



2015

Annual Report *Fort Collins Interfaith Council*

President's Report

2015 certainly proved to be an eventful year for the Fort Collins Area Interfaith Council. But what makes this report different is that I will highlight the last six years as well. For this summary marks my last one since beginning service as president in 2010. The developments in each period have been internal to the organization and external in outreach.

Internally, it has been gratifying to observe how IFC has grown in membership and attendance over the years and how its structure has evolved. Looking back, in making the permanent change in 2011 from two meetings a month to the one on the first Thursday facilitated growth. The listing elsewhere in this Annual Report shows a total of 59 members, including those recently added. The consolidation also helped increase attendance, to an average of 40-50 per meeting up from 25 in 2011.

It should be noted that the level of annual income over each of the recent years has often depended on contributions at the Annual Appreciation and Awards Dinner. For example, in 2012, when funds were raised at the event for IFC's newly established Faith Family Hospitality Project, where upwards of 165 attended the event, donations brought that year's total to the highest level of annual giving to IFC - of over \$16,000.

But one more internal development is notable – in regard to the development of the vital Communications Team, with its systems and processes. Jon Mendenhall, pioneered IFC's website, the organization's first electronic venture, some ten years ago. Alex Statham-Lardner has over the last two years beautifully upgraded www.fortcollinsinterfaithcouncil.org. She also launched and administers our Facebook page – www.com/fortcollinsinterfaith

Launching the e-bulletin in 2010 marked a fundamental change from regular postal delivery used until that time. Now our Constant Contact account is expertly edited by Gloria Kat via fortcollinsinterfaith@gmail.com. "Rostermeister" Dale Grit capably maintains the mailing list.

The 2014 brochure was published as part of IFC's 35th Anniversary Celebration which included the publication of IFC's history. That observance, in turn, coincided with the City's Sesquicentennial, in association with the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery FC150 Exhibit.

In reviewing this year's programs, two networks were brought into play. First was establishing a relationship with CSU by helping sponsor The Interfaith Thanksgiving Dinner for the campus and larger community. The other was the Affordable Housing Project, which drew together an elite panel for an evening meeting in October. That project will continue throughout 2016. Another one is underway - developing a video for viewing at the Museum on how local faith communities from across the world's religions celebrate "The Season at Lights" at year's end.

Hence we end with new beginnings, new leadership and spirit moving IFC into the future – growing from a past process in which I am grateful to have played a part.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Thompson



Team Reports

Program Team

2015 held a great diversity of programs for the IFC. Our theme this year was focusing on the affordable housing crisis in our local area. Appropriately, the IFC began our year with a presentation from "One village, One Family," which spurred many IFC members to create "villages" within their own churches. Since 10/14, eight families (including 23 children) have escape homelessness and landed into secure stable housing due to the work of such "villages."

In April, Pat Ferrier, writer for the *Coloradoan*, was our Keynote speaker at our Annual Awards Dinner. Donations from that event were given to nonprofit member organizations who provide services for those needing more affordable housing options.



In October, the IFC visited Catholic Charities, took a tour, and learned a great deal about the great services they offer there. One of biggest highlights of 2015, was the "Grassroots Solutions to Affordable Housing," panel at Foothills Unitarian Church in October. The executive team plans to synthesize the most workable solutions to focus on in the coming years, and present that information at the 2016 annual meeting in February.

In November, again, our membership took part in the Blood Bond drive, and heard testimony from a few whose families that have been affected by blood donations. The connection between the Interfaith Council and Colorado State University continued to grow in 2015, especially with continued sponsorship of the Interfaith Thanksgiving event. This Thanksgiving event garnered the participation of over 16 faith-based groups, and fed 160+ people. The press coverage can be linked from the IFC website.

The programming team is busy making fantastic plans for 2016, include a tour of the long-awaited Mormon Temple, hosting a panel and resource fair on Food Insecurity, as well as a film-discussion night on local issues of racism.

Communications Team

With several exciting events on the agenda for 2015, the Communications team was kept busy this year. Perhaps the most notable effort took place in October, surrounding the "Grassroots Solutions to Affordable Housing" panel. Between printed flyers, social media posts and events, and website updates and links there was a lot of work put in to the promotion of this event. Fortunately, that work paid off as we had a great turn out of community members from both faith-based and non-faith affiliations. As IFC works to collect and analyze the data and ideas suggested that evening, our task for 2016 is how to best communicate that information to the public.

Of course there are the administrative tasks we complete every year: following up on covenants, maintaining the roster and sign-in sheets, website, e-newsletter and social media posts.

We are very excited for the 2016 meeting schedule, and for the opportunity to promote the diversity of locations and programs that IFC hosts!

History and Media Project Team

Continuing on its project with the Museum of Discovery, the History Team concluded work on the review of files contained within the Fort Collins Archives (housed within the Museum). In addition, an announcement was made at two regular meetings for additional memorabilia of archival value from faith community members of IFC.

The original brochure "Walking Tours of Religious Sites in Historic Fort Collins" which was printed in 2014 continues to be available to the public at two sites near Old Town: the Chamber of Commerce and the Museum of Discovery. The team noted that more brochures were needed-- 200 were reprinted (with the updated IFC website address) and they also delivered the brochures to each IFC church or temple (along with a cover letter) urging them to display the brochures in a prominent location.

Following the brochure's reprinting and distribution, the History Team concluded its tasks for 2015 and was disbanded so that its members could move on to other projects within IFC.

Team Reports

Affordable Housing Project Team

This year the focus of our IFC efforts were in Affordable Housing. In April, at our Annual Appreciation & Awards Dinner held at First United Methodist Church, we honored some local organizations that make affordable housing possible, including Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity, the Fort Collins Housing Authority for the supportive housing project at Redtail Ponds, Neighbor to Neighbor, and CARE Housing.

At our May meeting, Diane Cohn delivered a presentation to get us up to speed on the current state of affordable housing in the community. We learned that the population of Fort Collins has almost doubled since 1990, that average rent for a two-bedroom apartment is about \$1270, and that the city has provided over six million dollars toward affordable housing projects in the last 3 years.

In October, the housing team hosted a very well-attended evening panel discussion to learn about creative ways that people are working toward affordable housing including shared and co-housing, tiny houses and creative student and senior housing options. There we discussed what we, as faith organizations and community non-profit members, might do to further the cause of affordable housing. The housing team plans to take that input and move forward into the next year with a project aimed at bringing more people together in shared housing.

Grants Team

The Grants Team distributed **\$11,625** among **25** non-profit entities from applications made by non-profits. Funds for the grants are primarily donated by IFC member faith communities. This year excess administrative funds were transferred to the grants fund. Non-profit agencies receiving grants were:

Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County, The Geller Center, Catholic Charities, The Growing Project, CO Health Network dba CO AIDS Project, Homeless Gear (for Murphy Center programs), Crossroads Safehouse, Lutheran Family Services, Dance Express, McBackpack Inc., Elderhaus, Neighbor to Neighbor, Faith Family Hospitality, Pathways Hospice, Feeding Our Community Ourselves, Inc. (FoCo Café), Project Self-Sufficiency, Food Bank for Larimer County, Room 4 Hope, Fort Collins Preschool, SAINT, Foundation on Aging, SAVA - Sexual Assault Victim Advocate Center, Spirit Crossing Clubhouse, Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center

Treasurer's Report

The duties of Treasurer were fulfilled by Carol Smith during the first six months and by Keith Black during the remainder of 2015.

Administrative:

2015 began with a balance of \$2,268. Income from Faith Communities (dues) was \$2,189, from private covenants was \$70, from donations for books was \$110, and from donations at the Annual Recognition Dinner was \$2,018.

This amounted to \$6,655 in Administrative assets for 2015.

Annual expenses were \$1,507. Donations from the Administrative account amounted to \$2,200.

\$1,200 was transferred to Grants. Total disbursement from Administrative account was \$4907.

\$1,748 is being carried over to 2016 Administration.

Grants:

The year began with \$1,003 carry over from 2014. Donations from Faith Communities amounted to \$9,338 and \$425 from private donors. \$1,200 was transferred from Administration. The total amount available for disbursement to Service Organizations was \$11,996.

In July and December, a total of \$11,625 was disbursed to 25 Service Organizations.

\$341 is being carried over to 2016 Grants.



Agenda - 2.4.2016

Welcome and Blessing

Introductions

Approval of 2015 Annual Meeting Minutes

Approval of Annual Reports

President's Report

Treasurer's Report

Grants Team Report

Program Team Report

Communications Team Report

History/Media Project Team Report

Affordable Housing Project Team Report

Elections

President – Laura Nelson

Vice President – Joseph Moore

Treasurer - Keith Black

Program: Affordable Housing Project Plans for 2016

Adjournment

IFC Thanks:

Special thanks to a few wonderful individuals who will be rotating off of the Executive Committee in 2016:

- Rich Thompson, President
- Anita Hildebrand: Grants Chair
- Cyndi Worayeth: Communications Chair

Without your time, passion and energy Interfaith Council would not be what it is today!