



A MEMBER OF THE  
**NATIONAL FEDERATION  
 FOR JUST COMMUNITIES™**

The NFJC of Western New York, Inc.

*The National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York (NFJC) is a human relations organization dedicated to overcoming racism, bias, and discrimination by building understanding, respect, and trust through education, advocacy, and community involvement.*

360 Delaware Avenue, Suite 106 • Buffalo, New York 14202 • Phone: (716) 853-9596 • [www.nfjcwny.org](http://www.nfjcwny.org)

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE NFJC CO-CHAIRS Gary Quenneville and Amy Habib Rittling, Esq.

As Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors, we are proud to be leading the NFJC of WNY, Inc. into 2013 and beyond. As an organization that tackles sensitive subjects like racism, bias, and bigotry, we have accomplished much in our more than 61 years of operation, but unfortunately our work is far from done.

The NFJC not only reacts to conflicts in the community, but is also a proactive organization that embraces our region's vast diversity, and encourages others to foster positive dialogue to bring about change. Schools, organizations, businesses, and most importantly, the youth of tomorrow have benefited from the intervention and actions of the NFJC's programs and initiatives. From commUnity build, to the Sheriff Youth Live-In Camp, to the Walk for CommUNITY, our programs have directly and indirectly influenced and encouraged thousands to continue making WNY a more just community for all. As Board leaders, we are charged with the same mission which we carry on to our workplaces, families, and houses of worship. We will continue to work towards inclusion and building bridges throughout our great community.

Each of us in our community needs to be valued and we, as Co-Chairs and Board members of the NFJC, hope to do our part to make WNY a strong and vibrant color-wheel of diversity and inclusion. We encourage you to read on to see how you can join us in this important work.



Gary D.  
Quenneville



Amy Habib  
Rittling, Esq.

## FROM OUR YOUTH LEADERS

It has been a very busy year for the NFJC Program Department. We hosted two of our hallmark "commUnity build: Institute for Inclusion" retreats to help youth examine the issues of bias and discrimination; we held our annual Sheriff Youth "Live-In" Camp which helps bridge the divide between high school students and law enforcement, and we presented four day-long youth leadership conferences on topics related to bullying. Members of our on-going program Community Builders continued to conduct meaningful service projects in and around the city; we conducted over a dozen Building Awareness Workshops for local businesses and organizations, and we were brought into several schools to help resolve and mediate incidents of racial tension. We accomplished much, and in 2013 we will expand our work with youth, businesses, local government, and school districts across WNY.

Central to our work is the belief that understanding diversity isn't about identifying the ways others are different from us as individuals; it is about realizing what we as individuals bring to the patchwork-quilt of culture that is already present in our region. The leaders we work with, especially our youth facilitators, share that belief, and it ignites in them a pas-

sion to make this work their own. They are enthusiastic, compassionate and empathetic; they are energized by the work they do for us, and ultimately, they are the best ambassadors of our work. Below are statements, written by them, explaining what the important work of the NFJC means to them.

– Marc Rummenie, Program Director

*I am currently a Student Board member for NFJC and have been involved with NFJC activities and programs since 7th grade. Besides fun memories, NFJC also helped mold me into a better leader. As the issue of bullying spiked at my high school, I felt obliged to not be a bystander but to act. In my senior year, I created a team of 30 students that upheld anti-bullying as a goal. Currently, I am studying criminal justice at Buffalo State and I continue to incorporate what I have learned from the NFJC.*

Sincerely, Reggie Nealy

*There's not many places you describe with the word "home". For me, the NFJC is one of those places. As a sophomore at Kenmore West, I attended the Sheriff Youth Live-In Camp. It was a week that was not only lots of fun, but one that also changed my life. Now at Buffalo State, I am inspired to*



*continue working with the NFJC and help give others the chance to have those same memories and life-changing experiences, and find their own place at "home".*

– Lyndsay Raymond

*I started with the NFJC three years ago at the Sheriff Youth Live-In Camp. That experience changed my outlook and understanding of diversity for my entire life. Now I am a Board member and help facilitate programs like the Institution for Inclusion, a high school retreat that brings students from all different schools and backgrounds together to talk about different issues and problems. The NFJC has given me the true character I need to lead, succeed, and make a change for this community.*

Very Respectfully, Brandon Cruz

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## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Spring 2013:

April 12-14, 2013  
Diversity and Leadership  
Retreat at St. Bonaventure  
University

May 7, 2013  
High School Youth  
Conference at Medaille  
College

May 9, 2013  
Middle School Youth  
Conference at Medaille  
College

### Summer 2013:

August 2013  
Sheriff Youth  
"Live-In" Camp

### Fall 2013:

October 2013  
Walk for CommUNITY  
at Buffalo State

November 2013  
commUNITY build at St.  
Bonaventure University

November 25, 2013  
Multi-Faith Thanksgiving  
Service

December 2013  
High School and Middle  
School Youth Conferences

December 11, 2013  
Annual Meeting at Hyatt  
Regency Buffalo

## STAFF OF THE NFJC OF WNY INC.

### President

Lana D. Benatovich

### Executive Assistant

Lyn Leopold

### Special Events /

Development Coordinator

Rene Petties-Jones

### Youth Program Director

Marc Rummenie

### First Time/Last Time Director

Susan Croglia

### First Time/Last Time Counselor

John Jackson

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## NFJC OF WNY LEADERSHIP



### First Row Seated (left to right):

John G. Horn, Esq. (Chair Elect),  
Tod D. Martin, Laura A. Zaepfel  
(Vice Chair), Gary D. Quenneville  
(Co-Chairperson), Amy Habib  
Rittling, Esq. (Co-Chairperson), Lana  
D. Benatovich (President), Christopher  
T. Greene, Esq. (Immediate Past  
Chair), Daryl E. Rasuli (Vice Chair),  
Rosemarie C. Steeb (Treasurer),  
Noma L. Roberson, Ph.D.

### Second Row Standing (left to right):

Joseph M. Hanna, Esq., Lyndsay  
Raymond (Student Member), Donna M. Mostiller, Oswaldo Mestre, Jr., Danielle E. Shainbrow, Esq., Glenn S. Jackson (Vice Chair),  
Gretchen R. Geitter, Surjit Singh, Ph.D., Bernard A. Tolbert, David M. Schmidt, Rev. Dr. Thomas H. Yorty, Rabbi Gary E. Pokras,  
Jay Dellavecchia, Brandon Cruz (Student Member)

**Not Pictured:** Tamara O. Alsace, Ph.D., Carlton N. Brock Jr., Julie Coppola Cox, B. Scott Fisher, Kenneth M. Franasiak,  
Daniel G. Kantor (Secretary), Michael Kimelberg, Bharat Kohli, M.D., MBA, Dana M. Marciniak, Michael N. Martin, Reggie Nealy  
(Student Member), Timothy L. Rodemeyer, Catherine F. Schweitzer (Foundation Consultant), James W. Smyton, Esq. (Legal Counsel),  
Melissa N. Subjeck, Esq., Sylvia M. Tokasz (Vice Chair), Toni L. Vazquez, MBA, Peter A. Vukelic

**Emeritus (not pictured):** Joan K. Bozer, Anthony J. Colucci, Jr., Esq., Kenneth P. Friedman, Esq., Mary H. Gresham, Ph.D., Ellen E.  
Grant, Ph.D., Amy J. Habib, Tamar P. Halpern, Esq., C. Douglas Hartmayer, Muriel A. Howard, Ph.D., Richard M. Kamats, Laurence  
A. Levite, Donald A. Ogilvie, Alphonso O'Neil-White, Linda D. Pollack, Hon. Hugh B. Scott, Ruth Kahn Stovroff, Pamela Jacobs Vogt,  
John N. Walsh, III

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### 2013 NFJC COMMUNITY LEADERS AWARDS LUNCHEON



### Awards Luncheon Co-Chairs



Glenn S. Jackson



Danielle Eisen  
Shainbrow, Esq.

Thank you to BlueCross Blue-  
Shield of WNY, and M&T Bank,  
our 2013 Luncheon Sponsors.

Congratulations to all of this  
year's award honorees!

## THE NFJC CELEBRATES ITS 60<sup>TH</sup> CITATION BANQUET

The NFJC of WNY's Citation Awards give public recognition and honor to those whose achievements contribute to the betterment of our Western New York community. These contributions have advanced the NFJC's objectives and mission, and are based on devotion to the spirit of human relations.

### Citation Banquet Co-Chairs



Peter A. Vukelic



Laura A. Zaepfel

The 2013 NFJC Citation Banquet honorees are:

- Sr. Margaret Carney, O.S.F., S.T.D., President,  
St. Bonaventure University
- Kenneth P. Friedman, Esq., Partner, Hodgson Russ LLP
- Gerard T. Mazurkiewicz, CPA, Partner Dopkins & Company, LLP
- Surjit Singh, PhD., Interfaith Community Leader &  
Retired Chemistry Professor Buffalo State

## FIRST TIME/LAST TIME



For the last thirty-two years, the NFJC First Time/Last Time Program has successfully re-routed literally thousands of young people from re-involvement in the Criminal Justice System. There is no greater challenge or reward than seeing a young person realize their individual potential and strive toward the attainment of goals they never thought possible.

In our role as Counselors serving at-risk youth, the important work of First Time/Last Time is shown through many positive outcomes: Young people successfully returning to an academic environment and receiving their high school diploma or GED; Youth engaging and staying committed to program counseling services and securing employment opportunities; and Youth remaining substance free after participating in outpatient treatment for drug and alcohol abuse issues. There are also many Youth successfully completing mandated through the courts Community Service Placements and implemented and monitored through First Time/Last Time.

As a truly effective Alternative to Incarceration program, personal client testimonies like these that follow illustrate our measure of success:

*"I decided to write this letter to you to express my endless gratitude, love and admiration to you for all you have done for me. Thank you for forcing me to stay loyal to myself as well as others and to also know that I must take ownership and responsibility of all my actions and life's choices whether they are good or bad. Thank you for loving and accepting me though out it all." – Noelle*

*"I just wanted to say "thank you"! I'm so very blessed to have you in my life. You always make me feel like I can take on any challenge even if I am unsure. I thank you for always taking a genuine concern and interest in things that I care about. I will always love you for that." – Kim*

These and countless other testimonials show why this unique and effective youth service program should remain positively funded so that we can continue to serve the needs of the young first offender.

– Susan Croglia, Director

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Lana D. Benatovich

One of the greatest sources of pride for our organization is the influence our student leaders have on participants in our programs from schools and youth organizations from across Western New York. As a result, the young people who are in NFJC initiatives become leaders in inclusion in their own schools, neighborhoods, and houses of worship.

In this newsletter you have read articles by our Student Board Members, Brandon Cruz, Reggie Nealy, and Lyndsay Raymond. All are passionate in their commitment to the work and mission of the NFJC. Veterans of our program, they now help to facilitate sessions and activities. They believe in systemic change and exemplify it in their daily lives. Lyndsay and Reggie have carried their leadership to Buffalo State and Brandon will do the same at his future college. We are grateful to them and to our

past youth board members for their many contributions to the betterment of all of us.

In addition to these student leaders, we salute the outstanding high school students who have received Youth Community Leader or Brotherhood/Sisterhood Awards from the NFJC for over 50 years. The list of those of all ages who have been recognized and honored continues to grow because of the many great things they do for our region.

Western New York, as almost all communities in our nation, has its challenges. We also have many opportunities for growth and change that are being realized by diverse and concerned citizens and leaders of all ages.

If we believe that the future of our region will continue to attract more families and businesses, we should first believe in, respect, and celebrate our Youth Leaders. They get it! They want more for themselves and for us. If we build it, they will stay!

## NFJC WALK FOR COMMUNITY

The Walk for CommUNITY 2012 was a great success as hundreds participated in an afternoon of family fun, celebration, and togetherness as a community.

Our sincerest thanks go out to our presenting sponsor, NewEra, and our Walk Chair, Jay Dellavecchia (GM Hyatt Regency Buffalo) for leading the efforts to make this a banner year for this annual event. The outstanding ready-made deluxe BBQ donated by the Hyatt delighted participants as they returned from an unusually warm and beautiful fall Walk. Buffalo State hosted this event in their sports arena and truly enhanced the afternoon with the ease of their great amenities which were available for all. Thanks to their staff and students for sharing their beautiful campus with us.

Congratulations go out to the winners of our Walk challenges. The Bank Challenge winners were First Niagara, led by our own Board member Scott Fisher, and the Law Firm Challenge winners were Hodgson Russ LLP, led by Board Chair Emeritus Ken Friedman. Also, congratulations to WNY Maritime Charter School for winning the School Walk Challenge. Look for these spirited competitions next year so you can participate!

We'd like to thank all our sponsors, supporters, volunteers, and participants and encourage you to look for us again in the fall of 2013 as we continue to re-invent this family-friendly activity. Even more new and exciting features await – hope to see everyone there at the 2013 Walk!



Above at the Annual MLK celebration, participants shared an inspiring evening of speeches and music. Below are participants sharing together at the Annual Multi-Faith Thanksgiving Service at Ephesus church.



Below: Walk challenge winners Hodgson Russ LLP (top), and First Niagara (below).

