

## **NAINConnect 2009 WORKSHOP PRESENTERS**

**Akbar, Najiba** is the Muslim Chaplain at Wellesley College, and is co-facilitator of the Pathways Interfaith Initiative at Tufts University. Najiba is a graduate of Wellesley College, where she received her B.A. in Peace and Justice Studies, and a graduate of the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, where she received her MSW with a focus on children and families. Najiba lives in Somerville, MA with her husband Bilal Kaleem.

**Albert, Rev. Abigail** is the Co-Minister of the Family Spiritual Center in Poway CA and the co-author of 3 books including *REBOOT* and *REBOOT to Marriage*. She is a retired public school teacher and has counseled parents and families through crisis and assisted in their growth towards developing better personal and business relationships. Abigail holds a Bachelor degree in Education and is completing her Masters Degree in Interfaith Studies. She is a member of the Association of Global New Thought, on the Board of The Affiliated New Thought Network and has been the Secretary of the Poway Interfaith Team since 2005.

**Albert, Rev. Dr. Stephen** is the Co-Minister of the Family Spiritual Center in Poway CA and the author of 9 books including *The Interfaith Manual* and *REBOOT to PEACE*. He is an invited guest speaker and leads motivational seminars across the United States, speaking on Interfaith and personal growth issues. Steve holds degrees from Penn State, Drexel University, The University of Colorado and a Doctor of Religious Studies Degree from Emerson Theological Institute. He is a member of the Association of Global New Thought, The Affiliated New Thought Network and was the 2008 President of the Poway Interfaith Team.

**Banegas, Arlette** has been involved with The Thanks-Giving Square Foundation and its Interfaith Council for three years. She is originally from Honduras and grew up Roman Catholic. Just like her co-worker Yanina, Arlette came to Thanks-Giving Square as an intern in 2006 and soon stayed, working as a receptionist and then taking part in the tasks required for the Interfaith Council and other aspects of the Foundation. She is currently working in a degree on International Business from El Centro College in Dallas, fluent on Spanish and English and planning to take lessons in Italian.

**Butalia, Dr. Taranjit Singh** is the Chairperson of the National Interfaith Committee of the World Sikh Council - America Region, Moderator of Religions for Peace - USA, Vice-Chair of NAIN, and member of Board of Trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. In Central Ohio, he is the President of the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio, Secretary of the Sikh Educational and Religious Foundation, Secretary of Interfaith Center for Peace, Co-convenor of Faith Communities Uniting for Peace, and member of Religious Advisory Council of the Mayor of Columbus.

**Clifford-Napoleone, Dr. Amber R.** holds degrees in history, anthropology and museum science, as well as a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Kansas. She teaches Anthropology at the University of Central Missouri, where she also serves as Curator of Museum Collections. Dr. Clifford-Napoleone was a 2006-2007 Unsung Heroine of the Year for Phi Kappa Phi, and is a Faculty Associate of the 2008 Summer Seminar in Contemplative Education at Naropa University. A scholar of cultural studies and the anthropology of gender, Dr. Clifford-Napoleone is currently working on a book about gender transgression in Kansas City's jazz scene.

**County, Claudell Hefner**, a faculty member of Unity Institute since 1999, teaches Ministry Arts and Skills – Leadership and Administration. An ordained minister since 1986, Claudell served in field ministry for fourteen years. She was a co-founder of the Interreligious Forum of Greater Harrisburg, PA. Claudell has a Masters' Degree in Psychology from the University of Northern Colorado, and is currently working on a doctorate in Organizational Leadership at Northcentral University, Prescott AZ. During her undergraduate years and beyond, Claudell sought

out and experienced Judaism, Baha'i, Sufism, Buddhism, Unitarianism, fundamentalist Christianity, Catholicism, Kundalini Yoga and the Raja /Kriya Yoga path of Hinduism from disciples of Paramahansa Yogananda.

**Cuenin, Rev. Walter** is a Roman Catholic priest and serves as chaplain at Brandeis University. He also coordinates the Interfaith Chaplaincy. Reverend Cuenin studied in Rome where he was ordained a priest and received his doctorate in theology at the Gregorian University. He is a panelist on an interfaith radio program in Boston called TALKING RELIGION. He is a member of the executive board of the Center for Jewish, Christian and Muslim Studies at Merrimack College. He is also the president of the Massachusetts Bible Society. This year he is a part of the Pluralism Alliance at Harvard University.

**Egan, Dr. Chryst** earned her Ph.D. in Communication from Florida State University and is currently an Associate Professor in Communication Arts at Salisbury University in Maryland. She also is a Certified Yoga Teacher with training in yoga, meditation, anatomy, and philosophy from the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health. Dr. Egan is a Faculty Associate of the 2008 Summer Seminar in Contemplative Education at Naropa University. Her academic work includes interpersonal relations, nonverbal expression, freedom of speech, and innovative pedagogy.

**Fleenor, Rev. Judith** is a Religious Science minister with the United Centers for Spiritual Living. She is on the Board of Directors for both the Marin Interfaith Council and the Interfaith Center at the Presidio. She is a panel moderator for the Islamic Network Group's Interfaith Speakers Bureau and a participant with the Abrahamic Family Reunion project. Prior to receiving her Masters Degree in Consciousness Studies and starting interfaith work, Judith held various roles in project management and technology training for companies domestically and internationally.

**Friend-Jones, Rev. Gilbert R. (Budd)** is a principal organizer of FaithBridge, an interfaith agency in the NW Chicago suburbs. He helped to found the Faith Alliance of Metro Atlanta and has organized or participated in interreligious workshops and conversations in the US, India, UK, Russia, Turkey, etc. A founding member of World Pilgrims, Budd has led interfaith pilgrimages to Morocco, Gibraltar and Spain. Budd is a Benedictine Oblate. He earned degrees at Howard University Divinity School, Princeton Theological Seminary and Frostburg State University. His articles on interfaith topics have appeared in local, national and international publications.

**Gladstone, Ora** has spent more than 20 years working with students on college campuses. Initially focused on work with Jewish students, her passion for creating community lead to involvement in helping to create groups that bring diverse populations together in dialogue and for enhanced acceptance and enriched appreciation of differences. For the past three years, Ora has been coordinating the Addir Fellows at M.I.T., part of a 5 campus grant to create on-campus Interfaith prototypes for enhanced inter-group cooperation. In addition to working 1/2 time with Addir, Ora teaches elementary public school music to 2nd-5th graders in her hometown, Newton, MA.

**Goggin, Mike** became the National Director of the St. Vincent Pallotti Center on April 1, 2008. He previously served the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC) as Assistant Director (2005-08) and Program Director (2001-05). He drew upon his experiences in the latter position to contribute a chapter to the book *Building the Interfaith Youth Movement: Beyond Dialogue to Action* (Rowman & Littlefield: March 2006) and to co-write and edit the Roman Catholic chapter of the *Teaching About Religion* book discussed in this workshop. Mike was previously President, Secretary and Young Adult Chairperson of NAIN, and he now serves as Membership Chair.

**Harris, Grove** is the Program Director for the Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne, Australia, December 3-9, 2009. This largest international interfaith gathering will address environmental concerns, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, ending poverty, social cohesion, peacemaking, and more, all from religious perspectives. The overarching theme is "Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, Healing the Earth." Grove's previous work with the Pluralism Project at Harvard University informs her work on interfaith education.

**Kent, Jessica** is a senior at Brandeis University planning to graduate this May with a BA in psychology. Jess has been involved in planning numerous interfaith workshops on campus. She was a member of the Religious Pluralism

& Spirituality Club and has served with Hillel in attempting to broaden the intra-Jewish dialogue. She was a national fellow for the Interfaith Youth Core.

**Kunin, Rabbi David** graduated from Brandeis University with a degree in Medieval History and was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He has served congregations in Scotland and in North America. He is now the Rabbi of Beth Shalom Congregation, Edmonton. He chaired the Southern Tier Interfaith Coalition (Elmira, NY), where he created the Walking Together program. He speaks widely on Judaism and on issues of understanding between different religions and traditions. Rabbi Kunin serves on the Academic Senate of St Stephen's College, is a board member for Jewish Family Services, the Edmonton Interfaith Centre and is a Chaplain at the University of Alberta.

**Laurence, Peter** is Executive Director of the Education as Transformation project at Wellesley College. He is a former Chair of the Board of NAIN and was a member of the Assembly of Religious & Spiritual Leaders at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago (1993) and Cape Town (1999). Peter is co-editor of *Education as Transformation: Religious Pluralism, Spirituality, and a New Vision for Higher Education in America*, co-general editor of the *Studies in Education and Spirituality* book series for Peter Lang Publishing, and a member of the Editorial Boards of the *Religion and Education* journal and the *Journal of College and Character*.

**Lindahl, Kay** has been facilitating workshops and leading groups for over 35 years. She is the founder of The Listening Center, which focuses on teaching participants how to prepare to listen. Her workshops and trainings have been presented across the U.S. and in several countries including Canada, Spain, South Africa, India and Brazil. Kay serves on the Board of Directors for the North American Interfaith Network and The Immortal Chaplains Foundation. She is a past trustee for the Global Council of the United Religions Initiative. Kay is the author of *Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening*, and *The Sacred Art of Listening*, both published by SkyLight Paths Publishing.

**Lohr, Christy** is a PhD candidate in theology and ethics at Hartford Seminary. Her research focuses on ecclesiological understanding and the theology of religions debate. She co-edited the third edition of *A World Religions Reader* published by Wiley-Blackwell in 2009. She coordinated the World Council of Church's 2005 interfaith education project and served on the North American Interfaith Network's board of directors from 1998 to 2005.

**Lohre, Kathryn M.** is the assistant director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University. Kathryn began her work with the Project as a student researcher in 2000, and has served in her current role since 2005. She received her B.A. in psychology, religion, and women's studies from St. Olaf College (1999) and her Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School (2003). As assistant director she is responsible for Project administration, managing student research, events, and outreach. Kathryn serves on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

**McConnaughay, Hannah** serves as Program Associate in the Outreach Education and Training Department of the Interfaith Youth Core, traveling to college campuses, civic organizations and conferences to promote religious pluralism and offer skills trainings. Hannah graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in Religious Studies and Economics from the University of Chicago and has previously worked in the fields of rape crisis, social work, and educational enrichment. Her childhood in East Asia and service experiences in religious communities like the Mississippi Delta drew her to interfaith work, and the incredible stories of youth peace building she encountered kept her there.

**Meyerhof, Dr. Nina**, President and Founder of Children of the Earth, has made a life of advocating for children and youth. Nina has received many awards for her work from The Mother Theresa Award to the Citizens Department of Peace Award to The International Educators Award for Peace. Her focus is on the realization that peace must come from recognizing our spiritual unity. For the past years she has ignited "The World Spirit Youth Council" which activates youth as a movement of united spirituality for world peace.

**Narang, Aanchal** is a junior at Sharon High School in Massachusetts. She has been a member of Interfaith Action's Youth Leadership Program for three years. Aanchal has developed curriculum and facilitated interfaith dialogues and interactive programs at conferences in Chicago, Boston, Atlanta, and Amman, Jordan. She has co-chaired the student-planned and run "Teenage Interfaith Diversity Education" (TIDE) conference at Tufts University in 2008, and at Wheaton College in 2009. Aanchal has also taught middle school students about stereotypes and labeling, as well as the BLAST elementary school elective program. Aanchal enjoys playing soccer and throwing discus for her school.

**Nelson, Kurt** holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in religions and history from St. Olaf College and a Master of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School. He currently resides in Hanover, New Hampshire, where he has been the Multi-Faith Program Advisor at Dartmouth College since September of 2007. During his tenure at Dartmouth, he has directed significant growth in Multi-Faith programming, including the creation of an inter-faith living and learning community, the development of a Faith in Action alternative spring break program, and the growth of a Multi-Faith Council. His interests include faith and sexuality, green theology, and struggling with the Lutheran Church.

**Padma, Ji Hyang** has been a member of the Religious and Spiritual Life team at Wellesley College since 1994. She has done intensive Zen training and teaching in Asia and North America, including Omega Institute, UCLA, Harvard University, and Boston University. Her writing has appeared in *Education as Transformation* and *Buddhist America*.

**Penn, Janet** is the Founder and Executive Director of Interfaith Action (IFA) in Sharon, MA and the creator of IFA's Youth Leadership Program and the Sharon Pluralism Network, an innovative collaboration among the Public Schools, Public Library, Council on Aging, Recreation Department, and clergy council to foster a town-wide culture of pluralism. She is passionate about empowering teens to lead interfaith work, inspiring adults with their example.

**Petrova, Tina** is a film producer and interfaith explorer. She has worked in film, television and on stage since she was a child. Now a producer, her recent film "Rumi – Turning Ecstatic" has been aired internationally, including a showing in New York with a special tribute screening at the United Nations. As her professional career developed, Tina honoured an inner drive which has taken her on a deeply personal interfaith journey. She has distilled this exploration into an offering of insight and questions that informs her current work as an educator.

**Rose, Rabbi Or** is the Director of Interfaith & Social Justice Initiatives at Hebrew College, and Co Director of CIRCLE: the Center for Inter-Religious Leadership Education, a joint project of Andover Newton Theological School & Hebrew College.

**Sananikone, Prany** is currently the Director of Diversity Relations and educational programs, Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (OEOD) at the University of California, Irvine. He develops and oversees staff development training, especially in the area of diversity, cross-cultural communication, and conflict management. Prior to this assignment, he was Director of Health, Education, and Community Programs at the University Extension. Before joining the University of California in 1990, Mr. Sananikone worked extensively with community-based non-profit organizations, developing educational and social services programs for refugees and immigrants. He has served as consultant/trainer for law enforcement, medical, educational, and social service agencies, and business corporations throughout the United States and abroad.

**Shore, Noam** is Founder & Chief Conversant of Idealogue, Inc. In founding Idealogue, Noam brought together prior business experience in finance and operations in the technology field, and consulting to Fortune 500 clients. His experience includes work at Working Assets, an innovator in the social enterprise field, integrating personal communications with progressive social causes. Noam has an MBA from Babson College and BA from Wesleyan University, and is also a trained mediator with Mediation Works Incorporated.

**Simkus, Renata** has worked in the communication field for over two decades with a focus on the use of picture and sound in the development of greater understanding; believing that understanding motivates action. Her area

of expertise has grown from education in the marketplace to a focus on children and youth and the organizations that support their healthy growth and development.

**Singh, Ralph** is currently an author and teacher who has spent many years in the formal study of religious traditions, grappling with issues related to values in society. He has been a consultant on values and character education in public and private education, has taught, consulted, and served as Chaplain for a private day school and taught adult education courses in congregational and community settings. He has developed international seminars to focus on demonstrating our commitment as people of faith to overcoming the critical societal problems of poverty, religious conflict, and terrorism. He also chairs the newly formed NAIN Committee on Interfaith Education.

**Small, Dianne** is a graduate student at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio, co-author of "Religion in Ohio: Profiles of Faith Communities," a member of the Education Committee of the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio, and the Corresponding Secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Columbus.

**Stokes, Alison** is Director of the Interfaith Chapel and Director of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence at the University of Rochester. A pastor/scholar for twenty-seven years, she has served as Protestant Chaplain at Ithaca College, Associate University Chaplain at Yale, and Vassar College Chaplain. Stokes has M. Div and Ph.D. degrees from Yale, and a Th.M. degree from Harvard. Long involved in interfaith work, she founded the Women's Interfaith Institute in 1992, and attended the Parliament of World Religions in Cape Town in 1999. Stokes is the author of several books. She has a son, daughter, and six grandchildren.

**Stoneking, Rev. Kristin** is Director and Campus Minister of the Cal Aggie Christian Association/CA House in Davis, California, where she founded and built the Multifaith Living Community. As a past president of the National Campus Ministry Association (USA), she has lectured at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, and consulted widely with denominational bodies, educational institutions and non profit boards on campus, young adult, and multifaith ministry. In the summer of 2008, she was a presenter at the Global Conference of Chaplains, Campus Ministers and University Religious Professionals in Tampere, Finland. Rev. Stoneking is a contributing author to the book *Serving God on Campus*, published in 2008 by the United Methodist General Board of Higher Education.

**Strouse, Pastor Susan** is a graduate of Antioch University and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg. She has served congregations in NY and CA, and has been at First United Lutheran Church in San Francisco since 2004. In 2005 she received a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. Her area of interest is interfaith theology and dialogue. She currently serves on the board of directors of the Interfaith Center at the Presidio, and was on the planning group for the NAIN conference in San Francisco in 2008.

**Talcott, Sarah** is the United Religions Initiative (URI) Director of Youth Programs, her work involving hundreds of young people from 65 countries. Having worked in the field of interfaith cooperation for ten years, Sarah has organized and facilitated interfaith youth exchanges, workshops and projects in the USA, UK, India, Cyprus, Spain, Brazil and Peru, combining interfaith learning with community service and peacebuilding training. Plans for the YLP in 2009 include an intergenerational mentorship program, a calendar series of action and reflection on topics such as social justice, the environment and peacebuilding, the launch of a youth communications hub, and regional trainings and workshops.

**Timpson, Theodore** is the president of Young Spirit Foundation, an organization dedicated to the development of wisdom, joy, and purpose in young people's lives. The foundation develops programs for young people, teachers, and families, that explore the role of faith and spirituality in education. Theodore taught for ten years in several progressive schools in the United States. He holds a B.A. degree from Harvard and an M.S. degree from the Bank Street College of Education in New York City. Theodore lives in Palo Alto, California with his family.

**Tobias, Rebecca** is an interfaith educator and social justice advocate. As Program Director of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Ethics, she designs and facilitates community programming that seeks to foster a culture of peace on

local, national and international levels. As a fellow at the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva she assisted Special Rapporteur Miguel Alfonso Martinez in the drafting of resolutions for the Working Group for Indigenous Populations for the Human Rights Sub-Commission meeting held in August 2005. Rebecca serves as a delegate to the UN's Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and the Committee of Religious NGOs. She resides on the board of the LA-PSR's Non-nuclear Proliferation Committee, the LA planning and coordinating council for the Parliament of the World's Religions, and is a US representative of the Interfaith Encounter Association of Israel/Palestine.

**Trautman, Judy Lee** is a retired high school teacher and technology instructor. She now works full time as a volunteer interfaith advocate and community organizer. She co-founded and chairs the MultiFaith Council of NW Ohio, which promotes education, fellowship, and service among adherents of a dozen faith perspectives. She is also Editor of NAINews and Communications Chair for NAIN. She manages websites for both organizations. Judy is an initiated Sufi and member of the Unitarian Universalist Church.

**Vashchenko, Yanina** has been involved with interfaith and international organizations for more than six years. She is originally from Russia and is Muslim. As Interfaith Coordinator at Thanks-Giving Square in Dallas, Yanina oversees a multitude of interfaith and international programs. Thanks-Giving Square is a non-profit organization that promotes gratitude as a common value in all cultures and religions throughout the world. Yanina came to Thanks-Giving Square as a high school intern in 2002 and has stayed ever since, working with the inter-religious community. Graduating from Southern Methodist University in 2007 with a degree in International Relations with a concentration in the Middle East, she is fluent in Russian and Spanish and is studying Farsi.

**Wiggins, Jim** is the Executive Director of InterFaith Works CNY in Syracuse, NY. He has been in that position since October 2002. He is Remington Professor of Religion Emeritus in the Department of Religion at Syracuse University, where he taught from 1963 through May 2001. He was chair of the department from 1980 through 2000. He is the author of several books, the last one entitled *In Praise of Religious Diversity*. He retired from Syracuse University in May 2001. He served as Executive Director of the American Academy of Religion from 1983 until 1992. He presented papers at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1993 and in Cape Town in 1999.