

Respect & Understanding

Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration

For 32 consecutive years, Interfaith Works has presented a special program on the Sunday preceding Thanksgiving. This community tradition celebrates *Gratitude* in all its many forms, and features the wisdom, song and writings of our diverse faith and cultural traditions.

Interfaith 9/11 Program

Each year on the 9-11 anniversary, Interfaith Works sponsors a community gathering to envision a peaceful world. In 2015, we conducted a worship service at The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, with readings and music from the



Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Native American and Baha'i traditions. The 9-11 program inspires and empowers our peace and justice work throughout the year.

ing to envision a peaceful world. In 2015, we conducted a worship service at The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, with readings and music from the

Interfaith Youth Camp

In August, we again offered a unique one week interfaith day camp for children in Grades 2-5. "Faith Explorations" was based at Temple Beth Hatfiloh under the direction of Catherine Carmel. The camp offered exposure to art, music and storytelling from diverse traditions. Volunteers from faith communities contributed their time and creativity to the camp.

41st Anniversary

We celebrated ourselves at IW's 41st Annual Meeting on May 19. In addition to en-

joying being together and celebrating our accomplishments, our business included the election of four new Board members: Ivy Gilliam (Treasurer) and George Krusz, Selena Kilmoyer and Julia Moore (at-large members). We thanked outgoing Board members Barnett Kalikow, Susan Kavanaugh and Bill Lynch, and honored nine "Hidden Gems" nominated by their faith commu-



nities (pictured above). The staff of the Emergency Overnight Shelter received special recognition.

Moment of Blessing & All Souls Day

We organized a Moment of Blessing in October as part of our long-established interfaith response to local homicides. We also gathered again in November for a special All Souls Day service, where we remembered those in our community who died but were not claimed by loved ones. This beautiful and heartfelt gathering, held at Mills & Mills Funeral Home, included the participation of Thurston County Coroner Gary Warnock and featured a traditional *Dio de los Muertos* altar constructed by our friends at CIELO.

Interfaith Works

PO Box 1221

Olympia, WA 98507

360-357-7224

office@interfaith-works.org

www.interfaith-works.org

Interfaith Works is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation



*Social Justice and
Peace through
Interfaith
Understanding
and Cooperation*

**2015
Program
Report**

Social Issues & Action

Emergency Overnight Shelter

IW has been dedicated to sheltering vulnerable adults in our area for over 25 years.



Our Shelter program is now located year-round at First Christian Church in downtown Olympia and has expanded to include more beds and a shared staff and volunteer model to better serve the most vulnerable adult men and women. We provide a safe, welcoming alternative for homeless adults who have been sleeping on the streets or in parks, doorways and under awnings.

During the first full year of the new 37-bed program, we supported over 30 people in their move into housing, provided safe and welcoming shelter for 317 unique individuals equal to 13,500 bed-nights annually. Yet this is only a fraction of the number in need of shelter. We have connected people to mental health and chemical dependency services, helped them regain or increase their income and supported people while they work full time jobs. We have benefited from over 5,000 hours of volunteer support and created 13 jobs in our local community as our shelter staff.

During 2015, shelter staff have participated in weekly multi-agency client case management meetings to coordinate services and solutions for individuals with challenging circumstances requiring repeated and costly police or emergency service intervention.

With Providence St. Peter Hospital and other agencies, we have been exploring options for opening a daytime Community Care Center in downtown Olympia in 2016. Planning will continue in the hope of addressing the urgent daytime needs of the street-dependent population.

SideWalk

After careful planning, SideWalk Homeless Advocacy and Support Center, a program of Interfaith Works since August 2011, Became an independent operations in June. As SideWalk moves forward, IW will maintain our close bond, continue to collaborate and support SideWalk's mission in any way we can.

35th Annual Thurston County CROP Hunger Walk

Hundreds of walkers enjoyed sunny skies on May 3 to raise awareness and funds for hunger programs, globally and locally. This year's Walk raised \$33,350.38, again ranking us among the top Walks in the region and nation. A 25% share of funds raised in the 2014 Walk benefited six hunger agencies and feeding programs serving Thurston County. The remainder went to support the international projects of Church World Service, a global leader in aid and development.

Policing & Community Relations

Within hours of the May 21 shooting incident involving an Olympia police officer, faith leaders working under the umbrella of Interfaith Works organized an evening community forum at Temple Beth Hatfiloh. About two hundred neighbors attended, and many took the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and concerns. Olympia officials were in attendance to listen.



Since that initial response, the wider community has continued to grapple with the shooting incident and related questions about race relations, racism, policing reforms and accountability. Interfaith Works and our diverse faith leadership has been actively involved in public engagement and dialogue, serving as a resource and working together to navigate the many challenges and opportunities. This crucial work will continue in 2016 and beyond.

Earth Stewards

2015 saw the revitalization of our Earth Stewardship work, beginning in March with the creation of a "BeeKind" campaign to encourage protection of pollinators in Thurston County. With the release of *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis' call to action on climate change, we are working closely with St. Michael Parish and other partners to bring the community together for local action on climate. Over 80 people attended our forum in September to discuss the Pope's speech to Congress and what it means for local action on climate change.



New in 2015

During the year, we welcomed a new Office Manager, Gabi Clayton, and bid farewell to our shelter co-managers Cassie Burke and Jeff Doyle, who were instrumental in creating the shelter.

In September, we moved our administrative office from its long-time location at Tumwater United Methodist Church to a new location at The United Churches in downtown Olympia.

We also inaugurated our newly-designed website www.interfaith-works.org