

THE INTERFAITH CENTER OF NEW YORK

2019 Annual Report



A celebration of religious & cultural diversity

A large, irregular teal watercolor splash serves as the background for the page. The splash is darker in the center and fades towards the edges, creating a textured, artistic effect.

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Letter from the Executive Director

What a challenging year.

From ICE raids to hate-filled vandalism, the truth remains: we are living in polarized and frightening times. That is why the Interfaith Center has not rested - and will not rest - thanks in large part to the generous support of those listed in this annual report.


Together from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, we:

- Educated and graduated **18 emerging grassroots leaders** of diverse faiths with civics training and hands on experience to better help them serve as leaders today and tomorrow.
- Celebrated 99 "Faith Justice Heroes" through our popular appeal to the public to nominate those who are doing inspiring social justice work. **Have someone to nominate?** Great! Head to your social media platform and mention that person using their handle, ICNY's, and the hashtag #FaithJusticeHero.
- **Hosted a conference for 120 people** to support the work of faith leaders and immigration activists, through civic engagement and advocacy training.
- Gave **80 social workers** multi-faith cultural competency training, access to healing resources grounded in New York's diverse faith traditions, as well as seven hours of continuing education credit for New York State LMSWs and LCSWs.
- Provided 25 K-12 teachers from 14 states with the tools they need to **improve and develop their own religious diversity curriculum projects**, thanks to the support of the National Endowment of the Humanities.
- and **helped lead the SCAR Act one step closer to passing** by galvanizing over 130 faith leaders to sign onto a letter of support, authoring an op-ed in the NY Daily News, and making multiple lobbying trips to Albany.

Please read on for more stories of our impact as well as some exciting announcements about our upcoming efforts to prevent violence, prejudice and misunderstanding. This work would simply not happen without you. We are particularly grateful to our generous funders and grant partners, including the **National Endowment for the Humanities, Ms. Barbara Slifka and the Joseph & Sylvia Slifka Foundation, the J.C. Flowers Foundation, and Ms. Patti Askwith Kenner** as well as our many other long-standing and new supporters.

We hope you will be inspired to join us before the close of 2019 as we head full steam into 2020.

Sincerely,



The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer



Thank you to Interfaith Center Donors

JULY, 2018 – JUNE, 2019

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The Rev. Richard Witt
Anton and Vanessa Wong
The Rev. Dr. Alfonso Wyatt



The 36th Rabbi Marshall Meyer Retreat

FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE - WELCOMING THE STRANGER

“We are faith leaders of different traditions, of different races, of different backgrounds, who are all tired of the inhumane, inhospitable, and arguably un-American behavior of our current administration.”

– The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer

Since the 2016 election, diverse congregations and faith-based organizations have stepped up to defend the newest New Yorkers – advocating for immigrants’ rights and immigration reform. New York’s immigrant communities are still under threat, but recent changes in Albany offer an opportunity for real and lasting change.

The time for action is now. That is why our 36th Marshall T. Meyer Retreat in January of 2019 focused on how to support the work of faith leaders and immigration activists through civic engagement and advocacy training.

The conference addressed best practices for action as shared by diverse faith leaders working for immigrants’ rights and offered hands-on workshops, with practical training for community organizing, policy advocacy, ICE accompaniment, etc.

Speakers included **Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs**, and break-out groups offered workshops on effective advocacy and challenges of long-term sanctuary. Outcomes involved a letter signed by over 150 Faith leaders asking for Drivers’ License for eligible citizens and non-citizens, and more transparency from NYS Social Service Agencies responsible for unaccompanied and separated children.



Imam Dr. Ahmet Altig, Sapthagiri Iyengar, Rabbi Marisa Elana James and Rev. Juan Carlos Ruiz share lessons from their work for immigrants’ rights and immigration reform.

Making a Difference in New York City

2019 EVENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

SANCTUARY AND IMMIGRATION PANEL DISCUSSION AT THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

Thanks to the generosity of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Interfaith Center of New York invited donors and members of the public to a discussion on Sanctuary and Immigration in March, shortly after the terrorist attacks on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.



The Rt. Rev. Clifton Daniel III, D.D., Dean of the Cathedral, Rev. Juan Carlos Ruiz, Rabbi Marisa Elana James, Jade de Saussure, and Saphthagiri Iyengar discuss Sanctuary and Immigration advocacy.

SOCIAL WORK AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Why do we educate Social Service and Mental Health care Providers about religion?

Because to make a difference in today's New York, mental health and social service providers need a rich understanding of the religious lives of the people they serve.

Thank you to the many health care providers who joined us on May 15th for our conference entitled **Faith Based Perspectives on Trauma and Healing**.



ICNY is proud to develop high quality continuing education programs with our two partners: the **Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services** and the **Psychotherapy & Spirituality Institute**.

YOUNG NEW YORKERS ON “LEADING THROUGH FAITH AND ADVOCACY” PODCAST RECORDING

In late February, ICNY gathered Faith Justice Heroes (#FaithJusticeHero), their nominators, and our followers for a live podcast recording at East End Temple. The topic was young New Yorkers leading through faith and advocacy.



ICNY's podcast series host **Hannah Meholick** moderated the discussion with (pictured clockwise) **Kyndra Frazier**, Executive Director of the HOPE Center, **Joshua Stanton**, Rabbi of East End Temple, **Gagan Kaur**, Director of Community Development for ThriveNYC at the Mayor's Office, and **Shahana Hanif**, then Director of Organizing and Community Engagement, Office of City Council Member Brad Lander and now City Council candidate (Brooklyn District 39).

ICNY STAFF AWARD

“Growing up in Brooklyn post-9/11 was very difficult ... I vowed I would never allow someone to put me in a box and define who I am. I will always stand up for what's right.”

– Hanadi Doleh,
ICNY Program Associate

ICNY's very own Hanadi Doleh was awarded a commendation from the NYC Comptroller Scott M. Stringer for her contributions to the civic life of New York.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her and thank her for her commitment to religious diversity and equality.



ICNY's **Hanadi Doleh** accepts a commendation at NYC Comptroller **Scott M. Stringer's** Post Eid ul-Fitr celebration.

The Religious Worlds of New York

SUMMER INSTITUTE

ICNY has hosted 130 summer scholars since 2012 – with our help, these fantastic teachers are transforming religious diversity education in primary and secondary schools nationwide.



In July of 2019, ICNY had the pleasure of working with 25 K-12 teachers from 14 States in the fifth meeting of our Religious Worlds of New York summer institute – a program developed in partnership with Union Theological Seminary, and with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

These 25 NEH summer scholars worked with leading academics, met with diverse religious leaders, visited local houses of worship, and developed their own religious diversity curriculum projects. The institute was an extraordinary success, with overwhelmingly positive evaluations from participants.





“ I finally made the time to take my AP World History girls to the Fo Guang Shan Hsi Lai Temple outside of Los Angeles...I am so thankful for our Summer Institute for giving me the confidence and caution as I prepared for this important site visit. In fact, it is the first site visit to a sacred space that I've ever led, and it was incredible.”

– Jonathon Allen
Marlborough School, Los Angeles, CA



“ The connections I made with other participants were invaluable – our cohort was an impressive group of professionals - and I appreciated the balance between scholarly readings, panel presentations, collegial discussions, and experiential learning.”

– **Monika Johnston**
Packer Collegiate Institute, Brooklyn, NY



“ I learned so much about the religions we studied, and also quite a bit about myself. Above all, thank you on behalf of my future students. They are the true beneficiaries of this experience – something I hold in trust for as long as I have the honor of teaching.”

– **Clay Francis**
Hutchison School, Memphis, TN

“ It's amazing how much I learned that affects my lesson plans in deeper understanding.”

– **Teresa M. Davis Archbishop**
McNicholas HS, Cincinnati, OH

Interfaith Center Advocacy Update

IMMIGRATION ADVOCACY

ICNY worked tirelessly against the hateful immigration rhetoric and policies coming from Washington, DC this year:

- **We brought more religiously diverse voices to public action on immigration.** For example, ICNY reached out to the head of the American Buddhist Confederation—the biggest umbrella organization for Chinese Buddhists in NYC—with an invitation to participate in World Refugee Day.
- **We partnered with various grassroots Harlem organizations to create a network of houses of worship offering short term sanctuary for immigrants afraid of ICE Raids.** Our message? ICE will not be welcome in Harlem.
- **ICNY is part of a coalition calling on the State Legislature to pass the SCAR Act.** The Separation of Children Accountability Reporting Act would require state-contracted facilities to provide an accounting of how many separated children are in their care.
- **Together with the Micah Institute, ICNY recruited diverse faith leader signatories for an Amicus brief, led by Muslim Bar Association of New York, challenging the Trump Administration's rescission of DACA.** Signatories included 121 religious organizations who represent New York's diverse faith communities.



Sen. Brian A. Benjamin, NY State Senator for Harlem, poses with our partners **Rev. Kaji Douša**, Sr. Minister, Park Avenue Christian Church; **Ravi Ragbir**, New Sanctuary Coalition; and **Jonathan Soto**, Union Theological Seminary, during the Interfaith Center of New York's visit to Albany.

Bronx man who sued NYPD detective, accused corrections officers of beating him, dies...



SEE IT: 'The View' audience groans in protest after Joy Behar announces Donald...



Trump trashes his native New York as 'dirty & unsafe' after announcing he's leaving the...



OPINION

Shine a harsh light on child separations in New York



By REV. CHLOE BREYER

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS | MAY 14, 2019 | 11:10 AM



ICNY's Executive Director **Chloe Breyer** authored op eds in publications like the NY Daily News and spoke with reporters about the interfaith coalition of moral voices that challenge our government to continually act in the best interest of all the people, especially the most vulnerable among us.



Breyer is seen here alongside ICNY friend and partner **the Rev. Kaji Douša**, to speak on *Assembly Update*, a cable tv show available at the State Capital to address the importance of the **SCAR Act**, which later passed the Senate with our help. This year we are trying for both houses, to ensure greater transparency and accountability of social service agencies in NY State who are housing unaccompanied and separated children.

SHARING BEST PRACTICES ON HOUSE OF WORSHIP SAFETY

In March, ICNY co-sponsored “Faith Over Fear”, a training workshop hosted by **Shoulder2Shoulder** at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, which offered anti-bias training to NYC clergy and lay leaders committed to countering discrimination against Muslims in their communities. S2S shared up-to-date research, resources, tools, and messaging for stronger, strategic, and more effective action in moving the nation towards our shared vision – where all people, no matter their religious or cultural background, are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

The two mosque attacks in New Zealand happened just one week later. In response to those attacks and the white supremacist attacks on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA, ICNY joined forces with Congregation Beit Simchat Torah to share best practices on House of Worship safety with US State Department visitors and security experts from around the world, many of whom are pictured below.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

We are proud to continue our work with Circles of Support's Raising My Voice program, a leadership training program for formerly incarcerated individuals, thanks to the generous support of the JC Flowers Foundation. Their support, along with additional support from Episcopal Charities, also allows us to have an important presence at Harlem Community Justice Center on Thursday mornings.

ICNY signed onto Bronx Connect's call to Close Riker's Island, the jail notorious for chronic abuse, neglect and mismanagement. This was part of a successful campaign directed towards the City Council and Mayor. The infamous jail is scheduled to close in 2026.

ICNY Supported The Discovery for Justice Reform Act, which will repeal the current “Blindfold Law” that prevents people accused of crimes from knowing the evidence against them until it is too late to prepare for trial and bring early, open, and automatic discovery to our criminal legal system.

New Programs and Grants

LAW SCHOOL PROGRAM

“Respect for litigants is critical to the fair and effective administration of justice, and this program, by increasing understanding of religiously diverse communities, will importantly serve that end.”

– Hon. Robert A. Katzmann, Chief Judge
United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit



ICNY is thrilled to announce an important new initiative on Lawyering and Religious Diversity, which we are currently developing in partnership with **New York Law School** and with **generous support from Diane and Arthur Abbey**.

Working with our NYLS colleagues, we are helping law students and attorneys understand the religious beliefs and values of the clients they serve while helping religiously diverse New Yorkers understand legal issues that impact their everyday lives.

Upcoming programs in this exciting initiative will include **religious diversity trainings for NYLS students, a continuing education conference for practicing attorneys** (building on the model of our successful Social Work and Religious Diversity conferences), **and a community-based legal education clinic**, providing free workshops at diverse congregations throughout the city.

Taken together, these programs will help create equal access to justice for New Yorkers of all faith backgrounds.

MAKE MANHATTAN COUNT INITIATIVE

For 22 years, ICNY has been deeply devoted to civic health of New York City. We can think of no better way to support the city's many faith and immigrant communities than to help ensure that every New Yorker is counted in the upcoming Census.

That is why the Interfaith Center of New York is proud to be **one of just 12 recipients of a grant from the Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer's office** created to fund outreach efforts and encourage participation in advance of the 2020 Census.



"I can't say it enough: there's a lot at stake for New York City in the 2020 Census, from federal funding to our representation in Congress, so we have to make sure all Manhattan residents are counted."

– Manhattan Borough President
Gale A. Brewer



Interfaith Center Sustainer Circle

"In a society that is increasingly fragmented, my monthly donation to the Interfaith Center of New York is a vote of hope and an investment in building bridges."

– Kevin Oro-Hahn

This year, the Interfaith Center of New York launched a new giving circle, called the Sustainer Circle, which honors donors who support us on a monthly recurring basis. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our founding members, the very earliest adopters who see the value in supporting our work year round and into the future.

SUSTAINER CIRCLE FOUNDING MEMBERS 2019



Sister Aisha Al-Adawiya
Muhammad, A. Al-Rahman, PsyD
Walter and Carol Beebe
The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer and Greg Scholl
Connie Chen
Kevin Childress
Jesse William Cooper
The Rt. Rev. Mary Glasspool
Ellen Greeley
Rev. Dr. John W. Krysko & Nancy Rosanoff
Rev. Michael J. Lynch, S.T.L.
Ruth Messinger
Ken Neumann
Kevin Oro-Hahn
Mary O'Shaughnessy
The Rev. Ted D. Pardoe, III
Dr. Betty A. Reardon
Willie Smith
Aaron Waldron

There is still time to join the circle! Simply visit us online at interfaithcenter.org/donation and select Start a Monthly Gift. Sustainers will be invited to private events throughout the year.

***"As a religious leader in our great city of NY, I depend on the supportive work of the Interfaith Center. My monthly gift demonstrates my faith in the many valued initiatives that benefit so many."* - Rev. Michael J. Lynch, S.T.L.**

***"As a community leader and social justice advocate, I value the work of the Interfaith Center. An easy way to support that work - and to showcase my own efforts to protect the diversity that makes NYC great - is through my monthly gift."* - Sister Aisha Al-Adawiya**

The James Parks Morton Interfaith

AWARDS DINNER

June 21, 2019 – Tribeca Rooftop, Manhattan

What an incredible evening! From the high energy of the talented National Dance Institute dancers to Dr. Ruth's promise to all those who support us, we are still basking in the glow of last summer's annual event. Thank you to everyone who made a gift, including those who did so even without being able to attend. Your support of this event helps fuel our work year-round.





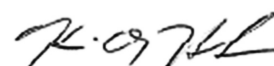
Previous page: Emcee **Mo Rocca** and Awardee **Dr. Ruth Westheimer** pose for a picture; Dancers of the **National Dance Institute** wow the crowd with their performance; Guests head down to dinner. This page: ICNY Board member **Dr. Rajinder Gandhi** enjoys the rooftop; ICNY Board member **Rev. Michael Lynch** addresses the crowd; Faith Justice Hero **Imam Dr. Ahmet Atlig** and guests pose in front of the Freedom Tower; presenter **The Very Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas** poses with awardee **The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry**; **Patti Askwith Kenner** presents the JPM award to Dr. Ruth; ICNY Board members **Ruth Messinger** and **Rabbi Joseph Potasnik** chat with ICNY supporters. Many thanks to © **Carolina Kroon** for the beautiful photographs of this event. (Inset photo of awardees on previous page taken by **Pierre Lehu**.)



Treasurer's Report

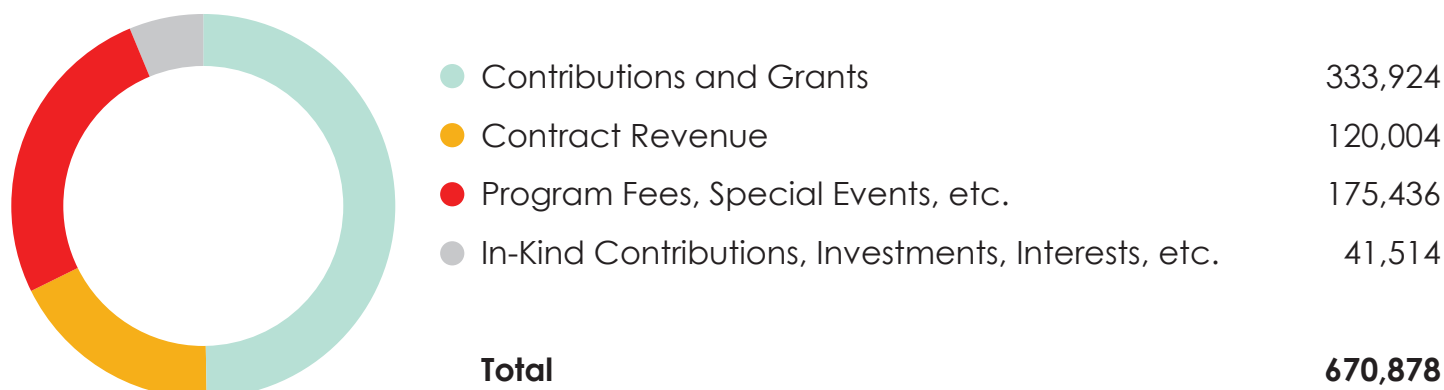
ICNY is involved in a long term project to find a new generation of ICNY partners who value the power of grassroots religious leaders from various faith backgrounds to overcome some of our city's current challenges. We are encouraged by signs during this past year including new grant partners, our Sustainer Circle comprised of new monthly individual supporters, and many new faces at our annual gala dinner.

ICNY closed the year with a deficit of just under 10% of expenses, an improvement from almost 14% last year. We have made necessary changes to streamline our administrative expenses and deliver key programming as efficiently as possible. Our expenses overall are about 17% lower than five years ago. Meanwhile, we are grateful for our many partners and donors, both old and new, whose contributions and involvement sustain this work.



Kevin Oro-Hahn
Treasurer

FISCAL YEAR 2019 REVENUE AND SUPPORT



FISCAL YEAR 2019 EXPENSES



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The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) works to overcome prejudice, violence, and misunderstanding by activating the power of the city's grassroots religious and civic leaders and their communities.

