

Presidents Report
Network of Religious communities
1272 Delaware Ave. Buffalo NY 14209

The Network of Religious Communities made good use of its time during 2016. The Board of Governors agreed to form the following committees:

Media Concerns: Chair -- Stan Bratton

Programming Committee: Co chairs -- Vijay Charkravarthy, Eula Hooker

Interreligious Concerns Committee: Chair – Dilip Sinha

Food and Hunger Concerns Advisory Council: Chair -- Kelly Ann Kowalski

Public Policy Working Group: Co-Chairs-- Pierre Albrecht Carrié and Richard Wright

We changed the structure of our Board meetings to include 15-20 minutes for committees to meet during our regular meetings with time at the end to report back to the larger Board. In addition, the Board agreed to try using Quaker Business practices. Some of these new practices included using consensus or a “sense of the meeting” to determine action items, writing minutes for action items and reading them back to the Board to get consensus. By doing this, the minutes are completed by the end of the meeting except for minor proofreading. In addition, we are asking people to speak only once to an issue, and overall, treat the meetings as an opportunity to determine what God is asking of us as a group, rather than seeking a majority vote.

Late in 2016, the Interfaith Climate Justice Coalition was approved as a new member. This group, with its twin foci of climate change and the effect it has and will continue to have on those least responsible for it joins our other organizations who are addressing the needs of refugees, torture victims, the hungry and the poor.

The programming committee organized our participation in the Elmwood Arts Festival on the Cultural Row. A raffle was held, giving us about 75 names of people who wanted to learn more about the organization. We handed out bumper stickers and bookmarks to people who stopped by our booth. Two durable banners were designed and made. These can now be used as portable displays wherever there is an NRC presence. The general sense of the Board was that this was a worthwhile activity and worth doing again every other year.

2017 marks the 150th year that this organization, now called the Network of Religious Communities has been in existence. The programming committee, along with other Board Members and their congregations will be planning several events including a large, family friendly, interfaith cultural performance showcasing the art, music and food of many faiths. We hope to hold this event in the fall of 2017.

It has been an honor to serve as President of this organization during the past year, and I look forward to another year of increasing the awareness of our presence in Western New York, encouraging interfaith understanding and bringing faith and action together.