



The Interfaith Alliance
LONG ISLAND CHAPTER
www.interfaithalliance-li.org



May 24, 2010

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Cordoba House at 45-47 Park Place, May 25 Community Board Hearing

It has been nearly nine years since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, where so many innocent lives were lost. One of the many consequences of that attack was that it caused many New Yorkers to fear and distrust their Muslim neighbors, even though the American Muslim community has wholeheartedly denounced terrorism as a violation of the fundamental precepts of Islam.

Religious leaders from different faiths continue to offer solace and hope to all who suffered the loss of loved ones as a result of hatred and violence. People of genuine faith know from the teachings of their prophets that violence always begets violence. So they search for acts and signs of peace and compassion that might redeem that terrible day and lay the groundwork for truth and reconciliation.

Recently, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf and Daisy Khan, religious leaders of the Muslim community who have worked tirelessly with us to build bridges and cultivate a culture of harmony, stepped forward with plans for a community center, to be located two blocks from Ground Zero. The center will be known as Cordoba House in honor of a city in medieval Spain where Muslims, Jews and Christians once lived together in peace, understanding and fruitful collaboration. It will be programmed along the lines of the 92nd Street Y and the JCC, a space that is open to all; a space for culture, arts, and learning; a space for celebration; and a space for prayer. Religious leaders from across New York City's faith traditions see in the dream of a Cordoba House to be built in the shadow of the fallen World Trade Center, a gesture that points the way to peace. The creation of Cordoba House is meant as a deeply felt gesture of compassion and healing. For this dream to come from the broken hearts of peace-loving Muslims is a sign of hope.

Unfortunately, in recent weeks, opponents of the Cordoba House project have asserted that it would be a desecration of the sacred soil of Ground Zero and an affront to those who lost their lives at the World Trade Center on that terrible day. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. The dream of Cordoba House is an expression of compassion and love for America and its values of tolerance and pluralism, coming straight from the hearts of Muslim-Americans.

We who sign this letter, support the building of Cordoba House as an inspiring expression of the millennial dream that Americans of all backgrounds can come together to create a future of brotherhood and peace. We support its founder, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf. We are grateful for the support of city leaders, the Community Board and citizens who live in the vibrant downtown neighborhood where once resided the World Trade Center.

For those whose pain makes them fearful of the future, we invite you to join us as we pray and act for a common future whose hallmark is compassion and courage.

Sincerely,

Rev. Mark Lukens, Chair
The Interfaith Alliance – Long Island Chapter