

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

BLACK • WHITE • BROWN • MAN • WOMAN • TRANSGENDER • GAY • STRAIGHT
LESBIAN • BI • CHRISTIAN • JEW • MUSLIM • HINDU • BUDDHIST
SIKH • HUMANIST • ATHEIST • AGNOSTIC • DEMOCRAT • REPUBLICAN
LIBERAL • CONSERVATIVE • PROGRESSIVE • INDEPENDENT

ETHICAL





Backgrounder

The New York Society for Ethical Culture (NYSEC) (nysec.org) is the founding institution behind the Ethical Movement. Established by Dr. Felix Adler in 1876, NYSEC offers a welcoming community in a congregational setting for humanists looking to lead ethical lives. NYSEC offers year-round programming for adults and children with hundreds of community and cultural events at its landmark Meeting House building on Central Park West. Programming is anchored around Sunday Morning Platforms, where people meet to learn, reflect and be inspired. An important voice for social justice for well over a century, NYSEC and its members are actively engaged in issues ranging from criminal justice reform to environmental stewardship and income inequality.

A Welcoming Home

Membership in NYSEC offers a home for people who are looking to be part of a community dedicated to the public good and a shared faith in humanity. NYSEC embraces all of the diversity of New York City, providing a welcoming forum to celebrate life's joys, support each other through life's crises, and work together to make the world a better place.

Programs and Initiatives

NYSEC and its members engage with and take action on the key social justice issues of our day. Some of NYSEC's major, ongoing efforts include:

- *Ethical Action Committee*: works to create community efforts and opportunities for making a difference. The Committee develops positions and takes action on America's stance regarding war and peace, and the ethical questions at the frontiers of science, family care, and more. Society members have participated in marches and protests, undertaken letter-writing campaigns and been involved with many other ongoing ethical action efforts.
- *Ethical Enrichment Committee*: offers a wide range of adult education programs focusing on the mind, body and spirit. Programs include Ethics in Film, Ethical Death Café, and Ethics and the Theatre, among others. Ethical Enrichment courses, workshops and discussions throughout the week explore issues of war, social policy, human rights, ethics in popular culture, and more.
- *Environmental Stewardship Committee*: Works to educate and spread knowledge of environmental concerns and to participate with other activists and groups in pursuing a more environmentally sound world.
- *Social Service Board*: a NYSEC affiliate dedicated to helping the most vulnerable members of our community through social service projects. Projects include Empowering Ethical Elders, Supportive Televisiting Services, and a Homeless Women's Shelter, among others.

History

Throughout its history, NYSEC has helped create significant community institutions that have had a long-lasting effect in promoting social justice. NYSEC founded the Visiting Nurse Service, created the first settlement houses and one of the first free kindergartens in the United States, and helped establish the NAACP and ACLU, among many other contributions to the public good. More recently, NYSEC has had an impactful role in such issues as paid sick leave, justice for juveniles and climate change. Notable speakers who have appeared at NYSEC range from Eleanor Roosevelt and Booker T. Washington to Al Gore, Eduardo Porter, Jeffrey Sachs and Mary Robinson.

NYSEC offers one of the premier rental spaces in New York City at its century-old landmark building on Central Park West, available for concerts, conferences, receptions, weddings, banquets, seminars, memorial services, rehearsals and film shoots. For more information, visit www.NYSEC.org/rentals.

Leadership



Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, Leader

Anne Klaeyesen is a Leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture. She holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in pastor counseling from Hebrew Union College, as well as Masters degrees in German from the State University of New York at Albany and business administration from New York University (NYU). Dr. Klaeyesen is the Ethical Humanist Religious Life Adviser at Columbia University and Humanist Chaplain at NYU. She is also co-dean of The Humanist Institute and serves on the board of Sunday Assembly NYC. Dr. Klaeyesen participates in several interfaith social justice coalitions.

Dr. Klaeyesen represents the American Ethical Union on the Board of Governors of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and is an active participant in Empire State Pride in the Pulpit, New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty, the Interfaith Peace Alliance, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She and her son represented the American Ethical Union and the National Service Conference at the December 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions in Melbourne, Australia. She also serves the American Ethical Union as Chair of the Training Committee, and is National Leaders Council liaison to the Religious Education Committee, YES (Youth in Ethical Societies for teens) and FES (Future Ethical Societies for college students).

Dr. Klaeyesen has given presentations on forgiveness at the World Fellowship Center in Conway, NH, the American Friends Service Committee, and New York State Office for Mental Health. As a member of the American Humanist Association and the International Humanist and Ethical Union, she is currently working on a project to develop humanist chaplaincies in health care, academia, the military and the criminal justice system.



Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

Joe is Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County, NJ, a position he has held since 1974. Prior to this position, he was Leader of the Essex Ethical Society. He served on the Leadership Committee of the American Ethical Union (AEU) for over 20 years, and was president of the National Leaders Council for six years. Joe is a representative from the AEU to the International Humanist and Ethical Union, and was co-mentor of the sixth class of Humanist Institute, also serving on the Institute's Board.

Joe teaches seminars in human rights to graduate students at Columbia University and undergraduates at the Honors College at Hunter College. Formerly, he taught at the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica and Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. Joe is the former chairman of Amnesty International USA's Committee Against the Death Penalty and was the chairperson of NJ's Committee Against the Death Penalty. He recently served on the advisory board of New Jerseyans for a Death Penalty Alternative, which helped abolish capital punishment there. Joe is a member of the Teaneck Clergy Council, which he chaired for three years in the '90s. He also serves on the Ethics Committee at Holy Name Hospital.

Recently, Joe founded and is president of the Bergen County Sanctuary Committee for Political Asylum Seekers. The Committee provides a range of services and advocacy for political asylum seekers. In addition to direct activism, Joe spreads the word on Ethical Culture and related themes through extensive writing and publishing in newspapers, journals of opinion, and academic texts. He is currently editing a series of Ethical Culture addresses that will be published as a text.



Dr. Richard Koral, Acting Leader

Richard Koral is an Acting Leader at New York Society for Ethical Culture and an AEU Leader-in-Training. He attended The Humanist Institute and holds a Doctor of Ministry in Interfaith Pastoral Counseling as well as a J.D. degree. Richard is a long-time member of the Ethical Culture Society of Westchester and served as president of the American Ethical Union, the national federation of Ethical Societies, from 2012 to 2015. He is also currently a part-time counselor with the Scarsdale Family Counseling Service.



Robert Liebeskind, Executive Director

Bob is Executive Director of the Society, responsible for budget development and fiscal management, overseeing the room rental program and management of the building, and working with the board and committees in long-range planning and developing programs for members and the public. Bob has been with the society since July of 2004.

Prior to joining the Society staff, Bob was Director of Administration for the Department of Psychiatry at North General Hospital. There, he oversaw day-to-day operations, provided short and long-term strategic planning and worked closely with medical staff. He has also served as the Associate Executive Director for the YM & YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood, providing budget development, fiscal management, long-range planning, and the supervision of staff members who ran the agency's myriad programs.



Phyllis Harrison-Ross, MD a trustee of the Society since 2005, is Chair of the Social Service Board for United Social Services, Inc., a social action affiliate. She co-chairs the NYSEC Finance Committee, and serves on the Radio Committee, Endowment Committee, Awards Committee and is a Trustee and member of the Supporting Organization for the Ethical Culture Fieldston School.

Phyllis practices child and adult psychiatry, is Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Sciences at New York Medical College, Emeritus Attending Psychiatrist/Chief of Psychiatry at Metropolitan Hospital Center and Founder and Managing Partner of Black Psychiatrists of Greater New York. Currently, **she serves fulltime as COMMISSIONER, NYS COMMISSION OF CORRECTION AND CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION'S MEDICAL REVIEW BOARD**, which oversees the operation and management of local and state correctional facilities and secure residential treatment centers operated by the Office of Children and Family Services.

She has written numerous articles, books and book chapters on community and children's mental health, prison health. Her interest in media extends from the NYSEC radio show on WBAI.FM, "Ethics on the Air" to championing the use of Telepsychiatry to reach underserved populations.

Phyllis is a past President of Black Psychiatrists of America and, in 2004, received the American Psychiatric Association's Solomon Carter Fuller Award. The All Healers Mental Health Alliance, an organization that Phyllis, along with the NYSEC and the Social Service Board, was instrumental in forming, received an award for Public Health Leadership at the American Public Health Association meeting in Washington, D.C. in 2007, bestowed for AHMHA's work to bring hope and healing to survivors following the disaster of the 9/11 World Trade Center tragedy and the devastation caused in the mid-south/Gulf Coast by the Katrina and Rita hurricanes, tornados and the BP oil spill.



**Frank J. Corigliano, Ph.D., Psychologist
Director, Supportive Televisiting Services,
Social Service Board at the New York Society for Ethical Culture**

Frank began developing Social Justice programming with the Social Service Board in 2011. He is an active member of NYSEC and Director of the Supportive Televisiting Services – a family justice initiative connecting children with their incarcerated parents through Skype-like “Televisits.” As director he has launched library-based Televisiting. He is a strong and effective advocate for Ethical development, Social Justice, and Mental Health initiatives, many of which are developed at the NY Society. He has presented Ethical Platforms both at the New York and Riverdale-Yonkers Societies and will present at the Philadelphia and Baltimore Societies.

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