



Dear Supporter,

InterfaithFamily.com finished 2009 in good financial condition and having met our key measurable operating goals for the year. Here are some of the highlights from this Update:

- 2009 traffic grew 35% to 381,294 unique visitors
- Continuing great content, both personal narrative and substantive resources
- Growing interest in our re-designed Network – 1,045 individual members, including 230 professionals, and 650 organizations, only six months after launch – and a surge in requests from interfaith couples for help finding a rabbi or cantor to officiate – from an average of 104 a month in 2009, to an average of 140 a month in January and February
- A more prominent public stance, including syndication by the JTA of our op-ed, *What Israelis Need to Know About Intermarriage in North America*, extensive coverage of our December Holidays Survey, and a very recent feature in an AP story, *Is a Jewish Wedding Ahead for Chelsea Clinton?*
- The addition of Lydia Kukoff, a true outreach pioneer, to our Board of Directors.

February 2010

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We're off to a good start implementing our 2010 plan, which identifies the "core" activities we can undertake with our existing funding, and three important expansions we could undertake with increased support.

Organizational Highlights

We are delighted to welcome Lydia Kukoff to our Board. Lydia created the field of Jewish outreach to interfaith families in partnership with Rabbi Alexander Schindler z"l as the first national director of outreach for the Reform movement.

The first telephone meeting of our re-vitalized Advisory Board on November 19 focused on InterfaithFamily.com's messaging. The next meeting is on March 18 and will focus on building relationships with site users. The Advisory Board now has 28 members; the current list can be found [here](#).



Lydia Kukoff,
IFF Board Member

Education Activities



In the last four months, we've published a broad range of interesting new content. We had personal narratives from many perspectives: a woman whose Orthodox Jewish community had to find a way to welcome her interfaith family, in *It's Complicated*, a gay Catholic man who came to believe he could build an interfaith household with his Jewish fiancé because of the welcome he found at *My First Purim*, and a bat mitzvah who loves the feeling of community in her secular humanist congregation, as she wrote in *A Personal Synthesis*. And a Jewish mom learned an important parenting lesson in *How Not to Tell Your Child Daddy Isn't Jewish*.

We've also continued to respond to our readers' desire for "how-to" materials with two new resource guides, *A Guide to the Synagogue for Interfaith Couples and Families*, and *A Resource Guide to Jewish Conversion*.

We continue to repackage our existing content in handy discussion packets for outreach or self-ed groups: *Oh Christmas Tree* and *Talking About Death and Mourning*.

We've been more effective at using the tools of the web, linking to our content on Twitter and Facebook to promote discussions and blog posts. We're continuing to utilize embedded video and audio, and expanding think pieces with how-to content, such as adding recipes in personal narrative essays, and reviews of children's books and music with information about how to use the media in parenting Jewish children.

If you don't receive our biweekly email newsletter highlighting our newest content and would like to, click [here](#).

Connections Activities

1. Jewish Clergy Officiation Referral Service



We've seen a major uptick in requests to help interfaith couples find a rabbi or cantor for their wedding. During 2009 we responded to 1,250 requests, an average of 104 a month. Starting in the fall we took a series of steps to increase awareness and ease of use of our service; the monthly numbers were 116 in December, 139 in January and 142 in February.

We don't just send names when we respond to couples; we also suggest resources to help their planning, and we send follow-up requests for feedback. On October 26, Rabbi Baesh got this email:

I wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you for helping me find a rabbi to officiate our ceremony. We had our wedding at the end of July and thanks to the help from your site, it was a wonderful day.

On January 11, Rabbi Baesh received this message:

My Catholic daughter and her Jewish husband were married a few months ago in an outdoor ceremony with a rabbi officiating... Your interfaith family service was a big part of "getting things going" for them. Thank you.

And on February 24, Rabbi Baesh got this email:

You have helped me in the past, when I was looking for a Jewish clergy to run my interfaith wedding. Thank you again for that! We are now at step 2. We are expecting a baby girl in 3 months, and since my wife is not Jewish, I wondered if you could help me with info or advise on how to get the baby converted to Judaism at birth (or around that time).

We now have 363 rabbis and cantors to whom we make referrals, a net increase of 26 since our last Update four months ago. Interested clergy should take our [Jewish clergy survey](#).

2. Network: Members, Organizations, Professionals and Events

We're very pleased with the growth in our Network since our re-design launched at the end of August. As of the end of February, 1,045 individuals (including 230 professionals) have created personal pages and joined our Network! Our goal for 2010 is 1,500.



At the time of our last Update, we had 648 organizations and 158 professionals listed in our organization directory, a total of 806. In the past four months we focused on adding professionals, and at the end of February we had 650 organizations and 230 professionals, a net increase of 74, almost 10%, since our last Update. Some interesting new additions include:

- [Tzedek v'Shalom](#) - A Philadelphia area, Reconstructionist congregation dedicated to the integration of spiritual life, learning, social activism and community
- [Congregation Beth El Binah](#) - A Reform congregation in Dallas founded with a mission of outreach to the Gay and Lesbian population
- [Temple of Israel](#) - A Reform congregation in Greenville which holds the annual ShalomFest, a festival attracting thousands of people from the Upstate area of South Carolina area.

Advocacy Activities

1. Resource Center for Jewish Clergy



There has been intense interest in Chelsea Clinton's upcoming wedding to a Jewish man. We [wrote about this](#) two and a half years ago when rumors of an engagement first appeared. When there was an announcement in November, Ruth Abrams' [early blog post](#) was picked up in [The Atlantic's blog](#) and traffic to our site jumped for several days.

On March 4, AP Religion writer Rachel Zoll wrote a great article, [Is a Jewish Wedding Ahead for Chelsea Clinton?](#), that quoted me and mentioned our clergy referral service, and has been picked up by media all over the country.

We're looking forward to our March 15 workshop on officiation for Atlanta-area rabbis and cantors.

2. Surveys

Our report on our December Holiday Survey was released in late November and generated some excellent coverage:

- A front-page story on [USA Today](#) on December 9, [More U.S. Christians mix in 'Eastern,' New Age beliefs](#) mentioned us and included a page 2 insert that featured our survey, [Holidays or holy days? Interfaith families make choices](#)
- A front-page story in the [Philadelphia Jewish Exponent](#) featured two families from the Philadelphia area who took the survey; the article generated a debate in letters to the editor, including [our own](#)
- We also wrote a [letter to the editor](#) in response to an article in the [San Diego secular paper](#)
- The survey was also mentioned in articles in the [Cleveland Jewish News](#) and [Boston Jewish Advocate](#), and Ruth Abrams wrote an article, [Christmas, Chanukah and the Interfaith Family](#), for the [Jewish Journal North of Boston](#).

Our sixth annual Passover/Easter survey recently closed, with 372 responses; you can find the survey report [here](#).

3. Appearances

My appearance at the [Washington Jewish Film Festival](#) in December, at the premier of our colleague Dr. Marion Usher's documentary film, [Love and Religion](#), was mentioned in the [Washington Jewish Week](#). Dr. Usher has for years conducted a four-session workshop for interfaith couples at the [Washington DC JCC](#) and has now created a film of one of her groups and a manual that other professionals can use to conduct similar groups in their communities. We are pleased to be [distributing the film and manual](#).



We were exhibitors at the Reform movement Biennial in Toronto and at the Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly in Washington DC in November. We were exhibitors this week at the Central Conference of American Rabbis convention in San Francisco.

4. Advocacy Writing

Our [Network Blog](#) is a great way to keep up with policy developments relating to outreach to interfaith families.

Our [op-ed](#) in the [Jerusalem Post](#) was syndicated by the [Jewish Telegraphic Agency](#).

Marketing



Traffic to our website is growing steadily. In 2009 we had 381,294 unique visitors, an increase of 35% over 2008. In the twelve months ended February 28, 2010, we had 393,471 unique visitors, and 1,129,922 page views. Traffic for the three months ended February 28 was 24% greater than in the comparable period in the prior year.

IFF's score on [Hubspot's Website Grader](#) has improved since our last Update: we now score higher than 98.6% of other websites in terms of the marketing effectiveness of our search engine optimization.

About 45% of our February traffic came from Google and Yahoo natural searches; 21% came from paid search results on Google; 1.9% came from links on Facebook – and .2% came from Twitter.

Our Facebook fan page now has 412 fans – just [click here to join](#).

We had several prominent mentions in the secular and Jewish press that drove traffic to our site:

- a *Boston Globe* story in December on [non-profit fund-raising post-Madoff](#)
- a *Los Angeles Times* article on [Jewish musicians writing Christmas music](#)
- a *Zeek* magazine article, [A Review of Dana Evan Kaplan's Contemporary American Judaism](#).

Key Metrics and Testimonials

- **Website traffic:** We had 393,471 unique visitors in the 12 months ending February 28
- **Bi-weekly email newsletter:** Our last email newsletter was sent to 7,843 mailable email addresses
- **Organizations and professionals listed on our Network:** We had a net gain of 74 organizations and professionals added to our Network between November 1 and February 28, bringing the total to 880
- **Requests for Jewish clergy officiation referrals:** 1,250 in 2009, and average of 104 a month; from January 1 through February 28, 2010, an average of 141 a month.



We are gratified by the expressions of thanks we regularly receive in emails and on our discussion boards. Here are some of the actual messages from the past four months:

- I came across your website while on a Google search for Shabbat reading. Very informative, and well done! It has helped me to re-engage with my Jewish roots, as my ancestors were "conversos" in Spain. Carlos T, March 4
- Robin, thank you so much for looking into this for us [help finding a bar mitzvah tutor], I really appreciate it! I contacted Rabbi P and hope to hear from him soon--in fact we attended [his synagogue's] High Holy Days children's services last Fall and really enjoyed it. It's great to know they are welcoming to interfaith families!! Karen S, March 3
- I'm flattered that you liked my Christmas tree story.... Writing it allowed me to understand myself better, so it was helpful for me as well. I often think that it would have been comforting and helpful to me if I had had a resource like the IFF website in the early years of being in an interfaith relationship. You can take great satisfaction to know that your work makes a positive difference in many people's lives. Debbie B, December 15
- Ruth, The articles you wrote for interfaith families about the synagogue, the demonimations, and the glossary are just excellent. I have not only referred my Mothers' Circle students to Interfaithfamily.com, but I have copied these 3 articles to use as handouts for the future. They are well written, informative, and non-judgmental. Kol hakavod! Lois S, December 2
- I would like to express my appreciation and deep gratitude for the useful resources you are putting at disposal of interfaith couples and families. Your website is a precious guide for young couples like us, who are new to the dynamics of interfaith families. Gaia S, October 21

Finance and Development



We ended 2009 with \$839,000 in income and \$806,000 in spending. Since our last Update we have received renewed, and renewed and increased, funding from several of our foundation supporters. Under our 2010 Strategic Priorities Plan we have a "core" activities budget of \$775,000, and we have identified three expansion opportunities that if funded would nearly double our spending. We are operating under a set of measurable numeric goals for our work this year, and would be pleased to share our plans with you, upon request.

Thank You for Your Interest!

We appreciate your support and interest very much, and welcome your feedback.

Please help us by forwarding this Update to anyone who might be interested in our work.

[Send to a Friend](#)

With best regards,



Edmund C. Case

Edmund C. Case, CEO