

# MOSAIC

A PUBLICATION OF  
INTERFAITH MINISTRIES FOR GREATER HOUSTON

SPRING 2020

# IM

INTERFAITH  
MINISTRIES  
FOR GREATER HOUSTON



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT- LINDA AND FRED MARSHALL

On February 8, Interfaith Ministries was proud to honor Fred G. Marshall and to remember Linda Marshall at its Wags & Whiskers Brunch benefiting the Animals program. The couple have been devoted Animeals supporters since the program began. They have been the lead sponsors of this brunch each year and have also been the mystery challenge donors behind the annual Stock the Shelves campaign, an annual appeal that raises funds to replenish Animeals' food supply over the summer.

At the brunch, Fred made the exciting announcement of a \$500,000 gift to Interfaith Ministries for its Meals & More capital campaign. This generous commitment will go toward the purchase and renovation of a new building on Interfaith's Midtown campus that will allow Meals on Wheels and Animeals to grow. The Linda and Fred Marshall Volunteer Welcome Center on the ground floor of the building will commemorate the couple's generosity.

Linda and Fred both grew up in the Midwest and met on the job in St. Louis. They were married for 37 years. They moved to Houston in 1985 and spent most of their married life here. Fred enjoyed a lifelong career in public and government affairs, the last 26 years with ExxonMobil. Linda began her career in social work and then shifted to computer programming for companies such as BFI.

Fred and Linda have long embraced Mahatma Gandhi's quote: "The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated." They have supported animal welfare causes both in the U.S. and internationally. After retiring to Florida, they bought a home in Houston in 2011 and decided to focus their financial support on one local animal organization - Animeals.

Linda passed away in 2019 and Fred has continued the couple's legacy of support to Animeals, not only through donating but also through volunteering at the 2019 Meals on Wheels Thanksgiving project.

Always giving behind the scenes, Linda and Fred have lived according to the motto: "Do all the good you can and make as little fuss about it as possible."

## "TAPESTRY GALA GOES VIRTUAL - DINE IN WITH IM!"

IM is excited to transform our 2020 Tapestry Gala Event into an extraordinary Dine In with Meals on Wheels Experience! On the evening of Wednesday, April 22, 2020, instead of dressing in your finest and heading downtown, we invite you to stay in your own home! Now, when dinner is served and how you dress is completely up to you! If health rules, and community safety precautions allow, we intend to deliver a wonderful dining experience to your home - just as we do every day for over 4,300 seniors. Set yourself up in front of your computer, tablet, iPad or smart phone and enjoy an entertaining half hour of video presentations and celebrations! Full details on how to access this special evening will be sent in the coming weeks.

Those of you who have already purchased your table or tickets will be contacted soon to let you know when your Dine In with IM Meals on Wheels will be delivered. We invite you to add guests, and deliveries for others, by simply making new or additional Tapestry Gala contributions in support of this new style event. Please contact **Brandi Ledet** at [bLedet@imgh.org](mailto:bLedet@imgh.org) or **713-533-4925** for reservations, additions and contributions. We hope you choose to Dine In with IM on April 22nd and look forward to sharing with you a festive, socially-distanced, and unique event! Your support is needed more than ever at this critical time.



2020

*Tapestry Gala*

# MEALS ON WHEELS & ANIMEALS



(left to right) Honorary Chair Don Sanders, Chair M.A. Shute & Honoree Fred G. Marshall

## 7TH ANNUAL BRUNCH RAISES SIX FIGURES FOR PETS

Puppy love and cat fever filled the air at Hotel ZaZa in Houston's Museum District at the 7th Annual Wags & Whiskers Brunch as brunch Chair M.A. Shute along with Honorary Chair Don A. Sanders hosted 200 guests who helped raise more than **\$115,000**. This year's brunch honoree and longtime Animeals supporter Fred G. Marshall announced a \$500,000 donation for the Linda and Fred Marshall Volunteer Welcome Center at Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston. The "On Broadway" themed brunch and pet fashion show benefited the Animeals program that provides free pet food and vet care to more than 1,300 dogs and cats of Interfaith Ministries' Meals on Wheels homebound seniors.

## MEET MARY AND HER DOG



Mary has been a Meals on Wheels client for 11 years now and an Animeals client for four years. Mary is a retired cook for the Houston Independent School District and now lives at home with her husband, two dogs and cat. Mary and her husband are homebound and can no longer load the animals into their vehicles to take them to the veterinary office.

Animeals, in partnership with the Houston Humane Society, was able to transport both their dogs and cat to the Houston Humane Society to get all their shots up to date, spay/neuter services, dental cleanings, microchips, as well as send Mary home with a one-year supply of flea, tick, and heartworm medication for each animal. Mary says since the Houston Humane Society visit her animals are healthy and she has the monthly preventative medications they need. "My babies are doing so well, and I am thankful to Interfaith Ministries and the Houston Humane Society for that!"

## MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERED EMERGENCY FOOD DURING COVID 19 OUTBREAK

Meals on Wheels' annual Operation IMPact ensures that our seniors have access to food in case a storm keeps Interfaith Ministries' drivers from making their regular deliveries. Operation IMPact usually occurs in May or June, but our drivers will make the deliveries in March due to the COVID 19 outbreak. All of our 4,300+ seniors will receive the emergency food this month, in case the virus impacts deliveries. The food supply may also be used during hurricane season if needed.

Moving up the dates of the massive distribution has resulted in significant increased costs. Interfaith Ministries is grateful to lead donors who have stepped up to support Meals on Wheels during this critical time, including: Janice McNair, Ashley and Adrian Peterson, Kroger, H-E-B, Comerica Bank, Greater Texas Credit Union, and Moody Bank.

Donations to this effort were matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$10,000 by Asha and Farid Virani. They were inspired to do this by the memory of their son Faris, who passed away of Ewing sarcoma at the age of nine. Faris loves his grandmother and would have wanted all the grandmas and grandpas in Houston- Meals on Wheels seniors- to be cared for during the COVID 19 outbreak.



## VOLUNTEERS SPREAD THANKSGIVING CHEER

Interfaith Ministries Meals on Wheels Thanksgiving delivery was a tremendous success! This is an annual community-wide event hosted on Thanksgiving morning, to help feed homebound seniors in the Greater Houston area and Galveston County. More than 1,200 volunteers from the community showed up at First Presbyterian Church in Houston and Carbide Park in Galveston to deliver 4,400 holiday meals and offer homebound seniors a friendly visit.

Thank you to our lead Golden Turkey sponsor, **Kroger**, and our Silver Turkey sponsor, **Energy Transfer**.



## HOUSTON PUBLIC MEDIA COMMUNITY PARTNER DAY

Meals on Wheels and Animeals had an army of enthusiastic volunteers wearing bright red jackets and tackling service projects on Houston Public Media's Community Partner Day on **Friday, Feb. 14**, Valentine's Day! Houston Public Media reporters and staff delivered meals and friendly visits to clients, assembled breakfast bags, made greetings cards and packaged Animeals food bags for our four-legged clients. According to Lisa Shumate, executive director of Houston Public Media, "we do this together for the love of Houston."



Martin B. Cominsky

## FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO:

Life has changed drastically as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We remain focused on our mission of dialogue, collaboration and service while evolving to meet changing community needs.

I am pleased to welcome a new Board Chair for 2020-2022, **Jay Harberg**, whom you will read about in this edition. I have known Jay for years and can attest to his passion and commitment to our work! Speaking of passion and commitment, we could not carry out our work without the continued support of friends like you. Thank you to all who give so generously of their time, talent and treasure.

A very good friend indeed has been found in **Fred G. Marshall**, whom we honored at our February Wags & Whiskers Brunch and remembered his wife Linda. This amazing couple have been long-time supporters of Animeals and have taken their support to a whole new level. Many friends made the brunch an amazing success, most notably Chair **M.A. Shute** and Honorary Chair **Don A. Sanders!**

Some friends are on television... and radio! I am referring to our partner **Houston Public Media**, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. HPM kicked off the celebration by launching its *For the Love of Houston* campaign and showing some love to **Meals on Wheels** on Valentine's Day. Staff volunteered delivering meals, assembling breakfast bags and pet food, and making greeting cards for our seniors.

Every day, we make new friends when we welcome refugees to our city, working with them to successfully acclimate to life in Houston. Even though arrivals have slowed, and the future

is uncertain, **Refugee Services** continues to advocate for refugee resettlement in Texas - in keeping with our state motto of "Friendship."

**Interfaith Relations and Community Partnerships** is at the heart of our work and we continue to bring old and new friends alike together to find common ground. We are organizing weekly phone calls for faith leaders with Mayor Turner, Judge Hidalgo, and Texas Medical Center officials to update them on the COVID-19 situation.

In January, **Volunteer Houston** welcomed over 4,000 friends from around the world - from Twitter! The company was hosting a convention in Houston and we arranged and managed over 50 volunteer projects for their staff on one day! This work benefited dozens of nonprofits in our community and Twitter for Good made a real impact during their stay.

In order to ensure our seniors have access to emergency food in case the COVID-19 outbreak impacts our deliveries, we moved up our annual Operation Impact to March. This annual project is usually held in May or June to prepare our seniors for hurricane season. Thanks to our lead sponsors and to hundreds of friends who supported this critical project.

We will get through the pandemic. We are blessed to have so many friends on our side.

**Martin B. Cominsky**  
President & CEO



Franklin J. "Jay" Harberg

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD CHAIR!

We are honored to welcome Franklin J. "Jay" Harberg as our 2020-2022 Board Chair. Jay is a successful attorney who is currently Managing Partner of Harberg, Huvard, Jacobs, Walder LLP - a civil practice law firm concentrating in real estate, commercial litigation, lending, business organization,

personal injury and mediation. He has considerable expertise in the acquisition, development, management, finance and disposition of shopping centers, office buildings, hotels, industrial properties, multifamily housing, single-family dwellings and undeveloped land. Jay also represents business clients in sophisticated business to business transactions and serves as outside general counsel supervising other attorneys who provide legal services for his clients.

Jay holds a B.A. in Political Science from Tulane University and a J.D. from the University of Houston. A frequent lecturer on title and survey review topics, he is recognized as a "Super Lawyer" by Texas Monthly Magazine and Texas Super Lawyers Magazine. He has been elected a Fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation.

In addition to his work with Interfaith Ministries, Jay gives generously of his time to other civic and philanthropic causes, including: City of Houston: Vice Chair - Civil Service Commission, Anti-Defamation League: Chair - Southwest Regional Board, 2007 Daniel R. Ginsberg National Leadership Award, Congregation Beth Israel: Chair Cemetery Committee, Chair Ad Hoc Security Committee, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston: Board of Trustees, Community Relations Committee (CRC).

# LEAD DONORS OCT. 2019- JAN. 2020

- Advanced Applications
- Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries
- BP America
- Bridgeway Capital Management
- Carleton Speed Family Foundation
- Chapelwood United Methodist Church
- Charity Guild of Catholic Women
- Chevron
- Christ The King Lutheran Church
- Clark & Charlene Thompson Foundation
- Cokinos Young
- Congregation Beth Yeshurun
- Dow Chemical
- Edward & Helen Oppenheimer Foundation
- Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church
- EOG Resources
- ExxonMobil Foundation
- Foster LLP
- Frost Bank
- Gensler Architects
- Greater Texas Credit Union
- H-E-B
- Houston Area Continuity of Care Assoc., Inc
- Houston PetSet
- Intercontinental Exchange, Inc.
- International Stoneworks Inc
- Isla Carroll Turner Friendship Trust
- Islamic Relief USA
- John R. Wright Eloise & Mountain Wright Foundation
- Lulu Bryan Rambaud Charitable Trust
- Marek Family Foundation
- McKinsey & Company
- MD Excel Construction
- Medallion Foundation
- Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church
- Milton Brenner VFW Post 3903
- Moody Bank
- Nathan Sommers Jacobs
- Noor Munshi Foundation
- Oiltanking Texas City
- Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church
- Paulea Family Foundation
- R.E. Smith Foundation
- Red & Black
- Samuels Family Foundation
- Shell Oil Company Foundation
- St. Luke's United Methodist Church
- St. Paul's United Methodist Church
- St. Theresa Catholic Church
- The American Legion Post 594
- The Brodsky Foundation
- The Dixie Starnes Wenger Foundation
- The Eleanor & Frank Freed Foundation
- The Elkins Foundation
- The Episcopal Diocese of Texas
- The Kroger Company
- The Kroger Company Foundation
- The LLEE Foundation
- The Simmons Foundation
- The Tsing Tsung & Wei Fong Chao Foundation
- The W.T. & Louise J. Moran Foundation
- Three Circle Soil & Gas
- Triple-A Steel Supply Co.
- Twin Eagle Resource Management
- United Way Galveston County Mainland
- Vijay & Marie Goradia Charitable Foundation
- Windsor Village United Methodist Church
- The ZESS Fund
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- Lindsey Bartlett
- Benjamin Bates
- Dr. Roberto Bayardo
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- Gina Liuzza
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- H. Max Loy
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- Glenda Mariott
- Marlene Marker
- Terry Marriott
- Fred G. Marshall
- Rehmina & Dr. Faisal Masud
- Shazma & Arshad Matin
- Dr. Farima & Amin Mawji
- Deborah & David J. McBride
- Paul McDermott
- Thomas McDonald
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- Patricia Papadopoulos
- Arthur Peabody
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- Russell Poston
- Maureen Quirk
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- Mr. & Mrs. Richard Rawson
- John Redfield
- Mary Lou & Tony Reidy
- Scott Repass
- Dr. Faraz A. Khan & Hina Syed
- Regina Rogers
- John Stevenson & Robyn Rothman
- Edward Ruppert
- June Russell
- Don Sanders
- Kathy Sanders
- Ellen Sankowski
- Ambassador & Mrs. Arthur L. Schechter
- Mr. & Mrs. Ash Shah
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- Brian Todd
- William Touchstone
- Kathleen Tyrrell
- Riya Varadhachary
- Sherry & Jim Vetter
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- Asha & Farid Virani
- Kenneth Vorhaben
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- Denise Woods
- Jun Ying
- Nihala & Shaukat Zakaria
- The Zandstra Family
- Alan Zuber

# FUNDING OUR MISSION



## MEALS & MORE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

In December 2019, Interfaith Ministries' Board voted to purchase a building adjacent to our W.T. and Louise J. Moran Meals on Wheels Distribution Center that will allow us to expand Meals on Wheels. The building will house the Linda and Fred Marshall Volunteer Welcome Center on its ground floor, facing Fannin Street. It has ample warehouse space and multi-use space upstairs that may be made into offices. Once the property is renovated, it will allow us to maximize the use of the Moran Center as well.

The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation has issued a challenge grant for the capital campaign. If we meet this challenge by **October 1, 2020**, they will give **\$50,000** toward the project. As of **March 1**, we have **\$704,400** to raise by that date. Gifts to the campaign may be made over one to three years. For info, please contact **Maria Magee** at **713-533-4924** or **mmagee@imgh.org**.



## LEAVE A LEGACY

Would you like to help Interfaith Ministries continue its work for generations to come? Consider making a gift to IM in your estate. We accept gifts of life insurance, stocks, retirement accounts, and more. For info, contact **Maria Magee** at **713-533-4924** or **mmagee@imgh.org**.



## CHARITY GUILD OF CATHOLIC WOMEN

On **February 3**, the Charity Guild of Catholic Women awarded **\$484,926.00** to **47 non-profit organizations** to help children in need in the Greater Houston Area. Interfaith Ministries was honored to receive funds to help our refugee children.



## HALLIBURTON GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thank you to **Halliburton** for donating **\$50,000** to our Meals on Wheels program through their 2019 Charity Golf Tournament! Representing Halliburton from left- EVP Human Resources and Administration Lawrence Pope and President and CEO Jeff Miller.



**John Williams and Superior Subaru** of Houston during the 2019 Subaru Share the Love Event!

## SUBARU SHARE THE LOVE

For the 12th year, the Meals on Wheels network participated in the annual **Subaru Share the Love Event**. Since inception, Subaru and its retailers have helped Meals on Wheels to deliver more than **2.2 million meals** nationwide to seniors in need. For every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased during a specified time, Subaru donates **\$250** to the customer's choice of participating charities. Meals on Wheels is one of four national participating charities. Thank you Subaru for sharing the love!

# REFUGEE SERVICES



## HOUSTONIA MAGAZINE CELEBRATES IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

In the March edition of Houstonia Magazine, which focuses on success stories of immigrants and refugees, two of our team members from Interfaith Ministries and three of our clients are featured. Read the stories of Salemu, Yunis, Flor, and Jina. Yunis Gabow (pictured) had to flee Somalia with his family when Civil War and ethnic violence erupted in his homeland. After walking to Kenya with his

family, they found a new home in a refugee camp. Many years later, Yunis and his younger brother were resettled in Houston by Interfaith Ministries. Read his full, remarkable story in *Houstonia Magazine*.

## GALLERY FURNITURE HELPS MAKE A NEW APARTMENT A HOME

The Refugee Services team nominated Reina, a refugee from Honduras and a widow with three children, for the Gallery Furniture Annual Christmas Furniture Giveaway. Reina won a household of furniture! The team from Gallery

- 4 bed mattresses and box frames
- Large couch
- Love seat
- Dining room table with 4 chairs
- Dresser and matching mirror

Furniture gave Reina these furnishings:

Reina is elated and very grateful. She said, "I am very grateful to Gallery Furniture. I feel blessed by God!"



## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PRESS CONFERENCE

Interfaith Ministries and the other members of the Houston Refugee Consortium jointly organized and hosted a press conference urging Governor Abbott to reverse his decision on halting refugee admissions to Texas.



## CHRONICLE LISTENING PROJECT

The Houston Chronicle has partnered with Interfaith Ministries on their series called, "The Listening Project" to have open dialogue about issues facing refugees in Houston and refugee resettlement.



We are so grateful to the United Way of Greater Houston and the Build-a-Bear Foundation for their donation of 100 Build-a-Bears. These bears were distributed to our young refugee clients during the holidays.

## REFUGEE SERVICES HAS A NEW SET OF WHEELS



Thank you to United Way of Greater Houston for making the lead gift that allowed us to buy a new van for our Refugee Services Department! This was made possible through a United Way Community Building grant, which we leveraged to raise additional funds from individual contributors. This van will enable us to transport refugees to and from important appointments that are not on a METRO route, like doctor's appointments and job interviews.

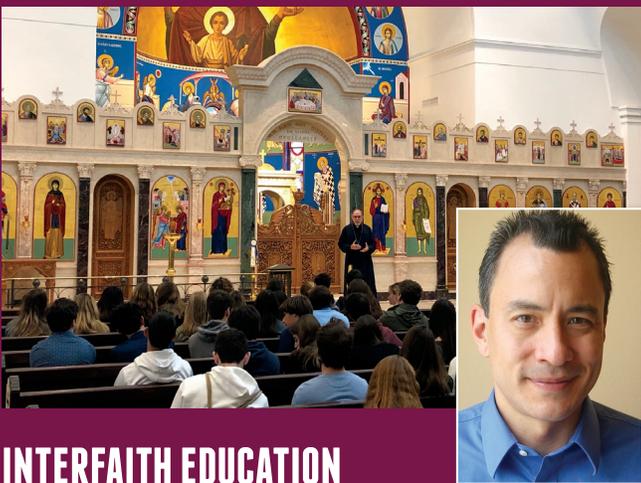
# INTERFAITH RELATIONS & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Chuang and Nichols in front of the Christchurch City Council building's peace bell on 2/14/2020.

## IN SOLIDARITY WITH CHRISTCHURCH

Interfaith Ministries Board Vice Chair, Charlene Chuang, presented a certificate to Matt Nichols, Civic and International Relations Manager of the Christchurch City Council, together with a letter signed by dozens of Houston area faith leaders expressing solidarity with Christchurch in the wake of the horrific shooting at a mosque last year. Charlene happened to be vacationing in New Zealand and was proud to deliver a message from us!



## INTERFAITH EDUCATION

Our Director of Interfaith Relations & Education, Rev. Greg Han, coordinated interfaith experiences for The Emery Weiner School as part of their Comparative Religions Week, including visits to nine houses of worship and a five-person multi-religious panel. The Houston Chronicle did a featured story about this experience. Thank you to all our partners that participated!



*IRCP is proud to welcome the newest member of its team, Kimberly Mabry. Kim comes to us from Houston Methodist, where she served as project manager for the Faith Health Initiative. She is an experienced professional with a demonstrated history of working in the hospital and health care industry. She has a Master of Divinity focused in Theology/Theological Studies from Southern Methodist University.*

## KEEPING FAITH DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Interfaith Relations & Community Partnerships (IRCP) is an important source of information and a key convener across faith, civic, and business organizations. The ability to share information and gather people for “dialogue, collaboration, and service” has never been more necessary than now. Over the opening weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect in the greater Houston area, IRCP staff:

- Coordinated calls in concert with the Greater Houston Partnership (GHP), bringing faith leaders together with business, government, and medical leaders. On March 19th, Over 40 people on the call with GHP and five top-level leaders from Texas Medical Center institutions (TMC, Methodist, MD Anderson, CHI/St. Luke’s, Memorial Hermann). The Partnership asked IRCP to assume facilitating responsibilities for these weekly calls going forward.
- Is developing ideas for future webinars such as: spiritual care in a COVID-19 Era; best practices for on-line worship/prayer; planning for major “high-touch” holidays coming up in major traditions; longer-term conversations about what faith communities will look like in an America significantly and perhaps permanently changed by COVID-19.
- Hosted a “Care in a Time of Anxiety” webinar on March 23 featuring Dr. Elizabeth McIngvale, Ph.D.
- Is moving our upcoming educational in-person programs to on-line formats.
- Is sending dozens of email and chat conversations with faith leader partners providing support and information.
- Working to develop a weekly faith leader update email.

Please stay tuned for a new webpage devoted to COVID-19 resources for faith leaders at [www.imgh.org/covid19](http://www.imgh.org/covid19).

# VOLUNTEER HOUSTON



*Volunteer Houston welcomes its new Director, Brooke Parkinson. Brooke comes to us from the Boy Scouts of America, where she served as Team Leader, Corporate Engagement. She is an Americorps alum and a Certified Nonprofit Professional. She holds a Bachelors in Recreation Administration from Texas State University.*

## VOLUNTEERING DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Many nonprofits in the Greater Houston area are prepared to protect their volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic while onsite, and others have posted virtual volunteer needs which allow people to volunteer remotely. Take a look at the current needs posted on [www.VolunteerHouston.org](http://www.VolunteerHouston.org) for more information.



*The event raised over \$115,000 for Volunteer Houston*



*Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey (center) volunteers with us at Houston Food Bank*

## VOLUNTEER HOUSTON 45TH CELEBRATION

Volunteer Houston held a 280-person event at Hilton Americas-Houston to celebrate our 45th Anniversary. Recognizing previous and current leadership, it provided a great opportunity to highlight the work that Volunteer Houston has done over four decades. Judge Lina Hidalgo and Mayor Sylvester Turner provided remarks before the featured speaker, Robert M. Gates, 22nd Secretary of Defense, spoke about the importance of service. A highlight of the evening was a fireside chat between Secretary Gates and his daughter, Eleanor Gates, Director of Volunteer Houston. Neil Bush, Chair of the Board of Points of Light (Volunteer Houston is the Houston affiliate) awarded Regina Rogers a Daily Point of Light recognizing all her efforts and consistent dedication to greater Houston and Beaumont. Special thanks to Hilton Americas Houston Hotel for hosting the event.

## SOMETHING TO TWEET ABOUT...

On January 16, Volunteer Houston partnered with Twitter to coordinate the largest corporate volunteer project in the company's history.

During a week of meetings of almost the entire Twitter workforce in Houston, the company employee's- called "Tweeps" – volunteered at over 44 nonprofits across the City of Houston. Over 4,300 Tweeps from around the globe worked on projects ranging from planting community gardens and beautifying parks, making STEM kits and hygiene kits, stocking food pantries, organizing activities for seniors and children, and more. Twitter Co-Founder and CEO Jack Dorsey was among those volunteering, as well as Twitter Co-Founder Biz Stone.

This project was made possible by Twitter for Good, whose philanthropic mission is to harness the positive power of Twitter to make the world a better place. Twitter for Good embraces this goal through civic engagement and volunteerism as well as content and data partnerships with NGOs and charities around the world. The company embraces this mission by focusing support where it can make the greatest impact.

Volunteer Houston can manage corporate volunteer projects of any size, from small business to international corporations. For info, please contact **Gayla Wilson** at [gwilson@imgh.org](mailto:gwilson@imgh.org).

# IM

## SPRING 2020 MOSAIC

**INTERFAITH  
MINISTRIES**  
FOR GREATER HOUSTON

3303 Main Street  
Houston, TX 77002  
713.533.4900

Franklin J. Harberg  
IM Board Chair



**Sysco**  
At the heart of  
food and service



United Way of Greater Houston



HOUSTON  
ENDOWMENT

When this is over,  
may we never again  
take for granted  
A handshake with a stranger  
Full shelves at the store  
Conversations with neighbors  
A crowded theatre  
Friday night out  
The taste of communion  
A routine checkup  
The school rush each morning  
Coffee with a friend  
The stadium roaring  
Each deep breath  
A boring Tuesday  
Life itself.

When this ends,  
may we find  
that we have become  
more like the people  
we wanted to be  
we were called to be  
we hoped to be  
and may we stay  
that way – better  
for each other  
because of the worst.

LAURA KELLY FANUCCI