



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

NAME: Katie Johnstone

IFYC PROGRAM: Former Staff

RELIGIOUS/SECULAR TRADITION: Jewish

ALMA MATER: Northwestern University

FAVORITE ICE CREAM FLAVOR: Coconut

FAVORITE FOOD: Grain salads

FAVORITE THING TO WATCH: Bollywood movies

WHAT ARE YOU DOING PROFESSIONALLY?

I'm currently an Acquisitions and Content Editor for Craftsy – an awesome organization in Denver, CO. Craftsy is a community of passionate crafters featuring online classes about all your favorite crafts – like quilting, sewing, jewelry making, etc. I help produce some of the videos by finding potential instructors, developing content, and coordinating back end production.

WHAT USEFUL SKILL HAVE YOU GAINED AS AN INTERFAITH LEADER?

Storytelling. When I hosted an interfaith dialogue at work, I shared my story and identity – which felt pretty matter of fact to me. But people were blown away! They told me that they had never heard anyone talk about religion like that. It reminded me that, for many folks, IFYC's framing of religious and secular identity is not the norm, and the way that we do it really resonates with people.

HOW HAVE ISSUES RELATED TO RELIGIOUS IDENTITY SURFACED IN YOUR WORK?

Through conversations! Better Together Day was a catalyst for me to have an interfaith dialogue, and even though my workplace doesn't have anything to do with interfaith it was clear that people want to have these conversations. I talked with a co-worker who is an Evangelical Christian who was so excited to share his story. I had the opportunity to support a colleague who recently converted to a new tradition and was struggling with how to explain it to her family. I connected with one of our instructors about her experience as a Latter-Day Saint, and I was able to tell her about participating in a Speedfaithing with Mormon author Joanna Brooks - which made my day and hers!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN IFYC ALUM?

I feel empowered! As you go into a world that doesn't necessarily understand religious diversity the way that we do, it's so helpful to have this identity of IFYC alumni. That's what makes us so connected - because we have a shared experience and a common goal – to make interfaith a norm.

YOU RECENTLY DID AN AWESOME JOB OF ORGANIZING A BETTER TOGETHER DIALOGUE AT YOUR OFFICE, ENCOURAGING FOLKS TO GET INVOLVED IN INTERFAITH WORK. DO YOU HAVE TIPS TO SHARE WITH OTHER IFYC ALUMNI WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN GETTING THEIR WORKPLACES INVOLVED IN INTERFAITH?

- ▶ **Frame your experience.** Doing this in the voice of the organization you work for can go a long way! Tailor your message to your audiences. Work on your 30 second elevator pitch so you're ready to succinctly talk about interfaith cooperation.
- ▶ **Use the network.** I've pinged the alumni network whenever I've had questions or needed advice, and it has always been super helpful.
- ▶ **Don't be afraid to be vulnerable.** It's initially hard to start the conversation when talking about interfaith isn't the norm - and it's kind of weird to talk about that in front of a group of people that you only know in a different context. But, I'm so glad I did exactly that, because it got the conversation going and encouraged my co-workers to share stories about their own religious and secular identities!