their experiences.



Executive Program in Faith & Social Impact

In partnership with the Center for Social Impact Strategy at the University of Pennsylvania, this eight-month executive-level certification combined a practice-based social impact curriculum with interfaith learning and networking opportunities. Leaders and innovators gathered to gain new tools, share ideas, and worked on a capstone with significant potential for impact in religiously diverse environments.

Art of Interfaith Understanding

Participants explored intersections of art and faith in partnership with the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Division for Community Engagement.

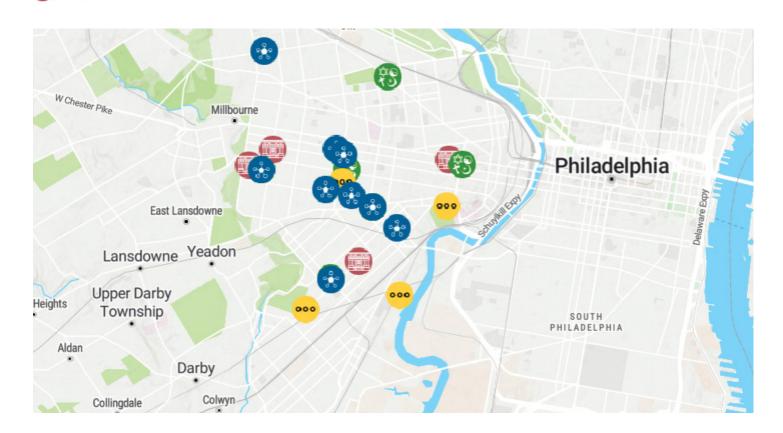
Topics Included:

- Art From World Religions
- The Christmas Story in Art
- Introducing Islam with Art
- Anticipating Passover and Holy Week
- Prayerful Looking: Art to Nourish Your Soul
- Prophets of Hope

NEIGHBORHOOD COLLABORATIONS



This year marked the completion of the Crafting Community Project (CCP), which included the launch of the West/Southwest Philadelphia Pathways Trail.



West Philadelphia Pathways Trail

CCP, a three-year neighborhood initiative funded by the William Penn Foundation, provided interfaith and intergroup art and educational programs at the neighborhood level. In West/Southwest Philadelphia the Pathways Trail highlights the multifaceted histories, religions, and cultures throughout the neighborhood. Each "stop" welcomes visitors to learn about their community's stories and belief systems, increasing understanding across lines of difference. The Pathways Trail is open to West/Southwest Philadelphia residents and visitors alike, and is designed to foster relationships, understanding, and community engagement opportunities.



Scan the QR Code to Explore the Pathways Trail or Visit: www.interfaithphiladelphia.org/west-philadelphia-crafting-community

RELIGIOUS NETWORKS

Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia

The Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia was founded in 2006 to build relationships of mutual support, offer a moral and spiritual voice in the region, and identify issues of local concern for dialogue and action. Senior leaders from thirty-five diverse religious traditions make up the Council, representing more than two million people from across the greater Philadelphia region. During the past year, the Council aligned itself with civic efforts to address our City's urgent gun violence crisis, learning about and collaborating with organizations such as the Restorative Cities Initiative, Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence, CeaseFirePA, and the District Attorney's 57 Blocks Initiative.





Places of worship and religious institutions serve as primary communities for our region's residents. Our Religious Networks convene these institutions for collaboration and broad impact.



Inter-Seminary Initiative

Through the *Inter-Seminary Initiative*, schools of higher education preparing students for vocations in religious leadership are brought together to bridge differences and work for the common good. Theological interns join our team annually, enriching their interfaith learning.

This summer, the Inter-Seminary Initiative extended a warm invitation to its members for a day of fellowship and rejuvenation, aptly named "Rest and Rejuvenation Across Religious Traditions." This retreat provided a wonderful opportunity for colleagues from various area seminaries to come together, replenish their spirits, and strengthen their bonds as they shared in a day of rest and renewal.

The Inter-Seminary Initiative Student Series brings together current and former theological students to discuss relevant topics. For the 2023 Student Series, a group of experienced faith leaders shared their insights into the question: "What is the role of religion in the public square?"

Participating Institutions:

- St. Charles Borromeo Seminary
- Won Institute for Graduate Studies
- Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
- Respect Graduate School
- Palmer Theological Seminary
- Missio Seminary
- Lancaster Theological Seminary
- United Lutheran Seminary

Religious Leaders Council Co-Conveners 2022-2023

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The Rt. Rev. Daniel Gutiérrez **Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania**

Rabbi David Straus Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

Imam Anwar Muhaimin Quba Masjid

Religious Leaders Council Members 2022-2023

Bishop Julius McAllister African Methodist Episcopal Church

Imam Mohamed Shehata Al-Aqsa Islamic Society

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Bishop Guy Glimp Church of God in Christ

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Bishop Peter Hwang Council of Korean Churches of Greater Philadelphia

Rabbi Eli Freedman **Delaware Valley Association** of Reform Rabbis

Bishop John Schol Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, The United Methodist Church

Rev. Louis Cortes Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia & Vicinity Dr. Tahir Wyatt Majlis Ash-Shura of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley

Rev. Dr. Calenthia Dowdy Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia

Imam Muhammad Miller Mosque of Shaikh M. R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen

Rev. William Worley Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ

Archbishop Mary Floyd Palmer Philadelphia Council of Clergy

Pastor Glenn McDowell Philadelphia Gospel Movement

Dr. Wilson Goode Philadelphia Leadership **Foundation**

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Rev. Ruth Faith Santana-Grace Presbytery of Philadelphia, Presbyterian Church USA

Rabbi David Glanzberg-Krainin Rabbinical Assembly, Philadelphia Region

Rabbi Shawn Zevit Reconstructionist Rabbinical **Association**

Fr. Mina Mina Saint Mary Coptic Orthodox Church in Delaware

Very Reverend Archimandrite **Avgoustinos Psomas** Saint Thomas Greek Orthodox Church

Lt. Colonel Larry Ashcraft Salvation Army of Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware

Bishop Patricia Davenport Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod ECLA

Dr. Gity Etemad Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Philadelphia

President Kim McNaughton The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Archbishop Borys Gudziak Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia

Rev. Kevin Jagoe Unitarian Universalist Association, Central Eastern Region

Rev. Dr. Bokin Kim Won Institute of Graduate Studies

Zones of Peace

An initiative of the Religious Leaders Council, Zones of Peace recognizes organizations that pioneer creative responses to violence and elevates their leadership. These include houses of worship, schools, and community-based organizations working to address the root causes of violence and make us safer in the communities where we live, work, and play. Zones of Peace recognized three new institutions this year, bringing the total to 97. In addition, our staff increased to include Rev. Dr. Jay Gardner, joining Rev. Dr. John Hougen in the coordination of Zones of Peace to strengthen collaboration among the recognized communities.

2022-2023 Recognized Zones of Peace:

- As I Plant This Seed
- St. John's Lutheran Church Mayfair
- Nationalities Service Center





Dare to Understand Awards: See No Stranger

The 2023 Dare to Understand Award was presented to Valarie Kaur - civil rights leader, lawyer, award-winning filmmaker, educator, innovator, best-selling author, Sikh American, mother, and woman warrior - for her dedication to revolutionary love. Through her keynote address, followed by a rich dialogue led by Trina Gary, Kaur shared compelling stories and guided us through actions that youth and adults can use to put her principles into practice. Valarie Kaur lingered at the reception, signing books and sharing hugs.





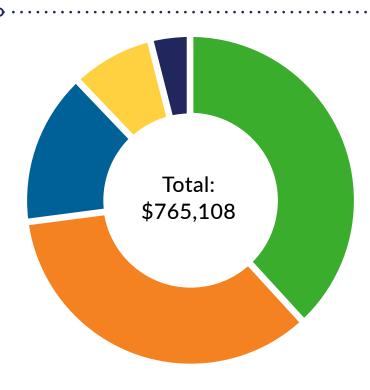




Bridges Not Barriers Breakfast

Our *Bridges Not Barriers* fundraising breakfast was a remarkable occasion that fostered inspiration, deep faith, and a sense of togetherness. The breakfast brought together over 70 community members, new and old, to learn about Interfaith Philadelphia's ongoing journey, echoing that achieving a just and compassionate society requires a collective effort. Interfaith Philadelphia leaders and alumni shared the impact of interfaith work on their daily lives, including at work and in volunteer spaces.

FINANCIAL REPORT



Revenue

Individuals:

38%

Foundations:

35%

Religious Communities:

15%

Corporations:

8%

Other:

4%

Expenses

Leadership Institute of Interfaith Philadelphia:

38%

Youth Initiatives:

25%

Religious Leaders Council:

11%

Crafting Community Project:

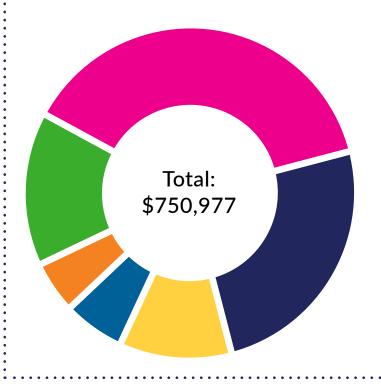
6%

Inter-Seminary Initiative:

5%

Other:

15%



UNDER & DONOR **REPORT** 2022-2023

TRAILBLAZER

\$25,000+

Anonymous

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0.....

CHANGEMAKER

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INNOVATOR

\$10.000-\$14.999

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BRIDGE-BUILDER

\$5.000-\$9.999

BrynMawr Independence

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0.....

FRIEND

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SUSTAINER \$1,000-\$2,499





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