InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit

FAITHS CONNECTED, COMMUNITIES STRENGTHENED, TOGETHER WE THRIVE

November 26, 2025

Dear Friends of IFLC,

For each of the past two years, the two of us, a Muslim and a Jew, as well as interfaith colleagues and proud Board Members of the Interfaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit (IFLC), wrote to you to request that when you were making your year-end charitable gifts, you considered a donation to IFLC. During each of those years, we addressed the issues facing the Metropolitan Detroit interfaith community, as events beyond our control and in certain instances, events beyond our national borders, challenged both this community and our efforts at IFLC.

This year, while many challenges remain, we are witnessing signs of hopefulness - locally and beyond. And so, in recognition of these observations of hope, please allow us to further share with you how IFLC's core work, namely, the bridging between people of different faiths and backgrounds, has enabled the two of us not only to respectfully accept our respective differences, but to deepen our appreciation of one another as humanitarians, as individuals of faith and as partners in the critical work of this exceptional organization. Our work with IFLC and the knowledge gained from its programming has enabled us to transcend our relationship as mere colleagues. We are true friends.

It is no small thing to acknowledge that IFLC's singular bridging programming has bestowed upon us the gift of friendship. And so, please allow us to share with you a few of IFLC's unique bridging opportunities:

IFLC's Bridging to Belonging program provides a safe venue for dialogue and understanding amongst groups of diverse adults. In groups of approximately six to ten, participants engage in respectful, structured and moderator-led dialogue, developing specific tools that facilitate this invaluable skill set. As reported by our "graduates," 85% plan to continue to practice bridging, having achieved a 25-39% growth in Readiness to Act in key bridging skills.

But because at IFLC we understand that bridging will be similarly valuable and perhaps possess greater efficacy if this exposure to diversity comes at an earlier age, IFLC's Journeys: World Religions of Metro Detroit program offers cohorts of middle school-age children of diverse religious backgrounds (and some adult groups) the opportunity to visit as many as six different religious/cultural venues during the school year. Through this novel program, our students gain a greater understanding of different faith traditions, but, equally important, they come to appreciate the common values that form the foundations of each of these religions. This year, we have 580 students (up from 470 last year – also an indication of hope) and 100 adults taking this incredible journey with the assistance of 24 congregations and four cultural institutions across three Metro Detroit counties.

In a world filled with divisions, conflicts and wars and in an era where discrimination, verbal hostility and attacks are often permitted, and in some instances, encouraged, the Interfaith Leadership Council provides to our community the commodities of bridging and hope. IFLC will continue to lead the way in helping our diverse faith communities gain a more substantive understanding of our various faith traditions, thus bridging differences, and lessening instances of stereotyping, discrimination and hate.

For the two of us, our commitment to our friendship has only deepened over the past two years. As IFLC colleagues who respect and care for one another, we have pledged to continue to pursue peace, to reach out to the other to express our sincere empathy for the other's pain, and to continue together on the path of interfaith understanding. As we have mentioned in the past - and we believe it bears repeating: a core teaching of both our respective faith traditions instructs that Abraham opened his tent to the stranger. Thus, we are compelled and pleased to continue to welcome one another into our lives.

Thank you, again, for enabling IFLC to work to strengthen our wonderfully diverse Greater Metro Detroit community. Please remember us on Giving Tuesday so that we might pursue IFLC's mission to achieve, through bridging, "a more just and peaceful society."

May this Thanksgiving and the Holiday Season bring you blessings and peace.

Dr. Walid Harb and **Bryant Frank**
IFLC Board Members

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