

# Founder of program on religious understanding is honored

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An Amherst woman who brought together people of 15 area faith communities to strengthen communication among congregations is being honored.

The Interfaith Opportunities Network recently created the Joan Lindeman Interfaith Opportunities Award to recognize Lindeman.

In June 2005, Lindeman formed ION as a group of lay people from Christian congregations that would work with the clergy and members of congregations on ecumenical relations. Within two years a synagogue became part of the network, and then a Muslim representative joined.

The award, announced last month, is a retirement gift for the 87-year-old Lindeman, who stepped down in February, and is designed to recognize interfaith projects that occur in the community and motivate people to increase understanding and respect for all religious faiths.

Certificates will be awarded as warranted.

The network is now led by Naz Mohamed from the Hampshire Mosque and Lee Bridegam from South Congregational Church, who can be contacted about commendable projects.

The network this year partnered with the Jones Library for its "Bridging Cultures: Muslim Journeys" project and the "Collaborative Anti-Racism" project headed by Russ Vernon-Jones from First Congregational Church Amherst.

To nominate projects for the award, visit ION's website at [www.interfaithamherst.org](http://www.interfaithamherst.org).