

Better Together Awards 2012-13

All across the country students are taking action to make interfaith cooperation a priority through the Better Together campaign. At the end of the school year, IFYC awards the campuses that have made the biggest impact. Winners receive \$\$\$ to increase the scope of their Better Together campaigns as well as free registrations to an Interfaith Leadership Institute within the coming year. We are pleased to announce this years winners.

Best Overall Campaign - \$1,500 and 3 free Interfaith Leadership Institute registrations

Winner: California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, CA

Awarded to the campaign that blew our minds when it came to mobilizing their campus for interfaith cooperation.

[California Lutheran](#) built a campaign with a vision for the entire campus, making the impact of their work all the more successful. Rather than introduce a new student organization on campus, they formed the Interfaith Allies, a movement that worked across the different sectors of campus to plan interfaith events. They voiced and engaged by organizing monthly "Come Together Now" dialogue dinners, planning multiple religious site visits, and creating an interfaith reflection at the campus's Rely for Life. They acted together by impacting the issues of clean water access and water consumption through their [Green Week](#) initiative. During this week they held a series of awareness raising events around the issues and asked participants to drink only tap water, donate the money they usually spend on other drinks, and monitor their daily use of water (showers, flushing toilets, washing dishes, etc.). As a result they were able to raise around \$300 for a well in Ethiopia. The impact they made on campus shifted the climate around interfaith engagement. Chapel Hour changed to Sabbath Hour, the Wennes Meditation Chapel was renamed Wennes Interfaith Meditation Chapel, a Muslim Student Association formed for the first time, the religion department was engaged in articulating interfaith cooperation as part of the school's Lutheran identity, and most impressive of all, the preamble of the constitution of the student government was amended to be more welcoming to non-Lutherans. Way to go California Lutheran!

Loudest Voice - \$500 and 2 free ILI registrations

Winner: Franklin College, Franklin, IN

Honorable mentions: University of North Florida, FL; Ohio University, OH

Awarded to the campaign that most successfully spread the word about interfaith cooperation and the Better Together campaign.

[Franklin Interfaith](#) showed us what top-notch PR can be for a Better Together campaign. Between their [active blog](#), [Twitter](#) account, engaging Facebook page, [beautiful photos](#), newspaper coverage [on](#) and [off](#) campus, a [Pinterest page](#), event-specific [posters](#), and plans to increase their presence on Youtube, it's hard to find something Franklin Interfaith hasn't covered. The PR Rep in the group even participated in a Google+ hangout with chaplains at a conference in Atlanta, GA to teach them how to use social media for campus religious organizations!

Biggest Campus Impact - \$500 and 2 free ILI registrations

Winners (Tie): Rhodes College, Memphis, TN; Concordia College, Moorehead, MN

Honorable mention: St. Louis University, MO

Awarded to the campaigns that leave the biggest mark on campus and best demonstrate interfaith partnership.

[Better Together at Rhodes College](#) had a year packed to the seams with creative events made all the more successful because of their collaboration with other student groups. They developed relationships with ALL 12 religious and intentionally secular groups on campus in order to make these events happen. It was only because of these relationships that they were able to have over 400 people attend their kickoff for Islam Awareness Week out of a campus of 1,900 students.

[Concordia Better Together](#) wins the Biggest Campus Impact for their hard work engaging the all sectors of the campus. In addition to participating in a campus wide interfaith council, they led presentations on interfaith leadership in Religion 100 classes, campus-wide symposiums, and school conferences. Better Together organizers played a critical role in supporting the recognition of secular students on campus as a student group. Concordia Better Together earned tremendous amounts of

recognition and respect this year, so much that one of their co-presidents was invited to speak at Concordia's commencement ceremony this spring!

Inspiring Action - \$500 and 2 free ILI registrations

Winner: Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX

Honorable mentions: Westminster College, UT; University of La Verne, CA

Awarded to the campaign that makes the most impact on their action issue(s).

[Texas Christian University](#) showed us the importance of developing ongoing relationships in order to make a sustained impact on their chosen action issue, "literacy." They chose to partner with one community organization throughout the year because in their words, "We didn't simply want this to be a series of projects that we completed where we patted ourselves on the back. We wanted to allow ourselves to be impacted by the people of this community as well." In addition to serving the organization two to three times a semester, community members came and spoke to TCU students about how to impact low literacy. Not only this but they held holiday reading parties, provided childcare when parents were taking GED preparation classes, and mobilized a book drive that gathered over 1550 books!

Rookie of the Year- Official recognition

Winner: Lynn University, Boca Raton, FL

Though not an award category that has any prize attached, we want to give a shout out to Lynn University for showing how a brand new campaign can make an impact. After winning the Event Design Challenge at the Atlanta ILI with their event, "Better Together: The Homelessness Project," they hit the ground running. When they returned to campus they sent out press releases and organized a creative and engaging event. They incorporated interfaith literacy, team building and awareness-raising to change people's perspectives both about interfaith cooperation as well as homelessness. Read more [here](#) from their campus publication.