

MOSAIC

A PUBLICATION OF
INTERFAITH MINISTRIES FOR GREATER HOUSTON

FALL 2023

IM
INTERFAITH
MINISTRIES
FOR GREATER HOUSTON



Susan and Dan Boggio



Juanita and Rudy Rasmus



TAPESTRY GALA WELCOMES THE WORLD

IM's annual Tapestry Gala will take place on the evening of Saturday, November 4th at the Hilton Americas- Houston. This year's theme, "Welcoming the World", celebrates the international humanitarian work of our honorees and IM's long history of welcoming the stranger and bringing diverse groups together.

Our 2023 Tapestry Honorees are an incredibly deserving couple - **Susan and Dan Boggio**. The Boggios have been involved with Interfaith Ministries for over 13 years. **They are among our most generous supporters and strongest advocates.** In addition to their significant personal contributions, Dan provides comprehensive pro bono architectural and project leadership services through his firm, **PBK** - a renowned company known for excellence in design and customer service - saving IM a substantial amount that would normally be rendered for such services. This amazing couple has been heavily involved in many IM projects including our interfaith Dinner Dialogues, Animeals, and Refugee Services. Their philanthropy is not only local in scope, but international as they support many worthy causes in our community and beyond.

Our Spirit of Respect Award, which is given to faith or community leaders who embody IM's philosophy of "respect thy neighbor," will be presented to **Juanita and Rudy Rasmus**, who led **St. John's United Methodist Church** in downtown Houston for over 30 years. The pastors grew St. John's from only nine members in 1992 to a vibrant, diverse congregation of thousands from every background and walk of life. In 1992, they founded Bread of Life, Inc., whose

mission is to tackle barriers together with compassion to restore hope for Houston. Bread of Life works in partnership with Beyonce's BeyGOOD. Together, Beyonce, Tina Knowles-Lawson, and Bread of Life have coordinated domestic and global anti-hunger initiatives, and provided support to natural disaster victims. Bread of Life is focused on supporting underserved communities and restoring hope in Houston through Homeless Outreach, Health Outcomes, Hunger Relief, and community radio station KMAZ, The Amazing 102.5 FM.

Our event chairs, **Tehmina and Faisal Masud** and **Karen and Jay Harberg**, are planning an elegant, international evening. In the spirit of respect for all faith traditions, this year's Gala will be a non-alcoholic event. Enjoy a mocktail reception with beautiful art on display, followed by a delicious dinner and inspiring program. The Gala is IM's largest fundraising event of the year and raises much-needed revenue for our work. Tickets start at \$500 and tables at \$5,000. Reserve your spot at www.imgh.org/gala2023. For detailed information, contact **Maria Magee** at 713-533-4924 or at mmagee@imgh.org.



Thank you to our presenting sponsor!



Randall E. Evans

MISSION

Interfaith Ministries brings people of diverse faith traditions together for dialogue, collaboration, and service, as a demonstration of our shared beliefs.

VISION

Interfaith Ministries envisions a community working and acting together in response to the needs of a Greater Houston to create a more respectful, connected, and caring society.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends of IM,

It is my honor to serve as the 2023 Board Chair for Interfaith Ministries. I have served with many worthy charitable organizations over the years; however, IM stands out because of its integrity, its standing in the community, and its unique foundation in **“the strength of shared beliefs.”**

Throughout its half-century of service, IM has referred to these shared beliefs to create and refine programs that meet changing community needs. Our Meals on Wheels program and Animeals were founded from the belief to **“feed the hungry”** and to **“care for the least among us.”** In our most recent fiscal year, ending in June, the program provided meals and more to over 8,100 homebound seniors – a 5% increase from prior year. The majority of these seniors live at or below the poverty line, are socially isolated, and rely on us for nutrition.

Refugee Services puts in action the belief to **“welcome the stranger.”** For over thirty years, we have worked with the U.S. State Department to resettle refugees from around the globe. These resilient individuals and families are fleeing war, violence, or persecution in their homelands. This program doubled after Kabul fell in the fall of 2021. We welcomed more Afghan refugees than any other agency in Houston, while continuing to serve refugees from a multitude of other countries. Now, two years after the Afghan crisis, those refugees have become our neighbors – working, studying, worshipping, and raising families in our community.

Interfaith Relations and Community Partnerships (IRCP) is based on the belief of **“love thy neighbor.”** It carries out the work at the heart of IM’s mission to bring people of diverse faith traditions together for dialogue, collaboration and service. Through interfaith programming, groups for women and young people, house of worship tours, educational videos, and more, IRCP works to dispel stereotypes and find common ground. In Houston, our nation’s most diverse city, this work builds bridges of respect and understanding.

And the Vic Samuels Center for Volunteerism and Civic Service instills the belief of **“doing for others”** in countless volunteers and young people. The Center’s two signature programs are Volunteer Houston and Serve Houston. The former connects thousands of volunteers with nonprofit needs throughout the community, both at IM and beyond. The latter is an AmeriCorps program that empowers young people eager to contribute their skills and passion to create positive change through hands-on work with area nonprofits and service learning.

In our increasingly divided society, it is refreshing to see people of all faiths and backgrounds join together in the work of making our community a better place to live, work, play and pray. The **“strength of shared beliefs”** inspired the founders of IM to start this work over fifty years ago and continues to propel us forward.

Thank you for believing in our work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randall E. Evans".

Randall E. Evans
Chair, Board of Directors

CARE ON COMMAND for Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston



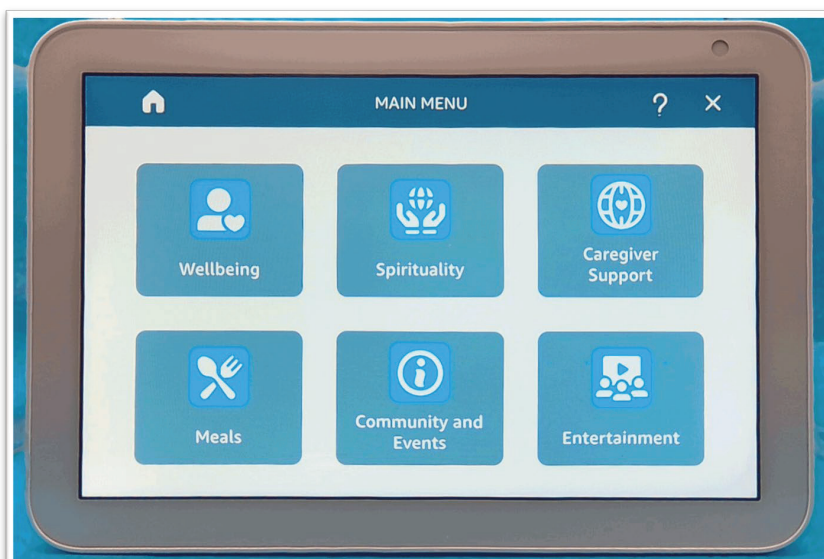
- Touch and Voice Control
- Camera Privacy Shutter and Muting
- Set up to maintain participant privacy and HIPAA regulations.
 - Connection to the Internet secure
 - Does not allow service providers to save personal information.
 - Seniors not allowed to use the system for activities that might put them at risk or at any expense.
 - No one outside the system (approved list) can contact the senior through the device.



Program Functions		
Engage & Connect	Wellness & Support	Extend & Integrate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voice and Video Communications - Connect with seniors via Alexa's voice and video calling services & seniors can connect with caregivers, family & friends. ○ Daily Routine Support – Generate automated reminders and notifications to support daily routines across the screen. ○ Usage Analytics - Gather insights on the activities and wellbeing of participants with usage analytics and reporting to see what activities seniors prefer. ○ Centralized Administration - Central administration portal with individual access to key community administrators, can send a private message to any screen or any group of screens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focused content to improve Social Determinants of Health – social/community access, healthcare access, educational opportunities, safe exercise, trusted health, and wellness content. ○ Care Coordination – Coordinate care activities with caregivers and support teams ○ Surveys – Create surveys and easily distribute to participants and learn about senior needs. ○ Curated Content Management – Select curated content focused on the topics that matter most to participants – art, music, literature, films, health awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Integration - Bring community together with faith services, hobbies, entertainment, social groups, and other social services, connectable to 2-1-1 ○ Integrate to other 3rd party systems to expand service.

Features and Content Supporting

- Wellbeing Activities
 - Physical
 - Mental
 - Spiritual
- Social Engagement
- Care Coordination
- Community Assistance
- Community Events
- Entertainment
- Proactive Notifications
- Surveys and much more



© Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston. Contact mcominsky@imgh.org for more information.

VIC SAMUELS CENTER FOR VOLUNTEERISM & CIVIC SERVICE



**EVERY YEAR,
EVERY DISASTER,
SAME VOLUNTEER PORTAL.**

WWW.VOLUNTEERHOU.ORG/DISASTER

Be patient. Recovery lasts a lot longer than the media coverage of natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

When disaster strikes, we often see an influx of volunteers looking for ways to help the people and communities affected **before they're needed.**



VOLUNTEER HOUSTON ENCOURAGES USE OF CRISIS CLEANUP FOR PROPERTY DAMAGE AFTER A STORM

Volunteer Houston, along with the Texas Gulf Coast Regional VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster), is encouraging the use of the Crisis Cleanup platform among 40+ local organizations that serve disaster survivors. More than 60 representatives from those organizations participated in VH's recent training series to ensure they are ready to efficiently address survivors' needs.

TGCR VOAD relies on Crisis Cleanup to manage work orders during a disaster response. It is used to help individuals and families who require assistance with debris management, clean-out, mucking, gutting, or tarping services. "To make the most of this technology, it's important for us to understand

how it works and use it as intended," said Gary Flaharty, TGCR VOAD President.

Volunteer Houston is proud to host trainings on how to use the Crisis Cleanup platform. Director of Volunteer Houston, Brooke Campbell, speaks about the importance of Crisis Cleanup in the event of a disaster. "The platform is an invaluable resource during hurricane season. It's important to ensure efforts aren't duplicated and volunteers serve where needed."

For more information, please visit **www.volunteerhou.org/disaster**.



Class two celebrates its accomplishments,

SERVE HOUSTON AMERICORPS SUMMER CLASS CELEBRATED CLOSE OF SERVICE

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston celebrated the Close of Service Ceremony for SERVE HOUSTON AmeriCorps class two on Thursday, August 10, 2023, at the **Linda and Fred G. Marshall Building**. The ceremony commemorates the completion of the summer term of service for 18 program participants. The ceremony featured impact stories from each project site.

Members began their service journey in May and contributed over 9,500 hours during the summer months. Nine partner organizations hosted the SERVE HOUSTON members including Catholic Charities, Houston Food Bank, Houston Humane Society, Houston ToolBank, Precinct2gether's Veteran Services Office, Santa Maria Hostel, Tejano Center, and several programs within Interfaith Ministries as well.

"It has been especially rewarding to walk alongside this cohort because they dedicated their summer break to service," said Andréa R. Shiloh, IM's Vice President of Volunteerism and Civic Service. "We are proud of the service they accomplished and know each project site has expanded their reach thanks to the contributions of our SERVE HOUSTON members."



A proud SERVE HOUSTON graduate

The SERVE HOUSTON AmeriCorps program places teams of diverse, service-minded individuals at nonprofit organizations across Houston, affording participants the opportunity to learn, lead, and make an impact through service projects geared towards building healthy futures. The AmeriCorps program is founded on the principles of servant leadership and members serve children, seniors, and veterans through numerous partner organizations. It is part of IM's Vic Samuels Center for Volunteerism and Civic Service, which establishes a positive and lasting impact on the Greater Houston community through organized service and leadership.

Visit **SERVEHou.org** for more details.

MEALS ON WHEELS & ANIMEALS



A purrfect donation!

LION'S SHARE OF CAT FOOD DONATED BY SMUCKER'S THROUGH GREATER GOOD CHARITIES

Animeals received a substantial pet food donation from Smuckers through a continued partnership with Greater Good Charities. Nearly 40,000 pounds of wet cat food delivered on 47 pallets will serve our Animeals pets for the next 12 months! This donation has a value of over \$100,000.

Greater Good Charities is the liaison between major suppliers and nonprofit organizations distributing pet food and other items from major suppliers like Smuckers, Chewy, and PetSmart. This much-needed cat food will support our special needs kitties (cats who cannot chew dry kibble) for a year!

KEEPING PETS HEALTHY

Nearly one-quarter of our Meals on Wheels seniors are also registered for Animeals. Through Animeals, they receive free pet food for their animal companions. Over 1,300 dogs and cats benefit from the program. Animeals allows our homebound seniors to keep their beloved pets, and ensures both senior and animal receive the nutrition they need. Our seniors' furbabies are also eligible for a variety of free veterinary services, including spay and neuter services, annual wellness exams, and immunizations. On a limited basis, we can also provide financial assistance for dental services and grooming, with approval. We call this aspect of our Animeals work "Aniheals".

Aniheals is one more way our Meals on Wheels program provides meals and so much more!

HEY HOUSTON! HELP US DELIVER MORE THAN A MEAL TO HOMEBOUND SENIORS NEAR YOU!



The Meals on Wheels program at Interfaith Ministries serves **5,300 homebound seniors**. We are currently searching for volunteers to deliver a **weekday, mid-day route, once per week** to seniors in their area. Come get to know your neighbors and deliver a smile and a hot lunch!

Scan the QR Code to register. For more information, reach out to us at volunteerinfo@imgh.org



MEALS ON WHEELS BROUGHT BRIGHTNESS BACK TO PETER GRAY'S DAYS...



A sunny smile from Mr. Gray

Meet Peter Gray, a resilient man who has weathered the storms of life with a determined spirit. Originally hailing from a small town with just a single red light, Peter's journey took him through the vast expanse of the oil, gas, and chemical refineries, from the heart of Louisiana to the shores of Texas City in Galveston County.

Life was never easy for Peter, but he faced each challenge head-on. He worked tirelessly in the refineries, operating heavy equipment and contributing to the energy industry that powers our lives. A man of action, he traveled across the country and even found himself working in the picturesque Virgin Islands. Yet, it was his unwavering work ethic that brought him to Texas City in 1973, where he decided to put down roots and make a home.

But life took an unexpected turn for Peter when he got sick with cancer. The illness threw him off his path, forcing him to undergo two surgeries and the removal of his left kidney. The vigor that once fueled his work in refineries was now channeled into his fight against the disease. As the storms of illness raged, Peter's aspirations had to be put on hold.

Enter Meals on Wheels, a ray of hope in the midst of Peter's challenging journey. For the past six months, Meals on Wheels has been an essential part of Peter's life. As he gradually regains his strength, the nutritious meals delivered to his doorstep have become a lifeline, providing sustenance and comfort during his recovery.

Peter's gratitude for Meals on Wheels shines brightly. He appreciates every meal, every delivery, and every moment of support. The simple act of receiving a meal has brought not just nourishment, but also a sense of connection to the community around him. Peter's days, once filled with the bustle of refinery work, are now filled with the joy of receiving a warm meal and a friendly visitor at his door.

Though his journey took a detour, Peter's spirit remains unbroken. He looks forward to each new day with a positive outlook, embracing the possibility of returning to work and finding his place once again. Through his trials and triumphs, Peter Gray's story is a testament to resilience, community, and the profound impact of Meals on Wheels. As the aroma of his favorite meals fills his home, Peter's heart is warmed not just by the food, but by the compassion that reaches him, one meal at a time.

BRING HOLIDAY CHEER TO SENIORS

As summer turns into fall, we begin planning for Thanksgiving meals and holiday gifts for our Meals on Wheels seniors.

Each year, we make sure that all our seniors receive a turkey dinner with all the trimmings prior to the holiday. And, thanks to our volunteer phone bank, we also make sure each senior receives a friendly phone call on Thanksgiving morning. It means so much to our elderly neighbors, especially those who live alone.

If you want to volunteer for our phone bank, please contact thanksgiving@imgh.org.

The holidays can be a lonely time for seniors, especially when their families live far away and cannot visit. Through Meals on Wheels, we provide each senior with a holiday gift bag filled with some of our most-requested items - warm sock or gloves, toiletries, games, and more! You can help us provide holiday cheer to thousands of seniors by assembling gift bags or making a donation to allow us to purchase the needed supplies. **Donate here:**



Thanksgiving



Holiday



FEEDING SENIOR VETERANS

Our Meals on Wheels program is supported by a \$250,000 grant from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The Fund for Veterans' Assistance provides grants to organizations serving veterans and their families. We are most grateful for their support.

For more information, visit www.TVC.Texas.gov.

INTERFAITH RELATIONS & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

EMPOWERING THROUGH DIALOGUE: ADDRESSING “THE RISING TIDE OF HATE”

Conversation can serve as a catalyst for change, and on Tuesday, September 12th, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston's Interfaith Relations and Community Partnerships Department (IRCP) hosted a *Vital Conversation* addressing “The Rising Tide of Hate.” This informative event, carried out in collaboration with the **Houston Coalition Against Hate**, was an evening marked by insight, inspiration, and the emergence of actionable solutions to counteract the pervasive challenges of hatred and bias within our society.

Attendees heard from a moderated panel of experts hailing from communities directly affected by the stain of hate. Attendees then engaged in guided table conversations, all orchestrated with the aim of fostering meaningful interactions. A comprehensive discussion guide was on hand, facilitating participants in their pursuit of deep and purposeful discussion. The recorded panel discussion and resource guide are available for student, religious, community, and corporate groups to engage their own communities in productive conversations about this issue.

Gayla Wilson, Community Engagement Program Manager for IRCP, expressed the urgency of addressing hate within the community: “Our community is in no way immune to the horrific impact of hate activities occurring across the United States. In Greater Houston, manifestations of hate, bias, and

discrimination show up in various ways, and the impact is long-lasting and far-reaching in our community. Hate instills fear and distress in its victims, and we must as a community work

to ensure the message of respecting everyone, regardless of race, faith, ethnicity, or who they love is part of our language and action. Our work here at Interfaith Ministries...supports the effort to make Houston a welcoming and safe community for everyone.”

Interfaith Ministries' Interfaith Relations and Community Partnerships Program would like to thank our sponsors, Vican Sun and Family, Bridgeway Capital Management, and Nadia Tajalli and Dr. Shahin Tavackoli, for their generous support of this program.

In the wake of this empowering dialogue, it is clear that unity, empathy, and dialogue stand as formidable allies against the divisive forces of hate. Through collaboration, understanding, and a collective determination to combat bias, Interfaith Ministries continues to pave the way toward a more inclusive and harmonious future.



Amanda Tyler

SAVE THE DATE: “DEMOCRACY, FAITH, AND THE RISE OF CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM”

Tuesday,
December 5, 2023

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Wheeler Avenue
Baptist Church

Cost: \$25 per person.
Includes lunch.

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston's 5th Annual Gershenson Lecture will feature Amanda Tyler, Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. Her keynote presentation will explore democracy, faith, and the rise of Christian Nationalism in the United States and the importance of safeguarding religious freedoms for all. Organized by the Interfaith Relations and Community Partnerships Department, the program will also include local voices as part of a fireside chat. Sponsorships and tickets will be available soon.

Please contact **Kim Mabry**, Program Manager Interfaith Engagement, for information at kmabry@imgh.org.

EXPLORE GREATER HOUSTON'S RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE: HOUSE OF WORSHIP TOURS

IM can help students discover and examine diverse faith communities in Greater Houston.

Break out of the classroom and meet the following TEKS goals for high school World & US History:

- Demonstrate the spread of world religions
- Describe the origins, ideas, and growth of major world religions
- Explain actions taken by people to expand economic opportunities and political rights for racial and religious minorities
- Customize goals built to meet your classroom needs

Contact **Jenny Abbott**, Education & Tour Specialist, at jabbott@imgh.org, for more information and to schedule your tour.



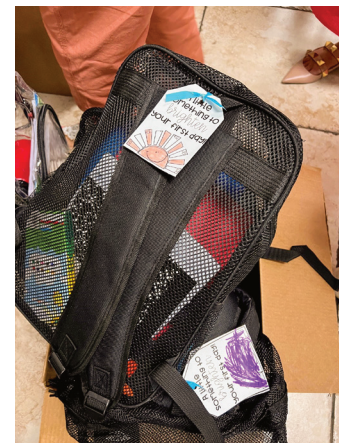
See how Houston worships!

IMPOWER— A FORCE FOR GOOD

With the help of the Khalil Islamic Collective, IMpower Women's Initiative filled 88 backpacks for IM's Refugee Services Back-to-School drive. IMpower Women's Initiative unites a diverse group of women in dialogue and action through community events, coffee chats, service projects, and large events to empower themselves, the next generation, and the community.



IMpower members make a difference



Ready for school!

I LEAD YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM TRANSFORMED THEIR PERSPECTIVE...



Shannon Lowry and son Owen

Shannon and Owen Lowry, a dynamic mother-son duo, embarked on a transformative journey through the iLead Youth Engagement Program. Drawn to the program by the promise of community involvement and cultural exploration, Owen's eagerness to make a difference was started by a simple email invitation. His

friend's participation further inspired him, propelling him to dive into the program with an open heart.

For Owen, the most pivotal lesson from iLead was the profound impact of community service. Through hands-on experiences like volunteering at a local food bank, he discovered the tangible difference that collective efforts can make. He recognized the significance of his role in alleviating food insecurity, fostering a newfound appreciation for his ability to make a difference.

Shannon resonated with Owen's sentiments, especially after witnessing the program's holistic approach. iLead didn't just focus on actions; it provided context by discussing the root causes of issues like food insecurity. This comprehensive understanding enhanced the impact of their volunteer work, infusing it with empathy and purpose.

REFUGEE SERVICES

REMEMBERING THE FALL OF KABUL

On August 15, 2021, Afghanistan’s capital was captured by the Taliban, resulting in a global refugee crisis unlike anything the U.S. had experienced before. Refugee resettlement is usually a structured process allowing adequate time for resettlement agencies to prepare for the special needs and arrivals of refugees. Agencies like Interfaith Ministries are allotted sufficient time and details to secure housing, furnishings, medical care, employment, and the tools to overcome language barriers and cultural integration. After the fall of Kabul, however, resettlement organizations had to act swiftly with little to no preparation. Interfaith Ministries’ Refugee Services Director Dario Lipovac reflects on his experience during the aftermath of this unprecedented humanitarian crisis: “Overnight, the volume of people in need overwhelmed the system. We had no process to count on and our only goal was to help as many people as quickly as possible.”

Families were separated, individuals were injured, and communication was minimal. What followed the initial calls were endless hours of Dario and his staff working around the clock to help thousands of people. Resettlement agencies focused on the most basic needs like food, water, and shelter. “Everyone was operating under the mantra of ‘flying the plane and building it at the same time,’” explains Dario, “we were up against limited housing, everyone was understaffed, and the already limited supplies were exacerbated by pandemic-related shortages.” The lack of process, vital information, and resources combined with the need for immediate action led to long days, uncertainty, hopelessness, and ultimately burnout.









IM’s staff went above and beyond and case workers faced their own trauma, feeling the weight of the crisis on their shoulders. Among IM’s staff were twenty individuals with family ties in Afghanistan. In addition to caring for the sudden influx of refugee clients, staff members were working through concerns for the safety of their loved ones.

Despite the struggles, what Dario remembers most is how Houstonians banded together to ensure every Afghan received a warm welcome. Restaurant owners supplied meals, property owners donated their rental homes for temporary housing, volunteers provided transportation, and donors gave generously. Over Interfaith Ministries’ 30 years in refugee resettlement, the populations in crisis have differed, but Dario states the goal remains the same: “We are in the business of helping people.”

Throughout the crisis, nearly 200,000 Afghan refugees were resettled across the globe. The effects of Kabul’s fall still linger. Many Afghans are still facing family separation, legal challenges, and will likely battle feelings of loss, trauma, and guilt for years to come. “We don’t know how we survived that moment in time, but we must continue to serve,” Dario says.



AFGHAN REFUGEES RESETTLED BY COUNTRY:

 United States approximately 97,000	 Italy 4,900
 Canada 32,000	 France 2,630
 Germany 26,000	 Poland 1,500
 United Kingdom 24,000	 New Zealand 1,500

NURTURING RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT: DR. ANN FRIEDMAN'S MINDFULNESS WORK WITH REFUGEE WOMEN



Dr. Ann Friedman

Dr. Ann Friedman's journey into volunteering with the Refugee Women's Empowerment Group showcases the transformative power of mindfulness in the lives of Afghan refugee women. As a psychologist and certified mindfulness trainer, Dr. Friedman's dedication to fostering well-being among these women has become a heart project that not only addresses stress and emotional challenges but

also creates a sense of community among this vulnerable population.

When U.S. troops withdrew from Afghanistan, Dr. Friedman felt a deep sense of empathy for the Afghan people facing upheaval and uncertainty. This empathy led her to channel her expertise into making a positive impact. As part of her commitment to giving back, she decided to work with the Afghan Women's Empowerment Group. This endeavor became a way to express her solidarity with the Afghan women and contribute to their well-being during a challenging time.

Dr. Friedman's day-to-day role at the Jung Center involves mindfulness work with various groups, including hospitals, businesses, schools, and individuals. However, her work with the Refugee Women's Empowerment Group is distinct due to its focus on women who are adapting to new lives in a foreign land. These women face language barriers, cultural adjustments, and the stress of caring for their families while being far from their homeland.

The mindfulness practices Dr. Friedman introduces to

the women are aimed at reducing stress and promoting emotional resilience. These practices encompass breathwork, walking exercises, movement, and techniques to manage strong emotions. The women have reported using these practices to cope with stress, with one participant even sharing that she has been teaching her neighbors. This ripple effect demonstrates how mindfulness is not only benefiting the participants but also positively influencing their communities.

Language and cultural barriers can lead to isolation for refugees. However, Dr. Friedman's sessions provide a safe space for these women to connect with others who share their experiences. Being able to communicate in their native language fosters a sense of community and belonging that is vital to their well-being. This shared experience allows them to find joy in their interactions and begin the journey towards adapting to their new surroundings.

Dr. Friedman's work has led to profound changes in the lives of the women she works with. Participants have reported increased emotional awareness, improved stress management, and a greater ability to stay present in the moment. One woman even mentioned that she thinks of Dr. Friedman's face whenever she catches herself worrying, reminding her to refocus on the present. This transformation underscores the value of mindfulness in helping individuals navigate challenging circumstances.

As part of the Refugee Women's Empowerment Group, Dr. Friedman sees a strong need for family mentors to provide support and integration for the Afghan refugees. By offering a welcoming environment, family mentors can play a crucial role in easing the transition and helping these newcomers feel a sense of belonging in their new homeland. Dr. Friedman's call for host families highlights the broader efforts required to ensure the well-being and successful integration of refugees. To learn more about ways to become involved, please visit www.imgh.org/refugees.

REFUGEE SERVICES BACK-TO-SCHOOL DRIVE A SUCCESS

Thank you to all the individuals and volunteer groups who generously supported our back-to-school donation drive. Together, your collective efforts have allowed us to distribute a total of 345 backpacks to refugee children to prepare them for the school year! These supplies make a difference in the lives of these students and help create brighter futures for them.



Ready to learn!



FALL 2023 MOSAIC

INTERFAITH MINISTRIES

FOR GREATER HOUSTON

3303 Main Street
Houston, TX 77002
713-533-4900



Greater Houston



This program is supported by a grant from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The Fund for Veterans' Assistance provides grants to organizations serving veterans and their families. For more information, visit TVC.Texas.gov.

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LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

Interfaith Ministries could not carry out its work without community support! We are grateful to all our donors for their generosity.

Become an IMpact Society member:

www.imgh.org/donate/impact/

To find out how you can include Interfaith Ministries in your estate plans, contact Jerry Haus at jhaus@imgh.org or 713-533-4965.

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