



2022 IMPACT REPORT





FOUR AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS. ONE COMMUNITY MODELING HOPE.

America is the most religiously diverse nation in human history — and the most religiously devout nation in the western hemisphere. There is no doubt that religious identity will continue to play an increasingly prominent role in the trajectory of our society, and we need bridge builders.

Tri-Faith Initiative is not a religious organization, but rather an autonomous 501(c)(3) that works with three equally autonomous, co-located religious partners: Temple Israel, Countryside Community Church, and American Muslim Institute.

We advocate for religious freedom and educate on religious diversity. We celebrate religious pluralism as a social norm and affirm that all people relate to religion differently; our mission extends well beyond bricks and mortar and the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

OUR MISSION

We cultivate inclusive environments to advance interfaith relationships and understanding.

OUR VISION

We envision a world where differences are honored, similarities are built upon, and everyone belongs.



89%

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

WOULD RECOMMEND

TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE

TO A FRIEND

DEAR TRI-FAITH COMMUNITY,

Eighteen years into an audacious experiment in interfaith collaboration, we are more confident than ever that **people with different beliefs and identities can co-exist when love triumphs over hate**. But love, empathy and pluralism are infinitely bigger than four buildings and a bridge. The lessons we learn from the Tri-Faith Commons – and the invaluable hope they awaken – must take root in the hearts and minds of our business leaders, educators, and policymakers. Unequivocally, 2022 represented a major leap forward in that direction.

As planned, **we debuted our first annual Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference, DEI-branded workshops, and the 2022 United We Walk: A walk for an inclusive Omaha**. The launch of these programs encapsulates our progress on ideating, formulating, and implementing policies, best practices, and underlying principles for interfaith relationships. Additionally, we were able to diversify our revenue streams by adding earned income sources and securing our first-ever grants from national funders.

We paid homage to outgoing board members Lisa Lewis, Mary Fraser Meints, Farhan Khan, and Deb McCollister. We also celebrated outgoing Board Chair Dr. Ali S. Khan, whose exceptional leadership was especially appreciated during the chaos of COVID-19. In turn, our board welcomed to its ranks Dr. Ilene Arnold, Rev. Dr. Keith Herron, Abdul Mackie, Harnoor Dhaliwal, and Ralph Kellogg. **We greatly expanded our staff capacity, too**; Communications Manager Corey Oldenhuis, Mission Advancement Coordinator Megan Griffiths, Administrative Coordinator Kalil Johnson, and Program Associate Lucas Schulte, PhD, joined the Tri-Faith team.

Erik Servellon, formerly our Deputy Director, was promoted to Vice President of Operations & Development. Since joining the team in 2020, Erik has been instrumental in growing the Tri-Faith Center as a space of community and connection. He's also grown and diversified our funding streams, helping ensure the future of our work. The success of United We Walk highlights his ability to convene diverse groups across differences on a grand scale.

Jeremy Fricke, formerly our Education & Program Director, was promoted to Vice President of Mission Advancement for the incredible work he's done developing programs and educational opportunities for people around the world since 2019. His development of the Race, Religion & Social Justice Conference and vision for the nascent Religious Equity Seminar testify to his ability to strategically direct our future as an organization.

As you will see in this report, there are so many wonderful ways in which we significantly advanced our mission and expanded our reach as an organization. But **we couldn't have had the year we did without contributions – tangible and intangible – from Bridge Builders like you**. We're excited for even bigger things to come in 2023, and it's an honor to share this journey.

With deep gratitude for you,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy".

Wendy Goldberg,
Executive Director & Co-Founder,
Tri-Faith Initiative



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Gerstandt".

Joe Gerstandt,
Board Chair,
Tri-Faith Initiative

TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE'S CORE VALUES

Courage

We are bold, innovative, and forthright, even in uncertainty.

Empathy

We cultivate understanding and compassion.

Inclusion

We create environments that welcome and value diverse people and ideas.

Resilience

We adapt to thrive, resisting narratives of fear and hate.

Lifelong Learning

We always strive to improve our knowledge and impact.



IMPACT

BY THE NUMBERS

84%



of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Tri-Faith **"helped me understand values that different worldviews hold in common"**

EMPATHY

83%



of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Tri-Faith **"helps me connect with people of diverse religious identities"**

INCLUSION

“

Interfaith work is a healer, a uniter... I heart what Tri-Faith Initiative is doing. I'm all in... If we could do what [Tri-Faith is] doing times a million, our country would be in such a better place."

– Rachel Laser, President & CEO of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State

80%



of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Tri-Faith **"helps me dismantle stereotypes and assumptions about people of diverse religious identities"**

COURAGE

83%



of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Tri-Faith **"helped me learn something new about the beliefs and/or practice of a religion or belief system"**

LIFELONG LEARNING

"FOR ME, IT'S DEEPLY PERSONAL"

IMPACT STORY: YASMINE JAKMOUJ



“*I was struck by a realization that this space, in Omaha, Nebraska of all places, was one of the most diverse I had ever been in... As a young Muslim woman, there are not many spaces in the U.S. where I feel truly able to be my whole self; Tri-Faith is now one of those spaces.*”

Yasmine Jakmouj came to Omaha to attend Creighton University, where she currently studies as a graduate student and works at the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. Her experience as a religious minority at the school, a Catholic Jesuit institution, inspired her to get more involved with her Muslim faith — a journey her collegiate peers and colleagues fully supported. A brief search for mosques in the area led her to American Muslim Institute, one of Tri-Faith Initiative’s three faith partners.

Yasmine is no stranger to interfaith relationships; her Catholic mother and Muslim father have enjoyed 30 years of marriage. “I grew up in sort of a microcosm of [the Tri-Faith] project,” she joked. But navigating two different religious traditions can be difficult if you don't see religious pluralism modeled elsewhere in society; Yasmine admits to having struggled with "a bit of an identity crisis" at one point in her life.

But as she became more acquainted with a community that reflected her personal experience, she felt inspired. “I came here [to Tri-Faith] and I was like, ‘Wow, people can actually love and care about each other regardless of their faith identity,’” she said. “That wasn’t news to me because of my parent’s marriage, but it’s definitely news to many other people. They don't think something like [my parent's marriage] or Tri-Faith could ever be successful. For me, it’s deeply personal and inspires a lot of hope.”

In 2022, Yasmine attended our inaugural Race, Religion & Social Justice Conference. “So much of that has stayed with me,” she said. “It was such a unique experience in Omaha, and I recognized people from Creighton and UNO and various other groups that are doing really great work here.”

Perhaps what excites Yasmine the most is the impact Tri-Faith is having beyond Omaha city limits. She recounts visiting a mosque in Minnesota, where a woman told her that Tri-Faith Initiative had inspired some of her friends in the local Turkish Muslim community there to consider purchasing land in conjunction with another faith community.

“My personal goal for Tri-Faith would be to have it be an epicenter where people learn and observe and take that collaboration back to their own communities,” Yasmine said.



Yasmine, second from left, attending a session in the Tri-Faith Center during the 2022 Race, Religion & Social Justice Conference

A BEACON OF HOPE IN A DARK CLIMATE

According to the Pew Research Center, "social hostilities involving religion" are hitting all-time highs, particularly between faiths. Nearly 80% of hate crimes with religious bias target Jewish and Muslim folks, even though they make up only 3% of the U.S. population.

In Nebraska, religiously motivated hate crimes rose 250% from 2019 to 2020. In December 2022, Stacker ranked the states with the most active hate groups per million residents; Nebraska topped the list with 9 – i.e., 4.58 hate groups per million residents.

Furthermore, recent Supreme Court cases have challenged an integral American concept: the separation of church and state. National discourse has been soured by those who implicitly and explicitly frame "religious liberty" as the right of one religious group to exercise supremacy over all others – a dangerous perversion that must be condemned.

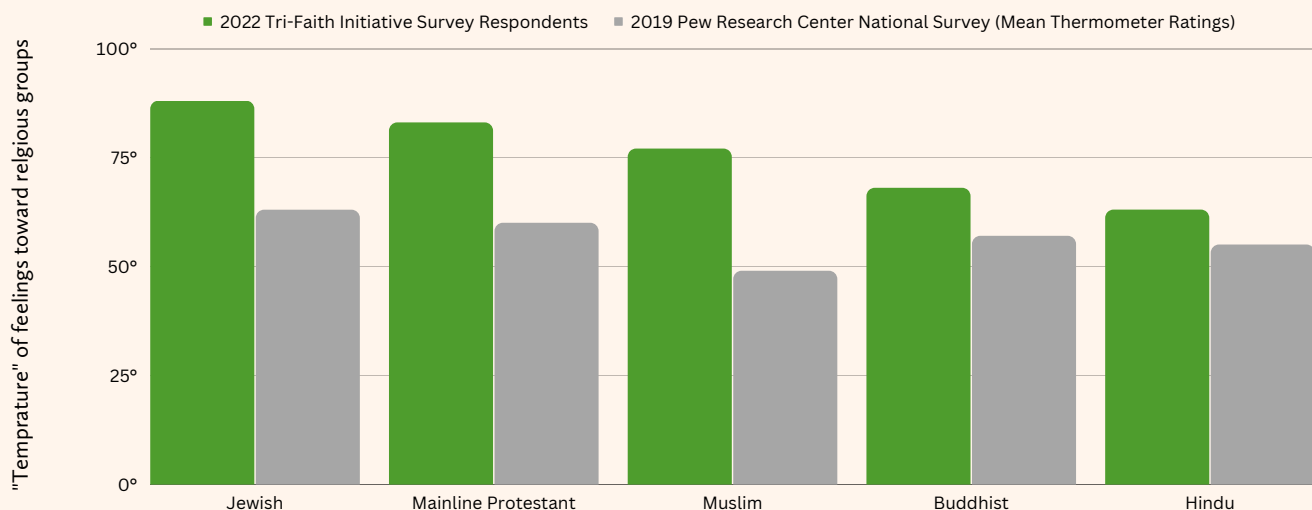
Tri-Faith Initiative is a beacon of hope against this dark climate created by well-funded systems of fear and hate. These systems use lies and misinformation to stoke oppression of the religious "other."

As a uniquely equipped interfaith nonprofit, we address the need of the moment through educational and relational programs, advocacy actions, and thought leadership. We believe that combating the rise in hate crimes and decreasing hostilities among religions begins by cultivating empathy and understanding of the wonderfully diverse religious identities present in our society.



84%
OF TRI-FAITH SURVEY RESPONDENTS
SAID THEY HAPPEN TO
PERSONALLY KNOW A MUSLIM,
COMPARED TO JUST
47%
OF AMERICANS SURVEYED IN 2019*
*PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Tri-Faith Participants Have Warmer Feelings Toward Different Religious Groups



6,686

people attended Tri-Faith events in 2022



625

tour attendees in 2022

5,320

pounds of produce harvested from Tri-Faith Unity Garden and Hope Orchard in 2022



12,272

views of virtual programs (across Facebook and YouTube) in 2022

UNITED WE WALK: A BONAFIDE SUCCESS

On September 11, 2022, United We Walk brought together spiritual leaders and pillars of diverse communities from across Omaha to lead the public in a celebration of the city's diversity and a call to build an even more inclusive community.

Standing shoulder to shoulder on stage, their message was clear: as we remember the tragic events of 9/11 and the deadly aftermath, we declare that fear, hatred and violence will not stand in our community; we are stronger together.



After completing the walk route, participants explored the Commons. Nearly 1,000 people toured American Muslim Institute; for many of those visitors, it was the first time they had ever been inside a mosque or asked a Muslim faith-based questions.

There were roughly 200 tours of Temple Israel; many more visited Temple Israel's event booth to learn about Reform Judaism and the Jewish High Holy Days, as well as taste homemade honey cakes.

The foyer of Countryside Community Church was chock-full for an hour and a half; visitors enjoyed the LGBTQIA+-affirming church's choice of entertainment: a drag queen story hour.

2,200+

WALKERS IN ATTENDANCE

\$150K

IN FUNDS RAISED FOR
TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE

89

UNIQUE ORGANIZATIONS
COMPRISING AN
INTERFAITH COALITION

100+

INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES
PROUDLY REPRESENTED

girls inc. Girls Inc. of Omaha
@GirlsIncOmaha

All in for inclusion, diversity, and unity. Strong, smart, and bold walkers at the @trifaithomaha's #UnitedWeWalk on Sunday.



4:33 PM · 12 Sep, 2022



Shaista Kiran
@KiranShaista

United We Walk with over 2200 people from all faiths for an Inclusive Omaha! @trifaithomaha #Omaha



11:33 PM · 11 Sep, 2022

The Kingfisher Institute
@Creighton_KFI

Thank you to all who came to United We Walk at @trifaithomaha yesterday! It was amazing to see @Creighton well-represented at this great event!



11:44 AM · 12 Sep, 2022



QLI
@QLIRehab

Team QLI proudly participated in this afternoon's United We Walk event sponsored by Tri-Faith Initiative.

The walk celebrated the Omaha area's rich racial, religious and cultural diversity in an effort to build a community where EVERYONE belongs. @trifaithomaha #unitedwewalk



8:01 PM · 11 Sep, 2022

THE POWER OF THE RACE, RELIGION & SOCIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE (RRSJ)



84%

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS
SAID THEY WOULD
RECOMMEND RRSJ
TO A FRIEND

On June 9, 2022, more than 170 people from across the country met on the Tri-Faith Commons for Omaha's first Race, Religion & Social Justice (RRSJ) Conference. The inaugural theme was Harm, Healing, and Hope.

Co-hosted by Tri-Faith Initiative and the University of Nebraska Omaha's Department of Religious Studies, RRSJ 2022 brought a diverse group of interdisciplinary scholars; diversity, equity, access, and inclusion (DEAI) practitioners; community and civic leaders; and corporate executives together to spark cross-sector collaboration in the Midwest.

Areas of focus included belief, behavior, and belonging; religious pluralism; intersectional identities; postcolonial formations of power and whiteness; race, truth, and reconciliation; identity formation; collaboration and conflict; and bridging differences.

“

Opportunities like the Tri-Faith Initiative's Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference offer us a chance to be part of the solution. To build bridges of understanding and hope, we can find pathways to reconciliation. But it starts with us. It is not our fault, but it is our responsibility."

– Rabbi Deana Sussman Berezin, Rabbi at Temple Israel



A SNAPSHOT OF OUR WORK



UNITY GARDEN & HOPE ORCHARD

Tended by volunteers from the Tri-Faith Commons and the wider Omaha Community, the Tri-Faith Unity Garden has provided literal tons of fresh produce for community pantries and families every year since its inception in 2019.

MAKING THE FAMILIAR STRANGE

An opportunity for interfaith dialogue that inspires people of different religious and nonreligious backgrounds to read the same text together and discuss their personal or congregational interpretations.



To Serve (Allah) and Protect: Black Muslims and the War on Drugs

with Dr. Alaina Morgan, USC

ABRAHAM'S WHITEBOARD

A monthly program for special topics in religious literacy, ranging from specific religious movements to broad concepts, with special emphasis on the social, political, and cultural impacts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; different religions are also explored.

OPEN HEARTS

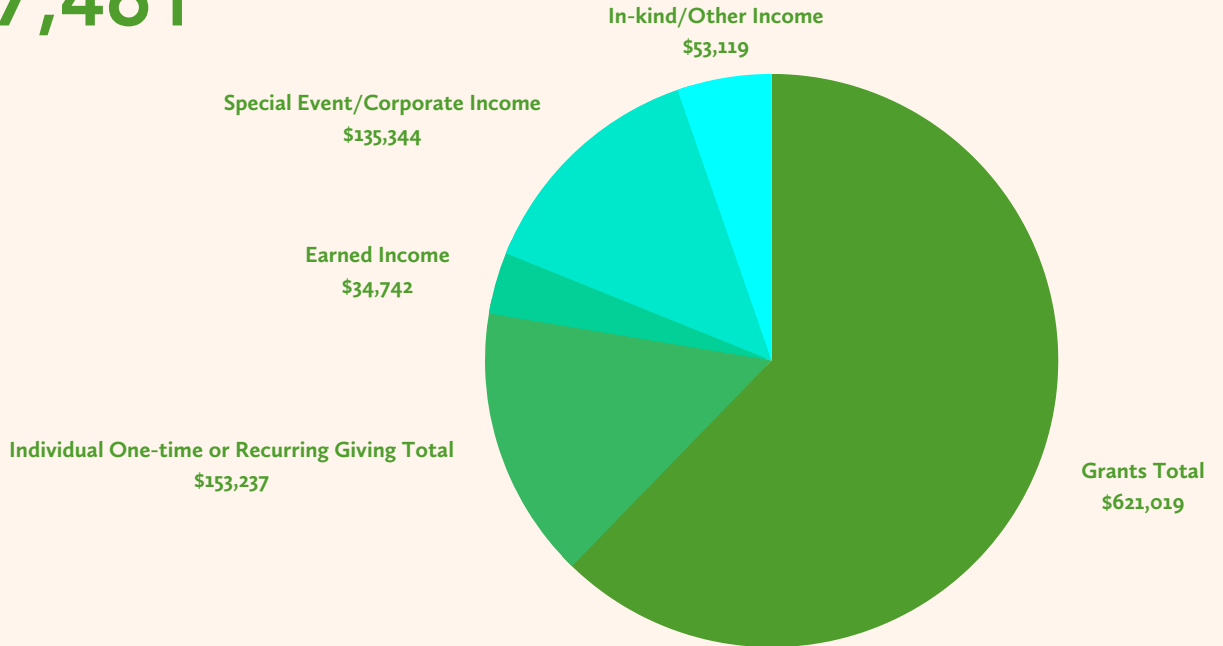
For each Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Conversations episode, Executive Director Wendy Goldberg invites national experts and/or local community leaders to discuss approaches to wellness and invite common action on timely issues.



TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE'S 2022 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

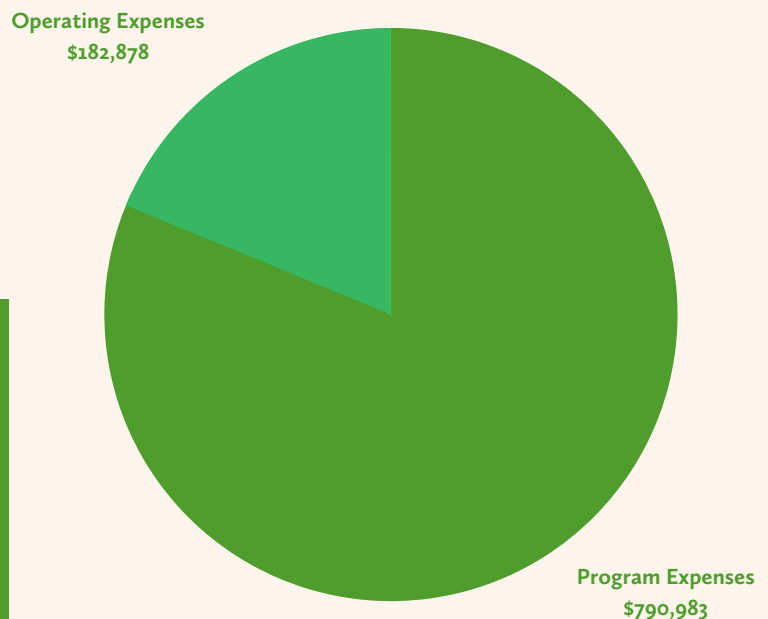
Total Operating/Program Revenue for FY22:

\$997,461



Total Expenses for FY22:

\$973,861



Cash in Hand
Entering FY23:

\$306,794

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“

Expanding my circle of friends and acquaintances has been the greatest joy of my Tri-Faith journey. I was drawn by the resonance of listening to stories of other traditions as a means of deepening my own faith and have been rewarded with new friendships, intriguing scholarship, and fabulous food!”

– Deb McCollister, former Tri-Faith Initiative board member

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PREVIEW: THE RELIGIOUS EQUITY SEMINAR

Devised in 2022 and scheduled for a 2023 pilot, the Religious Equity Seminar takes inspiration from the Racial Equity Institute and reflects Tri-Faith Initiative's increasing capacity to be an agent of change.

As Omaha grapples with demographic changes and the legacy of racism, healing divisions and building cross-cultural relationships have never been more urgently needed. Nearly 80% of hate crimes with religious bias target Jews and Muslims. The Religious Equity Seminar (RES) will provide an understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion issues surrounding religion in America through historical, cultural, and structural analysis such as privilege and marginalization.

Drawing upon peer-reviewed research and best practices, this two-day seminar will train participants with skills for applying learned knowledge to everyday and professional life. A primary goal of this program is to equip community leaders and members to build thriving, inclusive communities that celebrate religious pluralism as a social norm.

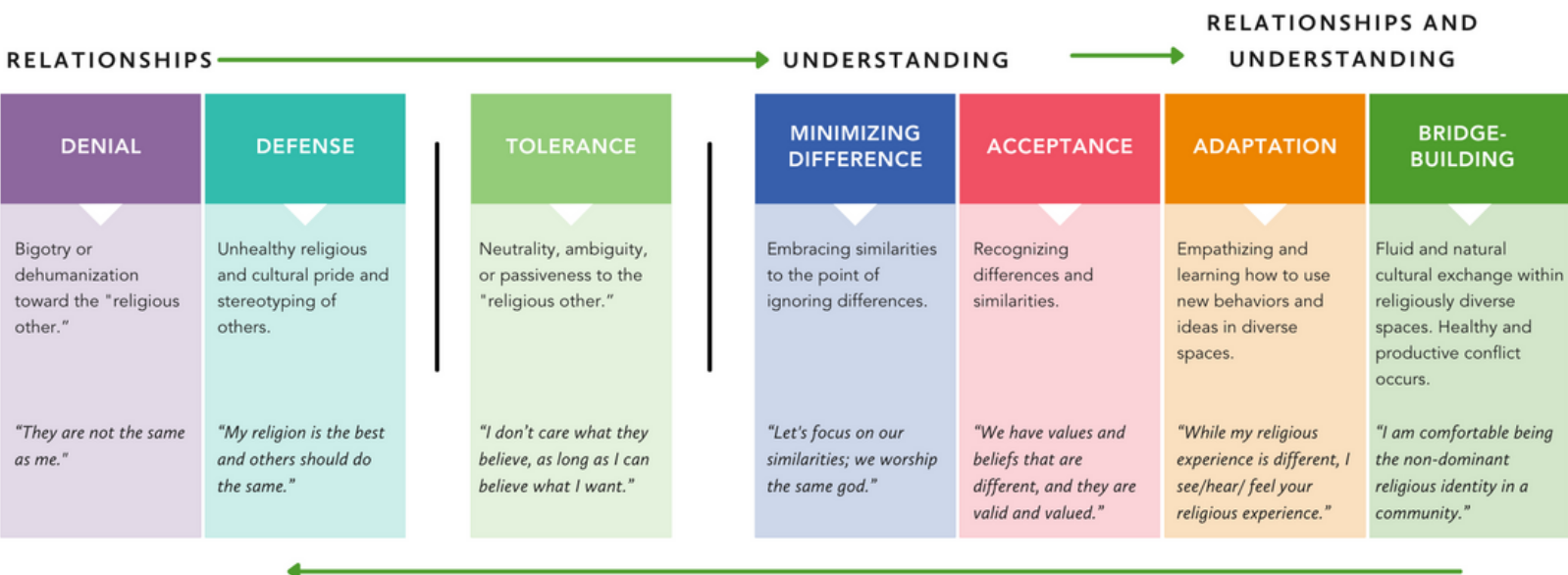
Importantly, participants will be introduced to the concept of cycles of socialization: people are born into a specific set of social identities, and are then socialized by powerful sources to play the roles prescribed by an inequitable social system.

RES participants will then be introduced to the Tri-Faith Bridge-Building Model (pictured below) in order to identify where they and others stand in relation to various religious and cultural groups, as well as envisioning how they can utilize this model to encourage advancement in interfaith/intercultural literacy and relationships.

Understanding the Tri-Faith Bridge-Building Model

Adapted from Milton J. Bennet's "Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity" (DMIS)

Rather than convey the idea of linear progress from the Denial stage to the Bridge-Building stage, this model is used to reflect a messier reality: most individuals embody multiple stages at once with respect to different groups, and can theoretically jump from one given stage to any other over time.



TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE'S 2023 PROGRAM SCHEDULE



RACE, RELIGION & SOCIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE (RRSJ) W/
KEYNOTE SPEAKER CLINT SMITH

JUNE 7-8, 2023

ON THE TRI-FAITH COMMONS

REGISTER VIA QR CODE OR [TRIFAITH.ORG/RRSJ-2023](https://trifaiith.org/RRSJ-2023)



UNITED WE WALK: UNITED FOR AN INCLUSIVE OMAHA

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

ON THE TRI-FAITH COMMONS

WOMEN OF TRI-FAITH VIRTUAL LUNCH
SECOND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH

COFFEE ON THE COMMONS
THIRD THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

MAKING THE FAMILIAR STRANGE
MONTHLY

ABRAHAM'S WHITEBOARD
MONTHLY

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RRSJ 2023



TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE'S 2023-2025

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1

TO CLARIFY OBLIGATIONS AND DEEPEN THE
RELATIONSHIP AMONG TRI-FAITH COMMONS PARTNERS

2

TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF AND ENGAGEMENT WITH
TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE BY DEVELOPING A PROGRAM AND
MARKETING STRATEGY TO ADVANCE OUR MISSION WITH
IDENTIFIED AUDIENCES

3

TO ACHIEVE FINANCIAL STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY
BY DIVERSIFYING FUNDING SOURCES AND DEEPENING
RELATIONSHIPS WITH A VARIETY OF FUNDERS



HELP CREATE A
WORLD WHERE
EVERYONE
BELONGS