

Q & A with Dan Correa

Dr. Dan Correa, in addition to his Monmouth & Ocean County Regional Office Director position for I-RISE, is also a police chaplain for the Middletown, NJ police dept, as well as Lead Pastor for Middletown Assembly of God Church and Abundant Life Church (Asbury Park).

You wear several hats in your work life. What was it about I-RISE that prompted you to apply for the Regional Office Director position?

I've dedicated my life to ministry since I started preaching at just 8 years old. Over the years, I've always felt a deep calling to advocate for the underprivileged and bring hope to those in need. As a pastor of two immigrant congregations and a police chaplain for over 10 years, I've seen firsthand the struggles that immigrants and refugees face—especially in today's climate of fear and uncertainty due to restrictive immigration policies and funding cuts.



When I learned about Interfaith-RISE, I immediately resonated with its mission to provide resources, support, and hope to immigrant communities. This position allows me to combine my passion for ministry, advocacy, and leadership to make a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it most. Every day in this role is an opportunity to serve others and bring light into difficult situations, which is why I felt compelled to join I-RISE.

You've started this position at an interesting and challenging time. How has your job changed for you and your staff in the 6 months since you've started?

The past six months have been both rewarding and challenging. The current immigration policies and government funding cuts have made it harder for us to provide

the resources our clients desperately need. On top of that, there's a palpable sense of fear in the immigrant community, which makes it difficult for people to trust and seek help.

Despite these challenges, my team and I have worked tirelessly to adapt. We've focused on building trust within the community, ensuring that our clients know we are here to support them no matter what. We've also been creative in finding alternative funding sources and partnerships to continue providing essential services. Every day brings new challenges, but it also brings new opportunities to make a difference, and that's what keeps us going.



How does your faith life influence and inform how you approach your interactions with staff and clients at I-RISE?

My faith is the foundation of everything I do. Having survived cancer 20 years ago, I view every day as a gift from God, and I strive to use that gift to serve others. As a pastor and police chaplain, I've learned the importance of compassion, empathy, and meeting

people where they are.

At I-RISE, I approach every interaction with the belief that every person is created in the image of God and deserves dignity, respect, and hope. Whether I'm working with staff or clients, I try to lead with love, patience, and understanding. My faith reminds me that even in the most challenging circumstances, there is always hope, and it's my job to help others see that hope.

What do you love most about this job?

What I love most about this job is the opportunity to bring hope to people who feel hopeless. Many of the individuals and families we serve have faced unimaginable hardships—leaving their homes, navigating a new country, and dealing with fear and uncertainty. Being able to provide them with resources, guidance, and a sense of community is incredibly fulfilling.

I also love seeing the resilience and strength of the people we serve. Their stories inspire me every day and remind me why this work is so important. Knowing that I can play a small part in helping them rebuild their lives and find stability is a blessing.

What do you find the most challenging about this work?

The most challenging part of this work is navigating the current political and social climate. Immigration policies have become increasingly restrictive, and funding for programs like ours has been cut significantly. This creates a lot of uncertainty for both our clients and our organization.

Additionally, the fear within the immigrant community is a constant challenge. Many people are afraid to seek help because they worry about their safety or legal status. It's heartbreaking to see people in need who are too scared to reach out.

Despite these challenges, I'm committed to finding solutions and continuing to advocate for our clients. It's not easy, but I believe that with faith, determination, and the support of our community, we can overcome these obstacles.



What are your hopes and dreams for the Monmouth/Ocean County office?

My hope is to see the Monmouth and Ocean County offices become a beacon of hope and support for immigrants and refugees in our region. I want us to expand our services, reach more people, and create a stronger sense of community among those we serve.

I also dream of building more partnerships with local organizations, faith communities, and donors to ensure that we have the resources we need to continue this vital work. Ultimately, I want every person who walks through our doors to feel valued, supported, and empowered to build a better future for themselves and their families.

Anything else you'd like our readers to know?

I'd like people to know that this work is deeply personal to me. Having been in ministry for most of my life, I've always been passionate about serving others, especially those who are marginalized or in need. I've been married to my childhood sweetheart for 40 years, and we have two grown children and four grandchildren. Surviving cancer 20 years ago taught me to cherish every day and use my time to make a difference in the lives of others.

This position with Interfaith-RISE allows me to live out my calling by bringing resources, hope, and advocacy to immigrant communities. However, we can't do this work alone. We need the support of donors, volunteers, and community members to continue providing these essential services. I encourage you to consider how you can contribute—whether it's through a donation, volunteering, or simply spreading the word about the work we're doing. Together, we can make a real difference.