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**Andover Newton announces first fully endowed CIRCLE
fellowship for interreligious theological education**

NEWTON CENTRE, Mass. (Oct. 23, 2014) – Andover Newton Theological School, America’s first theological seminary and first graduate school of any kind, has secured funding to endow in perpetuity the first of 12 student fellowships, part of a bold new fundraising effort to fully endow the inter-religious fellowship program jointly run in partnership with neighboring Hebrew College.

The family of late Andover Newton alumna Edith Crary Howe has donated \$40,000 to endow a fellowship in her name through the Center for Inter-Religious and Communal Leadership Education (CIRCLE), a joint center between Andover Newton and Hebrew College. The CIRCLE fellowship program brings together Christian, Jewish, and Unitarian Universalist seminarians with Muslim community fellows to work in pairs on inter-religious initiatives of their own design while participating as a cohort in a yearlong inter-religious leadership program.

Funding from a Henry R. Luce Foundation grant currently supports 12 CIRCLE fellows each year. Endowing the first fellowship is an important step toward self-sufficiency, said CIRCLE co-founder and co-director Jennifer Howe Peace, who is also a daughter-in-law of Edie Howe.

“Having seen the success and value of the fellowship program, we wanted to make it sustainable rather than dependent on grant funding,” said Peace, Assistant Professor of Interfaith Studies at Andover Newton.

“Because I was so convinced this was an essential next step in the institutionalization of our interfaith work, my husband Joel and I decided to invest in the first fellowship and invite Edie’s family members to do the same,” Peace said. “This is particularly appropriate because Edie was an Andover Newton student who did pioneering work with students at Hebrew College and Andover Newton to help build the foundation for what is now CIRCLE.”

Anyone interested in helping endow other CIRCLE fellowships may contact the following parties:

- **Andover Newton Theological School:** Jennifer Craig, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, jcraig@ants.edu.
- **Hebrew College:** Jan Moidel Schwartz, Senior Development Officer, (617) 559-8766, or email jschwartz@hebrewcollege.edu.
- **Dr. Jennifer Howe Peace,** CIRCLE co-director, (617) 831-2405, or email jpeace@ants.edu.
- **Rabbi Or Rose,** CIRCLE co-director, (617) 559-8636, or email orose@hebrewcollege.edu.
- **Ms. Celene Ayat Lizzio,** CIRCLE co-director, (617) 831-2440, or email clizzio@ants.edu.

The CIRCLE leadership hopes to raise funds from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Unitarian Universalist donors so the funding of the fellowships will reflect the diversity of the program, Peace said. And once the 12 fellowships are endowed, CIRCLE would like to explore means for permanently endowing inter-religious faculty as well.

CIRCLE launched in 2008 with support from a Luce grant. The mandate of that grant was to institutionalize an ethos of interfaith understanding at Hebrew College and

Andover Newton, Peace said. “This new fundraising initiative to endow all 12 fellowships follows from that mandate.”

In addition to the CIRCLE fellowships, other noteworthy aspects of CIRCLE’s work include:

- The appointment of Celene Ayat Lizzio to a joint teaching position at Andover Newton and Hebrew College for a three-year term beginning in 2014. Ms. Lizzio is the first Muslim faculty member at either school.
- Two online publications, the State of Formation (a blog for emerging religious and ethical leaders) (www.stateofformation.org) and the Journal of Inter-Religious Studies (the largest peer-reviewed, free online resource in this field) (www.irstudies.org).
- Redevelopment (in progress) of the former President’s House on the Andover Newton campus into a mixed-use facility combining meeting rooms, worship space, and living quarters for inter-religious community building and programming.

Visit <http://www.antshc-circle.org/> to learn more about CIRCLE.

Andover Newton Theological School, founded in 1807, is the first graduate school of any kind in America. Always an innovator in religious education, Andover Newton is internationally recognized as a leader in interfaith learning.