



Educating for Religious Literacy and Mutual Respect

ING's Annual Supporters Dinner & Eid Holiday Celebration on Sunday, October 5th Features Professor John Esposito & Comedian Maz Jobrani

ING's Annual Supporters Dinner this year is on Sunday, October 5th, 2008 between 6:30 and 9:30 PM at the Hyatt Regency Santa Clara. The event commemorates ING's 16 year anniversary as well as celebrates the end of Ramadan holiday, Eid-ul-Fitr (Festival of Breaking the Fast). This year's theme, "Telling Our Stories: Transforming the World," emphasizes the importance for American Muslims to tell their own stories about their lives and identities, rather than allowing others to tell their story for them. In recognition of those who have enabled ING speakers to tell their stories and help build bridges among people of all faiths and none, ING will be presenting "Building Bridges" and "Excellence in Cultural Diversity Education" awards to honor individuals who have significantly helped communities improve their understanding and respect for cultural diversity in the fields of law enforcement, healthcare, education, and community relations.



Dr. John Esposito

Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think is an effort to present the views of the world's Muslims, as they give their opinions on the topics of most significance today. In his keynote, Dr. Esposito will highlight this work, and emphasize the importance of genuine dialogue among people of faith.

In addition to being an evening of intellectual stimulation, the event also promises good laughs with internationally renowned Iranian American comedian, Maz Jobrani. Maz has appeared in numerous films, radio, and television shows including "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson," and "Comedy Central's "Premium Blend," speaking for millions of American Muslims who often don't have the opportunity to speak for themselves.

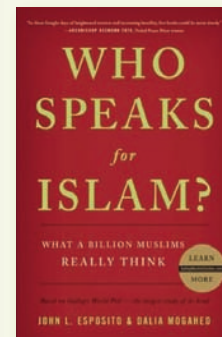
To reserve a seat or purchase a ticket, contact Yasmin Mirza at 408-296-7312 or yasmin@ing.org or go to www.ing.org and click on "ING Annual Dinner."

Also receiving the same award previously presented by ING to Karen Armstrong, the "Outstanding Pen Award for Inter-religious Understanding,"

is the Dinner's keynote speaker, renowned author and professor, Dr. John Esposito. Dr. Esposito is a leading academic and author, who has devoted his life to interreligious understanding, particularly with regard to the faith and practitioners of Islam. The author of numerous books on the topic, his latest work, *Who*



Maz Jobrani



Book Signing by Dr. John Esposito

There will be a book signing event for *Who Speaks for Islam?* with the author John Esposito on **October 5th, 6:00 PM, before the start of ING's event.**

In a post-9/11 world, many Americans conflate the mainstream Muslim majority with the beliefs and actions of an extremist minority. But what do the world's Muslims think about the West, or about democracy, or about extremism itself? *Who Speaks for Islam?* spotlights this silenced majority.

Some of the book's findings include:

- Muslims and Americans are equally likely to reject attacks on civilians as morally unjustifiable.
- Large majorities of Muslims would guarantee free speech if it were up to them to write a new constitution AND they say religious leaders should have no direct role in drafting that constitution.
- When asked about their dreams for the future, Muslims say they want better jobs and security, not conflict and violence.



Interfaith Speakers Bureau Panels Held

In May 2008, ING delivered its first series of Interfaith Speakers Bureau panels. The panels in San Francisco were held as part of the Lowell High School Ideas Festival on Comparative Religions. The first panel, held for two hours on "Religious Perspectives on Contemporary Issues", included five speakers and was attended by over 100 students. The second panel focused on Jewish and Muslim relations and addressed the topic of "Jewish-Muslims Relations in the U.S. in the Shadow of the Middle East Conflict."



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"I learned how similar Buddhism is to the Abrahamic faiths, because usually [they] tend to be only discussed in terms of each other."

– Student

At Oakland High School, ING hosted a Jewish-Muslim panel for approximately 60 students where panelists provided an overview of Judaism and Islam. The dialogue between the speakers quickly led to questions by the audience for over 30 minutes.

"I realized the connectivity of the major world religions (Golden Rule)."

– Student

"It is important ... to understand that the way certain religions are depicted in the media is not always accurate ... these students should have a better understanding in order to determine what is true and what is not."

– Teacher

To learn more about the Interfaith Speakers Bureau or if you would like to join the program as a speaker, visit our website at: www.ing.org/ifsb.asp

ING Education Awards

ING's mission is to promote religious literacy and interfaith dialogue within all sectors of our society; however, nowhere is this more important than in educational institutions. In 2008, approximately 40% of ING presentations are delivered in grades 7-12 schools. At the ING Annual Dinner in October, we will recognize two high schools and the educators that have been instrumental in fostering a better understanding of the Muslim world among their students, faculty and staff. Be sure to join us at the ING dinner so you can help us honor these exemplary educators.

Independence High School, San Jose, CA - Elizabeth Dinh, Activity Director, leads the campus-wide cultural diversity programs among many other key school events. Collaborating with Dr. Molla Huq, this public high school with more than 4000 students has hosted an annual multicultural week for the last ten years where ING speakers have provided an overview of Muslim cultures.

Carondelet High School, Concord, CA - Dr. Marcella Fox, Religious Studies Department Head, teaches World Religions and supplements her courses with ING presentations on Muslim cultures. After ING speakers visit her classes, Dr. Fox assigns students to write letters to local media dispelling stereotypes about Muslims.



ING Speaker at a Classroom

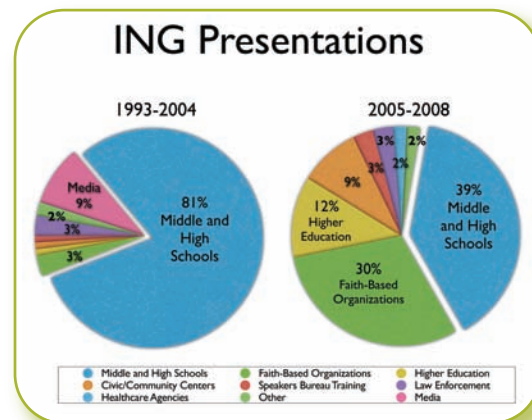
ING Increases Outreach to Adult Audiences

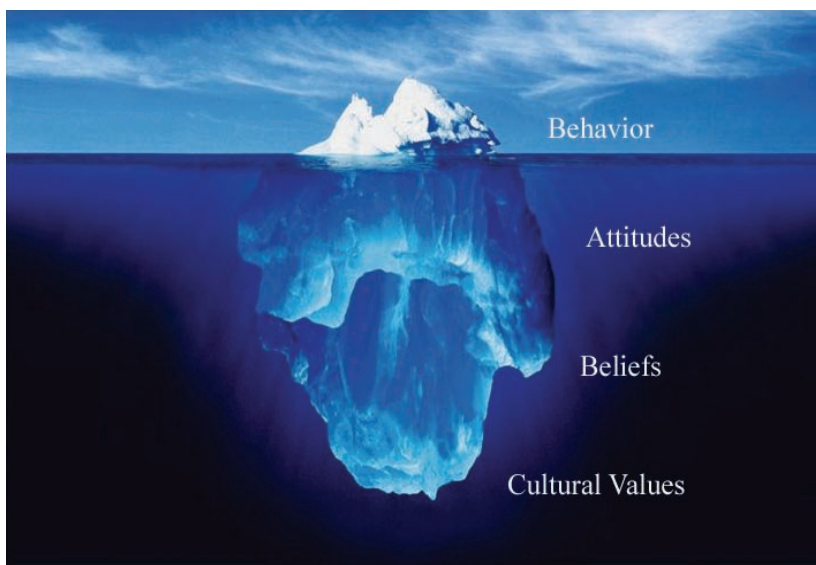
Over 15 years ago, ING began as a community based, grassroots organization to support media agencies that needed information about the impact of the Gulf War and the 1993 World Trade Center bombing on hate crimes against Muslims. Shortly thereafter, the Islamic Speakers Bureau was formed as an educational service whose

certified speakers were invited to supplement education about Islam and Muslims in public and private institutions. From 1993 through 2001, over 80% of the presentations were delivered in grades 7-12 schools and colleges and universities in the context of world history and social sciences.

After the 9/11 attacks, ING was contacted by many civic and community groups, faith-based organizations and law enforcement agencies, as well as health-care facilities and corporations,

asking for educational presentations to foster a better understanding of Muslim culture and practices. ING is pleased to report that we are currently reaching both student and adult audiences. In 2005-2008, 61% of presentations were delivered to adults from participating in police academy trainings to helping healthcare practitioners better treat Muslim patients, and providing cultural competency seminars in corporations to raise employee productivity. Our most recent accomplishment is increasing the networks and partnerships with faith-based organizations through the Interfaith Speakers Bureau program. These sponsors and partners are as eager to promote interfaith work as we are to build bridges and peace among people of all faiths and none. To learn more about the presentation history of ING from 1993 to the present, please visit www.ing.org/celebrating.





Why is education one of the most effective ways to prevent discrimination against Muslims?

By Maha ElGenaidi, ING Executive Director

While there are numerous avenues one can take towards creating positive change in society, education is one of the most effective means towards promoting long term change because education addresses the **underlying beliefs** that lead to bias and discrimination.

A belief is something one holds to be true, and is often based on cultural values. One's beliefs impact one's attitudes and ultimately, behavior. For instance, in the case of Muslims, if American values promote religious pluralism and the equality of men and women, and one believes that Islam subordinates women to men and is intolerant of other faiths, then one's attitude towards Islam will reflect that belief, and the accompanying assumptions that Muslims are misogynistic and intolerant of people of other faiths. That belief in turn will inform a person's behavior in such areas as voting to go to war against a Muslim nation or for a policy that restricts the rights of Muslims at home. In one's professional life, such beliefs may also influence one's behavior towards Muslim clients, with real life implications, especially in professions where human interaction is essential, such as for a judge, doctor, police officer, or corporate manager.

People are often so focused on affecting behavior that the more fundamental aspect of a person's makeup is ignored, which is why an iceberg makes a very suitable metaphor for the various factors that motivate a person. Ninety percent of an iceberg lies under water, and what is visible above the water only reveals a tiny portion of what sits beneath it.

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MUSLIM PARENTS,
*encourage your child's elementary school
teacher to order ING's Ramadan Kit*

Holidays and Special Days Around the World

Special offer for Elementary School Teachers

**Engage your students with
multicultural holidays.**

Welcome back to school! As you begin the new academic year, ING offers a wonderful Arts and Crafts Kit for teaching about Ramadan, an important month-long celebration for over 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide that starts in September this year. As students in today's classrooms have become more culturally diverse and are interested in learning about each other, what better way to start off the year than teaching them about multicultural holidays!

Ramadan Arts and Crafts Kit for K-6 Teachers

ING offers the Ramadan Arts and Crafts Kit for students in grades K-6 to learn about the importance of Ramadan and how Muslim families celebrate its conclusion with the Eid festival. The cost per copy is \$14.99 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling. Volume discounts are available for orders of five or more. *Order your kit by September 30, 2008 and ING will pay for your shipping charges!* Write to Yvette Ramirez at Yvette@ing.org.

By focusing only on changing bad behavior, one is bound to repeat the behavior if we never address the beliefs which motivate the bad behavior in the first place.

At ING, we believe that in order to prevent biased behavior for the long term, we must address a person's beliefs. By addressing people's misperceptions about Islam and how Islamic values are resonant with American values, ING is not only preventing negative behavior from occurring, but also building positive relationships among all Americans.

ING's strategic goals for the next five years include taking its effective educational model, which is currently being implemented in several states, to all major regional centers around the country. ING also plans on making its content accessible online and working with its interfaith partners in promoting inter-religious understanding, tolerance and harmony by increasing religious literacy. You can join in this effort by supporting our work through your donations, and by attending our annual Supporters Dinner & Eid Celebration this year on Sunday, October 5th.

For more information about the event or how you could be involved, please contact me or Yasmin Mirza at Yasmin@ing.org.



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Learn how you can donate online to support ING.
www.ing.org/donate



ING’s Ongoing Work with Law Enforcement Agencies

Since 1995, ING has been working closely with law enforcement agencies, including local police departments, state agencies such as the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), and federal bureaus, such as the FBI and Department of Justice. ING’s work with law enforcement is on two levels: face to face training seminars and as a consultant providing perspectives and policy recommendations on issues relating to Islam and Muslim culture. In the area of cultural competency trainings, ING has conducted one to four hour seminars in dozens of different police departments, in the cities of San Francisco, San Jose and Fremont as well numerous others around and outside the Bay Area. All of ING’s law enforcement presenters have attended Police Academy for Citizens, and two of ING’s employees have attended FBI’s Citizens Academy. Over the last year, ING completed

a series of trainings for new recruits to the San Francisco Police Department that meet the requirements and continuing education goals of POST.

ING began working with POST in the early 1990’s, and in 1995 ING training became POST certified, meaning that officers attending ING’s law enforcement trainings receive continuing education credit. Additionally, in recent years, ING’s president has served as an advisor to POST, providing the Muslim perspective in formulating training policies on cultural competency, as well as directly contributing to training films that contain sections on cultural awareness and hate crimes programming relating to the American Muslim community.

In honor of POST’s continuing outreach to and inclusion of cultural diversity programming, ING will be presenting an award to POST as its upcoming annual Supporters Dinner on October 5th. The award will be presented by ING board member, Rob Davis, Chief of Police, City of San Jose Police Department.

ING has been a frequent presenter at law enforcement conferences, including Sheriff’s conferences and retreats, and has received awards for its work from Police Chief Heather Fong of the San Francisco Police Department, and Sheriff Laurie Smith of The County of Santa Clara Office of the Sheriff. To learn more about ING’s law enforcement programs, visit: www.ing.org/about/page.asp?num=8.

