



# Interfaith Families Project

of the Greater Washington, DC Area

Sept-Oct 2008 [www.iffp.net](http://www.iffp.net) P.O. Box 5413, Takoma Park, MD 20913 [iffp@verizon.net](mailto:iffp@verizon.net) (301) 270-6337

## REVEREND JULIA'S REFLECTION

**Marci Shegogue** shared something quite lovely with me several weeks ago which I'd like to share with you all because it speaks so metaphorically well of what IFFP is doing.

When Marci met with the school principal where she works, the principal excitedly told her about her plans for the graduation speech she was going to give. (This school is known for successfully educating many children who have different learning abilities.)

She planned to have a piano keyboard on stage and she would begin the speech by playing one note on the piano. Then, she would say the piano is made up of many different notes -- each just perfect in their own right -- but that playing many together created a much fuller and beautiful sound. She would end the speech by saying "You can't have harmony if everyone sings the same note."



At IFFP, we are creating beautiful harmony with two different religious traditions. This coming year we will continue to play our music! Our Gatherings and Adult Group sessions will focus on "Nurturing and Wrestling with our Faith Traditions". We not only want to grow the pillars of our faith, but we need to wrestle with what is true for us, what has wounded us, and what we can no longer tolerate in the 21st century.

What I mean by "pillars of our faith" are the three elements Judaism and Christianity have in common -- being in and growing:

1. A faith community
2. A covenantal relationship with G-d
3. Our knowledge of the sacred scriptures and claiming our own experiences of the Holy.

I am thrilled to plan the Adult Group Sessions and our Gathering Committee while working with **Larry Bostian, Pete Flynn, Marci Shegogue, Josh Bernstein, Eric Maring, Dan Griffin, Andy Herman, Jodi Kantor, Bob Schwartz, Scott Paul, Larry Bostian and Jimmy Mrose.**

With full heart and great anticipation, I look forward to singing with all of you in beautiful harmony.

My kindest and warmest regards,  
Rev. Julia

## GREAT NEW FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY - IFFP IS ELIGIBLE CHARITY!

IFFP is now an eligible charity in the Federal Government's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The CFC is a program in which the Federal Government encourages its employees to donate money to one or more pre-approved charities.

For those who are Federal employees, please remember IFFP as you make your CFC contribution decisions this year. Also, please let all your friends and family members who are Federal employees know about IFFP's participation in this program. This is a great opportunity for IFFP fundraising, so let's get the word out! IFFP's CFC number is 27138.

## FROM THE BOARD

Dear IFFP Families,

As the summer winds down, IFFP is winding up for another great year! Like many of you, our family spent the summer connecting with relatives and we look forward to reconnecting with our IFFP family in the weeks ahead. So what's been happening at IFFP over summer "break", you ask?

**Reverend Julia** has been preparing for Gatherings, teacher training, and teaching the COA class with a new curriculum. She is graciously standing in as Director of Religious Education until a new DRE is hired. Our community is fortunate to have a great search committee working on this (more below). As expected, **Reverend Ellen Jennings** left our religious education program in great shape, with a super crew of teachers and lesson plans in place. We held a lovely Gathering in July to bid Ellen farewell, with Quaker-like expressions by the community of joy, sadness, and gratitude. If you missed the Gathering, be sure to sign her goodbye card at one of the September Gatherings.

**Rabbi White** returns from Martha's Vineyard ready to bless us with more adult education and expand his presence in the COA class (lucky kids). **Susan Ryder** has prepared and processed the new membership forms and is busy plugging all the members into much-needed volunteer roles. We are also excited to have hired a new teen group leader from Georgetown who will infuse the group with new energy and fun. It looks to be another exciting year of growth and change!

The Board crafted a DRE position description and search plan and has assembled a robust volunteer DRE Search committee. It is headed by board and long-term member Peter Gray, and composed of **Melinda Frederick, Jim Gold, Anne Stewart, David Habenstreit, Elyn McKay** and **Andy Herman**. We have started interviewing, and since we are in good shape, we are able to take time and be thorough in our search to find the most qualified and matched candidate for our unique community. If you have ideas for the search committee or are interested yourself, please let Peter or me know: [psgray13@msn.com](mailto:psgray13@msn.com)

One of my personal goals as board chair is to further professionalize the board itself and our board and staff roles. To that end, I am pleased to announce we have conducted the first ever IFFP performance review, and will continue reviews this fall. I offer many thanks to the personnel committee (composed of **Elyn McKay, Promise Ahlstrom** and the Board Vice Chair) for developing the review process. In September, we will hold a day-long board retreat and hope to spend the morning on board training and the afternoon on the logistics in creating the proposed Center for Interfaith Family Life.

As you can see, it's been a busy summer, and the board and staff have been working hard to ensure a smooth start to the IFFP year. I look forward to seeing you all this fall!

-----**Jennifer Liebreich**, Board Chair

## IFFP CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

### SEPTEMBER

**September 6 – IFFP Teacher Training**

**September 7 – Welcoming Gathering:**

"Hospitality: Welcome One and All!"  
Potluck Brunch

**September 14 – Gathering:**

"Roots of our Faith"  
Back to School Discussion  
Adult Group  
Sunday School – Session 1

**September 20 – Board Retreat and Training**

**September 21 – Gathering:**

"Pillars of our Faith: Covenant with God"  
Adult Group  
Open House  
Sunday School – Session 2

**September 28 – Gathering: Rosh Hashanah**

Adult Group  
Sunday School – Session 3  
Class Picnic for Grades 4 and 5

### OCTOBER

**October 9 – Yom Kippur**

5:00 PM Child friendly service led by IFFP  
teens  
Break-the-Fast potluck dinner  
Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church

**October 12 – Sukkot and Gleaning**

Gleaning field location TBA

**October 19 – Gathering: Simchat Torah**

Simchat Torah- "Pillars of our Faith: the Torah"  
Adult Group  
Sunday School – Session 4  
Class Picnic for Grades 1, 2, and 3

**October 26 – Gathering:**

"Pillar of our Faith: The Word"  
Adult Group  
Sunday School  
Class Picnic for Pre-K and Kindergarten

## IFFP EVENTS: SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER

### WELCOMING GATHERING & POTLUCK SEPTEMBER 7

It's hard to believe but the end of summer break is quickly approaching! Please join **Rev. Julia & Rabbi White** at our first Gathering of the 2008-2009 year, followed by a festive potluck brunch. This is a great time to reconnect with our community, catch up with other members, and focus on all the wonderful programs and events that IFFP offers.

IFFP will provide paper goods and beverages. As usual, the food assignments are based on your family's last name (use the female head of your household if the adults have different last names). Please bring enough for 10 to 15 people. If your last name begins with:

- ◆ A-J: Bring a main dish (cold cuts for sandwiches with the fixings, quiches, chicken, casseroles, etc.)
- ◆ K-Z: Bring a side dish or salad
- ◆ Board Members: Bring dessert

For more information please contact Susan, [sury3@aol.com](mailto:sury3@aol.com) or 301-270-6337.

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## **IFFP AT THE TAKOMA PARK FOLK FESTIVAL, SEPTEMBER 14**

**Please Volunteer** on September 14 from 11-6:30, we will spread the word about IFFP at the very popular Takoma Park Folk Festival.

IFFP will have an information table at the Festival, and we need several volunteers – including teens – to help staff the table for one-hour shifts handing out flyers, IFFP pens, origami peace cranes, showing photos and answering questions. It's a very pleasant way to spend your afternoon.

Please contact **Susan** at [sury3@aol.com](mailto:sury3@aol.com) if you are able to **help** out!

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## **FALL OPEN HOUSE, SEPTEMBER 21- YOUR HELP IS NEEDED**

There are so many people in the DC area that would love to hear about IFFP and benefit from being part of our supportive, wonderful community. On September 21st, we'll host our Fall Open House. **Please invite friends and family, post Open House flyers on list serves and school bulletin boards and help spread the word!**

Visiting families will attend the Gathering, refreshments and then attend an orientation with board and staff where they can learn more about IFFP programs and activities. For any questions, please contact Susan, [Sury3@aol.com](mailto:Sury3@aol.com).

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## **HIGH HOLY DAYS SERVICES AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, OCTOBER 8**

This will be **Rabbi White's** 41<sup>st</sup> year, and possibly his last, leading services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur at Georgetown University ! They are free and open to the public. These popular services do fill up, however, so the Rabbi advises IFFP families to arrive at least 20 minutes before the start of each service. Childcare is available for pre-school aged children. Times and locations for all services are available on the Campus Ministry Information Hotline, 202-687-1882. Rosh Hashanah begins at sunset September 29 and Yom Kippur at sunset October 8.

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## **YOM KIPPUR REFLECTION & BREAK THE FAST, OCTOBER 9**

Our Yom Kippur Service & Break-the-Fast potluck will be held this year on **Thursday evening, October 9**, 5:00-7:00 pm at the Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church near Silver Spring, 3215 Powder Mill Road, Adelphi, Maryland. Our teen group, directed by **Rob Liebreich**, will again lead this lovely, family friendly service in the Meeting Room (sanctuary). Very young children are welcome to attend, however we do not provide childcare.

The service will begin at 5:00 and our Break-the-Fast potluck meal will follow in the foyer of the Meeting Room and in the Meeting Room from 6-7 p.m. Those of you who will wait until sunset may want to save a plate of food until then. We have the space until 7:30 p.m.

Please bring one or more of the following for the potluck: egg/tuna/chicken salads, cold cuts with rolls or bread; challah/butter, bagels/cream cheese, fruit and desserts (bring enough to serve 10 people). Please leave the food that you bring on the tables in the foyer. IFFP will supply paper goods and drinks.

Directions

<p><b>From Takoma Park:</b> Follow Carroll to Ethan Allen/MD 410 Cont. to follow MD 410 .6 mi</p> <p>Turn LT onto MD 650 N/New Hampshire 3.4 mi Turn RT onto Powder Mill Rd .6 mi</p> <p>Turn LT onto Riggs Rd/MD 212. Cont. to follow MD 212 .9 mi</p> <p><b>From DC</b> MD 185 N/Connecticut Merge onto 495 toward Baltimore/SS Merge onto MD 650 N/New Hampshire Follow above directions from New Hampshire</p>	<p><b>From Gaithersburg:</b> 270 S to 495 E Merge onto MD 650 N/New Hampshire Ave, exit 28A toward White Oak Turn RT onto Powder Mill Turn LT onto Riggs Rd/MD 212. Cont. to follow MD 212 End at 3215 Powder Mill</p>
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**SUKKOT AND GLEANING, OCTOBER 12**

Gleaning to celebrate Sukkot is has become an IFFP tradition. To celebrate Sukkot, the joyous Jewish feast of ingathering, IFFP will once again be moving the site of its gathering to a nearby farm where we will "glean" produce to be given to a local food bank. Members of all ages can participate in this joyous event, share in the joy of the fall season, and celebrate nature's bounty while providing for needy members of our community. We hope you can join us this year for this fun event!

We will meet on October 12 for a gathering at the farm at the usual time of 10 a.m. and then glean crops until noon. **Watch the List-Serve for the exact location and directions to the gleaning site and for more details. Every family is asked to please bring their own snack.** The location is dependent on weather conditions that week.

----**Susan Ryder**, Program Coordinator

**AN ODE TO ROBIN ALLEN**

IFFP member **Robin Allen**, who joined in 2005, has decided to leave IFFP after three years of deep service and commitment to us.

I wasn't there for her joining but heard about how folks who knew Robin were thrilled to have her in our community knowing all the gifts she would bring. Little did we know!! In the three years "Dr. Robin" has been with us she has continually added depth and beauty and wisdom to us. She not only co-taught the mixed-grade class with **Kerri Mullins-Levine**, but also assisted **Ellen Jennings** in the Coming of Age classes the past two years.

Last week, I was in Mayorga Cafe with some of our teens and they asked if Dr. Robin could lead the teen group because she is so cool and has lots of great ideas, a great house, great snacks, and on and on. When I told them she was leaving IFFP they were very disappointed as all of us are.

Robin's legacy will continue with us. Her beautifully decorated peace cranes are in many of our homes. Her spiritual seeking passion touched many of us including the kids she taught. Her last mark on our community was the amazing mixed-grade class' Coming of Age video she created

along with **Mark Corrales**. It is a truly inspiring and loving video which illuminates the culminating wisdom and knowledge and the heart of the mixed-grade class. If you have not seen it, I have a copy. A must see!

Wherever Robin goes to continue her spiritual search, I am confident she will take IFFP with her. Robin found Jesus at IFFP, so to speak. I don't mean that she converted from Judaism to Christianity, but I believe Robin discovered Jesus through our community and her own searching. It is the Jesus I want to discover and know too -- that mystic, highly conscious person who brought light into a very dark time in history.

We continue to need that light in our own dark times. Dr. Robin was a light for all of us and we are so appreciative of Robin's love, time and gifts that she shared with so many of us. Come back and visit anytime Robin.

Yours always,  
Julia

# Sunday School & Teens

## IFFP SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS ❖ 2008-2009

Our outstanding team of IFFP teachers is ready to enhance your children's religious education in the IFFP Sunday School this year! **Rev. Julia** and the teachers will hold a Teacher Training Day on September 6 to ready them for the new school year that begins on September 14. Please welcome them...

**Pre-K (3's):** Lisa Henderson & Julia Lewis

**Pre-K (4s):** Mary Melrod & Jenni Benbassett

**Kindergarten:** Lora Dunne & Amy & Dan Richard

**1<sup>st</sup> Gr:** Elizabeth Gelfeld, Kathy Flitter, Anita Iverson

**2<sup>nd</sup> Gr:** Roberta Pracher, Alison Wylegala, Aimee Miller

**3<sup>rd</sup> Gr:** Cindy Pohoryles & Ron Weich

**4<sup>th</sup> Gr:** Eileen Kraus-Jakobsberg & Lisa Dominguez

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Philip Bregstone & Diane Ives

**6<sup>th</sup> Gr:** Freddie Adelman & Steve Brescia

**7<sup>th</sup> Gr/COA Prep:** TBA

**8<sup>th</sup> Gr/COA:** Rev. Julia Jarvis & Assistant

**Music:** Marci & Rich Shegogue & Eric Maring

**Hebrew:** Michael Rosenman

**Community Service:** Carol Muskin

## BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY

Both **Karen Jackler** and I will be meeting with parents of Sunday School kids on September 14 during the Adult Group time. Please join us for a short orientation of the Sunday School, time to connect with each other, some good jokes, and most importantly TIME TO FILL OUT ALL THE SUNDAY SCHOOL FORMS so you don't have to take them home with you and we don't have to try hunt you down later!

These forms are very important, not only for the safety of your children, but also so that we can get to know your children to maximize the experiences they will have in their SS classes. **Please note that it is mandatory for at least one parent from each family to attend Back to School Sunday.**

-- Rev. Julia

## SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS PICNICS

Come and meet your child's Sunday School teacher and the other class parents while the children play together! This year we will have 3 dates for our Sunday school potlucks:

**Grades 4-5 – September 28**

**Grades 1-3 – October 19**

**Pre-K & K – October 26**

The picnics will take place after Sunday school in the park across the parking lot. In case of inclement weather, we will use the cafeteria. (The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade will be having lunches after field trips.) Teachers will send notices with specifics and will provide nametags.

Each family is asked to bring its own food and drinks (unless the teacher chooses to organize a potluck), a blanket to sit on, frisbees, balls for the park, and any necessary paper or plastic goods.

Use this time to speak with your child's teacher, arrange play dates for your kids, or get-togethers with other families. Children are much more likely to want to come to Sunday school when they know they'll see their buddies there.

## TEEN GROUP & COA PREP

### WELCOME JESSICA STEVENS TO COA PREP AND IFFP TEEN GROUP!

One of the first applications we got for our job description for the COA Prep teacher and Teen Leader was a young woman by the name of **Jessica Stevens**. She described herself to us a senior at Georgetown who has worked with middle-school age kids and loved it. But what interested us the most was that she has always had a great interest in religion and interfaith dialogue and relations. Jessica was raised Catholic in Worcester, MA (went to Catholic schools, etc) and at some point in her young adult life has decided to convert to Judaism. She will more than likely convert after she graduates from college. We instantly felt that Jessica was made for IFFP! She already has the COA Prep curriculum, is cooking up ideas for the teens (she loves to cook too!) and all the teachers will meet her at the Teacher Training coming up. Please join me in a warm welcome to Jessica!

### TEEN GROUP UPDATE

In early August, **Susan Ryder** and I met with some teens and parents at Mayorga Café to talk about what we wanted to do with this year's IFFP Teen Group. We had a fabulous turn out with **Daniel** and **Leah Muskin-Pierret**, their friend **Maya Martin-Udry**, **Jeanne** and **Lauren Jarvis-Gibson**, **Ruthie Lewis** (COA class of 2009), and several parents showing up to advise us. There is much enthusiasm for a babysitting club, book group, camping and white water rafting trips, attendance of plays, community service, coffee house music, caving, movie & discussion nights and much more!

You can already mark your calendar for 5:00 PM on September 6<sup>th</sup> for a wild game of Laser Tag at Shadowlands Adventures in Gaithersburg, followed by pizza buffet next door at Cici's. Go IFFP TEENS! Come and bring your friends.

-- Rev. Julia

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

## SEPTEMBER

24<sup>th</sup> – Marci Shegogue  
28<sup>th</sup> – Katie Colarulli turns 13

## OCTOBER

3<sup>rd</sup>



- Jeremy Marcus  
10<sup>th</sup> – Colette Matzzie  
17<sup>th</sup> – Chuck Pierret turns 50  
22<sup>nd</sup> – Colin Kotler will be 1

# JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE COMMUNITY

Continue to keep **Kathy Flitter's** dad in your thoughts. He is being cared for in a nursing home in Pennsylvania.

This fall we will be welcoming new IFFP babies into our community.

On August 16, **Kristina Seppala and Jon Seaton** welcomed the arrival of their new daughter! Annabelle Marie Seppala Seaton was born at 10:08 a.m., about several weeks before expected.

In September, **Rachel** and **Basem Makar** will be expecting their first baby. We hope for a safe and speedy delivery!

A special congratulations goes to the **Matzzie-Rosenberg family** who adopted **Eva Grace Jiangyue** from Guangxi, China on August 18, 2008. Eva celebrated her first birthday on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Please send your prayers for healing to **Colin Kotler** and his parents **Brian and Emily Kotler**. Colin, almost a year old, was bitten on his face by the family dog and underwent cosmetic surgery.

# IFFP'S CATHOLIC PRESENCE

Fr. Dennis McManus will be participating in four Gatherings and Adult Education sessions this year. Fr. Dennis has worked with Rabbi White for many years at Georgetown and has just been appointed Director of Catholic Studies at the University. He is also at the Pope Paul Center in DC where he was a primary planner of the Pope's visit to the U.S. Members who attended the Adult Group with Fr. Dennis in the spring expressed a great interest in having more opportunities to be with him. At present he is scheduled for October 19, January 25, March 15 and April 19.

# NEW SET-UP/CLEAN-UP SYSTEM

IFFP is going to initiate a Set-Up/Clean-Up system this year (similar to our refreshments system) that is based on sign ups by semester.

We will pass out a sign up sheet at the Gatherings on September 7 and 14 (or until the list is complete) and need three families to commit to being at Einstein by 9:30 before each Gathering. This means that each family will need to Set-Up/Clean-Up at least one time during the year.

**Susan Mathis**, the board member who coordinated the Set-up/Clean-Up last year, will be there each week to instruct members on the set up procedure.

## YOGA AT IFFP

IFFP is pleased to again offer yoga during the Sunday school and Adult Education time period, from 11-12:00. The sessions will be held in the Einstein dance studio on September 28; October 19 & 26; November 9, 16 & 23; December 7 & 14.

Our very popular teacher from last year, **Janice Simsohn Shaw**, proudly one-half of a loving interfaith couple, will be returning this year. She has practiced yoga since 1997 and teaches a flowing style that draws upon a variety of yoga forms, including Astanga and Kripalu, and has taught absolute beginners as well as experienced yoga practitioners, all of whom are welcome at this class. She loves yoga both for its ability to stretch and strengthen the body as well as to calm the mind. Ms. Shaw particularly loves teaching yoga in a community and finds that yoga can be a powerful and enjoyable way to help people connect in new ways.

We prefer that members sign up for all 8 sessions or for ½ of the sessions, though drop-ins are more than welcome. Cost is \$120 for 8 sessions or \$15 per session. If you are interested in joining the class (and have not yet responded), please contact **Susan Ryder** at [sury3@aol.com](mailto:sury3@aol.com).

## MEMBER PROFILE

IFFP would not be where it is today without its dedicated membership. Because we are all here for the same important reason, sharing our differing faiths with our family and community, learning what IFFP means for one family can enhance its meaning for others.

In each issue of the newsletter, we would love to profile your family and discover what IFFP means to you. Not only can your thoughts enlighten our current members, they can be very helpful in building a larger fellowship. If you are interested in sharing your story with the community, please contact Susan Ryder, [Sury3@aol.com](mailto:Sury3@aol.com).