Dear Friends,

We are delighted to present you with the first issue of our semi-annual newsletter. In the months before and after the Centre’s Inauguration in January 2010, we engaged in an extensive and systematic process of discernment. We initiated a series of conversations with a great many individuals from a diverse array of religious communities, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions. We did so because of our commitment to co-creating the programmatic scope of the Centre through inter-religious, intercultural, and inter-agency dialogue. We did not script the Centre’s program in advance or in isolation, because we meant what we said about seeking to make this your Centre as well. We analyzed what we learned from these focused conversations, and we developed a three-year strategic plan and program. Since last winter we have planned and implemented a combination of initiatives – including programs, projects, infrastructure, development, and institutional partnerships and collaborations. I am excited about sharing with you some highlights of these initiatives, about which you can read more in our first issue of the Iona Pacific Compass, our new semi-annual newsletter. In coming weeks and months, further developments will be reported on our website.

Iona Pacific is an inter-religious centre where education and praxis meet. Our research and teaching informs our social action projects, and our social action projects inform our research and teaching. Our goals encompass education and advocacy, social action, dialogue, and leadership development.

- **EDUCATION**: Our educational initiatives include:
  - two new graduate degree programs in Indigenous and Interreligious Studies at Vancouver School of Theology in collaboration with VST’s Indigenous Studies
  - one new postdoctoral research fellowship
  - two summer courses in 2010 and two in 2011
  - three winter term courses
  - developing a collaborative course on “Religion, Spirituality and Social Action” with SFU’s Wosk Centre for Dialogue, to be launched in the Fall of 2011
  - public wellness programs on suffering and spirituality
  - public lectures at Vancouver School of Theology
  - presentations at universities, colleges, and various religious communities
  - intensive studies of indigenous and other wisdom traditions by our own leadership team

- **SOCIAL ACTION**: Our social action initiatives, which focus on poverty, women and children’s health, the environment, and youth leadership, include:
  - successful grant applications for Muslim-Christian-Jewish mothers parenting and dialogue programs
  - a sustainable food initiative in partnership with a local indigenous community
  - leadership development programs, including a dynamic interreligious and multicultural university youth team, Iona Pacific Youth
• a bridge-building university student-produced documentary production on student religious life
• a youth-led social action program to assist young learners to stay in school
• support for a music team of two friends – one Jewish and one Muslim
• guest speakers on religion and environmentalism
• inter-religious micro-development and micro-credit projects
• an innovative project reaching out to refugees
• a new initiative addressing vulnerable women’s and children’s health
• participating in Jewish-Christian, Muslim-Jewish, and Muslim-Christian dialogues, and Muslim-Jewish-Christian triologues

Sincerely,
Robert A. Daum, Rabbi, PhD
Director, Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre
NEW DEGREES IN INDIGENOUS & INTER-RELIGIOUS STUDIES

A close collaboration between the Indigenous Studies Centre, Iona Pacific, and VST’s Degree Programs has created new degrees in Indigenous and Inter-religious Studies at the M.A. and Th.M. levels. These degrees are “quadracultural”: they are rooted in an integrated study of Indigenous wisdom traditions, Christian wisdom traditions, Jewish wisdom traditions, and Muslim wisdom traditions. These accredited degree programs are unprecedented, inasmuch as students will concentrate their learning in two directions: a focused study of a particular tradition or traditions, and integrative seminars in which students will be able to share what they are learning in terms of content, theory, and method. In addition to extensive support from VST’s Faculty, visiting scholars and elders from the four traditions will provide academic support.

IONA PACIFIC 2011
SUMMER COURSES

Iona Pacific will offer two important courses in the summer of 2011: one on Islam and modernity, another on reparations and reconciliation after trauma. Our 2011 Iona Pacific Visiting Scholar will be Dr. Amyn Sajoo. Dr. Sajoo’s summer course is “Faith and Modernity: Islam in a Secular Age.” It builds on the core theme of a volume that he edited, Muslim Modernities: Expressions of the Civil Imagination (2008). The course will be offered July 11-15 (2:00 – 5:00 p.m.). Dr. Sajoo will deliver the Iona Pacific Summer Lecture on Tuesday, July 12 at 7:00 p.m. Amyn B. Sajoo is Visiting Scholar at Simon Fraser University’s Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures, and will be the 2011 Distinguished Lecturer on Islam at the University of Victoria. He has been affiliated with McGill and Cambridge universities, and the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. Dr. Sajoo is the editor of the Muslim Heritage Series, which includes A Companion to Muslim Ethics (2010) and A Companion to the Muslim World (2009). His earlier works include Muslim Modernities (ed., 2008), Muslim Ethics: Emerging Vistas (2004), and Civil Society in the Muslim World (ed., 2002). He has served as a human rights policy advisor with the Department of Justice in Ottawa, and is a frequent contributor to the newsmedia on both sides of the Atlantic, including The Globe and Mail, CBC Radio and The Guardian.

During the week of July 18 – 22, Iona Pacific Postdoctoral Fellow and Dr. Rosa Sevy will offer a course entitled “Accountability, Reparations, and Reconciliation in a World out of Balance.” This course builds on Dr. Sevy’s extensive work in the area of the therapeutic value of bearing public witness to individual and collective trauma. Raised in Mexico, she completed her Master’s program in counseling psychology at the Universidad Anahuac in Mexico City. Her work was mainly with children and families. Once in Canada, she attended the University of British Columbia, where she earned her PhD in Sociology. Dr. Sevy is a member of the British Columbia Association for Clinical Counselors (BCACC). She has worked extensively with refugee and immigrant families in the Lower Mainland. In recent years, she has been actively involved in inter-religious dialogue initiatives as a way to promote inter-religious collaboration and engage diverse communities in pluralistic dialogue and social action projects. She has served for the past years as a member of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue Steering Committee, an interfaith initiative cosponsored by the Vancouver School of Theology and the Canadian Jewish Congress, Pacific Region.

IONA PACIFIC FALL, WINTER, AND SPRING COURSES

RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL PEDAGOGIES FOR PAIN

Iona Pacific offered two degree courses in Fall term. Dr. Sharon Betcher offered a course in collaboration with St. Andrew’s – Wesley United Church in downtown Vancouver. The course is entitled “Opening the Hurt Locker: Religious and Spiritual Pedagogies for Pain.” The course included two free-standing public events related to the course’s theme and content. A “Compassionate Buddhist Practice” evening retreat was offered on November 1. On November 15 another event was held: a Muslim-Jewish-Christian triialogue on the character of Job as a model of faithfulness amid suffering. A packed room at St. Andrew’s – Wesley United Church heard panel members including Muslim Religious Educator Hanif Virani, Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan, and the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls.
WRESTLING WITH SACRED TEXTS

Iona Pacific Director Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum offered a fall course entitled “Wrestling with Sacred Texts in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.” An exploration of how medieval Muslims, Christians, and Jews interpreted their sacred texts, the course featured guest lectures on Christian exegesis by VST Professor of New Testament Harry Maier and UBC Emeritus Professor Paul Burns. Prof. Burns is currently on the faculty of St. Mark’s College and Quest University. Guest lecturers on Islam included Prof. Maya Yazigi of UBC and Dr. Niall Christie of Corpus Christie College, both of whom are historians specializing in Islam.

JEWS AND CHRISTIANS RESPONSES TO THE ROMAN EMPIRE

In the second term Prof. Harry Maier and Prof. Robert Daum will co-teach a seminar entitled “Resisters, Accommodators, Negotiators: Jewish and Christian Responses to the Roman Empire (100 CE – 325 CE). This course explores how early “Jews” and “Christians” – whose identities in that period were more fluid than historians used to believe – developed a civic imagination in the context of the visual and material culture of the Roman Empire. A key component of that cultural situation was the way that civic ideals were promoted through visual media (imperial monuments, coins, organization of civic space, architecture, statuary, mosaics, etc.). This helped to make Rome’s ideals persuasive to their audiences, the majority of whom were either illiterate or otherwise disenfranchised.

17 LECTURERS, 80 HOURS, 37 STUDENTS FROM 20 COUNTRIES: IP DIRECTOR, ROBERT DAUM, LEARNS ABOUT ISLAM:

Seventeen professors specializing in aspects of Muslim cultures around the world delivered a combined total of over 80 hours of lectures within a two-week intensive course offered in downtown Vancouver at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in July. Among the 37 students from 20 countries around the world enrolled in this landmark program was Iona Pacific Director, Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum. The lecturers came from SFU, UBC Vancouver, UBC Okanagan, the University of Victoria, Aga Khan University (London), and Pomona College in California. The topics included “Thinking of Islam and Muslims in the West,” “Approaching Scriptures: The Qur’an,” “Pre-Muslim Milieux: from the Nile to the Indus,” “The exemplary biography: the Prophet and Others,” “The Formation of Muslim Communities,” “Islamist Political Parties in Context,” “Art, Space and Islam,” “Law in Society: Muslim Contexts,” “Pluralism and Rooted Identities,” “Thinking of Gender in Muslim Societies,” “Islamic Family Law in Southeast Asia,” “Popular Culture and School Curricula,” “Gender, Scripture and Society in Islam,” “Female Voices in Persian Literature,” “Muslim Women’s Trans/national Discourses,” “Gendering Premodern Art and Architecture,” “Uyghur Women between Islam and Communism,” and “Gender and Swahili Modernities.” The summer intensive is co-sponsored by Simon Fraser University’s Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures and the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations at Aga Khan University in London. The program included “A Tour of Muslim Spaces of Vancouver.” This tour brought the students to the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre and the Burnaby Masjid As-Salaam and Islamic Centre. Both site tours were conducted by their architects: Bruno Freschi, O.C. and Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, who also designed Expo 86, and Sharif Senbel, who designed three local mosques and was awarded the Faith and Form Religious Architecture Award. According to Rabbi Dr. Daum, Director of Iona Pacific, “This program is an extraordinary opportunity for me to learn more about a core dimension of Iona Pacific’s work. What I am learning will deepen my understanding of the complexity and the diversity of Islam and of Muslim cultures, which is essential for my research, my teaching, and my work in the community.”

COMMUNICATION: For more information about these initiatives, see the articles inside or contact our staff at info@ionapacific.ca. In order to communicate more effectively with you about your inter-religious Centre, we have created print and social media platforms, including a website www. ionapacific.ca, a Facebook page, a Twitter presence, and Iona Pacific Compass.
IONA PACIFIC COLLABORATES WITH SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY’S WOSK CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE FOR FALL 2011 COURSE

In a partnership between Iona Pacific and SFU’s Wosk Centre for Dialogue, a degree credit course developed conjointly by both institutions will be offered in the fall of 2011 downtown at SFU. The course is entitled “Religion, Spirituality, and Social Action.” It will be co-taught by Prof. Mark Winston, Academic Director of the Wosk Centre and an internationally renowned bee scientist; Prof. Robert Daum, IP Director and Associate Professor of Rabbinic Literature & Jewish Thought at VST, and Prof. Heesoon Bai, a distinguished educational philosopher. The course will bring together a maximum of 20 students, including 10 or more SFU third- or fourth-year undergraduates from a range of disciplines and up to 10 graduate students from Iona Pacific and VST. The semester will probe how spiritual and religious practices can inform how we address social and civic issues, particularly poverty, health, peace and the environment. This innovative collaboration is predicated on the notion that organized religions and less formal spiritual thought and practices can provide deep wisdom to address social and environmental concerns, but also have been associated with problematic outcomes. We have much to learn from religious leaders, artists, activists, civic officials, youth leaders, and others of good will who want to make a positive difference. Our approach will be to explore constructive solutions arising where religious institutions, spiritual understandings, and social action intersect. We will focus on positive change but also recognize historical and contemporary instances when religion/spirituality may have contributed to injustice. Students will interact with a range of thought leaders, organizational partners, and field trips.

Lifelong learning is a core value of our work at Iona Pacific, and Iona Pacific's leadership team is committed to its own continuing education. This past fall Iona Pacific Senior Intern Aliya Hirji studied “World Religions” at Langara College to deepen and broaden her familiarity with a wide range of religious cultures. Iona Pacific Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Rosa Sevy completed four intensive courses in various aspects of Indigenous Culture last summer at the Summer School of the Indigenous Studies Centre at Vancouver School of Theology, for the purpose of deepening her understanding of indigenous cultures and peoples. Also last summer IP Director Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum completed an 80 hour intensive certificate program, “Expressions of Diversity: An Introduction to Muslim Cultures,” at the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures, coordinated by Simon Fraser University and Aga Khan University, at Simon Fraser University, July 19–30. In the course 37 students of various professional and religious backgrounds were taught by seventeen professors from six different universities. The course included a tour of two local Muslim community centres and mosques, which were led by the award-winning architects of the two buildings.

IONA PACIFIC DIRECTOR IS VISITING RABBINIC SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE AT ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL

As Rabbinic Scholar in Residence at Vancouver's Christ Church Cathedral in the Diocese of New Westminster of the Anglican Church of Canada for the current academic year, Dr. Daum teaches from his tradition on a few scheduled occasions. As the joint announcement of the Cathedral and VST explained regarding this appointment, “The Cathedral community respects the integrity of his tradition and counts his presence in the congregation as a teacher and consultant to be a blessing from the one God our traditions have known in different and in similar ways.”

PHYSICIAN, JEWISH EDUCATOR, AND DAVID SUZUKI AMBASSADOR

Dr. Gershon Growe, Medical Director of BC Blood Services, is also a respected Jewish lay educator in the Vancouver community at large, where he has been an instructor in the renowned Melton Program based at the Jewish Community Centre, and at his own synagogue, Temple Sholom. Dr. Growe delivered the keynote address on the theme of the environment at the Commons Hour Program – VST’s new monthly interfaith and intercultural dialogue and conversation about contemporary issues – at 12 noon on Wednesday, November 24. Dr. Growe’s presentation was sponsored by Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre.

LOCATION: To support our programming, we have relocated to new offices on the second floor of VST’s Iona Building, including our Iona Pacific Lounge, home of Iona Pacific Youth, and an office for our Interns.
IONA PACIFIC YOUTH
• Interfaith Youth Leadership
• Initiative for inner-city public schoolchildren
• Micro-development and micro-credit initiatives
• Education & Advocacy through media and the arts

Iona Pacific Youth captured the imagination and admiration of the many guests at the Centre’s Inauguration in January, 2010. The IP Youth Team is led by a dedicated, interfaith and multi-cultural group of university students with a global perspective and local project priorities. The group is based on the UBC Campus, with members in the Sauder School of Business, the School of Nursing, and the Faculty of Arts. Their busy agenda for the 2010-2011 academic year includes expanding their membership through recruitment on campus; micro-development and other initiatives related to poverty; education and advocacy through media and the arts; and social activities. In September the Youth Team relocated to the Iona Pacific Lounge in the Iona building.

The IP Youth Team is also exploring ways to expand Iona Pacific’s incipient micro-development work. Drawing on the expertise of micro-finance leaders in the various religious and ethnic communities, the Youth Team seeks to learn about best practices in the micro-development and micro-credit areas, as well as to develop a new pilot project to build on IP’s Kuper Island Community Development Project.

Media and the arts are important arenas for education, advocacy, and community-building. The IP Youth Team is developing two media and arts projects. One project is linked to a duo of music mixers, whose website will point visitors to Iona Pacific’s website. The two DJs, who are associated with IP Youth, are Muslim and Jewish. Their friendship is a model of what Iona Pacific Youth represents. Another media project currently in development is a documentary film project about varieties of spirituality on the UBC Campus, which will be linked to our website. If you know anyone interested in connecting with Iona Pacific Youth, or in supporting their work, please contact us either at info@ionapacific.ca or ipyouth@ionapacific.ca.

IONA PACIFIC AWARDED TWO GRANTS TO BRING TOGETHER MUSLIM, JEWISH, AND CHRISTIAN MOTHERS: POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW ROSA SEVY LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE PARENTING AND DIALOGUE GROUPS

With support from the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia, a Provincial “interfaith bridging” grant was awarded by EmbraceBC. This Iona Pacific project aims to establish an inter-religious dialogue group where Jewish, Muslim and Christian mothers will engage in conversations intended to foster learning about each other’s cultures and traditions, while exploring common practices and concerns in their roles as mothers, wives, and active members of their communities. Through the encounter with fellow women who are going through the challenges involved in raising children, this project aims to create a context for promoting personal friendships and connections, where the participants can realize that their commonalities as women and mothers transcend faith, cultural or political differences, while remaining respectful of those differences. The participants for this women’s Interfaith Bridging group will be women from the Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities who are currently mothers of elementary school-age children. The group will be recruited from both established and immigrant communities. This group will begin in January and run into March to discuss topics related to parenting practices. This group will be facilitated by Dr. Rosa Sevy, with presenters from different faith communities. Iona Pacific was awarded a second grant for a related interfaith mothers group. The second grant was awarded by the Isaac and Sophie Waldman Endowment Fund. It will provide support for Dr. Sevy to establish a Jewish-Christian-Muslim mothers’ parenting and dialogue program for mothers of teenagers.
INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUES

In collaboration with the Canadian Jewish Congress Pacific Region, Vancouver School of Theology co-sponsors the Metro Vancouver Jewish-Christian Dialogue, which has been co-convened for several years by VST Emeritus Professor Richard Leggett and Rabbi Philip Bregman, President of the Rabbinical Association of Vancouver. The group meets monthly, alternating between VST and one or another site in the Jewish community. IP Director Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum participates regularly in the Dialogue, as does IP Postdoctoral Fellow Dr. Rosa Sevy. Joining them and others from the wider community in the Dialogue this year from VST will be Professors Harry Maier, Stephen Farris, and Glenn Davis. Last spring Rabbi Philip Bregman and Muslim Canadian Congress leader Dr. Aziz Khaki co-convened a new Muslim-Jewish Dialogue.

Supporting and participating in inter-religious dialogues is a core component of Iona Pacific’s mission. As part of this work, Rabbi Dr. Daum speaks regularly in churches, synagogues, universities, and other institutions about the importance, as well as the complexity, of inter-religious dialogue, learning, and cooperation. On November 4 he addressed a program at the Catholic theological college at UBC, St. Mark’s College, in the College’s “Theology on Tap” series, where Senior Intern Aliya Hirji will speak on March 4. Professor Daum’s lecture is entitled “Interfaith Dialogue in the Twenty-first Century: Imperatives, Challenges, Possibilities.” On November 25 Rabbi Daum delivered a related lecture in a presentation at Vancouver’s Christ Church Cathedral in the Diocese of New Westminster of the Anglican Church of Canada in his capacity as Visiting Rabbinic Scholar-in-Residence at the Cathedral for the current academic year. Professor Daum addressed the student and faculty community at Quest University in Squamish on November 29 on a related theme. On December 9 he will address the community at Har El Synagogue in West Vancouver, followed by St. Mary’s Kerrisdale on January 12 as a component of their Centennial Lecture Series. He will speak again at St. Mary’s Kerrisdale on February 20. On February 6 he will speak at Canadian Memorial United Church, and on March 16 he will facilitate a Philosopher’s Café at the invitation of the Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia.

THREE INTERFAITH AMIGOS

On November 13-14, Iona Pacific supported an initiative of the Ecumenical and Multifaith Unit (EMU) of the Diocese of New Westminster of the Anglican Church of Canada to present the “Three Interfaith Amigos” – a Rabbi, a Sheikh, and a Minister. They have been participating in a weekly religious dialogue since 2001. Led by the EMU, the event was co-sponsored by the Muslim Canadian Federation, Christ Church Cathedral, Temple Sholom, and Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre. The program consisted of a public dialogue on Saturday evening, November 13, at Christ Church Cathedral, followed by a workshop on Sunday afternoon, November 14 at Temple Sholom.

SPIRITUAL AND SUFFERITY: JOB, THE COEN BROTHERS, AND THREE RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS

A packed room of lay and religious leaders, students, and members of the community packed a large room at St. Andrew’s-Wesley United Church in downtown Vancouver on Monday, November 15 to hear a distinguished inter-religious panel address the topic of suffering and spirituality. This program was sponsored by Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre with Vancouver School of Theology and St. Andrew’s Wesley-United Church. The program explored the biblical character of Job within and through a popular cultural idiom, A Serious Man, the Coen brothers’ 2009 film. The discussion, which was moderated by VST Professor Dr. Sharon Betcher, featured Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan-Kaplan of Or Shalom Congregation, the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls of VST, and Hanif Virani, a Religious Educator in the Muslim community. Following the opening presentations, the evening became a philosophy salon reflecting on the wisdom learned and the challenges of traversing suffering.

PEOPLE: Our Iona Pacific Team includes a Director, a Postdoctoral Fellow, a Senior Intern, a Development and Communications Associate, Iona Pacific Youth, two Practicum Placement Interns from the Adler School of Professional Psychology, and conversation partners like you.
In our pluralistic society, people and communities from different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds are increasingly interacting with each other. In these encounters with diversity, we, as individuals and communities, are being confronted with the challenge of how to embrace differences and celebrate commonalities. This is not an easy task, as we are the pioneer generation in a world where modern technology, politics and economics require us to become part of a globalized context. The creation of spaces for greater dialogue among persons of diverse backgrounds and religious beliefs has become essential. Religious leaders in local communities in diverse locations and countries have responded to this pressing need through organizing initiatives that encourage conversations and collaborative initiatives among members of diverse faiths.

Inter-religious programs are proliferating and for some of us, this development has opened new paths, as we realize the pivotal role that inter-religious initiatives can play in our contemporary society. However, notwithstanding the commitment and enthusiasm that inter-religious dialogue is triggering in a broad segment of society, there are few guidelines on how to engage in this kind of work. As an emerging academic who has had a wide exposure to the academic world and the privilege to participate in successful interfaith dialogues at a non-governmental level, I realized that the approach I wanted to pursue needed to combine interfaith development initiatives with research on best practices related to this kind of work. My post-doctoral appointment at Iona Pacific provided me the opportunity to engage systematically in inter-religious dialogue projects and also to conduct research that will contribute to the incipient literature on this fascinating and vital topic.

In my work at Iona Pacific, I am currently engaged in developing initiatives that bring together members from diverse faith communities. Our first initiative was focused on the creation and implementation of a youth initiative that would bring UBC students into collaborative projects aimed to bridge differences through their engagements in diverse social action and media projects. The Iona Pacific Youth team is developing an inter-religious breakfast program, a documentary aimed to build bridges among university students from diverse faiths, and a media project that brings students from different ethnic and faith traditions together through music. Based on the success of this initiative, we are working on a projected aimed to establish an Interfaith Bridging group where Jewish, Muslim and Christian mothers of elementary school-aged (or/and high school) children will engage in conversations intended to foster learning about each other’s cultures and traditions. They will explore common practices and concerns in their roles as mothers, wives, and active members of their communities. This project aims to create a context for promoting personal friendships and connections between women who are going through the challenges involved in child-rearing. While learning to respect their differences, the participants will discover and celebrate their commonalities as women and mothers, developing bonds transcending faith, cultural or political differences.

In addition to these initiatives and as part of my interest in engaging in research-driven social action projects at Iona Pacific, I am currently working on the creation and implementation of a photo exhibition that places refugees at its centre. This project seeks to respond to the need of envisioning innovative ways to support refugees in the process of integrating into their new homeland. It also aims to create an opportunity to educate the community-at-large about the challenges experienced by refugees, about the obstacles confronting refugees, and the contributions that refugees can make to Canadian society. An exhibition of this kind will provide refugees in the Lower Mainland with an exhibition in a public space that attests to their refugee experience, and that conveys the many gifts that they bring to their adopted homeland. Following Iona Pacific’s approach – socially engaged research, and research-driven social action – research will be conducted on the effects of the exhibition. The aim is to seek to understand the impact of an initiative of this kind on the participants and on the viewers. This investigation will explore whether, and how, the participants benefited from having participated in this project. It also will examine whether, and how, viewers’ increased awareness of the refugees’ experiences can be translated into concrete initiatives in areas such as education, training programs, financial aid programs, and the like.

Rosa Sevy, PhD, is the first Iona Pacific Postdoctoral Fellow.
INTERNSHIPS

IONA PACIFIC SENIOR INTERN ALIYA HIRJI
RETURNS FOR A SECOND YEAR

Iona Pacific’s first Intern, Aliya Hirji, is in her second year as an IP Intern. Her appointment as Senior Intern recognizes the many contributions that she has made and continues to make in articulating aspects of Iona Pacific’s vision in formal and informal presentations in the wider community, in contributing to Iona Pacific’s developing vision and program, and in implementing Iona Pacific programs. Aliya, who is also an alumna of UBC, will make a formal presentation on March 4 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Mark’s College’s “Theology on Tap” series. Her talk is entitled “Interfaith Dialogue and Education for Women in the Qur’an: A Canadian-Ismaili-Muslim Woman’s Perspective.”

IONA PACIFIC COLLABORATES WITH ADLER SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Iona Pacific is hosting two M.A. students from the Adler School of Professional Psychology this year. One student, who is in the M.A. Program in Organizational Psychology, is consulting with IP Staff regarding the Centre’s organizational development, given its rapidly expanding work. The other student, who is in the M.A. in Counseling Psychology Program, is assisting IP with grant development efforts. Iona Pacific values its collaboration with the Adler School.

A WORD FROM ALIYA HIRJI

How the time flies and excitement increases with every new project and connection that Iona Pacific pursues in its first year. As the first intern of Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre and now the Senior Intern, I’ve been blessed to become affiliated with the Centre. I’ve continued my journey in learning about Christianity, Judaism, and Aboriginal communities by having a dialogue with members of the communities. For example, I attended a Bat Mitzvah ceremony where I was able to ask the Rabbi questions about Judaism. As well, in December, I had the wonderful experience of participating in my first Christmas Eve Mass where the ceremonies were described to me by a parishioner. This past summer, I attended the Native Ministries Consortium summer salmon barbecue where I participated in my first eagle dance. Rabbi Dr. Robert Daum is a wonderful mentor and I’ve appreciated the chance to work with him on many of the projects that Iona Pacific has been involved in since the Centre was formally inaugurated in January of this year.

I had the opportunity this year to present to students on topics such as how religious practices and beliefs are similar and different in my perspective throughout the generations in my Canadian-Ismaili-Muslim family as well as modes of recovery from pain in Islam which I enjoyed researching. I am looking forward to researching the importance of interfaith dialogue and education for women using the Qur’an as well as discussing with students my humourous experiences growing up with three overlapping identities. In the past few months, I’ve been honoured to represent the Centre at the Interfaith Amigos planning meetings and will be attending the seminar and workshop on behalf of Iona Pacific Inter-Religious Centre in November. The past year has included networking and researching scholars that could discuss various topics within Islam in a respectable, dialogical, and constructive manner so continuing to build upon the number of scholars that will assist students and partners to continue to learn, question, create innovative research, and appreciate the similarities and differences within the communities.

VST’s Faculty, led by its Principal and Dean, and its Board of Governors established Iona Pacific. We need your support to guide and to sustain the work of the Centre. We hope to see you in the weeks and months to come.
IONA PACIFIC’S
INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTERS,
PARTNERS, AND COLLABORATORS

Iona Pacific was established through the vision and the generous support of Vancouver School of Theology at the direction of its Board of Governors and Faculty, under the leadership of Dean and Principal, the Rev. Dr. Wendy Fletcher. In addition to the generous support of individual donors, including readers of this newsletter like you, Iona Pacific is a beneficiary of institutional support directly provided by Vancouver School of Theology, EmbraceBC (the Interfaith Bridging Program funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia), the Isaac and Sophie Waldman Endowment Fund, Christ Church Cathedral, St. Andrew’s-Wesley United Church, the Sisterhood of Temple Sholom of the Women of Reform Judaism, the Diocese of New Westminster, West Pt. Grey United Church, and the Itta and Eliezer Zeisler Foundation.

In addition to these generous institutional supporters, Iona Pacific has developed, or currently is developing, programs and projects in cooperation with the Indigenous Studies Centre at VST, Simon Fraser University’s Wosk Centre for Dialogue, the Adler School of Professional Psychology, the Muslim Canadian Federation, Committee for Racial Justice, Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver of the Diocese of New Westminster of the Anglican Church of Canada, St. Andrew’s-Wesley United Church, the Ecumenical and Multifaith Unit of the Diocese of New Westminster of the Anglican Church of Canada, Temple Sholom, and other organizations.

Yes! I would like to make a gift to Iona Pacific

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