



# *Interfaith Families Project*

*of the Greater Washington, DC Area*

April – May 2010 [www.iffp.net](http://www.iffp.net) P.O. Box 5413, Takoma Park, MD 20913 (301) 270-6337

## **NEWSLETTER, LISTSERV, WEEKLY THURSDAY BULLETIN, ETC...**

Given our website, listserv, bulletin, and other email communications, we recognize that there is some duplication of information that we send out to members. We still, however, want to keep our members in touch with the latest news and events. Please contact Christine Beinhacker via email with your comments and suggestions for what information you would like to see included and your preferred format. Specifically, please let her know if you prefer the website, listserv, weekly bulletin, newsletter...or something else entirely.

## **FROM THE BOARD**

**JEN LIEBREICH**

At the upcoming membership meeting you will learn from the board about some pending BIG news! The board has decided, barring any unexpected barriers, to move our gathering location to the large gymnasium at Takoma Park Presbyterian Church (TPPC) at the corner of Tulip and Maple Avenues, beginning on April 25th. Our Sunday school will be held in TPPC's age-appropriate, large classrooms, where teachers will finally have long sought-after storage space in or around each classroom. It has less of an institutional and more of a community feel, and allows us to meet in a metro-accessible, affordable location without the burdens of the Montgomery County school system and worries that we will lose our location suddenly, with no comparably-sized available location..



Takoma Park, Maryland, has the largest concentration of IFFP families: it was founded by four mothers in Takoma Park, and next year 23 member families could walk to IFFP (and we hope they do). Environmentally, this is a win for IFFP's carbon footprint! We have mapped all the addresses of IFFP, and TPPC is centrally located. Of course, there will be some commuting increases, the largest of which are for board members who fully support the move. The majority of increases are for families who live closest to Einstein, and we apologize to folks who would have a longer commute, but we think you will appreciate that TPPC reduces the commute for Virginia and DC families, and is blocks from restaurants, shopping, and a Sunday farmer's market.

IFFP has a long history at TPPC: our first site for our one-room schoolhouse, it remains IFFP's office site. Julia and Susan have built and nurtured strong relationships with people at the church, who are just as excited about this new arrangement as we are. As some of you know, parking in Takoma Park can be challenging, so we can rent the PMI commuter parking lot at Maple and Carroll Avenues (next to 7/11) to have full, exclusive use of their lot on Sundays. It is one block from TPPC, and part of our agreement with TPCC is that all IFFP members will park in that lot, not in the limited street parking.

The board looks forward to answering your questions about the move and giving tours of TPPC at the membership meeting, which will be held in the large gym at TPPC!

We will also discuss the current and the 2010-2011 board-approved budget. In next year's budget you can expect a 3% increase in dues and tuition in order to meet costs and provide modest salary increases for our dedicated staff. The current budget is in good shape: the only area where we did not meet the budget is in contributions because we did not conduct an annual fundraising drive. You will hear plenty more details from our talented Treasurer, Andre Parraway. Finally, as we have in the past, we will break into small groups to take comments, kudos, and criticisms from all of you.

See you in Takoma Park April 25th!

## **EASTER GATHERING & PANCAKE BREAKFAST RECAP** REV. JULIA

For the first time ever, IFFP had an Easter Gathering on Easter Sunday! The Gathering was followed by an Easter Egg Hunt for the kids and then a pancake and matzoh brei brunch (of course).

There are many individuals to thank for our wonderful Easter Gathering, but let's just start with Stephani Abramson--who passionately wanted to do a pancake brunch and an Easter Service. She coordinated all the food, volunteers, and generally made sure that everything that was needed for a beautiful Easter Gathering was in place. Thanks to Ian Spatz, who envisioned this service many years ago; it only takes one person to sow the seed of an idea...and it happened. Ian, we are so grateful for your wisdom, passion and care for our community. Thanks to Larry Bostian and Beth for your beautiful reflections, so fitting for our community. Thanks to Rachel Franklin, who dared to come and play the piano and embrace all the music. Thanks to Jonathon, Rachel's beloved, on the bass. Thanks to Pete Flynn. Thanks to Rabbi White....we loved hearing about Jesus the radical Pharisee. Thanks to Eric, Danny, Tom/Ron for all the great music and sound. Thanks to Randy Gibson (my spouse) and Erica for your wonderful readings.

It was a beautiful day, made even more beautiful by ALL the members who came with hopeful hearts and who heard the message of being caring, compassionate, connected and childlike/humble.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

N Street Village (NSV) is a non-profit social services organization in Washington, DC that provides services to meet the needs of homeless and extremely low-income women as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. NSV was founded in 1973 by Luther Place Memorial Church in response to the explosion of the homeless population after the deinstitutionalization of chronically mentally ill patients. Every day of the year, N Street Village provides food, clothing, showers, transitional and permanent housing, mental and physical health care and support for women to re-enter the workforce. N Street Village serves nearly 800 women each year; this is 1/3 of the population of homeless women in DC. With a staff of 45 people, N Street Village is aided by more than 300 volunteers each year.

## **IFFP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO PREPARE AND SERVE AT NSV**

Through the listserv, IFFP members will be invited to sign up at <http://www.signupgenius.com> to prepare and serve meals. Be on the look out for a link from the listserv.

**Volunteers Needed Each 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the Month:** IFFP is in charge of providing a dinner every 3rd Saturday of the month for the 30 residents. Having 2-3 families volunteer for each month would be ideal. Our first commitment is for April 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Where:** Luther Place Memorial Church  
1226 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Come up the steps next to the wheel chair ramp, push the large middle silver button and then push 217 or 216 to get in. Someone will ask you your name; just let them know you are the dinner volunteer. If you would like to use the elevator let the person on the phone know. Go to the fourth floor. Arrive about 6:00pm so you have enough time to prep the food and serve it at 7:00pm.

**Tips for Planning a Meal:** Sue Katz-Miller provided the following suggestions for new volunteers, having done it many times before:

Two or three families plan the menu (by email) and split up responsibility. For instance: one family does salad and rolls, one family does spinach quiche and brownies, one family does roasted chicken thighs and watermelon. The families prepare the food at home (involving the children who are too young to come and serve). Then, one/two adults and one/two older kids from each family (max three adults, three kids) either meet at Luther Place or carpool and set up the meal, serve the meal, eat and clean up together. Cooking together would probably be wonderful and should be held up as a possibility but would involve a larger time and travel commitment. In a pinch, the fallback has been bags of salad, store-bought rolls and cookies, fruit, store-bought rotisserie chickens, frozen mac and cheese, made slightly less fatty by incorporating plain boiled pasta. More ambitious things we have done successfully: matzoh ball soup (women had no idea what it was but loved it), veggie/egg type casseroles, and homemade rolls.

**Important Note:** Participating families should return to the sign up page to view other families that are volunteering, so that you can coordinate. If you have any problems, contact Lis Maring.

**About children:** Children are welcome to serve with their parents, but must be under parental supervision. It is your discretion whether your child(ren) are at an appropriate age to volunteer. If not, you can always have them experience community service by assisting you in meal preparation at home.

**APRIL**

**April 4: IFFP's First Easter Service & Pancake Breakfast**

**April 10: COA Wilderness Retreat**

**April 11: Gathering: Journey of Resurrected Hope in the Holy Land**

Adult Group: Julia & Rabbi's

Trip to the Holy Land

Sunday School, Session. 18

Spring Open House

Yoga

COA – no meeting today

COA Prep – Einstein

Yom HaShoah observed (Holocaust Remembrance Day)

**April 11: Men's Night Out**

**April 16-18: Women's Retreat**

**April 17: N Street Village Event**

Luther Place Memorial Church

1226 Vermont Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20005

**April 18: No Gathering**

**April 25: Membership Meeting:**

**Meet at & tour Takoma Park**

**Presbyterian Church**

310 Tulip Avenue

Takoma Park, MD 20912

**Kids' Community Service Day &**

**Kids' Gathering**

**Teacher appreciation letters due**

**MAY**

**May 2: COA Ceremony Gathering & Reception**

**May 9: No Gathering - Mother's Day**

**May 16: Gathering & Baby/Child Welcoming Ceremony**

Adult Group: The Future of Our

Children's Faith

Sunday School, Session 19

COA Prep: Labyrinth Field Trip

**May 23: Gathering & Teacher Appreciation**

Adult Group: What Do We Believe about G-d?

Sunday School, Session 20

Yoga

COA Prep: PM, Wrap Up/Celebration

**May 30: No Gathering - Memorial Day**

**JUNE**

**June 6: Gathering: Volunteer Appreciation Day**

Adult Group: John Berlini/news from the Vatican

Sunday School Session 21

**June 13: Gathering: Blessings**

Adult Group: Looking Back and Looking Forward

**Luncheon honoring Freddie Adelman**

## SPRING OPEN HOUSE APRIL 11<sup>TH</sup>

On April 11<sup>th</sup> we will be hosting our **Spring Open House**. During the Adult Group, Rabbi White and Rev. Julia Jarvis, along with Joan Bellsey, one of our Coming of Age teachers, and Rabbi Tamara Miller will share experiences from their recent trip to the Holy Land. We will offer an orientation time when visitors will have the opportunity to speak with members of the board and staff and find out more about our programs and events. Please invite interfaith friends and family. There is an announcement of this event on the Listserv in a convenient format for forwarding via email to friends and to other groups.

## MEN'S NIGHT OUT – APRIL 11<sup>TH</sup>

PHILIP BREGSTONE

Guys! Come to our soccer and campfire-potluck from 6:00 to 8:00 pm on Sunday April 11. Silver Spring Park (on the corner of Boston Ave. and Chicago Ave just East of Georgia Ave off highway 410). We'll play a friendly pick-up game of soccer and then at 7, head to 610 Boston Ave, back yard, to make a fire and eat dinner. Bring food/drink to share... both to be cooked and picnic-style. Call Philip Bregstone with questions/suggestions.

## KIDS' COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> (DURING THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING)

For the event this year, the COA Prep class would like to support two different causes, Springvale Terrace and active duty military stationed overseas. The activities will include making care packages for the soldiers and creating a "talent show" DVD for the residents of Springvale Terrace.

The morning will begin with all of the children together for a Kids' Gathering, led by Rev. Beth. After that, the 3-5 year olds will go with Susan Ryder and other volunteers to a different location on site to make their cards for the care packages. We hope Rich Shegogue will again lead these younger children in songs.

The 6 and older crowd will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities including:

**Reading Corner:** COA Prep students will have a variety of books to read to our younger participants, who may need a chance to just take a break.

**Cards:** Paper and all sorts of coloring materials will be available so students can write and decorate cards for the soldiers.

**Picture Frames:** For both the military and Springvale Terrace care packages, everyone will have a chance to decorate cardboard picture frames.

**Talent Show:** One of the COA Prep students will be manning a flip video camera and putting together shots of the students performing jokes, doing puppets or any other talents that they would like to display. These will be cut together into a DVD and presented to the residents of Springvale Terrace.

**Care Packages:** Through the website [anysolider.com](http://anysolider.com) the COA Prep class has found units from MD, VA and DC that are currently stationed overseas. With the help of donations from the IFFP community, they will be putting together care packages that contain primarily snack and personal hygiene items.

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Gamble, COA Prep teacher or Susan Ryder.

## **SPRING WOMEN'S RETREAT APRIL 16-18<sup>TH</sup>**

**KAREN JACKLER**

Our fabulous annual retreat this year will be April 16 -18<sup>th</sup>, at the Christian Church Conference Center in Bethany Beach, Delaware. Sheree Mullen, yoga instructor and specialist in nutrition, exercise, and stress management will lead us through sessions in body restoration, deep body-mind relaxation, and restoring balance to your life.

Given the date, please RSVP right away to Karen Jackler or Carol Muskin.

## **COMING OF AGE (COA) CEREMONY MAY 2<sup>ND</sup>**

**JESSICA VISTNES**

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE! – Our crop of Coming of Age students will be having their special ceremony at Einstein on Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 am followed by a reception. We'd love everyone to attend, especially the families and kids in their COA-prep year. This will be a Gathering-type ceremony hosted by Beth, Julia, and Rabbi White with music and short presentations by the COA group. It's a festive occasion and a view into the entire IFFP Sunday School program. It's a chance for our whole community to support our teenagers and their families. You will be inspired!

**RSVP by April 19 to Jessica Vistnes.** We really need to know in advance that you're coming so we can plan accordingly! Please let her know how many people are coming in your family and if you are staying for the reception. Also – please let her know if you are a COA prep family.

## **GATHERING: BABY/CHILD WELCOMING MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>**

This is a lovely ceremony when the new babies and older children who have not participated in a prior ceremony are welcomed into the community. These children and their families stand before the community while Julia and the Rabbi bless and welcome each of the children into the IFFP community. If you would like your child(ren) to be included, please email Susan with the names and birthdates of the children as well as their Hebrew names if they have one.

# Sunday School & Teens

## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### OPENINGS FOR TEACHERS

We have many openings for teachers, co-teachers, assistant teachers, hall helpers and substitute teachers. Teaching a class is a great way for you to learn about Judaism and Christianity. It is a rewarding way to develop relationships with the students and your co-teachers. And it is also a way of contributing to an organization that helps interfaith families navigate our complicated religious and family lives. We could not pay the teachers for all the love and work they put into their classes, but, as a small token of our appreciation, we offer them following Sunday School tuition waivers: 1 waiver for lead teachers, 3/4 waiver for co-teachers, and 1/2 waiver for assistant teachers. If you are interested in participating in your child's religious education or helping IFFP in any of these ways, please contact Rev. Beth ASAP. Also, please consider coming to the informational meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Thanks!



#### **April 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am in the Back of the Cafeteria:**

Rev. Beth will be meeting with anyone interested in teaching Sunday School. If you're considering it, please come.

#### **Teacher Appreciation Letters Due April 25<sup>th</sup>**

To thank our teachers, we are assembling books of letters and drawings from the students. Please ask your children to write a letter or draw a picture thanking each person who works with them in Sunday School. (See the list below for each class below.) Each letter should be on 8.5" by 11" paper (lined or unlined). It should include your child's name, the teacher's name and class. Parents can also write a note to their children's teachers.

Please give your letters to Beth McCracken-Harness or Kerri Mullins-Levine.

#### **IFFP SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS: 2009-2010**

**Pre-K 3s:** Andrea Herman, Cheryl Leanza; Music: Eric Maring and Marci Shegogue

**Pre-K 4s:** Jenni Benbasset, Mary Melrod; Music: Eric Maring and Marci Shegogue

**Kindergarten:** Lora Dunne, Amy Richard; Teen Assistant: Aimee Miller; Music: Rich Shegogue

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade:** Kathy Flitter and Scott Kelberg; Pete Flynn; Teen Assistant: Renee Wasco; Rotating Assistants: Karen Jackler, Eve Weisberg, Don & Marla Hughes

## IFFP SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS: 2009-2010

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** Anita Iverson, Maureen Jaffe; Music: Eric Maring, Marci Shegogue

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:** Cindy Pohoryles, Josh Herman; Rotating Assistants: Ruthie and Julia Lewis; Hebrew Assistant: Renee Wasco

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Co-teachers: Lisa Dominguez, Maureen McCormick; Hebrew: Michael Rosenman

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Melissa Golding, Adam Korengold; Hebrew: Michael Rosenman; Hebrew Assistant: Renee Wasco

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Freddie Adelman (See article above re our special celebration of Freddie's 10 years of teaching this class!) and Deborah Schaumberg, Hebrew: Michael Rosenman

**COA Prep:** Sarah Gamble; Bob Schwartz

**COA:** Rob Liebreich; Joan Bellsey

**COA Ceremony May 2<sup>nd</sup>** – See article above in Upcoming Events section

### **Teacher Appreciation Potluck May 23<sup>rd</sup> 12:15pm**

This is not a teachers' meeting as other potlucks have been, so please come with your family--and bring a dish listed below.

### **Celebration of Freddie Adelman's 10 Years Teaching June 13<sup>th</sup> 12:15pm**

Freddie Adelman has lead the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday School Program for 10 years. We are inviting Freddie's former co-teachers and students, as well as leaders of the many houses of worship the 6<sup>th</sup> grade class visits. Please come with your families. And, since we will be having company, please bring extra big dishes according to the chart below:

Dish to bring if the last name of the woman in your family starts with:

A-H Main Dish

I-M Fruit/Vegetable/Side Dish

N-Q Bread

R-U Dessert

V-Z Beverage

(We have been having many delicious desserts, but not enough other food.)

## TEEN GROUP

BENJAMIN FOOTE

The adventures of the IFFP Teen Group continue on!

The major event of the winter season was our Teen Retreat. A crew of teens journeyed west to the Am Kolel retreat center for a twenty-four-hour marathon of fellowship and reflection. A Shabbat dinner, half an igloo, and innumerable photographs later, we emerged spiritually refreshed and better prepared to manage the sorrows and revel in the joys of life.

Our next adventure took us to the roadsides of the Capitol Beltway. Armed with empty trash bags and – thankfully – gloves, we took to the woods off of the Seminary Road overpass, picking up trash and recycling. Our labors did not go unnoticed! A few days later we received a note of thanks from the Linden Civic Association.

Looking to the future, next on the docket is the play, “My Name is Asher Lev,” based on the award-winning novel by Chaim Potok. Performed at the Round House Theater in Bethesda, the play follows a boy who struggles to balance family and self, tradition and inspiration. It's so good, even some parents are coming!

Finally, our merry band has undergone some constitutional changes. The power of the people has spoken, and we have elected some officers to guide and represent our group. Congratulations to Jeanne and Lauren Jarvis-Gibson, our new Co-Leaders; Leah Muskin-Pierret, Community Service Coordinator; and Michele Vistnes: Communications Coordinator. This is an on-going process, so we look forward to adding more civil servants to our ranks.

These changes seem quite appropriate for the season, as we as we enter this sacred time of rejuvenation – whether Resurrection or Liberation, or both. In both cases, the story of the old is an integral, guiding part of the new. May we – in IFFP Teen Group and in each of our own lives – remember that we are always improving, and remember how far we've come.

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

**SUSAN RYDER**

Our website, [www.iffp.net](http://www.iffp.net), has a listing of events and dates on the home page as well as a more detailed calendar of events that members can access at any time.

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