

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The subways have been on our minds this year at The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY).

The Metropolitan Transport Authority and other *public* institutions—courts, schools, and libraries—are the very lifeblood of a diverse community such as ours. These are the places where ICNY does its most important and unique work.

In September, following the appearance of anti-Muslim ads on ten subway platforms in Manhattan, ICNY convened an unlikely group of faith-based partners that advocated for the MTA to use disclaimers alongside such "viewpoint" ads (the MTA's term for opinionated, non-commercial advertisements). The coalition agreed that free speech allows expression of many opinions in such formats, including opinions ICNY and its partners regard as hateful. At its September board meeting, the MTA heard the concerns raised by our coalition as well as others and voted to require disclaimers on all "viewpoint ads." This interfaith organizing effort was used as a model when the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority had to confront the same issue.

Bringing about change in local government policy is only one of ICNY's interfaith peace-building activities. ICNY's <u>2012 Annual Report can be accessed here</u>. In it you will learn about religious diversity education for teachers and social workers, direct service opportunities for interfaith partners, and ongoing advocacy for religious freedom in the context of diversity.

Accomplishing this work can only occur with friends and supporters willing to invest in ICNY. This year alone your continued support made it possible to initiate the following:

- **EDUCATION:** ICNY partnered with Union Theological Seminary to offer a *National Endowment for the Humanities* Summer Institute "Religious Worlds of New York" in which 180 K-12 educators from around the country applied for the 30 fully funded fellowship positions for teachers to study in NYC for three weeks.
- **SERVICE:** With the help of a grant from the JC Flowers Foundation, ICNY collaborated with the Harlem Community Justice Center and 20 Harlem-based mosques and churches to provide support for up to 50 formerly incarcerated individuals returning to the community. Also, volunteers at St. Luke A.M.E. Church in Harlem have successfully piloted the first court-sanctioned faith-based site for the safe exchange of low-income children. Our belief is that houses of worship offer a more hospitable environment for children receiving a mandated visit from a non-custodial parent than either McDonalds or a local police precinct.

- ADVOCACY: ICNY convened and attended a number of press conferences on topics
 ranging from surveillance to hate crimes. New York religious leaders stood together in
 solidarity of the Sikh victims of the shooting at Oak Creek, Wisconsin and joined others
 in successfully requesting U.S. Senators Leahy and Grassley to hold Senate hearings on
 hate crimes and the threat of domestic extremism.
- **INTERNATIONAL:** Replication of ICNY's grassroots approach to interfaith work has been shared at conferences and summits around the globe over the last three years through our hosting of over 90 State Department sponsored "visiting leaders" as well as staff participation in peace-making conferences and dialogues in Beirut, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jakarta, and Barcelona.

Looking toward 2013, we seek to amplify our work while fortifying our capability. We have begun a strategic analysis and we are eager to hear your views about the Interfaith Center of New York. If you have not already done so, please take a moment to fill out the online survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NXV5YZY.

To continue to support our efforts to help both grassroots and immigrant religious leaders find their public voices, and civic officials see value in interfaith cooperation, we appeal to you to contribute to this year's annual campaign. You can contribute by credit card by clicking here to be transferred to the Network for Good website for payment, or call us at (212) 870-3510 and we can take your information by phone. We recently created the *James Parks Morton Legacy Circle* and encourage you to consider including ICNY in your estate planning.

Thank you for your help keeping New York City's public square warmed and enlivened by engaged religious diversity.

Best wishes for a healthy, happy, and peaceful year.

The Rev. Chloe Breyer Executive Director

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The Very Rev. James Parks Morton Founder and Chair, Emeritus

James Carles Morton