From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As I write this, summer is coming to an end and we are busy preparing to greet new and returning students. Our calendar is chockfull of programs and activities, requests for programs and building use continue to come in on a daily basis, our building is stocked with supplies, and excitement for the start of the new semester abounds here at The Interfaith Center.

Much of this summer has been spent looking after the needs of our building. A generous donation enabled us to have new energy efficient lighting installed in the hallway and offices. More electrical improvements are still needed, along with funding to cover the cost. A donation from an alumnus of the University/Interfaith Center made the purchase of a storage shed for gas grills and outdoor equipment a reality. With a grant from the University’s Division of Student Success, we will soon be purchasing and having installed a projector and wall mounted screen. All of these improvements will enable us to serve our students and community better.

Community engagement continues to be a high priority for us. On July 24, 2014, near the end of the Ramadan, we hosted a program entitled Fasting Practices in Religious Traditions and Iftar with the Turkish Cultural Center of the Capital District. Speakers from seven faith traditions spoke about fasting practices in their particular faith tradition; the program was followed by an Iftar-evening meal at sunset during Ramadan. A diverse crowd of over 80 people attended. On September 10, we will be partnering with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and the Red Cross to host a blood drive. If you are local, please consider donating blood in memory of those that died on 9/11. We will also be partnering with the Baha’i community, Bruderhof community, Greek Orthodox Church, Children at the Well, Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless and with 30+ religious and community organizations participating in the Second Annual North Star Peace Walk of which we are a lead organization.

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As this goes to print, I will be traveling to Turkey, part of a small group invited by the Turkish Cultural Center. “The trip aims to provide the participants with an original intercultural experience at the meeting place of the West and the East. Secular and democratic Turkey is home to a mosaic of different cultures, religions and ethnicity, and as such provides a living example of peaceful coexistence of different communities. The trip includes visits to the historic sites that have significance in Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions, interactions with the local people, and meetings with academics and local officials.” Details of the trip will be highlighted in the next newsletter.

Homecoming Weekend is October 10-12, 2014 and we will be hosting an Open House on Saturday, October 11 from 10am-1pm. Please plan to stop by and say hello, take a tour of the building, and enjoy some light refreshments.

Lastly, I would like to remind you that all of our programs are open to the public and we would love to see you here!

Warm Regards,

Donna Crisafulli

Recent Donation: A Wonderful Addition!

This new shed now provides convenient shelter for our Kosher, Halal, and common grills that get used during our very popular interfaith cookouts.

It was given in honor of Sr. Maureen O'Leary, FSP.

If you would like to make a donation or help us with one of our many projects, please contact Donna to find out how you can get involved!

Support from you helps us provide a great environment for our students and the community. Thank you!
Interfaith Center Fall Calendar of Events

All programs are at the Interfaith Center unless otherwise noted.

SEPTEMBER
3: **Interfaith Cookout 5-8pm**
Come enjoy free food at our opening cookout! Lots to eat (with Kosher and Halal options), games to play, and people to meet!

8, 15, 22, 29: **Meditation Mondays 6-7pm**
Learn and practice meditation in the company of other people and under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

8: **UA Interfaith Coalition Movie Night 7:30-10pm**
A time for a movie, some discussion, and some snacks. Check our website and facebook to find out what flick gets chosen!

10: **Red Cross Blood Drive with Ahmadiyya Muslim Community 11:30am-4:30pm**
Sponsored by Muslims for Life and The Interfaith Center. Schedule an appointment with the American Red Cross or by contacting Donna at dcrisafulli@albany.edu. Donors will receive a free lunch provided by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

17: **Religion 101-Baha’i 7-8:30pm**
Learn about Baha’i from a person who practices this tradition. Snacks will be served.

21: **North Star Peace Walk 2-4pm**
Multi-generational, interfaith, non-political peace walk in downtown Albany, New York. Please check our website and Facebook for updates.

OCTOBER
6, 13, 20, 27: **Meditation Mondays 6-7pm**
Learn and practice meditation in the company of other people and under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

11: **Homecoming Weekend OPEN HOUSE 10am-1pm**
See the building, learn more about our activities, and meet some people involved in this great organization! Snacks will be served.

15: **Religion 101-Bruderhof Community 7-8:30pm**
Learn about Bruderhof Community from a member of their community. Snacks will be served.

22: **Faith Journey Program 6:30-9pm**
Join us for kosher and non-kosher dinner and then hear Catherine Parker, Associate Director of Career Services, share her personal spiritual journey.

NOVEMBER
3, 10, 17, 24: **Meditation Mondays 6-7pm**
Learn and practice meditation in the company of other people and under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

5: **Interfaith Movie Night 6:30-9pm**
A time for a movie, some discussion, and some snacks. Check our website and Facebook to find out what flick gets chosen!

19: **Religion 101-Eastern Orthodox 7-8:30pm**
Learn about the Eastern Orthodox religion from a person who practices this tradition. Snacks will be served.

DECEMBER
1, 8: **Meditation Mondays 6-7pm**
Learn and practice meditation in the company of other people and under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

3: **Unity Dinner 5-9pm**
This yearly dinner will take place in the Campus Center Ballroom and showcase different foods and activities from various religious and spiritual traditions.

Stay up to date with all of the activities at the Interfaith Center by visiting www.albanyinterfaithcenter.org or following us on Facebook.
A Time to Grow
By: Peter Brusoe ’03
University at Albany (and “Chapel House”) Alumna

College is a time to grow and challenge ideas. Growing up in Amsterdam, NY I had a very specific idea of what church was. It involved gorgeous stained glass windows, inspiring statues, Fr. Gulley homilizing about how only children far, far away from here did bad things. It involved pasta dinners, charity, and bells during the consecration.

Attending school at UAlbany had a transformative impact on how I viewed my faith and the church experience. I attended zero on-campus Masses my entire first semester at Albany. I would go home for Thanksgiving and other holidays and catch Mass here and there. Yet, the second semester a killer paper in an honors class left me looking for something to clear my head at 7PM on a Sunday. There was Mass at the assembly hall. Sr. Maureen O’Leary welcomed everyone and had us greet one another and center ourselves. I went back the week after, then the week after, and the week after that. The rest as the saying goes, is history.

Church became community. It was not just the words we said, the songs we sang, or the prayers we prayed. Church was going to the orchard to pick apples. Church was cooking meals for the Catholic Worker House. Church was having pasta on Thursday nights after Mass. Church was the friendships we made. Church was praying with our Jewish, Muslim and Hindu Brothers and Sisters at interfaith events. Church was standing in the fountain area on September 11th with a candle comforting others. Church was joining together in service events.

The revised and expanded definition of church is one that serves me to this day. When I sit in Parish Council Meetings, or discuss activities for my parish, or participate in interfaith activities. The friends I made at Chapel House are friendships I still cherish to this day. Dana who sang in the UAlbany choir sings at my DC Parish. Damira and Andy I see every time I go back to UAlbany.

As alumni we have a tremendous number of things that can generate pride. The world class faculty, cutting edge research, the amazing athletic teams are great aspects of the University, but perhaps we do not spend enough time celebrating and supporting the amazing work that is done at the Interfaith Center. As the world becomes more disagreeable and more factionalized, perhaps the greatest thing we can do is to promote better and more collaborative dialogue. There is no better place to do that than at the Interfaith Center.
Interfaith Center Experiences
By: Ali Malik (Class of 2015; Pre-Med)

Ali is past-president of MSA (2013-2014). The Interfaith Center was often used for MSA activities during Ali’s presidency.

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Quran [49:13]

We tend to look at our differences and take the stance of “agreeing to disagree.” Although I see this as a proper way of dealing with differences, I do not think we should simply stop there. In the Quran, God says that the differences that appear due to the places we come from so that “you may know each other.” It is in this process of attempting to understand each other that allows our mind to open up. The Interfaith Center at UAlbany has given the Muslim Students Association (MSA) the ability to allow others to learn about our religion, Islam, and allow us to learn about other religions.

Throughout the year the MSA reserves a space in the Interfaith Center to hold events such as our Eid Celebration dinner, our Sandwich-Off, which allowed us to donate 100 sandwiches to a local shelter, or simply have educational events - all events open to anybody. The Interfaith Center’s close proximity to the indoor and outdoor basketball courts gives me a convenient way to establish one of my 5 daily prayers inside the prayer room. The annual Interfaith Cookout allows us to interact with people from various backgrounds and proves that sometimes the best way to bring people together is offering food.

Opportunities for Support

Giving Form
The Interfaith Center • 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12222

Yes, I would like to donate to The Interfaith Center. My donation and selected method of support is checked below. I understand that The Interfaith Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and that my contribution is tax deductible.

☐ General Donation for Organization Support and Programs
☐ Specific Project or Program _____________________________
☐ Building Fund

Name _______________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________________
City __________________________ State __________________________
ZIP _______________________

Enclosed please find my support in the amount of $ _____________
☐ Check (Please make payable to ACIC)
☐ Credit Card Online (Go to our website and find the Just Give button.)
Interfaith Cookout
Spring 2014

Faith Journey Program
Spring 2014

Interfaith Field Trip: Tendai Buddhist Temple
Spring 2014

Rev. Robert Lamar & Samuel Strasser
Feeding the Interfaith Spirit – Spring 2014

Faith Journey Program
Spring 2014

University at Albany
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222