

# Monmouth Center for World Religions and Ethical Thought

www.interfaith-MCWRET.org

## 2014 Annual Report

We celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Annual Meeting at Neelam's on 6/8/14 looking at where we have been, what we have accomplished, where we are now and where we are headed. It was another year of moving outward in influence, advocacy and public programs and inward in sharing our own stories, spiritual journeys, visits and dialogue at Board meetings.

The Garden State MOSAIC (Mobilizing Our Students for Action to build Interfaith Community) had even more students this year, 45 (30 new students and 15 alumnae). With leaders from the MCWRET Board and the *Monmouth Human Relations Commission* we meet on ten Sunday afternoons at each other's places of worship. Leadership development and community service project planning augment the religious presentations provided by the youth. We often tour the facility as well. Dinner follows. The first year, 28 teenagers from 7 different faiths participated in Sunday afternoon meetings at 7 different houses of worship. This second year 27 students from 8 faith traditions graduated; among them 14 new students and 13 alumnae. We learned about each faith, our diversity, our similarities and differences and talked about communication in leadership development. Together the youth chose and implemented a community project. Last year it was a "Midnight Run" to NYC with food and clothing for the homeless. This year we served dinner to the homeless in *Family Promise* at three different houses of worship. We are now responding to requests for resources for duplicating MOSAIC in other areas of NJ.

The MCWRET offered 11 public programs in 2014, a new high since at least 2009 with an estimated total attendance of 575. We appreciate the hospitality and support of the UUCMC for many of these events.

On 2/2/14 a number of Board members attended the annual Martin Luther King "Read-in" at the AME church in Atlantic Highlands.

On 4/2/14, we staffed a table at an interfaith fair at Monmouth University.

On 4/11/14 we led an interfaith panel on poverty and co-sponsored a film on peace-building, "My So Called Enemy" at the Monmouth University Global Understanding Convention

Board members and friends participated in a Sanjeeram Pranayam lecture and Yoga-Needra demonstration given by Shri Chandrakant Dharmadhikary on 6/28/14.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Shanti (Peace) Lecture, "*From Conflict to Peace Building in Israel/Palestine,*" was held on 10/5/14 with Professor Saliba Sarsar as speaker.

On 10/26/14 Paul Gibson (Patita Pavana Dasa) led us in "*An Evening of Kirtan.*"

On 11/2/14 in conjunction with the SAC we showed the film "A Place at the Table" and had a panel discussion with local experts to discuss hunger.

The well attended 13<sup>th</sup> *United We Sing*, was held on Sunday, 11/23/14.

Three from the MCWRET were panelists at the Interfaith Panel at the Manalapan Library 12/7/14 where the focus was on the role of women in each tradition.

Four Board members participated in the pilot version of the *Human Faith Project* led by Dr. Calvin Chatlos of the MCWRET.

We co-sponsored several other events including:

*Our Children, Climate, Faith* Conference held in Vermont 8/28/14, the 35<sup>th</sup> *Annual Interfaith Service & Conference for Peace* in Princeton on 9/11/14, and the Monmouth University Global Understanding Conference on 4/11/14.

Respectfully submitted,

Co-coordinators

Rev. Elizabeth B. Congdon

Dr. Stevi Lischin