Love over Fear

Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity

We are a multiracial and multi-faith organization bringing spiritual leadership to social movements to demand the full humanity of every individual and ensure the well-being of our communities. With organizational roots in the 1990s, we advance racial equity in two program areas: immigrant justice and incarceration.

In the last two years, we engaged more than 2,000 people of faith, 360 congregations and partner organizations, supported 234 directly-impacted individuals, and reached more than 35,000 people with a message of hope, love and resilience.

We aspire to transform public understanding of immigration and public safety – from a framework of punishment and exclusion towards a liberating vision based on dignity and care.

We do this in three ways: transforming narrative, transforming leadership, and transforming policy and practice.

www.im4humanintegrity.org
You can connect with us on Instagram and Facebook!
For more information about us and our work, subscribe to our mailing list!
We can only be as safe as the most vulnerable in our communities.

Our Love Over Fear campaign helps create safe and thriving communities by replacing the narrative of fear, xenophobia, and racism with inclusion, forgiveness, and shared humanity.

IM4HI has received a 1-year grant from the San Francisco Foundation’s Bay Area Creative Corps Program to hire a team of cultural strategists and creative change-makers to pilot the Love Over Fear campaign in Oakland!

Through the project, IM4HI will bring together Black, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), and Latinx communities to inspire deeper conversations and civic engagement on community safety through art, spirit, and beloved community.

Follow us to learn more about upcoming Love Over Fear events this spring!
Our very own Benjamin Mertz (aka BenjaSoul) has been a friend of Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity since 2018 and a member of our board of directors for 2 years.

Benja is a musician and educator who has studied jazz, gospel, R&B, Black Spiritual music, and is a folklorist, writer, storyteller, poet, and Civil Rights historian. He taught at the middle and high school level for over 10 years and works full-time in the Diversity & Inclusion space.

BenjaSoul is part of a long tradition of writers and musicians who have always been the heartbeat of social change in America. He dedicates his life and work to the generations of freedom singers who came before, and to his two beloved children. Benja is a Love Conquered Records Artist.

Nancy Louise was born singing in church. She studied music therapy, toured through Europe in the 80’s, and sang with the Ridgewood Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company for over 10 years. From Carnegie Hall to small community stages, Nancy Louise has been a songbird for countless people. She started her own music business in 2000, and she performs sacred music, jazz, folk, love songs, standards, and more.

Nancy lives in Sonoma County, where she is a sought-after church soloist, and practices music therapy for people with Alzheimer’s and dementia. She is a Reiki practitioner and a devoted mother and grandmother.
Aisea Taimani is a Tongan American Creative Artist based out of the Bay Area, working alongside the love of his life, Elmira Taimani.

For the past 20 years, Taimani’s art/work has focused on creating spaces for authentic spirituality in the creative community.

Taimani has released 3 full length music albums alongside his band "Minor Islands," exploring themes around justice, faith & cultural identity.

Taimani has been able to share his passion and work worldwide.

Aisea Taimani + Minor Islands

Tory Teasley is a dynamic singer, songwriter, and music teacher who has captivated audiences with her soulful voice and inspiring lyrics.

Based in Oakland, California, she has released albums and singles that showcase her unique blend of R&B, jazz, and gospel influences with her band Tory and The Teasers. In addition to her music career, Tory is also a dedicated music educator who has taught in schools and community centers throughout the Bay Area. Her passion for music and teaching has touched the lives of countless students and helped them discover their own creative potential.

With her talent, passion, and commitment to community, Tory Teasley is a true force to be reckoned with in the music world and beyond.

www.toryteasley.com
Diana Gameros is a singer, songwriter, composer, and social justice activist based in San Francisco, California. She was born and raised in Juárez, México and immigrated to the United States as a teenager. Over the last decade in the Bay Area she has released two albums of original songs written in Spanish and English and has been highlighted often by NPR’s Tiny Desk concert series, and a documentary film about her was released by KQED in 2020. Her music often tells stories of family, migration, and home, and has led her to perform with other prominent performers such as Joan Baez, Natalia Lafourcade, and the San Francisco Symphony.

www.dianagameros.com

Francisco Herrera is a Theologian, Cultural Worker, Singer-Songwriter, and a prayer warrior. Francisco Herrera has produced 7 albums (includes 2 children’s music in Spanish), writes scores for film and theater, and has worked with producers like the late great Saul Landau. He has shared the stage with Jon Fromer, Pete Seeger, Emma’s Revolution at mass actions as School of America’s Watch (up to 22,000 people), and the Battle for Seattle, with over 250,000 people shutting down the WTO in 1999 and massive demonstrations across the country.

Francisco brings together spirituality, community organizing, the arts as a sprinkle of salt in a boiling soup ready to be served and nourishes the common good.

Learn more about Francisco here.
Ricardo is a professional drummer that has been working in the bay area for the last decade+. He spent his formative years in Sonoma County, receiving a Bachelors of Music in jazz performance from Sonoma State, and has since performed with every band/project/ensemble that he could manage, including a balkan/klezmer street ensemble, a new orleans style brass band, a pop/electronica outfit, multiple musical pit orchestra gigs, an avant-garde jazz sextet, a folk/funk/worldbeat band, a cumbia/norteño/chicano rock project, a neo-soul/hip hop collective, and much more.

Although he keeps his ears & mind open to all styles, he has always been particularly drawn to groove-driven, celebratory music - the stuff that makes you want to dance, smile, laugh, and celebrate life. He currently lives in the south bay area, spending his weekdays working at UC Santa Cruz as the Music Department Manager, and most weekends doing what he loves most - playing the drums and making people dance.

Learn more about Ricardo Here.

Deema K Shehabi is a Palestinian-American poet, writer, and editor. Deema is the author of Thirteen Departures From the Moon and co-editor with Beau Beausoleil of Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here for which she received the Northern California Book Award's NCBR Recognition Award. She is also co-author of Diaspo/Renga with Marilyn Hacker and the winner of the Nazim Hikmet poetry competition in 2018. Deema’s work has appeared in literary magazines and anthologies including Literary Imagination, the Kenyon Review, Literary Hub, Poetry London, and Crab Orchard, to name a few. Her work has been translated into French, Farsi, and Arabic, and she has been nominated for the Pushcart prize several times.

Website: deemakshehabi.com
Hulissa Aguilar was first introduced to Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity at a vigil outside of West County Detention Facility, the ICE detention center where her father was detained. She began to share her story and advocate for her father’s release. Along the way, she found her passion for advocacy work, especially for immigrant families like her own.

Since 2018, Hulissa has developed her leadership skills through speaking at events and involvement in various projects and campaigns. During the summer of 2021, she interned with IM4HI and took on major roles for the VISION Act advocacy work and the zine, We The Youth. She hosted a VISION Act youth rally in August 2021, which got a lot of important media coverage. She also worked on the communications team during the Pilgrimage for a Better Future. In September 2022, Hulissa went to Washington D.C for the Defund Hate Campaign’s ‘National Day of Advocacy’ and spoke to members of Congress about cutting funds to ICE.

Hulissa is our official Youth Leader and assists with our social media and advocacy for campaigns. In addition, she continues to share her story, being the voice of so many youth and families.

Pedro Ayon was born and raised in Sacramento, California, where his life took a turn during his freshman year of high school, leading to a series of unfortunate decisions and ultimately, incarceration spanning over 15 years. His story, however, is one of resilience and triumph. After facing the possibility of returning to his community and loved ones, Pedro was unexpectedly transferred to the Golden State Annex by ICE. In an incredible display of determination, he fought tirelessly and successfully to remain in the country he now proudly calls home.

Fast forward to today, Pedro has transitioned into a dedicated full-time employee, serving both his city and the re-entry community with great commitment. As the Outreach Specialist and P2E Instructor for the Center for Employment Opportunities in Sacramento, Pedro plays a pivotal role in empowering those who are transitioning back into society. He actively contributes to society and gives back, cherishes moments spent with his family and girlfriend. Pedro is living proof of the potential and success anyone has if given the opportunity to remain in this country even if they weren’t born here.
Special Thanks to Our Sponsors!

Easter Hill United Methodist Church  
St. John’s Presbyterian Church San Francisco  
Island United Church  
St. Francis Lutheran Church  
Priority Africa Network  
Filipino Advocates for Justice  
St. Columba Catholic Church  
Presbyterian Church in Chinatown  
City of Refuge UCC  
First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco  
Leslie and Merle Rabine  

San Francisco Zen Center  
Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants  
Skyline Community Church  
Buena Vista UMC  
All Soul’s Episcopal Church  
Sogorea Te Land Trust  
Climate Connection  
Chinese Congregational Church  
Sisters of Mercy  
Sycamore Congregational Church  
Rev. Mary Foran
GET INVOLVED!

ACCOMPANIMENT AND HOUSING FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS!
Our Nueva Esperanza Accompaniment Team Program is looking for more volunteers and teams to be trained to support asylum seekers and become housing hosts!
For more info: kyounger@im4humanintegrity.org

LETTER AND POSTCARD WRITING
Nov 15 at 6-8pm
Join IM4HI, Asian Prisoner Support Committee, and Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants to write postcards for community members incarcerated!
Location: CERI Office (by Lake Merritt)
RSVP and details: dthongsy@im4humanintegrity.org

IM4HI HOLIDAY GATHERING!
Dec 17 at 3pm
Join us for a year-end holiday gathering to celebrate our beloved community you are a part of!
Location: Lake Merritt United Methodist Church, 1330 Lakeshore Ave, Oakland
More details: gking@im4humanintegrity.org

Subscribe to our Newsletter!
CLICK HERE
IM4HI’S IMPACT

Over the past decade, IM4HI has served as a touchstone within the immigrant rights and anti-incarceration movements, a moral compass and north star, helping to sustain these movements through changing policy and political administrations.

IM4HI’s work shines a light on injustice embedded in incarceration and immigration detention with each campaign and action undertaken: each detention facility closed; each ICE contract terminated; each individual and family supported.

Leadership Development for the Most Impacted
IM4HI is centering the leadership of the most impacted in its staffing, including people of faith, those formerly detained and/or incarcerated, and immigration enforcement. Keep investing in the development and growth of these leaders.

Support and Accompaniment for New Immigrants and Asylum Seekers
Through IM4HI’s Nueva Esperanza Accompaniment Program, 273 immigrants and their families from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Cuba, Honduras, Nicaragua, Cameroon, Russia, Venezuela, and Argentina are supported and accompanied and 100 accompaniment teams are trained and matched.

Healing and Culture
IM4HI acts as a bridge between formerly detained and a new life and community on the outside. IM4HI centers healing in this important work with the most impacted, specifically culturally rooted healing practices. IM4HI continues to build the fabric of community, culture, and spirituality, to help formerly incarcerated and their families land and heal after release.

Pilgrimage
Going forward, IM4HI is embedding pilgrimage practice in each of its three regions, as reflected in its most recent strategic plan. IM4HI’s staff and board recognizes pilgrimage as a powerful organizing and leadership development tool to build awareness, momentum, and community around the immigrant rights and anti-incarceration movements.
IM4HI would like to especially thank....

**Freight & Salvage** for use of their beautiful performance space!

Our concert planning committee - **Rev. Deborah Lee, Benjamin Mertz, Felicia Hyde, Sharon Weld, and Sara Fread** - for making this event happen!

**Francis Mead** for designing the beautiful Love Over Fear art!

**Gabriela Fernandez** for designing the Love Over Fear event postcards and program!

The donors of our silent auction items - **Joyce Xi, Peg Hunter, Gwyn Kirk, Ipyani Lockert, Bill Ong Hing, Alumita Joseph, Charles Joseph, Kelly Younger, Margo Okazawa-Rey, David Bacon, Leslie Mah, Art Cribbs** - for their generous contributions to our fundraising efforts!

**IM4HI NorCal Staff and Board** - **Gala King, Danny Thongsy, Nadia Tavera Medina, Kelly Younger, Sharon Hwang Colligan, Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, Maram Bata** - and our crew of amazing volunteers!

All of our incredible performers and speakers - **BenjaSoul, Nancy Louise, Francisco Herrera, Ricardo Lomelí Gómez, Diana Gameros, Deema K Shehabi, Tory Teasley, Aisea Taimani, Pedro Ayon, and Hulissa Aguilar** - for sharing their talents and stories with us!

Photographer and IM4HI friend **Peg Hunter** for capturing this inspiring night!
Stay Connected & Stay Updated!

Follow us on Instagram!
CLICK HERE

Follow us on Facebook!
CLICK HERE

Subscribe to our Newsletter!
CLICK HERE

office@im4humanintegrity.org
310 - 8th Street, Suite 310. Oakland, CA 94607
510-948-7899