



From Chuck Erickson, Board Chair and Elliot Gershenson, President and CEO



As we and our Board members and staff meet with city leadership and donors we keep hearing that IM is on the right track. It's good to hear, and motivates us to do more.

This is the first edition since Chuck Erickson was elected Board Chair; and it marks the beginning of Elliot Gershenson's fifth year as President and CEO. Chuck returns to the position – being Board chair in 1998 - 2000. Since then, ever-loyal Chuck has worked tirelessly to help IM adapt to new times and challenges. As a result of his work, the next two years look very bright.

Leading the way is the expansion of IM's *Meals on Wheels for Greater Houston*. This summer the program will expand from about 3,300 seniors a day to about 4,000 a day. This expansion is due in no small part to the thousands of individual, congregational, corporate and foundation gifts that are added to government and United Way funding. Your giving has made it possible for us to expand well beyond our own dreams, and helped to trigger our new Texas Department of Agriculture \$1.4 million grant. This funding is contingent upon IM serving many more meals than our contracts provide – and because we have found great success by sharing this responsibility with all sectors of our community, our award was almost 5 times the amount we had expected. Your giving really does make a BIG difference.

We have also been receiving Iraqis through our refugee services department. For more than 30 years IM has been resettling refugees, as an arm of Episcopal Migration Ministries, Church World Service and the US State Department. This is very rewarding work, and given the political and economic stresses facing too many of the world's citizens, IM is proud to welcome between 200 – 300 people this year to our great city.

We are gearing up for the hurricane season and our *Ready Houston!* Program will be hosting and co-sponsoring a number of conferences. *Ready Houston!* is staffed by a small team dedicated to being part of the important work done by the City of Houston, Harris County, United Way, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and so many other great organizations. Our role is to channel volunteers and disseminate information. We may be small, but it's a mighty role as proven by our role with **Operation Compassion** during Katrina.

Finally, all summer long we will be planning our next *Amazing Faiths Project Dinner Dialogues*. Mark your calendar now for **Thursday, November 13, 2008**. This year we expect that 500 hosts will welcome about 5,000 people into their homes all over Houston and in as many as ten other cities around the country. Within six years we anticipate 1,000,000 people meeting in 100,000 homes in as many as 500 cities all over the world. We've heard the buzz, and we hope you have too. The dinners are the centerpiece in a

growing movement that calls on all of us to find common ground through understanding and respect. At each dinner up to 12 participants from various faith traditions follow a well-defined active listening process that creates a safe space and provides many opportunities for awakening the heart and the spirit. You can learn much more by visiting www.amazingfaithsproject.org. You can register as a host or participant; and if you would like to be a moderator at one of the dinners, please contact Lauren Salisbury at lsalisbury@imgh.org.

Thank you for being part of IM. We are Greater Houston's "go-to" organization for interfaith action. In our lifetimes, we have never known a time when organizations like IM are more critical to the health of our communities.

Chuck Erickson
Board Chair

Elliot Gershenson
President and CEO