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## ***June 2014 Interfaith Center of New York E-Announcements***

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Dear Friends,

The beginning of summer comes with some signs of hope for interreligious understanding. As we wrote last week, the Interfaith Center of New York takes inspiration from Pope Francis' visit to the Holy Land and his invitation to Presidents Shimon Peres and Mahmoud Abbas to join him at the Vatican on June 6th to pray for peace. Pope Francis' statement that "peace must resolutely be pursued" along with his gesture of imagination and hospitality offers an example of religious peacemaking at its best. Drawing on the time-honored principles of determination in the face of adversity and non-violence in the context of armed conflict, the Pontiff demonstrates shared moral values that are at the heart of the world's great religious traditions.

Closer to home, ICNY will be celebrating our 12th Annual James Parks Morton Interfaith Award Dinner on June 5th and will be welcoming teachers from around the country who have come to learn about teaching religious diversity. (The Summer Institute, as it is called, is a collaboration between the Interfaith Center, Union Theological Seminary, and the National Endowment for the Humanities).

Enriching public dialogue in [her recent Op-Ed](#) in *The Huffington Post*, ICNY's Sarah Sayeed discusses the meaning and misuse of the words "Islamic" and "Islamist." She concludes that "Muslim" is the preferable way to describe terrorists professing that religious tradition. Read more about the Interfaith Center's response to a controversy on the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in at the 9/11 Museum in our RECENT HIGHLIGHTS section below.

Finally, the death of Maya Angelou offers us the chance for a reflection. Here she speaks of change, inclusion, and responsibility in reading her poem "[On the Pulse of Morning](#)" at *Bill Clinton's inauguration*.

Best Wishes,



Rev. Chloe Breyer  
Executive Director  
The Interfaith Center of New York

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**\*\*\*\*\* ICNY Recent Highlights\*\*\*\*\***

**NY Community Leaders Address Controversy Over 9/11 Memorial Museum Film**



On Wednesday, May 14, The Interfaith Center of New York hosted a press conference of New York community leaders to address the controversy over a 9/11 Memorial Museum film. [Press reports](#) on the conference and this controversy have been published by Reports on the press conference appeared in all major U.S. media, as well as in countries around the world.

Videos of each speakers' statements are available on [our YouTube channel](#). Speakers included [Zaed Ramadan](#), board member of the Council on American-Islamic Relations - NY Chapter; [Rev. Chloe Breyer](#); [Haroon Moghul](#), National Security Expert; [Talat Hamdani](#), mother of fallen 9/11 hero Salman Hamdani, [Aisha AlAdawiya](#), Board Chair Emeritus, Women in Islam, Inc.; [Donna Nevel](#), member of Jews Against Islamophobia; [Robert Jackson](#), former NYC Councilmember and candidate for New York State Senate; [Todd Fine](#), Project Khalid, Little Syria; and [Amardeep Singh](#), Director of Programs, Sikh Coalition.

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## A Conversation on Religious Pluralism at Regis High School



ICNY's Dr. Henry Goldshmidt (moderator), Tom Dobbins, Jr. and Dr. Mehnaz Afridi

On Friday, May 16th, two leading faith-based social activists and educators spoke with Regis High School students about their efforts to build understanding, and foster collaboration, across religious lines. Some highlights included Dr. Mehnaz Afridi (Assistant Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Interfaith Education Center at Manhattan College) talking about [how people actively make pluralism happen](#); and Tom Dobbins, Jr. (Justice and Peace Coordinator in the Department of Social and Community Development of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York) speaking about [the Christian doctrine's support of interfaith dialogue](#). Prompted by student questions, these leaders also talked about [how interfaith experiences strengthened their own faiths](#), and [how to involve secularist groups in interfaith work](#).

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by The Very Reverend  
James Parks Morton  
Founder and Chair, Emeritus  
The Interfaith Center of New York

## Celebrating Selfless Sacrifice

Today, the work of The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) feels more vital than ever. Global events - from overseas to just down the street in NYC - make us more aware of the deep problems rooted in people's misunderstanding of cultures and religions different from their own.

Interfaith is basically an appreciation of religious differences. And the word "religion," at its root, means bringing together (from the Latin *religiare*: to join, to bind together). So, on June 5th, ICNY will bring together its friends to celebrate the work that we do and to honor four remarkable people who have done extraordinary things.

Interfaith empowers people from different religious communities to understand and respect each other. This is no easy task. But when it happens, then communities can work on things that everyone needs. We do this because we live in the same civilization, in the same city and at the same time.

Our annual gala gives us the opportunity to pause and reflect on how well ICNY is doing on really insurmountable (and often unpopular) problems. How effective is interfaith itself in NYC? How many people actually know what interfaith means? What truly works? Are we really making any difference? The truth of the matter is that we are not there yet. There is still a lot of fundamental work to do.

Organizations like ours are doing things for spiritual reasons, but keep in mind that true spirituality is also often misunderstood. In the most radical sense, to be spiritual is to be unselfish and, often times, unpopular. At the gala, that is why we honor people who have made really exceptional contributions for the promotion of justice, peace and positive human development. Those whom we have honored, and those we are honoring this year, have put forth great personal effort to strengthen the respect and mutual understanding among people and situations that are different from each other.

This year we honor four wonderful people. [Mrs. Gaetana Enders](#) (who died very unexpectedly this past May 21 in NYC) was a powerhouse of a humanitarian. The Honorable [Al Gore](#) continues his work on the environment with his new book, [The Future](#). This year, on the one hundredth anniversary of his birth, His Holiness [Sri Swami Satchidananda](#) will receive a posthumous Interfaith Award in honor of his pioneering work for interfaith. Lastly, we will honor respected lawyer [Peter L. Zimroth](#), one of New York City's own "legal eagles" and a most faithful public servant.

These are inspiring men and women because of the very unselfish things they have done in areas of great need throughout the world and in the United States. This year's honorees have worked in areas including the humanitarian imperative, politics, law, spirituality and the environment.

We celebrate people who have done necessary and unselfish things. We honor them because they represent an ideal of what a person can achieve. They are heroic and remarkable people who inspire us. We hope they will inspire you.

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**\*\*\*\*\* Upcoming Interfaith Center of New York Events\*\*\*\*\***

*Below we list programs offered by The Interfaith Center of New York in June. We also list additional upcoming events that may be of interest to religious leaders in New York. Listing for non-ICNY events does not imply endorsement.*

**Tickets on Sale Now for 12th James Parks Morton Awards Gala**



The Interfaith Center of New York Requests the Pleasure of Your Company at the 12th Annual James Parks Morton Awards Dinner, Thursday, June 5, 2014, 6:30 pm - 10:00 pm at New York Hilton Midtown, 1335 Avenue of the Americas at 53rd Street Cocktails and Dinner will be served.

Honorees:

The Honorable Al Gore, 45th Vice President of the United States & Nobel Peace Prize Laureate 2007

Peter L. Zimroth, Senior Counsel, Arnold & Porter LLP & Director, Center on Civil Justice, NYU Law School

Mrs. Gaetana Enders, Humanitarian

His Holiness Sri Swami Satchidananda (posthumous), Interfaith Visionary & Founder,  
Integral Yoga International

Dramatic Readings from The Very Reverend James Parks Morton's Unpublished  
Biography

Click [here](#) to buy tickets. For more information contact Ellen Greeley at (212) 870-  
3511 (212) 870-3511 or email [ellen@interfaithcenter.org](mailto:ellen@interfaithcenter.org).

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**\*\*\*\*\* ICNY Co-Sponsored Events\*\*\*\*\***

**13th Annual Dr. Betty Shabazz Awards Ceremony**



Date: Sunday, June 22

Time: 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Location: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Malcolm X  
Boulevard at 135th Street, Manhattan

"Find the Good and Praise It," was one of Dr. Betty Shabazz's favorite expressions!  
Women In Islam, Inc. is celebrating her legacy, by recognizing three women of  
diverse faith traditions, talents and accomplishments.

**Dr. Betty Shabazz Award Honorees:**

[Letitia James](#)

Public Advocate for the City of New York

[Talat Gilani Hamdani](#)

Mother of Salman Hamdani, 9/11 First Responder

Civil Liberties and Human Rights Advocate, Interfaith Bridge Builder

**Compass Award Recipients:**

[Zakiyah Ansari](#) - Advocacy Director, New York State Alliance for Quality Education  
(AQE)

[Aziza](#) - Founder/Executive Director, Def Dance Jam Workshop

The program is open to everyone, women and men, and interfaith allies! Purchase  
tickets by credit card on [Eventsbot](#) (\$35 for adults; \$20 for student) To pay by  
check or cash and for additional information, email [rsvp@womeninislam.org](mailto:rsvp@womeninislam.org)

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## Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue

Date: Wednesday, June 25

Time: 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Location: New York Insight Meditation Center, 28 West 27th Street, 10th Fl, New York, NY 10001

Building on the first Buddhist-Muslim Relations sponsored by the Buddhist Council of NY and the Peace Islands Institute in February 2014, this dialogue will continue the interfaith exploration with two prominent scholars/faith leaders. The conversation will touch upon the misconceptions that Muslims and Buddhists have of each other – often fueled by the media, especially in the wake of events in Bangladesh, Burma, and Bodhgaya (India). The speakers will present the core teachings and practices of these two traditions and reflect on the commonalities and possible challenges that their differences may present. The event will include a light lunch, time for conversation, and mingling. Registration is free. Please include event name (BM Dialogue), your name, email, organization. Send e-mail to: [tknakagaki@gmail.com](mailto:tknakagaki@gmail.com) by June 18. A flyer for this event is [here](#).

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**\*\*\*\*\* Additional Events that may be of Interest to You \*\*\*\*\***

### iMentor - Mentors Needed



Location: iMentor has partnerships with schools in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.

iMentor builds mentoring relationships that empower students in low-income communities to graduate high school, succeed in college, and achieve their ambitions. iMentor pairs high school students with college-educated mentors in matches that typically last three to four years. Link to event listing on your website: Start the [online application](#) today. For more information or questions call 646-979-4550 or email Julia Chanes at [Julia@immentor.org](mailto:Julia@immentor.org).

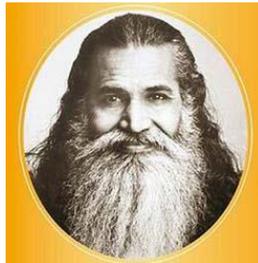
**Manhattan Multicultural Summer Youth Program at the UN**



Date: July 28-August 8 (applications accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis)  
Time: 9:00 am- 3:00 pm  
Location: United Nations

The Manhattan Multicultural Summer Youth Program (MMSY) brings together youths of different cultures, ethnicities, and faiths from around New York City area to provide an opportunity to engage with one another and create an environment where people can share, respect, and value cultural differences. Due to space limitation, registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. To apply, [click here](#). For more information, [click here](#). For questions or more information contact Mahroo Moshari, 646-420-6633 or [mahroo@mmcnyc.com](mailto:mahroo@mmcnyc.com).

### In Celebration and Honor of the 100th Birth Anniversary of Swami Satchidananda



Date: Saturday, June 7  
Time: 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
Location: Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue at 112th Street, New York, NY 10025

In Celebration and Honor of the “Global Garland” 100th Birth Anniversary of Swami Satchidananda, The Interfaith Kirtan for World Peace is coming together for devotional chants and sacred music from a variety of global faiths. In the sacred space of the world’s largest Gothic Cathedral, we will unite our voices utilizing classic Kirtan call and response. Join this celebration of our unity in diversity and our common goal of world peace. Musical guests include: Krishna Das, GuruGanesha Singh, Kirtan Rabbi, Mandala, the PS41 Songbirds Choir, Tibetan Gongs with Grand Gongmaster Don Conreaux, and Islamic Call to Prayer.

Presented by The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Integral Yoga Institute of New York, the Temple of Understanding, [gratefulness.org](http://gratefulness.org), and the Lotus Center for All Faiths. To purchase tickets, please [click here](#).

## FREEDOM SUMMER: THE NEXT GENERATION



Date: Monday, June 9

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: West Park Presbyterian Church, 165 W 86th ST (corner of Amsterdam)

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Summer and the murders of Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner as they canvassed the south in an effort to register African-Americans to vote. Much has changed in the 50 years since that summer, but the daily headlines remind us how far we still have to go in creating a more just and inclusive world for all. One June 9, The Center at West Park and West Park Presbyterian Church, in cooperation with the Andrew Goodman Foundation, will present: Freedom Summer: The Next Generation, a commemoration and discussion where we can begin to answer these questions. Doors open at 6:30 pm; program begins at 7:00 pm. Admission is free. For more info see [westparkpresbyterian.org](http://westparkpresbyterian.org) or contact Robert Brashear, 212-362-4890 or [rbrashear@gmail.com](mailto:rbrashear@gmail.com).

Oud Player on the Tel:

A Developmental Reading produced by the Jewish Plays Project



Date: Saturday, June 14

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Theater at the 14th Street Y, 344 E 14th St., New York, NY 10003

"Oud Player on the Tel" explores Israel's founding, the possibilities of a shared future that flowered briefly and then was buried in that moment of history. Vaguely referential to "Fiddler on the Roof," the play's action takes place at the intersection between the overwhelming tide of history and what might have been. It is the hope of both playwright and producer that this kind of artistic exploration might open up the conversation around this issue, allowing audience members to speak honestly, if painfully, about the difficulties both in history and in the contemporary situation between Israelis and Palestinians, Muslims and Jews. This developmental reading will be followed by a talk-back with peace

activists involved in the difficult job of trying to bring these two peoples together. Panelists include:

~ Dr. Sarah Sayeed, Director Community Partnerships, The Interfaith Center of New York

~ Joseph Montville, Director of the Program on Healing Historical Memory, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University.

~ Jacob Bender, Director of the Philadelphia office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

For more information and to purchase ticket, click [here](#).

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### \*\*\*\*\* ADL Calendar of Observances for June 2014 \*\*\*\*\*

June	Full Month	<b>LGBT PRIDE MONTH</b> Commemorates the anniversary of the June 28, 1969 Stonewall riot in New York City, the incident that initiated the modern gay rights movement in the United States. <i>LGBT</i> (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) <i>Pride Day</i> is the last Sunday in June.
June 4–5	Wednesday–Thursday	<b>SHAVUOT • Jewish</b> The "Feast of Weeks" celebrates the covenant established at Sinai between God and Israel, and the revelation of the Ten Commandments.
June 8	Sunday	<b>PENTECOST • Christian</b> Also known as <i>Whitsunday</i> , the seventh Sunday after Easter/Pascha commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and women followers of Jesus. Marks the birth of the Christian Church.
June 8	Sunday	<b>Race Unity Day • Bahá'í</b> Observance promoting racial harmony and understanding and the essential unity of humanity.
June 12	Thursday	<b>ANNE FRANK DAY</b> Birthday of young Jewish girl whose diary describes her family's experiences hiding from the Nazis through assistance of gentile friends.
June 12	Thursday	<b>LOVING DAY</b> Observes the anniversary of the 1967 United States Supreme Court decision <i>Loving v. Virginia</i> which struck down the miscegenation laws remaining in 16 states barring interracial marriage.
June 14	Saturday	<b>FLAG DAY</b> Anniversary of the adoption of the United States flag by Congress in 1777.
June 14	Saturday	<b>NISF SHABAAN • Islamic</b> "Night of Repentance" in preparation for the fast of Ramadan. Fixed as the 15th day or middle (nisf) of the eighth month of Shabaan in the Islamic calendar.
June 15	Sunday	<b>FATHER'S DAY</b> Children of all ages show appreciation for their fathers.

<b>June 15</b>	Sunday	<b>ALL SAINTS DAY • Eastern Christian</b> In Orthodox churches observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost, it commemorates all known and unknown Christian saints.
<b>June 19</b>	Thursday	<b>JUNETEENTH</b> Originally commemorating the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in 1865, it is now celebrated throughout the U.S. to honor African-American freedom and achievement.
<b>June 20</b>	Friday	<b>WORLD REFUGEE DAY</b> Raises awareness about the plight of refugees and displaced persons.
<b>June 21</b>	Saturday	<b>SUMMER SOLSTICE</b> In the northern hemisphere, the longest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of summer.
<b>June 28–July 27</b>	Saturday– Sunday	<b>RAMADAN • Islamic</b> A month of strict fasting from dawn until dusk in honor of the first revelations of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.

The full ADL Calendar of Observances for 2014 is available [here](#).

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