HELP. HOPE. CONNECTION. BELONGING.
ONE COMMUNITY. ONE INTERFAITH WORKS.

Dear Friend,

Sometimes, the moments that change a life are the simplest ones.

A warm welcome when everything feels unfamiliar. A bag of groceries when making ends meet feels impossible. A friendly visit when loneliness starts to set in. A conversation that challenges us to see the world through someone else's eyes.

These moments may seem small. But to the person on the receiving end, they can mean everything. At InterFaith Works, we see the power of these moments every day. We see what happens when people show up for one another, when compassion becomes action, and when a helping hand becomes the beginning of something greater. We see how these moments help spark hope, strengthen connections, and foster a sense of belonging.

For 50 years, we have brought people together across cultures, generations, race, and faiths to build a stronger, more connected community. Today, that mission is more important than ever.

For a family starting over in a new country, **hope** begins with the possibility of a different future: a warm welcome, a safe home, assistance to find employment, access to essential resources. Though the journey toward self-sufficiency takes time, everyday challenges can make it difficult for families to build the lives they envision. With continued support, they can find stability, grow their independence, and begin to feel at home in their new community.

For an older adult, **connection** may begin with a friendly visit, a ride to an appointment, or simply someone taking the time to listen. These moments can grow into meaningful relationships that nurture independence, create opportunities to remain engaged, and help older adults age with dignity.

For people navigating a world of differing perspectives, **belonging** begins with having spaces where they can listen to one another, share experiences, and build bridges of understanding. These conversations challenge assumptions, foster understanding, reveal common ground, and help us recognize the humanity we share.

Different needs. Different stories. One community.

Behind each of these moments is someone who cares enough to make a difference.

It takes practical support for families working to put food on the table and keep a roof overhead, resources for older adults to remain independent and stay engaged, and opportunities for people of different backgrounds and perspectives to come together, listen, and build understanding. It means being there for caregivers, helping neighbors navigate life's challenges, and creating spaces where relationships can grow and bridges can be built.

The need is growing, and every day, more families, older adults, and neighbors turn to InterFaith Works for support. We cannot meet that need without your help.

To learn more and give a gift, scan the QR Code or visit www.interfaithworkscny.org/we-are-one/

InterFaith Works
Affirming Dignity since 1976
1976 2026
50

Together, we can make a difference.

Every gift creates a ripple of hope that reaches far beyond one person, strengthening our entire community. Your generosity turns compassion into action, assisting families find stability, ensuring older adults remain connected, and helping neighbors build relationships across differences.

Because when we belong, we become part of something greater than ourselves. A family. A neighborhood. All of us.

One community. One InterFaith Works.

Your gift brings it all together.

As we look toward the next 50 years of InterFaith Works, we invite you to make a year-end gift. Your support today will help families overcome challenges, older adults age with dignity, and people of different backgrounds build meaningful connections. Together, we can ensure that help, hope, connection, and belonging remain within reach for everyone in our community.

And this year, your generosity has an opportunity to make an even greater impact.

Longtime supporters Judy and Eric Mower have made an extraordinary commitment through the **Judy & Eric Mower Gift Matching Challenge**, pledging to match eligible gifts dollar for dollar, up to $100,000.

Their generosity reflects a powerful belief at the heart of InterFaith Works: when we come together, we can accomplish more than any of us could alone.

If you are giving for the first time, returning to support our mission after a few years away, or increasing your annual contribution, your generosity may qualify for a match. Together, we have the opportunity to turn this remarkable commitment into **$200,000 in combined support**, helping families build new lives, supporting older adults as they age with dignity, and building bridges of understanding with our neighbors. If you know others who might be interested in our work, share this message with them.

When we give together, we strengthen the community we all share.

This is the power of We Are One.

Thank you for believing in our mission, investing in our work, and being part of the InterFaith Works community. Your kindness, compassion, and generosity make all of this possible.

With gratitude,



Chris Foley
President & CEO



Deborah G. Welch
Chair of the Board of Directors

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WE ARE ONE

We Are One: Helping Young People Find Their Voice

Seth almost talked himself out of applying for InterFaith Works' Youth Leadership Institute (YLI). He had never attended a camp before. Having participated in our School Exchange dialogues and enjoyed the experience, he decided to take a chance.

"You've never done a summer camp before. Just do it," he told himself.

That decision changed more than his summer. It helped shape his future.

At YLI, formerly known as Seeds of Peace, Seth connected with young people from different backgrounds, exploring identity, culture, social justice, and the challenges facing their communities. Through honest conversations and shared experiences, he began seeing the world differently.

"It made me realize how different but also the same that we really are," Seth shared.

Now studying English at Syracuse University, Seth is considering adding International Relations as a second major and hopes to travel, teach, and mentor young people.

This past summer, Seth returned to YLI, but this time as a counselor. The young man who once questioned whether he belonged was now helping others find their confidence and sense of belonging.

He watched shy students discover their voices, build friendships, and gain the courage to share their perspectives. He recognized their uncertainty because he had once felt the same way.

Seth's journey is a reminder that when we invest in one young person, the impact can reach many others.

Because of opportunities like YLI, young people are learning to embrace their identities, understand their differences, and build bridges across communities.

When we help one young person find their voice, we help create a community where more voices are heard.



Seth



We Are One: Finding Hope, Building a Future

When Bahara and Sayed arrived in Syracuse, they were starting over for the second time.

After fleeing Afghanistan in 2021, they spent more than two years rebuilding their lives in the United Kingdom before moving to Central New York to be closer to family. Both brought advanced degrees, professional experience, and determination. But beginning again meant navigating unfamiliar systems, finding housing, and rebuilding their careers.

Through InterFaith Works' Center for New Americans, they found more than assistance. They found a community ready to welcome them.

From the moment they arrived, staff greeted them at the airport and welcomed them to a furnished apartment stocked with familiar foods, including halal meat. That thoughtful welcome made an immediate difference.

"Honestly, straight away, I felt like I'm at my home," Sayed recalled.

InterFaith Works helped the couple navigate essential paperwork, obtain work authorization, manage housing expenses, and prepare for employment. When their advanced degrees were not automatically recognized in the United States, staff supported them through the credential equivalency process, résumé preparation, interviews, and job searches.

Their determination, combined with that support, opened new doors. Bahara secured a position as a business operations specialist with the City of Syracuse. Sayed began working as a construction inspector with the New York State Thruway Authority and later advanced into a full-time project engineer role.

But their journey was about more than finding jobs. It was about rebuilding confidence, restoring hope, and feeling valued in a new community.

As Bahara reflected, "You need a support system that opened the door for you so you can shine."

When we welcome newcomers, recognize their strengths, and help remove barriers, we create opportunities for individuals and families and strengthen our entire community.

We Are One: A Community Built on Connection

When Charlene visits Villa Scalabrini, she isn't just checking in on a client. She's spending time with family.

For more than eight years, Charlene and Lucille have shared a special bond through InterFaith Works' AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program. What began as companionship has grown into a lasting friendship filled with laughter, shared experiences, and genuine care.

Over the years, Charlene's relationships at Villa Scalabrini have grown beyond the two of them. She has become part of a close-knit group of women who look out for one another and help bring their community to life.

At the center of that connection is a small community store, run by Lucille and her friends Melanie and Thomasina. More than a place to pick up items, the store gives residents a shared purpose and a reason to come together. Neighbors stop by not only for what they need, but also for conversation, encouragement, and a friendly face.

Charlene is part of it all, lending a hand at the store and sharing the everyday conversations and laughter that turn neighbors into friends.

"This is my family right here," Charlene says.

A retired licensed practical nurse, Charlene wanted to remain active and connected after health challenges forced her to leave work. Through the AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program, she found renewed purpose in helping others while building meaningful friendships of her own.

The care goes both ways. As Lucille shares, "I love Ms. Charlene. I do. We joke and kid around half the time, but I love her because she keeps me going."

At Villa Scalabrini, the relationships surrounding the store show what can happen when people have opportunities to contribute, connect, and care for one another.

Through InterFaith Works' AmeriCorps Senior Companion Program, older adults find more than companionship. They find friendship, purpose, and a community where they belong. Because when we care for one another, we build a stronger community.



Lucille, Charlene, Melanie, Thomasina



We Are One: Creating a Foundation of Care and Belonging

For Mojitullah and his family, starting a new life in Central New York meant facing unfamiliar challenges without the comfort of family and a familiar support system.

After leaving Myanmar and spending time in Malaysia, they arrived in the United States hoping to build a brighter future for their children. But rising housing costs, food insecurity, and a serious health condition that limited Mojitullah's ability to work made that dream difficult to achieve.

"I just want a simple life," Mojitullah shared through an interpreter. A safe home, food on the table, and stability for his family.

Through InterFaith Works' Community Well-Being program, the family found a caring support system that helped them meet essential needs, including temporary rental assistance, regular food deliveries, help with electricity expenses, and transportation to medical appointments.

To Mojitullah and his wife, Zaidah, this support meant more than assistance with everyday expenses. It brought relief, stability, and reassurance as they navigated life in an unfamiliar community.

Sometimes, support meant being there when the family needed someone most.

One evening, around 10 p.m., Mojitullah's child became sick. Although her workday had ended, the family's caseworker helped them get to the hospital and arranged transportation home. It was a moment of compassion that reminded the family they were not alone.

Today, Mojitullah and Zaidah hold onto the dreams that brought them here. One of their children hopes to become a doctor, another a teacher. Like any parents, they want to give their children the opportunity to succeed.

"I feel like I belong here," Mojitullah shared.

For Mojitullah and his family, belonging means knowing that someone cares, that support is within reach, and that their family is not alone.

Through compassion, connection, and community, we help families build a foundation of stability, hope, and belonging.