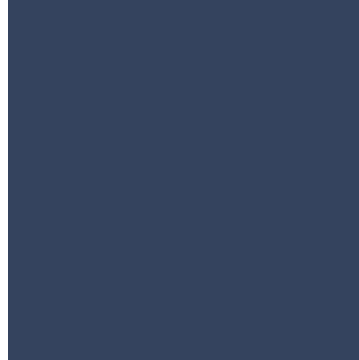


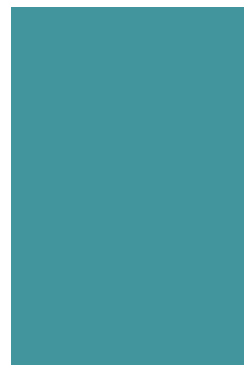
2022-2023

Interfaith Families Project

Annual Report



Explore More



Message from the Staff & Board

Dear Members, Colleagues, Friends and the wider IFFP Community,

We are excited to share our [FY 2022-23 Annual Report](#).

IFFP entered its 29th year with a jubilant return to in-person Gatherings and Sunday School and extended our reach across the United States, Canada, and globally through hybrid services and virtual educational offerings. During the year, our Spiritual Leaders helped us to explore the theme, **What is Love?** recognizing that an interfaith community like ours is in a unique position to help bridge divides, welcome in “the other,” and model transformational acceptance. With your help, we leaned on our rich traditions and diverse ancestors to explore where love can take us and how we might bring that love outward, to help shape the world for the better.

The following pages lift up in words, numbers, and pictures just a few of the many highlights from the year. We are excited to share these different sides of IFFP and look forward to continuing to grow and expand our community in 2023-24.

Thank you for your commitment to IFFP’s mission and your support of our ongoing ‘Project.’ We are thrilled to have you by our side in this journey.

With gratitude,

IFFP Staff and FY 22-23 Board of Directors



About Us

What is IFFP?

Started in 1995, The Interfaith Families Project of Greater Washington, (IFFP), is an independent community of interfaith families and others committed to sharing, learning about, and celebrating our Jewish and Christian traditions. IFFP is a place where both Jewish and Christian partners can feel like equal members of the community, celebrate, and learn about both faiths. At IFFP, we “teach not preach.”

What do we do?

The core value of IFFP is respect—for each other, for Judaism, and for Christianity. As a community led by both a Rabbi and a Reverend, we celebrate, explore, question, and enjoy both religious traditions. IFFP members neither reject our religious backgrounds nor seek a new religion that is a mixture of beliefs. Instead, we believe it is possible — and desirable — to honor our distinct religious traditions and to share those traditions with spouses, partners, and children.

How do we do it?

IFFP seeks to develop our children, ourselves, and our community through opportunities for education about Christianity and Judaism, holiday celebrations, fellowship, spiritual gatherings, community service, and exploration of interfaith identity in an environment that encourages questions and respects different answers.

How can I become involved?

IFFP is a community of nearly 100 families living in the D.C. area, as well as across the country and abroad. People are welcome to join as virtual or local members. If you are interested in membership, contact our Administrative Director, Miranda Hovemeyer at Miranda@iffp.org. You can also visit our website at iffp.org to learn more.



"I love this place and it's been so great for our family. We have found our people that are raising their children in an interfaith home. Having a zoom capability especially helps us now that we live abroad."

Join

During the fiscal year, IFFP brought together 105 households from across the greater Washington, DC, area, the country, and internationally for Gatherings, Sunday School, holidays, community events, and social outings. This year, we welcomed 12 new or returning interfaith families, including households spanning multiple IFFP generations.

New or Returning Households

The Bangser Family - Potomac, MD

The Kahn Family - McLean, VA

The Lyons Family - Aspen Hill, MD

The Leach Family - Troy, MI

The Bernstein Family - Holliston, MA

The Leppla Family - Kensington, MD

The Wilensky/Manha Family - Silver Spring,
MD

The Updike Family - Tampa, FL

The Greenwell Family - Owensboro, KY

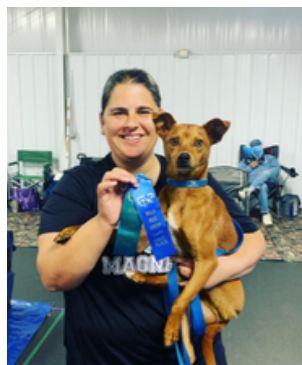
The Dirker Family - Kensington, MD

The Haverstick Family - Somers Point, NJ

The Rosen Family - Chevy Chase, MD



“Before joining, we investigated liberal Jewish congregations. They would have accepted us, but IFFP is the only organization offering an education in Judaism where Jews and non-Jews are absolutely equal members of the community.”



Gather

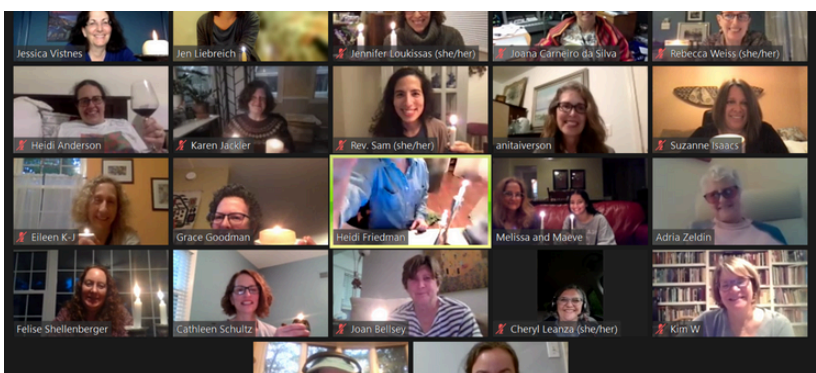
IFFP built community, honored traditions, and deepened our interfaith identities both on-site and off-site through weekly **Gatherings**, celebrations of Christian and Jewish **holidays**, fun and adventurous **Teen Group** activities, a weekend **Women's Retreat**, and an interactive and informative multi-session **Couples Workshop**.

Some of the many highlights from these events include:

- Holding 24 Gatherings, 21 Adult Groups
- Coming of Age ceremony for nine graduates
- Celebrating High Holy Days with a new Mahzor (prayer book), Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Passover, and Purim among many more religious holidays
- Honoring Reverend Samantha Gonzalez-Block, IFFP's Christian Spiritual Leader, with a moving and joyful installation in March 2023
- Welcoming our largest-ever 'class' of Couples Workshop participants
- Bringing together 23 women across multiple generations at the Bon Secours Retreat Center for a rejuvenating and fun Women's Retreat
- Engaging IFFP's teens in hikes, pool parties, ice skating, community service, and in Gatherings and Adult Groups



"I appreciate the fact that my children are receiving an interfaith religious education. The families that belong to IFFP are thoughtful and justice-oriented, and I want to be able to support an organization that is uniquely serving many families in the area."



Learn

Sunday School

One of the hallmarks of IFFP is our Sunday School. Serving children ages three to 13, the curriculum's capstone experience is a two-year Coming of Age Program, where students study six foundational questions that help them form their religious identity. In addition to learning concepts from both Jewish and Christian perspectives, students also study Hebrew and engage in music instruction.

This year, 89 students attended IFFP's Sunday School, including 21 young members of our community who joined via our Distance program. Twenty-Two IFFP parents served as teachers of the religious education curriculum, and 17 teens gained valuable experience as class interns.

Adult Education

Each Sunday, IFFP offers programming for the adults in our community while children take part in Sunday School. Adult group discussions covered a wide range of topics and engaged both outside speakers and dialogue among the IFFP community.

Highlights include:

- Rabbi Lex Rofeberg - "How Jewish perspectives on interfaith families must change"
- IFFP Member Ron Weich - "Why We Stay - How Members Can be Involved After their Children Finish Sunday School"
- Reverend Sam - "What's Good about Lament?"

“This curriculum is AMAZING! I have taught religious education – both Christian and interfaith – and I have never had such a good curriculum. It is well thought out and well written and the format makes it easy to teach and follow. I really mean it – I love how good the curriculum is!!!”



Care

Care Team

Through the years, clergy and community members alike have found ways to be present for one another during challenging times, life transitions, and happy milestones. In 2021, we formalized this essential aspect of IFFP through the creation of the IFFP Care Team. The Care Team meets regularly and supports members and their families in a variety of ways, always staying true to our core values of inclusion and connection.

Weddings & Baby Namings

Our Rabbi and Reverend led 17 interfaith marriage services, 10 interfaith B'nei Mitzvahs, and 14 interfaith Baby Naming ceremonies this year. These services are one of the hallmarks of IFFP's unique value to the wider interfaith community.

Tikkun Olam & Community Service

IFFP's Racial Justice, Environmental and Immigration, and Refugee Assistance Tikkun Olam (TO) Groups help develop Gathering reflections, lead Adult Group discussions, and coordinate outside service activities for IFFP members. In 2022-23, IFFP's Teen Group volunteered at Shepherd's Table and held a bake sale to raise money for Montgomery County Parks. Our Racial Justice and Environmental groups each were featured in Gathering and Adult Group programming. IFFP also continued its longstanding relationship with Springvale Terrace; members donated over 100 bags of toiletries to residents.



IFFP By The Numbers

101 Local Member households

17 Virtual Member households

12 States

3 Countries (*US, Canada, Romania*)

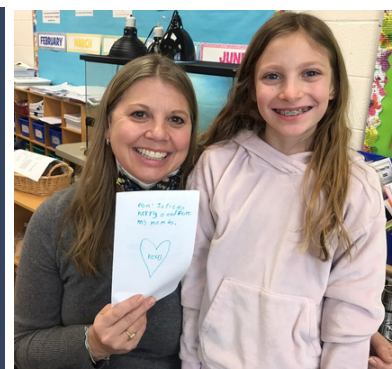
20 Couples Workshop Participants - our largest ever!

124 Households/corporations that donated to IFFP

778 Followers on Instagram

886 Followers on Facebook

1071 Followers on X (*formerly Twitter*)



Looking Ahead



2023-2024 Theme: Our Living Stories

As we step into our next year at IFFP, our theme is “Our Living Stories.” We’ll delve into the rich tapestry of religious writings, including the stories that didn’t make it into the texts. Our focus extends beyond the past; it’s about the stories that shape our entire community, connecting us on a deeper level. These living stories hold invaluable lessons on how to live and love better. They are uniquely ours, reflective of who we are as individuals and as a diverse collective.

Let’s embrace and learn from these narratives, drawing inspiration from the past and applying them to our lives today. To prepare for this journey, take a moment to reflect on your own stories—from the past, the present, and those unfolding in your life. Together, for the Fall, we’ll unite our voices to celebrate and explore the powerful impact of “Our Living Stories.” Who knows where this shared journey might lead us?



Thank You



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