



ING Newsletter

Educating for Religious Literacy and Mutual Respect



Leave a legacy for your children and future generations. Support ING today. Visit www.ing.org/donate or use the enclosed envelope.

BE A PART OF THE CHALLENGE — *Changing One Mind at a Time.*

Challenging misconceptions is not an easy task, but in today's world, it is a necessary one. Be a part of the effort to create a better world for our children by supporting ING's educational outreach programs. ING is establishing positive relationships among all Americans while working to build a society and nation where there is respect and understanding for all community members, where children are not exposed to harassment and adults feel secure in their neighborhoods and workplaces, regardless of their background and religious or ethnic identity. We can do this together through education and interfaith engagement.

ING commemorates 17 years of Educational Outreach

ING commemorated 17 years of community service at its Annual Supporters Dinner held on Saturday October 3rd, 2009. The program began with a welcome and introduction by the emcee for the program, ING Board Member, Diane Bauer. In line with the event's theme, Finding Common Ground, an interfaith invocation by religious leaders from the three Abrahamic faiths followed. The keynote speech, which was delivered by Marcia Beauchamp in place of Dr. Charles Haynes who could not attend due to illness, touched on the importance of ING's work in a country that was founded on the principles of religious tolerance and freedom. After dinner the audience was shown a video clip of testimonials about the impact and need for ING's work in the community, a theme that was reiterated throughout the evening. Subsequently ING Board Member Randy Pond and long-time ING supporter, Javed Patel both shared their thoughts on the importance of ING's work.

ING staff and speakers were excited to present a series of awards to a diverse array of ING supporters. The "Building Bridges" Award was presented to Rev. and Dr. Andrew Kille, an interfaith scholar and leader. The "Excellence in Cultural Diversity Education" Award was given to Presentation High School in San Jose, and accepted by Amy Fields and Siobhan O'Byrne of the school's



Event attendees

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State Department Ramadan Dinner

ING's president, Maha Elgenaidi and ING Atlanta Affiliate Director, Soumaya Khalifa joined dozens of American Muslim leaders at a Ramadan iftar (fast-breaking) dinner with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on September 15, 2009. The evening began with an introduction by Farah Anwar Pandith, who was recently sworn in as the State Department's Special Representative to Muslim Communities. She spoke of her experiences as a Muslim American. She was followed by Secretary Clinton, whose comments reflected the importance of ING's mission, "Now, we recognize that the relationship between the United States and Muslim communities has at times suffered from misunderstanding and misperception. But we are committed to learning and listening; to creating bridges of understanding and respect; and building stronger bonds of cooperation. We believe that there is more that unites people of all faiths than divides us." Ms. Elgenaidi thought the evening was a success and commented, "The most important value of attending the Ramadan dinner at the State Department along with my colleagues from other Muslim non profit organizations was to demonstrate Muslim American commitment to civic engagement and contributions we make to the betterment of America. I lost no time telling Hillary Clinton and other State Department staff about ING contributions towards inter-religious understanding among people from diverse backgrounds."



ING's President with Secretary Clinton

Volunteering for ING



*ING volunteer
Zabraq Saiyed*

As a recent graduate, I had been looking for opportunities to donate my time to a local non-profit organization. My hope was to regain my bearings in a community I had been disconnected with for several years, and ensure that I was in some way giving back. Over the summer, I attended a speaker's training session headed by Maha ElGenaidi, whom I met for the first time. I was thoroughly captivated by Maha's eloquence and equanimity, and equally fascinated with ING's scope and

mission. I realized immediately that I wanted to be part of ING's effort, where my keenness for education could be shared amongst others with similar enthusiasm and vision.

My short experience thus far has been more than fulfilling. I have had the chance to attend various presentations, ranging

from the most basic in understanding Islam, to dynamic interfaith panels with exceptional speakers on major world religions. These have also ranged from secondary educational settings, to specialized venues such as seminars for medical practitioners to learn about patients' distinctive needs based on certain belief systems.

From attending such lectures, I realized through audience comments how appreciative students, professionals, and educators are of ING's services, which are presented at no cost. Promoting religious literacy and mutual respect are ING's primary goals, but I feel that this organization goes above and beyond by providing a unique platform for individuals to understand and question religion openly. Only with greater awareness can tolerance be afforded, which is an ideal ING strives to impart.

If you are interested in learning more about ING and ways in which you can support ING's cause, visit www.ing.org.

Meet ING Speaker Asma Ghori



Asma Ghori

Asma Ghori is one of ING's newest speakers for the Islamic Speakers. However, ING is not new to Asma. She was only in junior high when the organization was born in the

early '90's, but she remembers thinking that one day she would become an ING speaker. After returning to the Bay Area after living in Baltimore for a few years, she knew it was time to join ING. While attending an ING training seminar Asma realized that becoming an ING speaker would be a great way for her to give back to the Muslim community, impact the

larger community in a positive way by educating people, while at the same time keeping up her communication skills. She also hopes that the work she does with ING will help create a world that has a better understanding of Islam and Muslims, especially for the next generation.

Asma works part time as a Recruiter for the Rosen Group, a Baltimore based Arts Advocacy Company and recently joined Discovery Toys as an Educational Consultant. She also volunteers for COMPASS, the management-training program for MSA National. Asma graduated from the University of Baltimore with a B.S. in Corporate Communications. She currently lives in San Jose with her husband and son.

ING is actively seeking volunteer speakers for our Islamic & Interfaith Speakers Bureau programs.

Our speakers bureaus are the core of the outreach efforts of ING to promote inter-religious understanding and mutual respect among people of all faiths (and none) by increasing religious literacy. All our speakers are authentic in their representation of their religion and they are certified after a rigorous process of professional development, testing and evaluation. Both Bureaus use scholarly developed, time-tested presentation materials to speak at 7-12 schools, universities and other public and private organizations. To register for an upcoming Islamic Speakers Bureau or Interfaith Speakers Bureau workshop, visit www.ing.org

Tony Blair Faiths Acts Fellows at ING Finding Inspiration through Interfaith

Hafsa Arain (r) is a Faiths Act Fellow placed with Islamic Networks Group, which is her guide and mentor to interfaith work in the Bay Area. She works with Tim Brauhn (l), Roman Catholic, in order to build interfaith councils on college campuses.



A remark at the Interfaith Youth Core conference in Chicago really struck me. It was made by a 16-year-old Evangelical Christian, "If this conference were a picture of the world, the world would be such a better place."

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From your visit, I gained a greater respect for Islam itself and its followers.

~ Student, San Francisco

ING STAFF

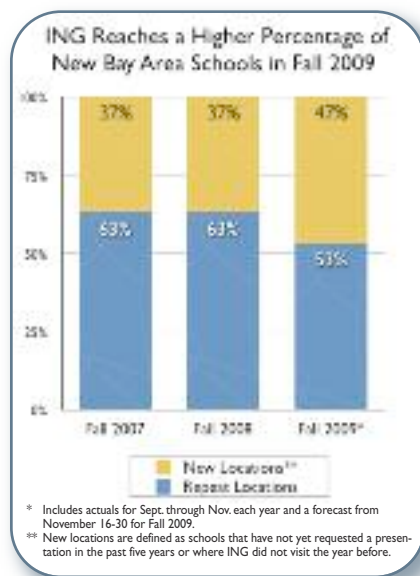
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ING Reaches a Higher Percentage of New Bay Area Schools

At the end of each summer, with the return to school of hundreds of thousands of students, ING activity also peaks with a flurry of guest speaker requests. An estimated 70% of presentations are delivered to students in the fall as ING speakers are invited to present in middle and high schools throughout the greater San Francisco Bay Area from Marin to Monterey.

The strong demand for ING presentations, especially by new schools, was stimulated by mailings of the recently redesigned educational resources catalogs and monthly email communications. For the first time, nearly half (47%) of this fall's presentation and panel requests were from new schools. This is significantly higher than the previous two years, when only 37% of presentations were delivered to new locations.

ING was able to meet these new requests due to a group of new speakers who were certified in 2009 after a rigorous training process. This enabled ING to fulfill requests in new as well as repeat schools.



In class, we had already discussed the Islamic faith, but I had never before heard about the Muslim way of life from someone who had actually lived it!

-Student, Los Gatos

Finding Inspiration... *continued from page 2*

My favorite part of the Interfaith Youth Core conferences, which are held every two years in Chicago, is the opportunity to meet and interact with other young interfaith leaders. Outside of plenary sessions and workshops, we discuss what is most pertinent to us as young people. We talk about movies and music, books and art, and at the forefront of it all we discuss how we are people of faith - how our faith drives us into action, or plays a role in the choices we make. We recognize faith as the mover of our beings, and we are not afraid to have that conversation.

That conversation about faith makes me remember my own tradition, and to bring it forward into my daily life. When Maha Elgenaidi spoke in an afternoon plenary session, she constantly referred to her own relationship with her faith. She stated that Islam's theology of pluralism was the reason she is involved in interfaith work. It made me realize how much more I have to learn about my own faith, and what great teachers I have available to through my participation in interfaith work.

As a Faiths Act Fellow, one of thirty young people selected by the Interfaith Youth Core and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation to build interfaith hubs of action against malaria, the conference boosted my perception of what I can do here in San Jose, CA, and gave me the inspiration I so very much needed.

Breaking Down Barriers through Education

Since my first child started school, I felt the need to educate students and teachers alike about Muslim traditions and culture since they are so often misrepresented and misunderstood. Students begin developing a sense of the existence of other faiths and how to be respectful to them at a young age, which provides the best window of opportunity to help guide those minds before they have been corrupted with stereotypes, biases, and preconceived notions. In essence, shaping children's minds by introducing religious and cultural pluralism is vital to the future harmony of a community in which they will grow up in and participate. Currently, at this point of my children's developmental growth, I realize the need to be more active in educating others about my culture in the education system. I looked for an institution with this kind of mission to help me achieve that goal, and found ING.



Noha Ragab, New ING employee

I do not want my kids to grow up having to justify themselves and their religion because of the extreme acts of the few, or in a society of "we" and "them;" it is so much easier to vilify those who we don't know. In my opinion, the only way to change public opinion is through education and to lead by example. To that end, ING has done a phenomenal job reaching out to various communities to educate and inform, and has played a vital role in building bridges amongst peoples of different faiths. The significant impact it has on the community through the education it provides by its Islamic and Interfaith Speakers Bureaus is instrumental in realizing that ideal. In its well-researched, balanced, and educational presentations and workshops, ING compensates for the lack of knowledge about religion in our education system, and provides a valuable understanding of religious traditions and practices. In doing so, it also helps Muslim children and their parents live in an environment where they are not viewed as "the other" - an environment that is conducive to being an active member of society without the fear of being labeled.

For me, this is the best venue to support my children, which is why I joined ING.

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Help ING become greener by going paper free!

In an effort to fulfill ING's commitment to the environment, please take a moment to join ING's email listserv to receive ING newsletters via email instead of a paper copy. Reducing the use of paper saves trees and postage. Stay informed of ING's activities while helping the environment! Please visit <http://www.ing.org/join/default.asp>.

Understanding the distinction between culture and religion is very important. Our school has invited ING speakers every year and we are impressed with the dedication and commitment of their speakers."

~Teacher, Hayward

ING commemorates... *continued from page 1*

Social Studies Department. A first-time award, ING's "Outstanding Affiliate" was presented to the Islamic Speakers Bureau of Arizona, represented by the founder and director, Azra Hussain, who traveled from Phoenix to attend. ING also recognized our philanthropic supporters by presenting Faisal and Mona Haq, Raghieb Husain and Sadia Kanwal and Kamal Ahmed and Nahid Aliniyazee with the "Emerging Leaders in Philanthropy" awards, for their outstanding level of support. Lastly, the "Keystone Award" was presented to Amer Haider and Munira Shamim for their continuous support for ING. ING is grateful for all of the support from donors that has allowed it to continue and expand its important work. A common theme mentioned by the awardees in their acceptance comments was that one of the main motivations for supporting ING was their desire to create a more just and tolerant world for their children.

The evening ended on a lighter side with comedian Aron Kader, who kept the crowd laughing non-stop in a great conclusion to a successful event! ING is pleased to announce that it met its fundraising goal for the evening; we extend our appreciation and thanks to everyone who contributed, including our volunteers. ING is looking forward to a busy and productive year with the support of its friends, volunteers, and supporters.

SAVE THE DATE: Upcoming ING Events

Learn more about each of these events on the ING website at www.ing.org.

January 12, 2010	Interfaith Speakers Bureau: New Speaker Training Workshop	
February 4, 2010	Life Story Discussion: Tri-City Interfaith Council, Fremont.	
February 21, 2010	Five Faith Panel: Shared Values, St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church, San Jose.	
March 10, 2010	An Abrahamic Showcase: Educating One Another, Interfaith Center at the Presidio, San Francisco.	
October	November	December
April 21, 2010	One Voice of Faith: A National Interfaith Conference on Global Poverty, San Francisco.	



ING executive director Maha Elgenaidi, Faisal and Mona Haq, recipients of ING's 2009 Emerging Leaders in Philanthropy award, and Diane Bauer