FAITHS Program

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Michelle L. Myles Chambers, Ph.D.

Michelle's grandparents were part of the Oakland Community Organizations (OCO) for over 40 years where she began organizing and educating her community of their rights to demand our government to provide the same services for low-income communities as it did for upper-class communities. Michelle joined the FAITHS Program as a lay leader of the West Side Missionary Baptist Church and now leads as the Director of FAITHS representing the San Francisco Foundation for 20+ years.

Michelle serves on the board of the Sisters of St. Joseph Healthcare Foundation, is a member of Episcopal Impact Fund Program Committee, while still actively involved in the West Oakland community. She is married for 35 years to Reverend Ken Chambers, and the Mother of their 4 children, and 4 grandchildren.

Her motto is "Service to others is simply the price we pay for living." -Marian Wright Edelman

HISTORY

The San Francisco Foundation created the Foundation Alliance with Interfaith to Heal Society (FAITHS) in 1993 under the leadership of Neighborhood & Community Development Program Officer Joe Brooks. FAITHS was established to enhance the work of faith-based organizations to organize and advocate for equitable policies and improve community services in their neighborhoods. The program has built an interfaith network of more than 600 congregations in 5 counties.

FAITHS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

FAITHS consists of a diverse representation of the Bay Area's faith-based community leaders representing 5 counties: San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, and San Mateo. Quarterly meetings bring leaders together for trainings, information/resource sharing, and community reconnection.

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FAITHS Pillar Programs

- Capacity-Building Training & Technical Assistance
- Civic Engagement
- Faith-based Housing Work
- Community Partners Grants

PROGRAMS

CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAININGS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

FAITHS Program presents the "A Model Built on Faith" program which is an annual workshop series designed to support faith-based and other non-profit leaders in creating communities of opportunity throughout the Bay Area. Trainings are **FREE** and equip participants with the skills they need to develop stable organizations, design impactful programs and build passionate teams. Sessions are presented in workshop settings and small group intensives. Individual coaching sessions are also available. For more information, visit amodelbuiltonfaith.org

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In partnership with the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, FAITHS provides trainings and policy briefings for its grantees and broader network. Through these trainings, faith-and community-based organizations learn how to successfully engage in nonpartisan voter registration, education and policy work that supports the foundation-wide focus on racial and economic equity.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS GRANTS

Every year, the FAITHS program provides grants to assist congregations and faith-based organizations to strengthen interfaith and race relations, increase civic and cultural participation, support leadership, and provide community service to low-income residents and communities of color.

In 2023, FAITHS awarded $399,000 to 41 FBO's/congregations.

FAITHS has leaned into multi-year grantmaking, increasing our grants to a range of $20,000-$25,000. Applications will re-open in Fall 2024.

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PROGRAMS

INDIVIDUALIZED GRANTEE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A series of capacity building workshops and individualized training sessions. Trainings were centered around an innovative and proven methodology for simple statements of vision, mission, objectives, strategies and action plans via the One Page Business Plan for Non-Profits.

FAITH-BASED HOUSING WORK

FAITHS champions equitable housing policies in the Bay Area. We empower faith-based organizations (FBOs) to amplify the voices of marginalized communities in policy discussions. FAITHS fosters collaboration between community leaders and policymakers, ensuring that their lived experiences directly shape affordable housing development.

SB4

The Affordable Housing on Faith Lands Act (SB4) is one such innovation recently signed into law. It recognizes that places of worship and faith institutions often own large parcels of land that can be repurposed to address the housing crisis. SB4 unlocks the potential of faith-based properties for affordable housing development.

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PARTNER COMMUNITY WORKS

We are multicultural/ethnic/spiritual base of faith leaders that provide different services in the areas of housing, food, community, COVID-19.... These are some of our partners in the community.

HOUSING

“Housing is tenuous, work is tenuous, securing food is tenuous for people that are newcomers. We knew when the crisis hit the population at large, that meant this community would be hit even harder. This community does not have reserves. This is not a matter of living check to check or week to week, for the people we work with it is day to day.”

Deborah Lee, Executive Director
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity

POLICY / ADVOCACY

“What can we do where we can highlight acts of radical welcome and inclusion in order to inspire more?” Quinn says of the thought behind the initiative. He hopes the positivity of the program becomes contagious, “so that the entire community can stand in solidarity and say, ‘You are welcome here in the fullness of your humanity as you are.’”

Scott Quinn, Executive Director
Marin Interfaith Council

HOMELESSNESS

In 2018, the ICAC launched a program in which homeless people who live in their cars in Oakland will now be able to park overnight in church parking lots without being harassed.

Each site will feature an on-site security guard, portable toilets, hand-washing stations, drinking water, and security cameras.

Reverend Ken Chambers, President
Interfaith Council of Alameda County

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Faith-Based Housing Strategies:

Faith-based capacity building for development

Data development for FBO housing

Advocacy

Innovative models

LEADERSHIP TEAM

- The Leadership Team, with the partnership of LeaderSpring, is hosting a series of peer learning discussions for Women of Color Leaders as they navigate the multiple challenges of leadership in this unprecedented time of COVID-19, economic distress, and focus on racial injustice. The peer learning discussions focus on topics selected by participants and provide a unique and intimate forum for these extraordinary leaders to address the multiple challenges and opportunities they face in this moment.

- The Leadership Team, comprised of four women of color staff at the San Francisco Foundation, advances our racial equity and economic inclusion agenda through direct community programs, grantmaking, and innovative projects all focused on the dynamic leaders in the Bay Area.

- In addition to our joint Women of Color Leadership project, the Leadership Team members each lead SFF programs. We maintain two long-standing community-based programs: the Koshland Civic Unity Program, led by Retha Robinson, works with local leaders within a specific neighborhood, providing training, networking opportunities, and five years of funding for each neighborhood; and the FAITHS (Foundation Alliance with Interfaith to Heal Society) Program led by Michelle Myles Chambers works with faith-based organizations, providing training opportunities for congregations, and a forum for discussions and leadership on current regional issues. The Multicultural Fellowship Program, led by Claudia Paredes Corne, employs mid-career people of color for a two-year fellowship at the Foundation. Grants for leadership, led by Yolanda Alindor, serves to support organizations that provide training for leaders of color focused on systemic change.

KOSHLAND FUND PARTNERSHIP

- The Daniel E. Koshland Civic Unity Program was established in 1982 by the San Francisco Foundation as a memorial to one of its founders and major benefactors, Daniel E. Koshland, a businessman and philanthropist who committed himself to making the Bay Area a better place for all. The Koshland program recognizes Bay Area grassroots risk-takers and makes a five-year $300,000 investment in their community. To date, the program has cultivated more than 500 fellows in nearly 30 neighborhoods throughout the Bay Area. Fellows have made great strides in their neighborhoods, including:
- A neighborhood **welcome center** for immigrants and other newcomers in San
- Rafael's Canal neighborhood
- A **workforce development** center in San Francisco's Excelsior neighborhood
- A **scholarship program** for students in Hayward's Jackson Triangle/Harder
- Tennyson neighborhoods
- A neighborhood-wide **mini-grants program** in San Pablo
- An **afterschool mentorship and tutoring** program in North Fair Oaks, an unincorporated area of Redwood City

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