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Annual *Report* 2010-11 HEAR THE CALL



Dare to understand.

Letter from the Executive Director



The last quarter of this program year was dedicated to working with the City of Philadelphia, The Constitution Center, and the Religious Leaders Council to plan a regional response to the tenth anniversary of 9/11. We all found ourselves in deep reflection, going back in our minds and our hearts to that tragic day and the range of emotions evoked in its aftermath. Fear. Uncertainty. Helplessness. On that fateful Tuesday, I left my briefcase and my hope at the office. The sky was blue, the temperature glorious, and I was in complete despair.

9/11 was a wake-up call for me and all Americans. As the smoke lifted, the country came together to rebuild – not just physical structures, but also the very foundations on which our democratic ideals are grounded. It became increasingly clear that the risky business of “not knowing one another” could no longer remain the status quo.

Whether it is our particular faith traditions or our human response, when we are awakened to individual and societal cries, we are called to respond. At the Interfaith Center, we hear the call every day...

The founding of the Interfaith Center was, at its core, a response to that wake-up call. It was our way of saying “message received” to terrorists, extremists, and all those that promulgate ignorance and hate. Our founders imagined the power of visionary people from diverse faith communities coming together, defiantly rejecting the forces of fear that would divide us, in favor of creating institutions dedicated to building the kind of world we want to live in – at least in our corner of the earth right here in Philadelphia. Now, almost ten years later, I am so proud of the work that we have done together with the support of our local interfaith community: Board members, donors, community, congregational and corporate partners, and friends.

This is why the theme of this Annual Report is “hear the call”.

Whether it is our particular faith traditions or our human response, when we are awakened to individual and societal cries, we are called to respond. At the Interfaith Center, we hear the call every day – of young people seeking opportunities to define new ways to engage the “other” in dialogue and service; of adults eager to bridge divides in increasingly plural workplaces, neighborhoods and even families; and religious leaders who are coming together to effect lasting change.

Whatever you feel called to do in these times, I hope that it leads you in some way to join our numerous community partners and diverse and talented leaders in carrying out important endeavors and enriching programs. It does – and should – not take an event like 9/11 to remind us of how important interfaith work is to sustaining the fabric of our community. It takes work to break down barriers. It takes sustained investment to build trust and forge lasting relationships. Thank you for all that you have done already to make this possible and your continued commitment to carrying this work into the future.

Gratefully,

Abby Stamelman Hocky
Executive Director

HEARING THE CALL: YOUTH SERVICE LEARNING & LEADERSHIP



Young people have a way of trailblazing and, in many ways, it is by listening to their voices that the Interfaith Center continues to develop new and innovative programming for high school and college youth. In 2010-2011, our signature **Walking the Walk** program attracted 98 high school students from 19 diverse congregations and schools – our largest group to date.

Clustered by regional or neighborhood “networks”, these young people gathered twice a month over the course of the academic year and covered a wide range of topics related to leading in a religiously diverse world. Additional youth leadership program highlights of this year included piloting our **Walking the Walk Alumni** Initiative and expanding the Center’s **Alternative Spring Break**.

“Walking the Walk changed my life! Before this experience, I respected my heritage and faith – but now I embrace them as “my own.” This has helped me to challenge stereotypes and navigate some serious challenges in my life.”

*Halima,
Walking the Walk Alumna*

Walking the Walk expanded to six networks, reaching 98 youth and 19 partner congregations

Walking the Walk

One of our new, standout networks brought together girls from Barrack Hebrew Academy and Academy of Notre Dame de Namur. This was an experimental deviation from our traditional congregation-based model that paid off considerably for both the Center and the schools involved. For us, it demonstrated the extent to which religious school communities provide ripe terrain on which to carry out interfaith dialogue and service. And, the young people themselves revealed a particular aptitude for engaging in serious reflection related to interreligious work and understanding. We believe that this will serve as a new model for attracting other independent and faith-based schools to establish partnerships of this kind.



Walking the Walk Alumni Program

Many **Walking the Walk** alumni – youth that have “graduated” from our program expressed a desire to us to stay in touch with one another and engage in interfaith initiatives. Hearing their call, we established a formal **Alumni Program**, which engaged 25 youth in college readiness workshops, service projects, public speaking and, in select instances, serving as student group leaders for Walking the Walk networks and as Interfaith Center interns.

Alternative Spring Break



The Center increasingly receives calls from colleges and universities across the country eager to find interfaith service experiences to offer as part of their alternative spring break offerings. In 2010-11 we hosted **Alternative Break** groups from Temple University, North Carolina State University and University of Maryland. These week-long immersion programs, titled “Interfaith Encounters,” include site visits and worship experiences in five to six different faith communities, interactive case study and dialogue sessions, and hands-on community service work.

HEARING THE CALL: ADULT LEARNING & LEADERSHIP

The original impetus behind the Center's **Adult Learning and Leadership** work was to respond to a public call for opportunities for people to come together across faith lines to achieve understanding through study and dialogue. The Center rose to the occasion and is currently the *only* Philadelphia organization to provide an in-depth menu of interfaith programming. Over the years, requests from the community have become more nuanced and, as a result, our programs more sophisticated and diverse. As you will read below, continuing to innovate has enabled the Center to reach a broader audience and engage adult communities in new ways.

Gateway to Religious Communities

Gateway to Religious Communities was launched in 2010 as a means for opening doors – literally and figuratively – for the public to experience various houses of worship. In its first year, we arranged for 11 Gateway programs that attracted more than 150 guest participants and exposed the work of the Center to more than 1,000 congregants from respective host communities throughout our region -- Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Baha'I, Sikh and Native American.

Religious Diversity in the Workplace

We frequently field calls from the private sector to help in developing creative solutions to complex issues related to religious diversity and sensitivity. We hear from business leaders wrestling with the balance between their faith identity and professional persona. Companies and institutions seek us out because they want to educate their employees about what it means to do business in a world that is increasingly interconnected and interreligious. To this



end, the Interfaith Center formulated a new **Religious Diversity in the Workplace** curriculum, which we proudly presented at two local institutions, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Drexel University. These programs attracted 60 and 30 participants, respectively, and have opened the door to other programs in the future.

Single Faith Immersion

In Spring 2011, we launched **Single Faith Immersion**, a new professional development and training program for allied health professionals who work with a religiously diverse client base. This training was offered through a series of five one-day intensives to increase knowledge about the religious backgrounds of colleagues, clients, patients and other constituencies. 45 professionals from a wide range of healthcare settings participated in this pilot program and concurred that the Center can provide a great service towards addressing a great knowledge gap in their fields.

HEARING THE CALL: RELIGIOUS LEADERS COUNCIL OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

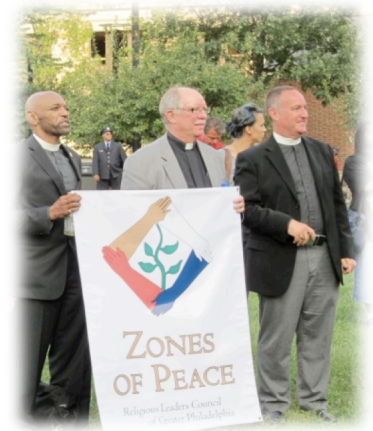


The Interfaith Center is proud to serve as the home of the **Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia**. This group includes leaders from 27 faith communities across Philadelphia and in 2010-11 was co-convened by His Eminence Cardinal Justin Rigali; Bishop Claire Burkat, PA Southeast Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; Rabbi David Straus, Main Line Reform Temple and Chair, Jewish Community Relations Council; and Imam Anwar Muhaimin, Quba Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies.

Zones of Peace

This year was a landmark year for the Council, which launched its first community-based initiative called **Zones of Peace**. This special project stemmed from a pressing need to address violence – in all its forms – through the collective power and work of grassroots religious communities. Twenty congregations signed on as a “site” this inaugural year, which involved displaying a banner claiming their religious space and surrounding area a violence-free zone and implementing a community-wide violence prevention project.

In addition to serving as an external call to action, **Zones of Peace** plays a role in addressing the internal, often unseen impact of violence in families, workplaces and neighborhoods throughout the region. To this end, in May 2011 the Center and Council partnered with Drexel School of Public Health to present a day-long workshop, led by Dr. Sandra Bloom, renowned expert in “Understanding and Transforming Trauma.” This workshop was attended by 200 people representing 48 congregations and 88 non-profit agencies and organizations.



Hearing the Call

*The **Zones of Peace** Initiative engaged more almost two dozen schools and congregations in creating grassroots solutions to all forms of violence. It has served as encouragement for communities to take the next step with existing programs and partnerships or as inspiration to prioritize an action they've intended to take for a while ... in order to become part of something “bigger than themselves” and to turn the tides of violence.*

HEARING THE CALL: GIVING BACK

In 2010-11, The Interfaith Center responded to the call for our involvement in three important civic initiatives, all in conjunction with the City of Philadelphia – at the invitation of Mayor Michael Nutter and Reverend Malcolm Byrd, Director, Mayor's Office of Faith-Based Initiatives. We are proud to be able to "give back" to this great City and region through these important projects.

New Conversation on Race and Ethnicity – NewCORE

The Center's Executive Director and Board Member Rabbi David Straus joined NewCORE, a multi-racial, interfaith body of many striving to become one through a new conversation on race and ethnicity. New CORE recognizes the urgency to speak and listen to our racial and ethnic histories, experiences and struggles and to respect each person's dignity and individual journey. Our differences will one day serve not to divide but to enrich and inspire. The Center participated in NewCORE's monthly leadership meetings, its racial dialogue training and in NewCORE's Martin Luther King Jr. Day Dialogue on Race at Girard College and South Philadelphia High School – and in a community dialogue led by Penn Center for Civic Engagement at the Suzanne Roberts Theater, prompted by the performance of David Mamet's evocative play, RACE.



West Philadelphia Economic Recovery Coalition

The Interfaith Center was selected through the City's federal economic development grant to become a Mentor Agency for the **West Philadelphia Economic Recovery Coalition**. We had the privilege of working with three small non-profits located in West Philadelphia, providing capacity building assistance. This grant allowed us to create lasting neighborhood connections and forge a sustained partnership with the Mayor's Office that has carried over into a number of important projects.

Planning for the Region's Tenth Anniversary of 9/11

The Religious Leaders Council and the Center played a central role in commemorating the tenth anniversary of 9/11, serving both to convene a prayer service led by religious leaders from across the region and to inform a public gathering on Independence Mall.

Prior to the anniversary of 9/11, the Religious Leaders Council and the Interfaith Center built a coalition that included the Constitution Center, the Mayor's Offices of Faith Based Initiatives and External Affairs and Community Engagement. As a coalition, we worked together to execute meaningful commemoration events and developed a unifying pledge that was made available on www.phillyuniteson911.org, for the public to sign. The unifying pledge was also featured as a full page ad in the Philadelphia Inquirer, signed by over 50 religious and civic leaders in Philadelphia.

HEARING THE CALL: EVENT REFLECTIONS

Over the years, the Center has proudly hosted a series of community events, designed to raise funds and build camaraderie among our vast network of community partners and friends. After a brief hiatus, many among the Interfaith Center family called upon us to renew this practice on an annual basis.

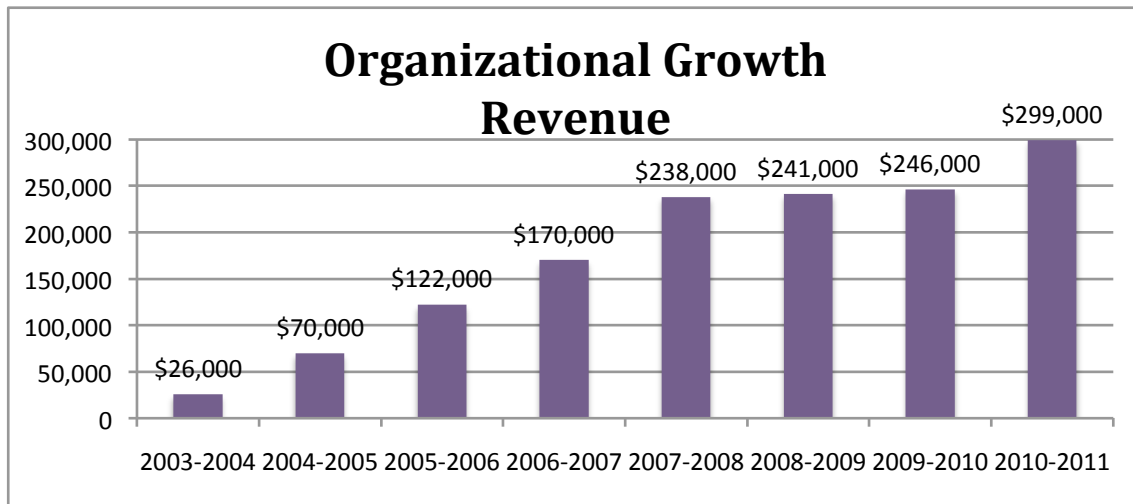
On March 28, 2011, the Center held its first sponsorship-based fundraising event. Headlined by acclaimed violinist Gil Morgenstern, more than 200 guests filled the Great Hall of Moore College of Art & Design to enjoy a truly unique evening of celebration and fellowship. Gil generously provided pro-bono a specially created performance featuring solo and chamber music along with spoken word selections, including a poem, "Let Peace Begin with Me," written on the first anniversary of 9/11. He was accompanied by Jonathan Feldman, pianist in residence for the New York Philharmonic, and Obie-winning actress, Elizabeth Marvel. Guests were also treated to some words by Luis Sandoval, a High School student in **Walking the Walk**, who spoke to the importance of interfaith dialogue and service.



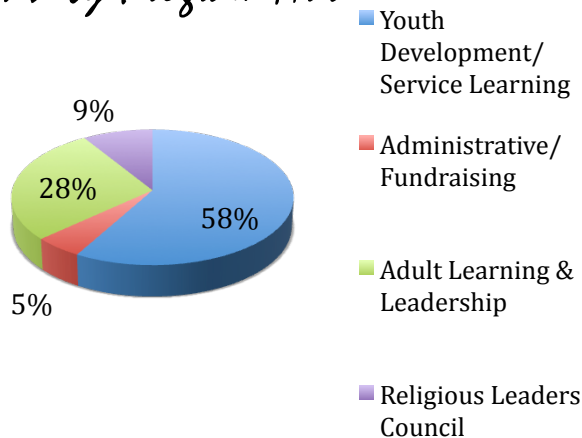
The event raised more than \$70,000 in unrestricted revenue to sustain the work of the Interfaith Center. We extend our deepest gratitude to event sponsors and donors for *daring to invest* in the power of interfaith programming. We also extend thanks to all those who made this evening a reality, particularly members of our Event Committee: Jeffrey Abrams (Chair), Sr. Gloria Coleman (Board Chair), Rev. Richard R. Fernandez, Lisa Liem, Tricia Mackay, Imam M. Abdur-Razzaq Miller, the Very Reverend Judith Sullivan, and Julie Williams.



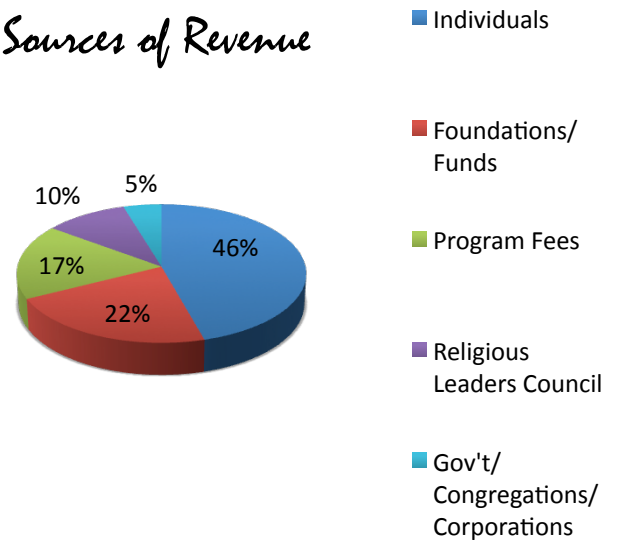
HEARING THE CALL: THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY



Expense by Program Area



Sources of Revenue



Income		Expense	
Individuals	\$ 137,000	Personnel	\$ 243,000
Foundations/Funds	\$ 65,500	Program Materials	\$ 46,500
Program Fees	\$ 52,500	Administrative Expense	\$ 15,500
Religious Leaders Council	\$ 30,500	Total Expense	\$ 305,000
Government	\$ 7,500		
Congregations	\$ 4,000		
Corporations	\$ 2,500	Net Income	\$ (6,000)
Total Income	\$ 299,000		

HEARING THE CALL: THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY

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*The generous donations of these individuals, foundations, and corporations include their sponsorship of our March 28th Spring Concert.



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3723 Chestnut St
 Philadelphia, PA 19104
 215-222-1012
info@interfaithcenterpa.org
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