

NAINConnect 2009 WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

FRIDAY, 10:30 - NOON

Chapel Library - *Do Other Religions Have to be False for Mine to be True?*

Rev. Walter Cuenin, Jessica Kent - Brandeis University

In this session, Jess Kent, a recent graduate from Brandeis University and Rev. Walter Cuenin, the chaplain of the Interfaith Chaplaincy at Brandeis will discuss the "hard" issues of interfaith dialogue. How do we move beyond being "nice" to each other and tackle the issues that are challenging? In our work together with many colleges in the Boston area we have conducted retreats and led seminars on interfaith issues. It is always easy at first because everyone wants to be friendly but as we move into more sensitive areas there can be a temptation to avoid the hard realities. For example, at a panel we conducted on interfaith dating many sensitive issues surfaced that normally never were spoken. We will use our experience of Brandeis which has a 60% Jewish student body that interacts successfully with the Muslim and Christian groups as well as other religious traditions. We have both been active in the interfaith service movement and will bring that experience to the discussion.

Chapel Classroom - *Contemplative Pedagogy*

Amber R. Clifford-Napoleone - University of Central Missouri, and Dr. Chrys Egan - Salisbury University

Most religious traditions offer some form of contemplative practice. One way to approach interfaith education is to focus on this common element as a pedagogical tool. This session will explore contemplative pedagogy, and the many ways that teachers can use this technique to bring their students to greater awareness of the interconnectedness of modern life. Contemplative pedagogy is a practice that encourages moment-to-moment awareness for both student and teacher, regardless of religion or spiritual tradition. This pedagogy also actively engages students and teachers in mindfulness, and helps develop concentration and engagement in an ever more fragmented world. Attendees will discuss and experience contemplative pedagogy techniques, and learn about contemplative components available for both traditional and online courses. The workshop will rely heavily on the contemplative system at Naropa University. As such, "a fundamental assumption of this workshop is that the individual development of the teacher is inseparable from the contemplative transformation of higher education learning. Toward that end, the workshop will provide practices for the personal journey of the participants, with direct and indirect applications to contemplative teaching and learning" (Naropa CACE website). This workshop will include a short period of meditation and reflection. The workshop leader is a member of the 2008 Summer Seminar on Contemplative Pedagogy at Naropa University.

Room 201 - *Assessing Religious Pluralism in your Campus or Community*

Hannah McConaughay - Interfaith Youth Core

The Campus/Community Assessment is a tool to assess the current state of religious pluralism and interfaith efforts on a campus or in a community, and identify assets, challenges, and positive action steps to increase religious pluralism in that setting. This tool has been developed through years of research and interaction with interfaith programming in a variety of settings, and Interfaith Youth Core trainers will lead interactive exercises to brainstorm specific action steps to take upon returning to participants' home communities.

Room 202 - *Multifaith Living Community at the University of California at Davis: Learnings from the First Year*
Rev. Kristin Stoneking - UC Davis

The Cal Aggie Christian Association (CA House) is an independent non-profit that has been serving the campus of the University of California at Davis (UCD) since 1916. Working with a very diverse student population of 30,000, CA House envisioned the construction of multifaith housing for students. In this community, students from various religious backgrounds could live with one another and learn about one another's beliefs and practices, forming relationships over dinner, in casual gatherings and through more formal programs.

The community features a weekly student-made meal using produce grown and harvested by students at the university farm. The meal is organic, local, kosher, halal and vegetarian. Following the meal, a program utilizing speakers, films, art and games, and addressing issues of interest to the multifaith community is offered. Student residents have also committed to acts of service and a quarterly conversation with a spiritual advisor (a minister, priest, rabbi, or advisor of their choice.)

Through pictures and stories, the workshop will explore the experience of students in the Multifaith Living Community as well as the challenges and learnings for the Christian host organization.

Room 204 - *Collaborating to provide Interfaith Education at a Liberal Arts College*
Dr. Tarunjit Singh Butalia and Dianne Small -
Interfaith Association of Central Ohio

This workshop will explore the intersecting roles of a local interfaith organization, a state sponsored humanities council, and a private liberal arts college to provide education to college students about the religious legacy of Abraham, patriarch of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the Baha'i Faith. The presenters will share the experiences of the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio (IACO) as they initially collaborated with the Ohio Humanities Council to bring the "Children of Abraham" exhibit to Central Ohio. In networking with various community organizations, Capital University expressed interest in using the "Children of Abraham" as an educational tool, and one professor used the exhibit directly in her Introduction to Religion class. The factors and skills needed for these opportunities to occur will be discussed and analyzed.

Room 227 - *Interfaith Education at the Parliament of the World's Religions: Multiple Layers and Opportunities*
Grove Harris - Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions

The Parliament of the World's Religions is designed with multiple streams of interfaith education in mind. These include the casual personal encounters of participants, specific programming for teachers, presentations by members of diverse religious communities, strategic sessions on the state of training for religious leadership in our multireligious world, and more. Multiple learning modes are served through variety of forms, including art, film, dance, discussion, and presentation. This session will start with a presentation on the program of the next Parliament. The interests of participants will guide the discussion of educational strategies. Resource sharing will include films, web resources and more. Distance learning possibilities will be considered, as well as other deliverables useful in classroom and other settings.

Room 229 - *Taking the Initiative: The Role of Youth in Global Interfaith Action*
Sarah Talcott - United Religions Initiative

The purpose of United Religions Initiative (URI) is to promote daily, enduring interfaith cooperation, end religiously motivated violence, and build cultures of peace, justice, and healing for the Earth and all living beings. As Director of the Young Leaders Program, I am working to actively engage a group of several hundred youth leaders in 65 countries to bring this purpose to fruition in their daily lives and work. I intend to present the synopsis of the URI Young Leaders Program, which began in Mayapur, India, and has grown into a long-term plan for building the interfaith youth movement. I will share both the highlights of the program in Mayapur – including the methodologies and core values of this leadership training program, as well as present a number of model projects

these young leaders have organized in their communities since then. Some of these model projects include: a Youth Elevation Project in Malawi – a partnership between youth in USA and Malawi to set up a computer training center to train youth in necessary job skills and generate income for interfaith activities; an interfaith peace club at a university in Sierra Leone; an international interfaith women’s dance troupe; and the creation of an environmental Cooperation Circle *Greenfaith* in Australia.

Room 244 - *The Place of Education within an Interfaith Agency*

Jim Wiggins - InterFaith Works of Central New York

The workshop will present the array of educational events and projects that have been presented in Syracuse since 2002 to underscore the breadth of both content and form that "education" encompasses in InterFaith Works CNY. In doing this, one of the big issues to be addressed is how broad or narrowly "education" is understood to be. Part of the purpose is to generate discussion of whether "dialogue" is the only way to imaging education within an interfaith/multifaith setting.

FRIDAY, 1:30 - 3:00

Chapel Library - *Spirituality and Education*

Ji Hyang Padma and Najiba Akbar - Wellesley College

To quote the educator, Parker Palmer, In today’s understanding, nature is seen as relational, ecological, interdependent. Reality is constituted of relationships rather than separate particles...

This bears fruit in the kind of teaching and learning all of us want to engage in. We can know a communal cosmos only be being in community with it, ourselves. When we see education as taking place in a developmental context, we rediscover the original mission of higher education: to integrate knowledge with ethics and compassion, so that students develop spiritual and psychological leadership skills. At this point in history, it is most essential that students develop: a resilient worldview that helps them cope with stress, and spiritual resources that help them develop meaningful goals and purposes in life.

At Wellesley College we are taking a multimodal approach. Working within campus ecosystems to create strong supportive community; helping educators reconnect with the creative spark which originally motivated them to teach; and working with students-- through the arts, through contemplative teaching practices, through celebrations-- we encourage students towards greater authenticity, empowering them on behalf of wholeness. We will share our fieldwork and praxis through an experiential presentation.

Chapel Classroom - *Teaching About Religion: A New Print Resource for Secondary School Educators and Students*

Mike Goggin - InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington

Since 2005, staff and board members of the InterFaith Conference in Washington, D.C. have been compiling a new print resource to assist in the teaching *about* religion in public high schools around the DC area and potentially around the continent. In phase one of the project, the core team developed a battery of about 50 questions and divided those questions into 11 different topic areas. In phase two, Board members and scholars from each of the organization’s 11 member faith communities were approached about answering the questions in writing on behalf of their own faith community. Phase three saw the papers vetted both within the respective faith communities and among the Board of Directors of the IFC. Soon thereafter, we approached the Social Studies Supervisor of Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools. She in turn recruited five high school teachers who already offer an elective course in World Religions to review the resource and offer a critique. Their feedback became the basis of our final edits. Dr. Charles Haynes of the First Amendment Center’s Freedom Forum contributed a foreword and the resource is now available for purchase by educators and the general public. This workshop gives you the opportunity to meet one of the book’s contributors and find out if the book might be useful in your local school system. We’ll also discuss changing attitudes towards teaching *about* religion in the schools.

Room 201 - *Multi-Faith Life at Dartmouth College*

Kurt Nelson - Dartmouth College

Multi-Faith work at Dartmouth College centers around the student Multi-Faith Council, the Inter-Faith Living and Learning Community, the Faith in Action alternative spring break, and our Multi-Faith Summer Retreat. Explore the means and method of multi-faith life at Dartmouth College. We've experienced 24 months of new excitement and growth in quality and quantity of multi-faith programming.

We will talk about our meeting models, especially the frequent use of the "spiritual autobiography." We will explore the joys and challenges of robust involvement of atheist, agnostic and secular students. We can discuss events and programs that have been particularly successful. And we reflect especially on a year of inter-faith living -- what we have learned, how we made it happen and where we are going from here.

Room 202 - *What's in a Name? A Discussion of Interfaith Terminology*

Rev. Judith Fleenor and Pastor Susan Strouse - Golden Gate Center for Spiritual Living

There is a challenge developing in our Interfaith world around the use of language. People are using the same words, but meaning very different things. Traditionally the word *Interfaith* meant various faiths working together for common understanding and/or working together on issues of shared values. However, today we see spiritual communities sprouting up under the banner of an "Interfaith Church." Many individuals, who call themselves "Interfaith practitioners," consider their personal spirituality to be one that includes concepts from many different faiths. In light of this, the meaning of the word *Interfaith* is changing. Some see this as a natural progression of interfaith work, while others believe that this will cause *Interfaith* to lose its power and meaning in the world. As an interfaith community, it is beholden to us to look seriously at this issue and work toward creating a vocabulary that can be used and understood by all of us.

This workshop/presentation will take a look at the vocabulary being utilized today. We will look at words such as Interfaith, Inter-religious, Multi-faith, Spiritual, and Inter-spiritual in order to unpack the multiple meanings people place on these words, and to discuss ways in which we as a community can forward a more accurate use of vocabulary in the world through formal and informal influence.

Room 204 - *Tools for Interfaith Education*

Kathryn M. Lohre - The Pluralism Project

Since 1991, the Pluralism Project at Harvard University has engaged in the study and documentation of America's new religious landscape. Through our Interfaith Initiative, we have explored the range of organizations, initiatives, and projects that comprise the interfaith movement in the United States today. From the grassroots to the campus green, and from city hall to the ICU, there is an urgent need for interfaith education and leadership development. Yet given its contextual nature, this need is not neatly defined nor resourced. In some cases, basic information about the world's religions is sufficient. In other more complex circumstances, resources that foster sensitivity, agility, and critical thinking skills are needed.

Through our mission of "helping Americans engage with the realities of religious diversity," the Pluralism Project has developed a number of tools and resources that could benefit interfaith education and leadership development in a range of settings. These include:

- Documentary films on women's leadership and civic engagement
- Case studies for religious and theological studies
- Research reports, accessible by tradition and state
- *Religious Diversity News* database
- Teachers' resources

This workshop will seek to spotlight our most recently developed tools, including our newly released documentary film, *Fremont, USA: A City's Encounter with Religious Diversity*, and a sampling of our case studies. It will also explore the specific challenges and issues at stake as colleges and universities respond to the increasing needs for multi-faith programming, leadership development, and space.

**Room 227 - *Interfaith Education in the Community: Interfaith Holidays and Observances with Jeopardy Game*
Judy Lee Trautman - MultiFaith Council of Northwest Ohio**

MultiFaith Council Education Strand

The MultiFaith Council has provided, as a founding activity, many examples of community interfaith education. It has hosted two World Religions 101 Discussion Series. A program called Patterns for Peace discussed tenets and strategies for peace from about twelve different religious and spiritual perspectives. Two evening series held at local libraries studied religion as it intersects with current issues. We received a small grant from Bowling Green State University to explore opportunities for interfaith dialog on campus and in the larger community.

Current Example of Community Interfaith Education

Most recently we were contacted by a nonprofit residential facility which provides services to individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. They wanted a two-hour in-service for their staff about diverse religious holidays.

I presented a PowerPoint about diverse religious holidays and observances. In order to maintain interest and engage the participants, I prepared a Jeopardy game. The participants seemed to really enjoy playing the game. I presented the winner with a beautiful Interfaith Calendar. Because I feel that all participants in increased understanding are winners, I had made a one-page calendar for each attendee. The event was very successful and repeatable. We may consider offering it to a local University class.

I would present the PowerPoint and game as one example of how a local interfaith group can participate in community education.

**Room 229 - *Multi-Faith Dialogue and the Web*
Noam Shore - Idealogue, Inc.**

The internet is connecting people in ways never before imagined, yet for all the social networks and interactive software tools, we are still lacking in the ability to engage in in-depth and constructive multi-faith dialogues on the web. In fact, the internet itself may be helping to continue limited perspectives about people from other backgrounds, experiences, and religious faiths, and even further inflame deep divisions.

Idealogue, Inc. has partnered with Beyond Tolerance at Wellesley College to pilot an experimental online platform for dialogue and collaboration on multi-faith issues. Join us to learn more about the Beyond Tolerance program, Idealogue, Inc. and our lessons learned from the past year. We will be reviewing the Beyond Tolerance dialogue program, outlining a new approach to online dialogue, sharing best practices for engaging student leaders in important multi-faith discussions, and answering questions that you may have on your own online experiences.

**Room 244 - *Developing Teen Leaders in an Age of Pluralism*
Aanchal Narang - Interfaith Action, Inc.**

High school students in Interfaith Action's Youth Leadership Program not only engage in intercultural and multi-faith conversations amongst themselves, but actually facilitate interfaith dialogue and interactive activities within schools, at conferences, and in the community. In this workshop, participants will engage in dialogue and interactive activities about issues of core religious identity. The teens will create a safe place for participants to share core religious values and the role of religion in their lives.

Using active listening and other communication tools, participants will experience the power of teen-led dialogue and hear in the teens' voices, why this work matters to them, how they develop the skills to plan and facilitate

workshops, and how participants can adapt the model to create youth-led community forums, celebrations, dialogues, and conferences in their own communities. Through this session, the teen facilitators hope to expand their audience's notion of what is possible in the area of youth empowerment and interfaith discussion.

With today's religious conflicts, participants will learn how one group of teens in Massachusetts is creating the means to spread the message of religion as a unifying factor instead of a dividing one and providing future leaders with the necessary tools to create a more connected and globally positive outlook. The workshop will conclude with time for question and answer.

SATURDAY, 10:30 - NOON

Chapel Library - *Wisdom and Connection: Common Principles of Education for an Interfaith World* Theodore Timpson - Young Spirit Foundation

Education is the art of meeting the unknown. The value of learning is in its power to change us, to make us aware of what was hidden before. The process engages the mind, feelings, intentions, and beliefs of each student. How can we reform our schools to develop that art for each individual? How can classrooms welcome the spiritual realities of children and young people? How can we redefine curriculum to place academic pursuits alongside a commitment to personal transformation, service to others, and sensitivity to nature? This workshop connects the need for self and world transformation to the underlying attitudes that inform our educational systems. We cannot achieve a different society unless we change the way we teach our children.

We need ideas of spirituality that allow for wide differences of belief and background. Our workshop will explore these ideas, using reading, dialogue, and reflection about our own past experiences. The core principles of meaning, relationship, and self-awareness have the potential to change our educational institutions into places where wisdom is practiced and connection is restored. Each of us makes a journey which has often involved faith and natural wisdom. What are the common elements of this journey, regardless of our traditions and philosophical differences? We can resolve to make this process the real focus of children's learning, from birth to adulthood and beyond.

Chapel Classroom - *Advocating for Interfaith Engagement and Education: Women as Leaders, Learners, and Role Models* Allison Stokes - University of Rochester

This workshop will focus on the experience and stories of women leaders advocating for interfaith cooperation, dialogue and learning. We will begin by looking at women's participation in the Parliament of World Religions in 1893 in Chicago. The workshop will draw mainly on experiences of the presenter in her work as Founding Director of the Women's Interfaith Institute, located in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts and in Seneca Falls, New York. Texts particularly helpful in this endeavor will be cited including 1) Mary Pat Fisher's **Women in Religion**; 2) Maura O'Neill's **Mending a Torn World, Women in Interreligious Dialogue**, and 3) Allison Stokes' **Shalom, Salaam, Peace**. The latter was commissioned by the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church for use as a Spiritual Growth Study in their Schools of Mission, and includes a study guide by Pat Patterson. The four sessions carefully outlined in this study guide are designed to include multiple modes of learning, and so provide an excellent model for organizing interfaith education and experience. There will be time for participants to share their own stories and resources. (Stokes' book will be available for purchase for \$5.00.)

Room 201 - *Dialogue Facilitation: Skills for an Interfaith Dialogue Inside and Outside the Classroom*
Hannah McConnaughay - Interfaith Youth Core

This training is designed for leaders who want to build their skills in dialogue facilitation and gain a deeper understanding of the role of dialogue in religious pluralism. This training will particularly address the special circumstances of interfaith dialogue in the classroom (with classmates or students), as well as many other civic spaces. This 1.5-2 hour training will involve a shared values dialogue experience and role playing to help practice responding to both constructive and tough comments. The training will also provide participants with sample interfaith dialogue outlines and facilitator's tips and resources, and a Q&A session with experienced trainer/facilitators from the Interfaith Youth Core.

Room 202 - *Putting Teens in the Driver's Seat: How to Create a Youth-led Interfaith Program*
Janet Penn - Interfaith Action, Inc.

Learn how high school students are empowered to plan and facilitate interfaith dialogue, school programs, national and international conferences, and community interfaith celebrations. Janet will present the core principles and methodology that guide Interfaith Action's successful teen-led Youth Leadership Program and share the multi-layered training program that provides the skill base for their action. Participants will learn about the mentoring process that enables adults to transform from their role as teacher to a new role as guide and mentor. This model enables teens to conceive of, plan, and facilitate programs typically run by adults.

Janet will share examples of successful programs and collaborations among different organizations and religious or cultural groups. She will share Interfaith Action's plans to create a national training certificate program for teens and mentorship training for adults, as well as IFA's vision for networking high school interfaith groups nationwide.

Participants will not only hear about best practices, but analyze strategies that have not worked. Group discussion will include practical issues (e.g. recruitment) that emerge when starting a new interfaith youth program and ways to enhance existing interfaith youth programs. Teen leaders from the program will be available to share their perspectives. Together, we will explore how to strengthen the collegiate interfaith youth movement by expanding the realm of what is possible for high school teens.

Room 204 - *Tools for Interfaith Education (repeat)*
Kathryn M. Lohre - The Pluralism Project

Room 227 - *Interfaith Education at the Parliament of the World's Religions: Multiple Layers and Opportunities (repeat)*
Grove Harris - Parliament of the World's Religions

Room 229 - *Creating Multifaith Community at Wellesley College*
Dr. Peter Laurence - Education as Transformation

Creating Multifaith Community at Wellesley College is a video documentary of the multifaith programs at the college, created with funding from the Department of Homeland Security. The video portrays Wellesley's Student Multifaith Council, the professional Religious Life Team, the Multifaith Living and Learning Corridor, and such programs as Religious Holy Day Observances, Dinner and Dialogue, and Multifaith Community Celebrations, along with a tour of the new Multifaith Center. The documentary was produced and directed by Peter Laurence, who will be joined in the workshop by Ji Hyang Padma, a member of the Wellesley College Religious Life Team. After viewing the video, participants in the workshop will have an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Room 244 - *From Interfaith to Finding Spirituality (repeat)*
Dr. Nina Meyerhof - Children of the Earth

SATURDAY, 1:30 - 3:00

Chapel Library - *Navigating Through Diversity with the Power of Public Listening*

Kay Lindahl and Prany Sananikone - Listening & Diversity, Inc.

In today's fast-paced society, all of us are faced not only with the challenges of understanding current trends and technologies, but also the challenges found in simply communicating effectively within our global society. This workshop is a model of the work we present to businesses, educational groups and organizations who have diverse workplaces and/or whose clients and customers are from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Participants will learn how to:

1. Listen to people who don't think and behave like you.
2. Work with Eastern and Western communication styles.
3. Build relationships through effective communication in a global marketplace.

This is an interactive workshop. Each segment of the workshop has experiential components and/or case studies to illustrate the concepts presented. A brief outline follows:

- Welcome
- Introduction to public listening: cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural competence
- Self Introductions: Who would you like to impact with the quality of your listening?
- Deep Breath Exercise
- Background preparation: listening as an art, choice, gift
- Impact of cultural diversity and learning styles
 - Greeting across cultures
 - First impressions
 - Our culture is the best: can we adopt new ones?
- Ongoing preparation
 - Cultivate silence
 - Slowing down to reflect
 - Being present
- Communication Styles -- distinguish Eastern and Western modes
- Top Ten Powerful Listening Tips

Chapel Classroom - *The Israeli Palestinian Relationship: A Peace Education Program*

Rebecca Tobias - Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Ethics

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Ethics designs and facilitates a variety of service learning projects for youth and adults. This year the Institute has adopted a Middle East peace education community outreach program featuring the documentary film "Encounter Point." The film is coupled with an extensively researched well developed adjunct teaching curriculum both produced by the non-profit organization Just Vision. Since their introduction in 2007 the Institute has conducted multiple screenings and facilitated discussions using these materials in formal and informal classroom settings with community leaders, members religious congregations and social action institutions comprised of adult and youth learners in an effort to teach about successful the peace building taking place in the region. The printed curriculum as well as Just Vision's interactive educational website the 'On-line Network for Peace' contain age appropriate discussion questions that address the pressing social and political realities facing Israeli and Arab youth today, and features educational resources where students in the Diaspora can learn concrete ways to employ their insights and energies toward fostering and supporting peaceful coexistence initiatives taking place in Israel and her surrounding territories. The film and the curriculum have been endorsed by Israel's Ministry of Education.

Room 201 - *Dialoguing Across Divides: The Story of the Pathways Initiative at Tufts University*
Najiba Akbar - Tufts University

This workshop tells the story of the Pathways Interfaith Initiative at Tufts University. The program, launched through a federal grant awarded to several U.S. colleges in 2005, offers students of all religious and non-religious backgrounds an opportunity to engage in dialogue and collaboration around a variety of issues. The role of faith in politics and social activism, issues of identity and belief, the conflict in the middle east, and the role of religion on the college campus are all topics that have been addressed through this dialogue initiative. This workshop will provide an overview of the goals and methods of dialogue employed by the Pathways program, with a focus on key successes, challenges, and insights uncovered along the way. Some key questions we will examine include:

- 1) How can dialogue be structured to maximize deep and lasting relationship-building?
- 2) How can we reach beyond the "usual suspects" and engage a broader circle in interfaith dialogue?
- 3) Where does politics fit in to interfaith dialogue? Is it the "elephant in the room" that needs to be discussed, or the "third rail" that will destroy the dialogue on contact?
- 4) What is the connection between interfaith dialogue and social justice activism?

This presentation will be interactive and will provide a forum for audience members to share their own thoughts and experiences around dialogue.

Room 202 - *Training Students in the Essentials of a Successful Interfaith Dialogue*
Ora Gladstone - M.I.T.

In 2005, a three-year government grant was established to create on-campus interfaith prototypes to enhance inter-religious understanding and cooperation. In addition to creating these enhancements, between individuals and campus organizations, the students involved, it was thought, would be in place, as a coalition, to help ease tensions if the need arose.

The Addir Fellows at MIT, in their model presented to obtain a grant, included a number of key ingredients necessary for the success of Interfaith Dialogue. The resulting program has proved to be very positive and participant's have spoken of significant effects it has had on their thinking and beliefs.

If you have contemplated creating an Interfaith Dialogue, but have not known how and where to begin, this session is designed to help you move forward. We will also focus on the ways in which the establishment of an Interfaith Dialogue group has the potential for more positive outcomes than might at first be expected. Focusing on some true and rather dramatic situations within the Boston community, we will also see the ways in which Interfaith Dialogue can result in the positive resolution of difficult and divisive situations. If you are a member of a dialogue group, you are most welcome to share your successes and/or challenges.

Room 204 - *"Expressions" Art Competition: Educating Children on the Multi-Faith Path*
Yanina Vashchenko and Arlette Banegas - Thanks-Giving Square

The "Expressions Art Competition" began exactly four years ago under members of the Thanks-Giving Square Board and Interfaith Council. "Expressions" started as a small experiment in promoting gratitude throughout this land, especially through our children. The first annual competition proved that students around the area were not only willing to share their views on gratitude through visual arts, literature and dance but demonstrated an immense maturity towards a term used and practiced by many religions. When this small experiment concluded, we were astounded by the results. We had numerous schools from different cultural and religious backgrounds participate. It was then that we realized that "expressions" was a must do yearly task, which would not only benefit the students and schools but also us. Our mission soon included aspects of religious tolerance and rather than teach what gratitude meant, we were asking our children what they thought gratitude was. Since then the competition has been a growing success. Many students, ages five through eighteen from various faith traditions have entered, teaching us that there is no age limit to understanding and accepting the many faiths of the world. In its fourth year the "Expressions Art Competition" brought in a wider range of participants. Many entries came

from outside the local district and county. Religiously speaking we had entries from public schools as well as private Jewish and Christian and non-sectarian educational institutions. This year our horizon will broaden out as we start including online entries and an international category. As “expression” grows so will the interest of many students toward the multi-faith path.

**Room 227 - *Faith to Faith: Face to Face: A Certification Program in Interfaith Studies for Lay People*
Gilbert R. Friend-Jones - First Congregational Church of Crystal Lake
and FaithBridge**

This workshop will introduce the principles and practices of a two-year lay certification program in interfaith studies offered in the NW Chicago suburbs. *Faith To Faith, Face to Face* provides an introduction to the basic tenets and texts of five of the world’s faith traditions, and a forum for informed discussions of contemporary issues involving religious diversity. Organized by a coalition of Islamic, Jewish, Christian and Buddhist faith communities along with the Spiritual Care department of a local hospital, the program draws on expertise and leadership from the region’s universities and diverse religious communities. Classes are designed for people from all faith communities. A “Certificate of Interfaith Studies” is awarded upon the successful completion of four semesters.

This course is more rigorous than a simple "Sunday School" approach, but less demanding than a university program. There are no academic prerequisites, but participants are preparing themselves to build cooperative relationships between differing faith-based constituencies through readings, lectures, visits, assignments, and interaction with instructors and each other. Individual projects are required. Through interacting with the practitioners of different religions, participants are learning about the beliefs, practices, history and texts of various world faith traditions. They are becoming acquainted with the diversity within each tradition. They are reflecting upon the positive and negative contributions of religion to contemporary global, national and local conflicts, and developing skills in multi-cultural communications.

This workshop will share the assumptions, methodologies and challenges of the course, and offer a summary of recent experience.

**Room 229 - *Taking the Initiative: The Role of Youth in Global Interfaith Action* (repeat)
Sarah Talcott - United Religions Initiative**

**Room 244 - *Theological Education for Interfaith Engagement: What are Seminaries Doing?*
Christy Lohr - Hartford Seminary**

In 1999 Thomas Thangaraj wrote in *Theological Education*: “Dialogue across religious boundaries has become a daily activity in many people’s lives.” (Vol 35, No 2, pp 143-153) Based on this, he outlined three reasons that an increased engagement with world religions is critical for Christian theological education. Without a meaningful understanding of how one’s faith relates to that of others:

1. a minister cannot have an adequate theological grounding for personal faith.
2. a minister cannot adequately address the laity’s everyday interfaith experiences and practices.
3. A minister cannot relate to an increasingly interfaith public ministry.

Against this background of mounting awareness, necessity, and involvement in interfaith endeavors, one might think that a subject like interfaith dialogue would be of great interest in theological education. The evidence, unfortunately, is less compelling.

There are, however, a few innovative schools that understand the issues that Thangaraj enumerated a decade ago. These schools are preparing religious leaders for ministry in a religiously diverse world through programs that offer students a truer understanding of religious traditions other than their own and help them forge real relationships with people of diverse faiths. Such schools are equipping a new religious leadership that understands interfaith

engagement as a form of peacemaking. For the past two years Hartford Seminary has hosted a working group of faculty members from theological schools to share best practices in teaching interfaith dialogue. The results of this research are being compiled in a forthcoming book.

This workshop will present the cases highlighted in this study and share its findings. Asking questions such as “What kind of interreligious education is appropriate in a theological school?” the workshop leader invites participants to comment on the courses presented and to share their own visions of what theological schools should consider when designing such programs of study.

SUNDAY, 8:30 - 10:00

**Room 201 - *Walking Together: Diversity Training to Build Bridges of Understanding for Young People and Adults*
Rabbi David Kunin - Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Action and Education**

Perhaps one of the most important needs for children in our community is the teaching of empathy, acceptance and understanding of ethnic, racial, sexual, gender and religious differences of members of our community. The failure to address this need may lead to fear, hate and stereotyping of those who are different from ourselves. The *Walking Together* program brings together Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu and Christian (and from many other faiths) children and/or adults. Through positive interaction and directed activities this diverse group of participants gains an understanding and appreciation of groups different from themselves, and indeed often perceived as antithetical to themselves. The participants come to the understanding that differences should not be feared, but rather form an essential element within the North American cultural mosaic.

During this session through interactive participation and discussion the *Walking Together* curriculum, a program of the Edmonton Interfaith centre will be demonstrated. Participants will gain the skills and the materials to implement religious diversity programs for grade school children, teens and for adults. Models for inter-generational programs will also be examined.

The *Walking Together* program has received a Laurel Award for programming excellence and has been honoured as a Global TV Everyday Hero.

**Room 202 - *Unity and the Many Paths to One God*
Rev. Claudell Hefner County - Unity Institute**

Unity was founded in 1889 by a man who described himself as “decidedly eclectic.” Since its inception, the Unity movement, while embedded in a predominantly Judeo-Christian culture, was open to and accepting of all paths to God - looking for similarities rather than differences. This workshop will look briefly at the development of Unity’s multi-faith position and how it has progressed over the years in churches, and in young adult and youth education. It will explore the multi-faceted approach to World Religions taken by some Unity clergy in special worship, ritual, and educational experiences.

Unity honors the universal truths in all religions and respects
each individual's right to choose a spiritual path.
(Unity – A Path for Spiritual Living, pamphlet)

**Room 204 - *Who is Going to Heaven? A Topical Approach to Interfaith Education*
Rev. Dr. Stephen L. Albert & Rev. Abigail Albert - Family Spiritual Center**

Is our Soul here for a Divine Purpose? Do we come into this life with an unconscious awareness of what will happen and, if we believe in one faith versus another, will it change the end result? If we believe the ‘right things’ will we enter heaven with less pain and, if and when we get there, are we complete on our mission or is there a lot more to come? Possibly the most emotional times a man or woman can have in life is when he or she is going through the loss of a loved one. No matter what Faith the person belongs to, whether it is a revered family member or a close friend who is dying, the sense of loss, and the acknowledgement that someday this will also be

me, can be very scary and lonely. **This workshop will look at what 12 of the world faiths believe about the Soul and Death & Dying and will compare those beliefs with each other and what science has been able to prove and document.** We will ask: Where are we going from here? Does the Soul actually exist? If so, how much does it weigh and what does it look like? Whether your Faith believes in an afterlife or not, the material and visuals in this workshop will have you questioning and discussing one of the most important and sometimes taboo topics in life. Do we reincarnate and if so, what about Karma? Will I have to put up with "THAT PERSON" again? Join us for the fun, the tears and the AH-HA moments and especially for the discussion it produces.

**Fountain Room - *Life on "Faith" Hill: The Andover Newton-Hebrew College Collaboration*
Rabbi Or Rose - Hebrew College**

In 2001, Hebrew College (HC) moved from its longtime home in Brookline, Massachusetts to a new hilltop site in Newton it would share with Andover Newton Theological School (ANTS), one of the oldest Protestant seminaries in the country. The leaders of these institutions had a grand vision in mind: in a city with a long history of racial, ethnic, and religious tensions, Jews and Christians from a wide range of backgrounds would create a model interfaith community, with a focus on preparing a new generation of religious leaders for work in an increasingly diverse American society.

Join us as we explore the growth and development of this unique program. Our conversation will include discussion of both the theoretical and practical dimensions of this initiative, including several case studies. How can seminaries best train religious leaders for life and work in a pluralistic society? What are the core skills and experiences these emerging leaders need? How can we build the interfaith agenda within seminaries nationwide?

**Garden Room - *From Interfaith to Finding Spirituality*
Dr. Nina Meyerhof - Children of the Earth**

This workshop is offered to help the audience understand that interfaith is one means of integrating and developing acceptance for peaceful co-existence. To further this understanding it is important to develop a universal code of ethics as well as examine what is "spirituality".

Children of the Earth houses The World SPIRIT Youth Council that develops programs that enlist all cultures and religions to find our commonality rather than furthering a focus on respecting differences. In this commonality, one finds unity and then can appreciate differences from the perspective that they allow for a mirage of alternative styles of being and living. This group will share our charter of Principles and Code of Ethics and discuss Spirituality.

This group, guided by Dr. Meyerhof, will also illustrate the potential of how it is to develop sequential processes that bring youth together igniting their personal desire for activating spirituality into form for creating peace projects for their communities and the international arena.

The youth will share their personal stories of going beyond interfaith and finding their common family. They will create small groups for the purpose of helping others begin this process using words of clarification, drawing and movement.

Youth as the future will share their dream.....our dream.....the dream to Be a better humanity for a more equitable world where every life counts.

**Conference Room 1 - *Educating a Pluralistic Civil Society: Lessons from 30 Years in Interfaith and Character Education in Secondary Schools, Congregations, Community Adult Education Courses, and Cross-cultural Exchanges*
Ralph Singh - Gobind Sadan, USA**

Following my work on the Central New York Education's Task Force for Values in Public Education, (made up of the major universities, private, public and parochial secondary schools in a 3 county area) where I was instrumental in developing our "Schools of Character Project," (1990's) I was asked to consult with a private day school, to develop an experimental course using the stories and core teachings of each tradition to teach values/ethics, and challenge students to look within themselves and develop a spiritual relationship within their own tradition.

In addition, I have spent 35 years organizing (and participating in) interfaith gatherings, from academic seminars to holiday celebrations and shared worship, cross-cultural exchanges, and community building projects helping to overcome the barriers for the disabled community and the poor.

Despite all our efforts, our place of worship, Gobind Sadan, USA, was still a victim of arson post 9-11. While this gave us a very powerful teachable moment, to which we responded with a powerful statement of forgiveness and reconciliation, it also highlighted how far we still have to reach.

The workshop will focus on lessons learned from each of these practical experiences, and suggest future courses of action. It will provide members with the opportunity to interact and participate – and will provide me with valuable feedback in further refining our course.

Conference Room 2 - *Animating the Golden Rule: an Introduction*

Tina Petrova and Renata Simkus - Scarborough Missions

The centerpiece of the workshop is a film presenting the universality of the Golden Rule described through an educational initiative of Scarborough Missions to animate this ethic through art, drama and music.

Scarborough Missions has developed retreats for students which lead the youth through an exploration of diverse expressions of the Golden Rule; the Ethic of Reciprocity. The retreats draw on communication skills that go beyond the traditional education paradigms.

Workshops are designed to draw students into alternative ways of thinking with the first exercise being a meditation; stillness. From there, defenses are further breached by different games which create a deep level of receptivity for the presentation of how the Golden Rule is expressed by the major world faiths.

Students explore the words of the different traditions through art exercises and then embody the learning through a performance art piece they develop and present as group work. The group work itself is a living exercise of the spirit of this profound ethic.

Film is a public sharing and in deference to the deeply personal nature of sudden awareness experienced by students through their retreat workshop process such disclosures were not included in the film. In the NAIN workshop the presenters will elaborate on the development of awareness experienced by the young people as they worked through their chosen forms of animation; recounting stories of how youth cracked open to the light in the Golden Rule.