

Introducing the Faiths Act Fellows at the U of T Multi-Faith Centre

The Multi-faith Centre and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation (TBFF) are excited to collaborate this year on TBFF's international youth leadership program, the Faiths Act Fellowship.

Our Fellows

Between July 25, 2011 and June 30, 2012, the Multi-Faith Centre is hosting two young people of different faiths who have been tasked with building understanding between different religious communities by mobilising them around the UN Millennium Development Goals. All Fellows are raising funds and awareness toward the elimination of deaths from malaria and related maternal and child health issues. Specifically, the Fellows at the Multi-faith Centre will support the work of U of T researchers engaged in malaria projects in malaria-endemic countries such as Uganda. As a pair, Davina Finn (Jewish) and Anna Siu (Christian) will be a symbol and a practical example of how faith is a force for good in our globalised world.



How were they chosen?

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation received over 700 applications from around the world and has chosen just 34 of the most outstanding young people of faith to be ambassadors for its Faiths Act program. The Fellows represent a diverse cross section of the faith traditions: 11 are Christian, 10 Muslim, 5 Jewish, 3 Hindu, 2 Buddhist, 1 Bahá'í, 1 Sikh and 1 Quaker.

“Too often we hear about the negative aspects of faith but the number of applications we received shows the enthusiasm which exists among young people to use their faith as a force for good. Faith can build understanding and provide unity and strength to counter those who see faith as a source of division and discrimination,” **Tony Blair, patron of TBFF**



Thirty of the Fellows are placed in multi-faith pairs in host organizations in Canada, India, the UK and the USA.

TBFF has also chosen four Fellows for placement in a multi-faith team in Sierra Leone. Faiths Act Sierra Leone is an initiative that works with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone to deliver malaria health messages by utilizing faith leaders and networks. Sierra Leone Fellows will be working alongside health care workers, faith leaders, and volunteers to make the case that using faith networks in grassroots health messaging is an effective approach to global health challenges. The other 30 Fellows in India, the UK, US and Canada will engage with and share the Sierra Leone Fellows' work over the course of the year.

What will the Fellows do?

From July 2011, the Fellows will undertake a year of interfaith service. Working in interfaith pairs, they will reach out to tens of thousands of people of faith and none about the devastating impact of malaria and related maternal and child health issues and the opportunities open to faith communities to work together to save millions of lives.

They are full-time employees of the University of Toronto with a dedicated Supervisor, Richard Chambers. Fellows work on a very specific Work Plan that was developed by TBFF and the Multi-Faith Centre. With the help of TBFF's Faiths Act Program Team, the Fellows at the Multi-Faith Centre will use their Work Plan to engage and embed the participation of faith communities in interfaith action. You can follow the Fellows work over the course of the year by visiting www.faithsactfellows.org.

What is the Tony Blair Faith Foundation?

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation launched in May 2008. In an increasingly globalised world, religion is at the very core of life for billions of people and it cannot be ignored. The Tony Blair Faith Foundation aims to promote respect and understanding between the major religions. We empower, support and train young people to take multi-faith action against extreme poverty in over 130 countries, providing them with a positive alternative to those who try to use faith as a means to divide. We provide emerging and current leaders with the education and analysis to understand the role of religion in the modern world and we break down barriers between young people of all faiths and none by using new technology to connect them.

www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org

What is Faiths Act?

The Faiths Act program empowers, supports and trains people to take multi-faith action to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the eight international development targets that over 190 United Nations member states agreed to achieve by 2015, with a particular focus on MDG 6 eliminating unnecessary deaths from malaria.

Faiths Act has supporters in over 130 countries and provides a positive alternative to those who try to use faith as a means to divide.

www.faithsact.org

Contacts

Fellows Supervisor at the Multi-Faith Center, Richard Chambers richard.chambers@utoronto.ca

Faiths Act Project Manager, Kate Millar kate.millar@tonyblairfaithfoundation.org