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Citizens for Peace Minutes 6-12-12

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CITIZENS FOR PEACE
Minutes
June 12, 2012

Our meeting opened at 7:00 pm with a welcome by President, Colleen Mills. She introduced Inner Peace Director, Sally Peck, who led us in a peace meditation with words from a poem by Mary Oliver: “Wage peace with your breath...Wage Peace! Never has the world seemed so precious. Act as if armistice has already arrived. Don’t wait another minute.”

Special Presentation:

Our Guest Speaker this evening is Mary Hanna, Director of the Michigan Peace Team. She has been on many domestic peace team excursions to teach others about non-violence. First we must understand why our society uses violence – because it works! But many times it’s a last resort. Mary shared key myths vs. facts regarding violence. Here are the facts:

- Studies have shown, Non-violence is more successful in effecting change.
- Long-used violent/oppressive means are not effective.
The truth is 60% of non-violent means to overthrow oppressive regimes have been successful.
- Statistics have shown that after a regime change thru violent means, only 4 % remained democratic. However, regime change through non-violent, grassroots efforts - 41 % studied remained democratic.

Mary went on to say that there are things that are easier to accomplish through non-violent means because:

- There are less physical barriers – anyone can participate
- There are lower international barriers & people can mobilize in minutes through social media
- There is open communication & every one can voice an opinion
- There are lower moral barriers to overcome
- There are fewer commitment problems (No need to leave a current lifestyle; commitment can be short or long-term; lower physical risks.)

She went on to say that we are all familiar with famous non-violent activists such as Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez. But she wanted to let us know of lesser know people who have, and are, making a difference in this world:

- Badshah Khan – A close friend of Gandhi, who was jailed for 30 years – but managed to mobilize 100,000 people to lay down their weapons and become peace-keepers. They were known as the Red Shirts and they worked to empower and educate others.
- Sophia Scholl & the Society of the White Rose – A 22 yr old German student who distributed thousands of anti-war leaflets at the University of Munich. She, along with her brother Hans, were executed for doing so.
- Chiune & Yukiko Sugihara – Chiune, a Japanese diplomat to Lithuania, and his wife saved more than 40,000 Jews by obtaining visas to Japan. They eventually hand-wrote 300 visas per day until they were told to leave.
- Dr. James Lawson – He trained with those who worked with Gandhi and met with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and shared the principles of non-violence (sit-ins, etc) for effecting change during the times of desegregation.
- Mbaye Diagne – From Senegal, and a UN Peacekeeper in Rwanda in 1994. He helped between 600-1000 people get past 23 checkpoints to safety. He has been called The Forgotten Angel of Rwanda.
- Julia Butterfly Hill – From Arkansas, she fought to save the Red Wood trees from clear-cutting. He found a tree, named it Luna, and stayed in it for 2 years! In that time, she consistently tried to befriend the people from the Paper Mill who wanted to cut it down. They eventually gave her the tree – and the two acres around it!

Mary closed with a slideshow of the non-violent success stories over the last 100 years (www.ontario.mcc.org/peace). She thanked us for our kind attention and an invitation to join the Michigan Peace Team website (www.michiganpeaceteam.org) to learn more, participate and engage! She was thanked by all for sharing with us.

Business Meeting:

- Colleen reported on the recent visit to Senator Levin’s office and the Regional Conf. in Manistee, MI
- We are participating in the Kroger Plus card program, with proceeds going to the Education Fund.
- We are participating in the 2nd annual Inner Peace Festival in Ann Arbor on June 24th
- Next month’s meeting we’ll be joined by Keith Gunter, who will talk about his Nuclear Wheel of Misfortune.

Colleen thanked all in attendance for joining us, and looked forward to seeing our members during the many summer activities. With no further business to conduct, the meeting closed at 9:10 pm.