



## *Alumni Speakers Bureau*

Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) was founded in 1998 with the mission of making interfaith cooperation a social norm. We believe that interfaith leaders are the key to achieving our goal and since our inception have been training young people across the U.S. to create movements for interfaith cooperation in their communities and campuses. Many of these talented young people are now available to educate and inspire others through IFYC's Alumni Speakers Bureau.

### *About IFYC Alumni Speakers Bureau*

IFYC's Alumni Speakers Bureau is a nationwide network of **diverse religious and non-religious** young leaders who have completed intensive interfaith leadership training and are excited to spread the message of interfaith cooperation far and wide. IFYC Alumni Speakers have run a variety of large-scale interfaith action events and draw from their own story and experience as interfaith leaders. Speakers have worked with a variety of organizations, including **college and universities, public and private secondary schools, faith communities and non-profit organizations**. Our Alumni are available to speak at events, such as **panel discussions, conferences, fundraisers, book clubs, school assemblies, and more**.

### *Potential Keynote Topics*

- Interfaith Cooperation. Speakers will address the importance of building a **culture of respect** for religious and non-religious identities, **mutually inspiring relationships across religious boundaries**, and common action for the common good.
- Better Together Campaign. Speakers will connect the audience to IFYC's Better Together Campaign, which empowers students to **speak out** about the importance of interfaith cooperation in the world, **mobilize** their peers to participate in interfaith action on a chosen social issue, and **sustain** an interfaith movement on their campus or in their community.

**Honorarium.** IFYC suggests that honorarium and travel costs be covered for Alumni Speakers. Please contact us to request a quote.

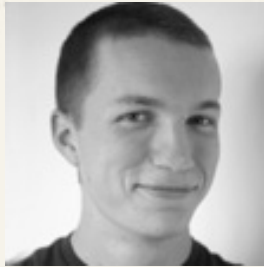
**Request a Speaker.** To request a speaker please contact Amber Hacker, alumni relations manager, at [amber@ifyc.org](mailto:amber@ifyc.org) or 312-573-8937.

### *About Interfaith Youth Core*

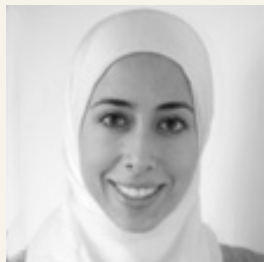
IFYC **seeks to make interfaith cooperation a social norm**. Too often, religion is seen as a barrier of division. IFYC believes faith can be a bridge of cooperation, strengthening our civil society and promoting the common good. Just as civil rights leaders and environmentalists built transformative movements in the 20th century, IFYC believes that interfaith leaders will build the movement for interfaith cooperation in the 21st century. For more information, visit [www.ifyc.org](http://www.ifyc.org).

## Interfaith Youth Core Alumni Speaker Biographies

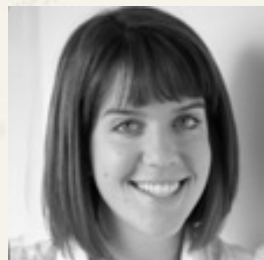
Please find a sampling of speaker biographies below. There are many more speakers available, and IFYC is excited to work with you to find a speaker that will fit your needs. Please note that booking a speaker will depend on factors such as required scheduling and travel.



**Benjamin Bechtolsheim** (Jewish) works as the special projects coordinator for the Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty (CIFA), an international development agency based in Washington DC. At CIFA, Benjamin manages a wide portfolio of projects, working closely with the interfaith programs manager and executive director. Benjamin began his work with CIFA in 2009 where he served as an IFYC Faiths Act Fellow, one of our most prestigious and intensive interfaith leadership programs. Prior to joining CIFA, Benjamin started and ran a community-based health education program in northern Uganda under the auspices of a grant from the Kathryn Wasserman Davis Foundation. He continues to consult to the project. Benjamin holds a degree in political science from Brandeis University and currently serves on the board of directors of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation.



**Randa Kuziez** (Muslim) was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. She graduated from Saint Louis University in 2007 as SLU's Woman of the Year, with degrees in history and international affairs and a focus on American intellectual tradition and Islamic history. She also studied Arabic at the University of Damascus, Syria. Locally, Randa has been involved in her community as a youth group leader and has organized numerous events, fundraisers, and service projects. After receiving her black belt in Tae Kwon Do in 2004, she has continued to assist in training young students in the sport. She has served as the Vice President and former Treasurer of the Muslim Students' Association of the United States and Canada, as well as a Muslim Advisory Board Member for Malaria No More, with whom she travelled to Mali on a bed net campaign. Randa is also the co-founder of Maded, an organization dedicated to providing resources to those who have been in serious physical accidents to help them maintain quality in their lives. Randa served as a member of the IFYC's Faiths Act Fellowship, one of our most prestigious and intensive interfaith leadership programs, at the Malaria Policy Center in Washington, DC. Prior to the fellowship, she was working as the Manager of Interfaith Education and Dialogue at the Interfaith Partnership/Faith Beyond Walls of St. Louis, as well as a medical interpreter for Arabic-speaking refugees. She received a Master's degree in the international affairs program from Washington University in Saint Louis.



**Amy McNair** (Christian) is from Redlands, CA, and completed her degree in political science with an emphasis in public policy and law from Seattle Pacific University. She has been heavily involved with the HIV/AIDS community in Seattle and Africa and spent the previous summers with religious and secular organizations in various African countries assisting with community development, health, and education projects. Through work with the International Justice Mission in Washington, DC, her commitment to social justice for marginalized people was further solidified, along with her belief that people of faith can make a difference. Amy's successful leadership and student involvement in Acting on AIDS and The Refugee Project at Seattle Pacific contributed to her desire to work on an interfaith basis for the furthering of the MDG's and bettering the lives of those impacted by malaria. Amy served as a member of the IFYC's Faiths Act Fellowship, one of our most prestigious and intensive interfaith leadership programs, at the Inner-city Muslim Action Network in Chicago, IL.



**Prerna Abbi** (Secular Humanist with Hindu roots) is currently serving a year as an AmeriCorps national director with Habitat for Humanity of Orange County as a volunteer coordinator for youth programs. Before her recent move to Southern California, Prerna was a lifelong New Yorker, where she grew up on Long Island, attended Syracuse University, and served an AmeriCorps term with Habitat for Humanity of Suffolk. She earned her B.A. in international relations and political science from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University in 2009. During her time at Syracuse she was involved with Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, Habitat for Humanity, The Vagina Monologues, and residence life. Prerna cares deeply about interfaith plurality and is particularly passionate about infusing that into community service, feminism, and the issue of substandard housing. Prerna has been involved with the Interfaith Youth Core since 2008. She spent her senior year at Syracuse as a member of IFYC's Fellows Alliance, one of our most prestigious and intensive interfaith leadership programs. Prerna co-led a session on engaging those with exclusive truth claims in interfaith plurality at the IFYC's Leadership in a Religiously Diverse World conference. Prerna currently mentors emerging interfaith leaders through the IFYC's Better Together campaign.



**Erin Toolis** (Engaged Buddhist) grew up in the small town of Lisbon, Ohio. She received her B.S. in psychology from Denison University. In college, she was primarily interested in interfaith work and identity development. She moved to Seattle, Washington after graduation to join the Lutheran Volunteer Corps, where she worked in an art center for homeless youth and focused on service, intentional community, and simplicity. As an engaged Buddhist, Erin reveres the power of humanity to liberate one another from suffering. Her faith and passion for social justice led her to become a Faiths Act Fellow, which is one of our most prestigious and intensive interfaith leadership programs. After traveling to Mali to learn from Project Muso's work to empower women to combat malaria, she was placed with the Micah Challenge in Portland, Oregon, to foster local interfaith collaboration around the global issue of malaria. Erin studies the role of narrative in identity development within a cultural context while pursuing her master's degree in psychology from the University of Chicago.



**Chris Stedman** (Secular Humanist) works to foster positive and productive dialogue between faith communities and the nonreligious. Chris is the managing director of State of Formation at the Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue. Chris received an MA in religion from Meadville Lombard Theological School at the University of Chicago, for which he was awarded the Billings Prize for Most Outstanding Scholastic Achievement. A graduate of Augsburg College with a summa cum laude B.A. in religion, Chris is a blogger for the The Huffington Post Religion, where his work is among the most commented in the site's history, and is the founder and author of the blog NonProphet Status. His writing has also appeared in venues such as The Washington Post On Faith, Tikkun Daily, The New Humanism, and more. Chris was previously a content developer and adjunct trainer for our organization, and is currently writing a book on fostering positive and productive dialogue between faith communities and the nonreligious community. Chris has long had a passion for community service work, from leading a weekly meal delivery shift to a Somali immigrant community center in college to managing a nutrition program at a church on the south side of Chicago in graduate school. Portland, Oregon's GLBT newspaper Just Out called his work "brilliant" and labeled him an "emerging...vibrant and youthful queer voice for the secular humanist movement."