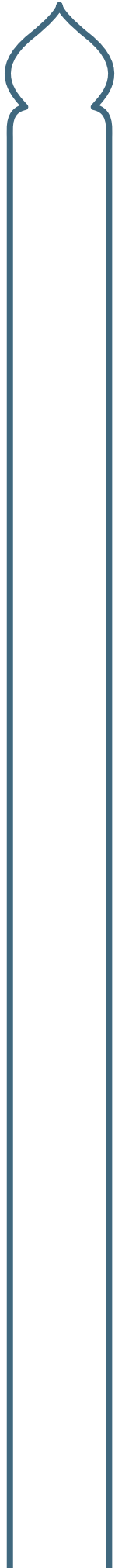




THE INTERFAITH CENTER
OF NEW YORK
Annual Report 2009





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MISSION STATEMENT

The Interfaith Center of New York seeks to make New York City and the world safe for religious differences by increasing respect and mutual understanding among people of different faith, ethnic, and cultural traditions and by fostering cooperation among religious communities and civic organizations to solve common social problems.

**The Interfaith Center of New York
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 540
New York, NY 10115
tel: (212) 870-3510 / fax: 212-870-3499
www.interfaithcenter.org**

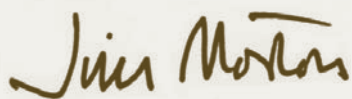
Letter from Executive Director and Founder

This year inaugurated the **James Parks Morton International Visiting Fellows Sister Cities Program**, supported by a grant from the **Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Fund**. After 13 years of work strengthening interfaith dialogue on the urban front lines of one of the most religiously diverse cities in the world, The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) welcomed delegations of 16 diverse religious and civic leaders from **Barcelona** and **Glasgow** to share our unique approach and for us to learn from the best practices of their organizations. This was only the first year of the three-year, three-city exchange, but we have already learned a great deal from the questions and personal experiences of our international visitors.

As explained in the following pages, we prepared a comprehensive 10-day schedule that focused on immigration challenges, hate crimes, and New York City's religious diversity. Highlights included **the Ven. Rewatha, a Buddhist member of the Glasgow delegation and chief monk of Great Britain**, being united with a lost Sri Lankan friend in Queens who saw him on a local TV channel and invited him to his home... **Ravinder Kaur, a Sikh member of the Glasgow delegation**, respectfully explaining to a police captain outside the Manhattan Courthouse that the Kirpan, a 6" strapped sword, is one of the five Articles of the Sikh faith, and how she has carried it with her into the **Scottish parliament** and **#10 Downing Street**. ICNY is grateful to Ravinder who, despite having to sit out of several planned activities, realized that she had a unique opportunity to educate law enforcement, the courts and other faith communities about the religious significance of the five articles of the Sikh faith.

In addition to the International program, ICNY recently received grants for its local programs and initiatives described in this report from the **New York Community Trust**, **The Harlem Community Justice Center** and the **Intercultural Foundation**.

Thank you for your loyal support! It enables us to continue our unique programming and to fulfill our mission of increasing the respect and mutual understanding among faiths and fostering cooperation among religious communities and civic organizations.



The Very Rev. James P. Morton
Founder and Chair Emeritus



The Rev. Chloe Breyer
Executive Director

THE JAMES PARKS MORTON INTERNATIONAL VISITING FELLOWS SISTER CITIES PROGRAM: JUNE 15-24, 2009

With ongoing and generous support from the Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Fund, ICNY launched the first year of its three-year JPM International Visiting Fellows Sister Cities Program in June. Following a year of research in which ICNY staff members mapped interfaith activities in eight European cities, ICNY invited delegations from Barcelona, Spain (led by UNESCO-Catalonia) and Glasgow, Scotland (led by The Scottish Interfaith Council) to participate. Glasgow's innovative police-community relations strategies and government policies that encourage interfaith activity make it an important partner. Likewise, the sister city network will benefit from exposure to Barcelona's religious diversity, immigration challenges and successful programs for religious mediators.

Members of the Spanish and Scottish delegations were chosen by the Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC) and UNESCO Catalonia and represented diverse faith traditions and interfaith leadership roles:

Spanish Delegation

Manuel Perez Browne, Director, *Dialogal* Magazine of religious diversity, published by UNESCO

Josep Pera Colome, Badalona Councillor for Citizenship and Social Cohesion

Oscar Craviotto, Program Coordinator, Dept. of Interreligious Dialogue, UNESCO

Mohammed Halhoul Debboun, Spokesperson, Islamic Cultural Council of Catalonia

Berta Natalia Reverdin Effront, Pastor, Catalan Evangelical Church

Monserrat Castella Olive, President, Catalan Coordination Center of Buddhist Organizations

Fr. Jaime Aymar Rogalta, Rector of the parish of St. Francis Assisi, Badalona

Scottish Delegation

Salah Beltagui, Vice-Convenor of the Muslim Council of Scotland; founding member of the SIFC

Rita Docherty, representative of the Baha'i Council for Scotland on the SIFC

Pramila Kaur, Chief Executive, SIFC

Magdalen Lambkin, Youth Steering Committee, SIFC

Sharon Newall, SIFC volunteer

Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Co-Chair, Religions for Peace, former CEO, SIFC

Mohammed Irfan Rabbani, Councillor, Executive member for Equalities, Glasgow City Council

Rabbi Aharon Soudry, Leader of the Garnethill Hebrew Congregation, Glasgow

The Most Ven. K. Rewatha Thero, Chief Monk of Great Britain

► The Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, Rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in West Harlem with the Delegates.



"We had the privilege to experience and perfectly understand what a grassroots religious leader is when meeting the Episcopal Priest Earl Kooperkamp who guided us around his Harlem streets, telling us stories and sharing with us his daily struggles to serve the community – a community – as we could see through all the people greeting him in the street – which obviously recognizes his role and commitment."

Manuel Perez Browne, Spanish Delegation

THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM

The international delegates' 10-day schedule included the ICNY **Rabbi Marshall Meyer Retreat and Courts program**, visits to houses of worship, meetings with elected officials with expertise in immigration and multicultural issues, and cultural visits to museums and iconic NYC sites. The primary goal of the many activities was to illustrate ICNY's innovative approach to grassroots interfaith work in New York City and to offer a comparative perspective on religious identity and democratic citizenship in a religiously diverse city.

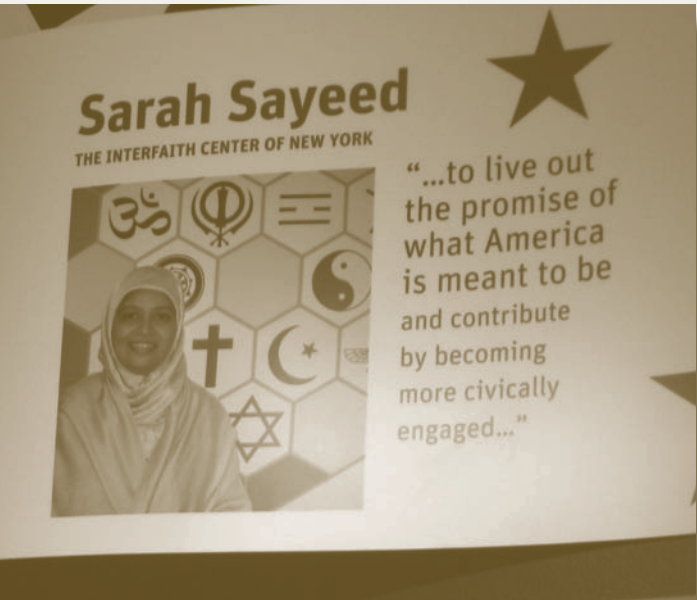
Highlights of the delegates' itinerary included a walking tour of **Harlem** with **The Rev. Earl Kooperkamp**, Rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, and a visit to **The Harlem Community Justice Center** to learn about problem-solving courts, religious leaders as mediators, juvenile justice and parole re-entry programs. They attended a meeting of the **Queens Borough President's Immigration Task Force** and attended a task force meeting that was subsequently aired on the NY1 cable station. The group visited the **Statue of Liberty** and toured **Ellis Island** to see where over 12 million immigrants entered the United States from 1892 to 1954. They attended services and visited houses of worship including an **Upper West Side synagogue**, **West African and African American mosques**, a **Sikh Gurudwara**, and **Buddhist Temple**, where **T.K. Nakagaki** reminded them of the need to use inclusive language in interfaith discussions. They took a **World Trade Center Walking Tour** and in one exhibit saw **ICNY Program & Communications Associate Sarah Sayeed's** personal reflections after 9/11 which emphasized the need to break the circle of violence. The delegates met with the **NYC Commissioner for Human Rights**, members of the **NYC police department**, and attended roundtable discussions with **judges from the NYS Unified Court System** to discuss with city officials their experiences with religious communities, public policy, and the judicial system.



▲ Left to right, Pramila Kaur and Ravinder Kaur Nijjar (Glasgow) explore Chinatown
◀ The Most Ven. K. Rewatha (Glasgow) checks out the bargains available in downtown Manhattan.



- ▲ Meeting with Susie Tannenbaum and the Queens Borough President's Immigration Task Force
- ICNY Program & Communications Associate Sarah Sayeed's post 9/11 personal reflection at the Tribute World Trade Center Visitor Center
- Meeting with T.K. Nakagaki, Sensei, New York Buddhist Temple
- Delegates on route to Ellis Island
- Meeting with Patricia Gatling, NYC Human Rights Commissioner





"In just a few years, in partnership with The Interfaith Center, the New York State courts have connected with hundreds of religious leaders of every persuasion and background... I'm so proud that, by now, we have established lively Roundtables throughout the five boroughs of New York City, each with its own court culture and community culture, addressing particular concerns and building new opportunities for collaborations. I genuinely believe that together, we have created a program that not only enormously benefits our great city, but also serves as a model for our entire nation."

Judge Judith Kaye (Ret.)
June 2, 2009, JPM Interfaith
Awards Dinner

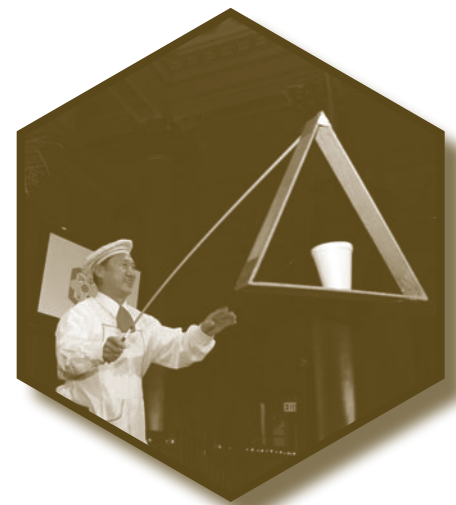
THE JAMES PARKS MORTON INTERFAITH AWARDS DINNER

The **Seventh Annual James Parks Morton Interfaith Awards Dinner** was held on June 2, 2009 honoring **The Hon. Judith S. Kaye**, Chief Judge of the State of New York (Ret.) and best-selling author **Thomas Cahill**. It was particularly exciting to honor Judge Kaye who was instrumental in founding ICNY's Religious Leaders and the Courts programs in 2005. The partnership created between ICNY and the New York Unified Court System continues today with programs that provide both civics training for grassroots and immigrant religious leaders and religious diversity training for civic officials. We were equally delighted to honor Mr. Cahill, a writer and visionary whose work has shaped popular understanding of Western history and religion. Our Master of Ceremonies for the evening was **Paul Binder**, **founder of the Big Apple Circus**, who recently "stepped out of the ring" to become Senior Adviser to the circus.

The evening's highlights included an irrepressible juggler who balanced assorted kitchenware with apparent ease. The juggler was followed by **Auctioneer George Cole**, who ensured that all the wonderful auction items sold to the highest bidder. Donated items included a vacation at an Idaho ranch retreat, a child's participation in the Big Apple Circus, orchestra tickets to the Nutcracker plus a custom backstage tour, and a personally guided 'insider's' tour of the Bronx Zoo.

The James Parks Morton Award was created in 2001 to honor individuals who have exhibited personal wisdom, courage, and commitment to achieving more open dialogue among different faith and ethnic traditions and for understanding that diversity enriches our lives.

- ▲ Left to right: The Very Rev. James Parks Morton, Judge Judith Kaye (Ret.) Thomas Cahill, and The Rev. Chloe Breyer
- ◀ Left to right: Winning bidder Walter Beebe with Judge Judith Kaye (Ret.)
- ▼ Yang Xiao Di, Juggler



NOTABLE AND NOTEWORTHY



▲ ICNY staff, from left to right, Raffaele Timarchi, Matthew Weiner, The Rev. Chloe Breyer, Jane Colvin, Sarah Sayeed, Ian Stickland, Anushavan Margaryan and The Very Rev. James Parks Morton.

In 2009, members of ICNY both received recognition and continued to make significant contributions to the larger interfaith world. In January, 2009, **The Very Rev. James Parks Morton, Founder and Chair, Emeritus** was honored by the **American Indian Community House** for his commitment to enhancing and enriching the lives of indigenous peoples. He received the Award for Outstanding Community Service at their inaugural Honoring the Spirit Awards Dinner.

The Rev. Chloe Breyer appeared at the **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Commemoration at Riverside Church** in April, 2009 with the Rev. Dr. James Lawson and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. She was featured on the **CBS** Sunday morning news program in a segment on forgiveness and partnered with PBS to host a pre-release panel discussion of **NOVA's** hour-long broadcast "The Bible's Buried Secrets." She wrote *The Anglican Church's Shifting Center* for the **International Herald Tribune**, 7/08; *Where is the Cause for Concern?*, **Newsweek**, 4/09; and, *Senator Edward Kennedy: A Man of Faith and Friend of Religious Freedom*, **BeliefNet**, 8/09. She offered the invocations at the **Harlem Community Justice Center's** Parole Reentry Graduation and at the **Queen's Criminal Court's** commemoration of National Crime Victims Week.

Matthew Weiner, Program Director, wrote many opinion pieces and commentary that appeared on the **Reuters FaithWorld blog**, the **Huffington Post**, **BeliefNet**, **The Jewish Week**, and the **Harvard Divinity School Bulletin**. He co-authored *Interfaith encounter at a Catholic school in Brooklyn*, 3/09 with ICNY colleague **Raffaele Timarchi** (see excerpt page 9).

Sarah Sayeed, Program & Communications Associate was interviewed on **Blogging Heads TV** in July, 2008. In May, she moderated an interfaith panel discussion "Women's Spiritual Voices: Crossing Continents, Finding Common Ground," sponsored by the **Moroccan American Cultural Center** and the **American Jewish Committee** that subsequently appeared on **PBS' Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly**. She also collaborated with United Methodists to organize a program for **Emory University** students about interfaith perspectives on immigration. In July, she spoke at Ellis Island about interfaith and immigration to the **Mission of European Imams and Rabbis**, a program organized by the **Foundation for Ethnic Understanding**. She wrote articles posted on the **Reuters FaithWorld Blog** including *Canada and the niqab: How to go public in the public square* 2/2009 (with Matthew Weiner) and *Out of Our Hair and Away from Our Pants!* 8/09. On September 24, 2009 she was invited to speak at the City Council's *Eid* dinner (see excerpt page 8.)

Speech at NYC City Council Eid Dinner

On September 24, 2009, Program & Communications Associate Sarah Sayeed spoke at the City Council Eid dinner held at City Hall. Eid ul-Fitr is a Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting. The following is an excerpt from her speech.

Ramadan is the month that we are celebrating today – it is a month that uplifts our souls and strengthens our character. It is a month of both inward and outward renewal. It is also the month in which we are grateful for the guidance found in the Holy Quran, a book whose revelation began in Ramadan, a book that moves our hearts ever closer to compassion, good will, and justice.

Muslims observe this special month with fasting – one of the 5 pillars of Islam. The world famous 13th century mystic, jurist and poet, Jelaluddin Rumi, may God have Mercy on His soul, invited us into fasting by saying,

"There's hidden sweetness in the stomach's emptiness / We are lutes, no more, no less. / If the soundbox is stuffed full of anything, no music. / If the brain and belly are burning clean with fasting, / every moment a new song comes out of the fire. / The fog clears, and new energy makes you run up the steps in front of you. / A table descends to your tents, Jesus' table. / Expect to see it, when you fast, this table spread with other food, / better than the broth of cabbages."

The better food that Rumi refers to is the food of the soul. God willing, in Ramadan, we have fed and filled our spirits. This is the food that is better than the broth of cabbages, the kebabs, the bakhlava and the biryani. It is the spirit of happiness and gratitude that fills us as we purify our bodies and turn longingly to our Creator. I pray that this happiness and gratitude, and the guidance and strength we have received this month continue to nourish us in the days ahead.

Interfaith Encounter at a Catholic School in Brooklyn

On March 15, 2009, ICNY organized an interfaith program in response to a request from a teacher at Nazareth, a regional Catholic high school in Brooklyn. Nazareth students — ethnically African American and Caribbean and predominantly Christian — live among Hasidic Jews in Crown Heights and Muslims in Bedford Stuyvesant. There is little interaction but a lot of curiosity. Panelists included a Rabbi, two Imams and a Hindu and a Muslim student. The following are excerpts from an article about the program written by ICNY Program Director Matthew Weiner and Program Associate Raffaele Timarchi. (Posted on Reuters FaithWorld Blog, 3/24/09):

"Why do you wear that hat on your head?" one student asked Rabbi Avi Lesches. "First, to acknowledge that we are different from the larger community," the Rabbi said. "But also we wear it to remind ourselves that we are not the final authority. There is someone above us, and that someone is God."

Another ventured, "I understand you don't believe in Jesus, and that ya'll still waiting for the Messiah?" "That's right," Lesches said. "There are still a lot of problems on the Earth. The Messiah hasn't come yet." But he went on to say that Maimonides, the great medieval Jewish philosopher, praised Islam and Christianity for their monotheistic orientation.

When asked why he is serious about his faith, Hesham El-Meligy, an Egyptian-born Muslim responded: "When I was a kid, around your age, I began asking myself, 'Who am I?' But I also noticed some people who saw the world as us vs. them, and I didn't like it..."

Sharear Kabir, a Muslim student said it was hard being Muslim in a majority community. He said he was supposed to pray five times a day, but couldn't when he was in school. To this, Shaykh T. A. Bashir, an African American Muslim participant, said that it was important to pray, and that the school should let him. "That's one of my jobs, making sure that there is religious accommodation. So I will speak to your teachers here," he said. The teachers all smiled.



PROGRAMS, OUTREACH & PUBLIC EVENTS WITH PARTNERS

The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) connects, educates and reaches out to religious communities, civic institutions and organizations to increase understanding and utilize the religious and cultural diversity that keeps New York City so vital and vibrant. At retreats, in classrooms in public and private schools, at roundtables for judges and civil servants, and with partners in activist organizations, ICNY continues to fulfill its mission of making New York City safe for religious diversity.



▲ Two **Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Retreats for Social Justice** entitled “Confronting Hate Crimes” and “Immigration: From Estrangement to Engagement,” brought together 178 religious leaders and delegates from the JPM International Visiting Fellows Sister Cities Program to explore the impact of immigration and hate crimes on New York’s diverse communities, including the rapid changes in the make-up of neighborhoods, and the language barriers many face as they try to navigate the city’s health care system.

ICNY organized nine Roundtable meetings with the **NYS Courts System**, to promote discussion about hate crimes and immigration issues with new audiences, bringing together a total of 250 religious leaders from Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx with judges in each borough. Inspired by the Roundtable sessions, the Queens-based **United Hindu Cultural Center** convened its own community education forum focused on hate crimes, which ICNY co-sponsored and helped coordinate.

➤ Motivated by the need for coordinated action, ICNY helped launch the first **NYS Interfaith Network for Immigration Reform** with over 30-partner organizations to coordinate state-wide interfaith meetings with elected officials to advocate for national immigration reform.





◀ ICNY conducted interfaith site visits to Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist communities in Queens for the **Bronx public high school Explorations Academy**. In two Brooklyn Catholic schools, **Nazareth Regional High School** and **St. Saviour's High School** (to the left) ICNY organized interfaith panels to address the borough's local religious diversity and women's issues across faith lines.

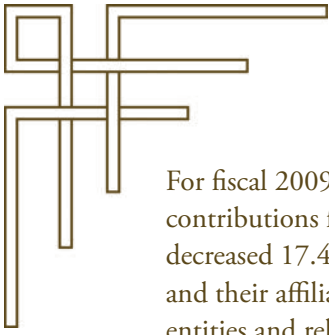
In addition to schools and secondary school educators, ICNY continued the Social Workers and Religious Diversity program which has successfully introduced social workers throughout the city to the role that religion often plays in immigrant and disenfranchised communities and in the lives of their diverse clients.

➤ Partnering with the **Queens Mediation Center**, ICNY offered **Mediation programs** for a second time to youths and conducted a new mediation program for prison chaplains who work in the borough's detention centers.

▼ On May 22, 2009, ICNY and over 200 faith and community leaders came together at **The Riverdale Jewish Center** to condemn the plot to bomb the Riverdale Jewish Center and the Riverdale Temple in Riverdale, New York. **Imam Konate Soulimane of the Masjid Agha in Harlem** and other religious leaders addressed the Press.



▲ On December 1, 2008, (left to right) **The Rev. Chloe Breyer**, ICNY Board Member **Rabbi Joseph Potasnik**, **NY Board of Rabbis**, and **Dr. Uma Mysorekar**, the **Hindu Temple Society of NA**, joined other faith leaders on the steps of City Hall to condemn the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India and to call for interfaith tolerance.



LETTER FROM THE TREASURER

For fiscal 2009 (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009), The Interfaith Center’s expenses were almost fully met by contributions from generous donors, despite the fact that in the economic turbulence total donations for 2009 decreased 17.4% from 2008. Expenses were also cut. Our donor base remains, at its core, committed individuals and their affiliated funds. Efforts to diversify our income sources and to obtain more funds from grant-making entities and religious organizations are bearing fruit.

The Interfaith Center’s expenses are concentrated on the program staff who provide ICNY's educational services. Program personnel costs account for 63.3% of program expenses and 36.4% of total expenses.

Statement of Activities

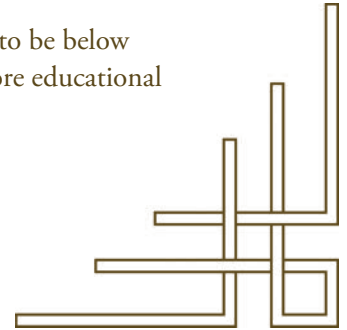
	2009 Total	2008 Total
REVENUE AND SUPPORT		
Contributions and grants	\$ 497,210	\$ 591,895
Special events, net of direct costs	180,380	150,216
Program fees	4,768	6,370
In-kind contributions	57	118,721
Other income	19,777	94
Interest income	1,890	10,700
Sale of property and equipment	-	(322)
Net realized gain on investments	6,279	-
Net assets released from restrictions	-	-
Total Revenue and Support	\$ 710,361	\$ 877,694
EXPENSES		
Program services	432,376	482,931
General and administrative	102,684	91,202
Fundraising	177,769	199,765
Total Expenses	712,829	773,898
Change in Net Assets	(2,468)	103,796
NET ASSETS		
Beginning of year	469,093	365,297
End of year	\$ 466,625	\$ 469,093

Thanks go again to Covington & Burling, our legal counsel, who continue to provide a substantial amount of services pro bono. Our auditors, O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins, enabled us to make the transition to a new financial software system and to institute more rigorous internal controls.

This fiscal year 2010 will be a stringent time for the organization; budgeted expenses are planned to be below last year's actual expenditures, even though The Interfaith Center is being called on to provide more educational services to more organizations and institutions. We are grateful to all of our generous supporters.



Stephen Guittard, Treasurer



Statement of Financial Position

	2009	2008
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 461,770	\$ 341,451
Prepaid expenses	7,503	7,332
Pledges receivable	20,825	132,275
Investments	11,484	11,484
Property and equipment, net	6,954	11,502
Total Assets	508,536	504,044
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	23,275	34,951
Loan payable		
Total Liabilities	23,275	34,951
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	373,670	373,699
Temporarily restricted	95,424	95,424
Net Income	16,167	
Total Net Assets	485,261	469,093
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 508,536	\$ 504,044

The 2009 financial statements are shown unaudited. The 2008 Financial amounts are audited. Audited financial statements of The Interfaith Center of New York, Inc. will be available by writing to The Interfaith Center of New York, Inc., 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 540, New York, NY 10115, or to the Department of State Office of Charities Registration, Albany, NY 12231.

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NEW BOARD MEMBER

Leonard T. Jordan, Jr. was employed by National Grid (formerly Keyspan Energy), a major utility in the U.S for over 38 years. Leonard held various positions in the Customer Relations Area and retired as Director of Consumer Advocacy and Customer Relations in 2008. He has collaborated with a number of not-for-profit organizations and has advocated for low income consumer energy initiatives. Leonard also holds a MS in Organizational Behavior from NYU-Polytechnic University and currently serves as Adjunct Professor of Management at St. Francis College, Brooklyn, NY.



I was first exposed to the work of The Interfaith Center through my friendship with the Board Co-Chair Kusumita Pedersen. I have been involved in various consumer advocacy efforts over the years and was very impressed with the Center's programs. I believe that the assembly of religious, community and civic leaders for the purpose of discussing social issues fosters understanding, cooperation, an enhanced diverse perspective. In such an environment similarities are accentuated rather than differences. I am pleased to be asked to join the Board and will make every effort to bring value to the work of the Center.

NEW STAFF

Ian Stickland graduated from Beloit College in 2004 with a degree in Sociology and Political Science. After leaving college, Ian taught English at a school for orphans and street children in Kathmandu, Nepal. Returning to the United States Ian worked in Sales and Customer Service for Tumi before moving on to a position in Catalog Design and Sales Tracking with Scully and Scully in New York. Ian will be working on expanding The Interfaith Center's web presence as well as keeping the office running day to day.



By expanding The Interfaith Center's presence on the web I hope to greatly increase the number of individuals aware of our programming. The Interfaith Center's mission of spreading information across secular and faith lines is one I really believe in. As people are taught about each other's cultures bonds of understanding form which simply cannot be replicated by passive observation from the outside. Education breeds tolerance, and that's a goal sincerely to be wished for.



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