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A Newsletter of the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable

THE ROUNDTABLE



Interfaith Youth Committee Luncheon *February 11, 2014*

Rachel Kuhr loves telling newcomers about being a Juan Diego student. “I like to tell them I am a Seventh-day Adventist in a Mormon state attending a Catholic high school.” She was one of six students from various religious backgrounds who offered their own dialogue and reflections at a special luncheon recognizing Interfaith Month. The luncheon was hosted by Juan Diego Catholic High School in Draper.

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A Deeksha Night of “Unconditional Loving: Giving and Receiving Blessings”

February 13, 2014

“A Blessed thank you to the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable for attending our regular Thursday evening Deeksha event at the Salt Lake Krishna Temple during Interfaith Month,” expressed Alan Naumann of the Deeksha community. “Our numbers swelled in attendance to welcome the honored guests of different faiths. And that alone was a great blessing.”

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Gov. Gary Herbert offered remarks at the Interfaith Blessing Ceremony

Interfaith Blessing Ceremony at Capitol Rotunda

February 12, 2014

The hour-long program began at 9:00 a.m. with a welcome and remarks from Roundtable Chair Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos. He then introduced Lacey Harris, a member of the Northern Ute and Northern Paiute tribes, who would perform the blessing ceremony. Pamela Atkinson introduced Gov. Gary Herbert, who offered remarks, then turned over the rest of the time to Lacey.

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Interfaith Youth Committee Luncheon / *Continued from first page*



Rachel Kuhr

Ikuna Tavake, who is Tongan, serves as a student ambassador, is on student government, and plays lacrosse. He is LDS, and learned about Juan Diego from cousins who attended before him. He started as a sophomore after being homeschooled. "It didn't matter what faith I was. I really like the idea I could pray before classes, especially if I didn't study for an exam the night before. Can't do that in public school. Here it's OK, and we are all a tight-knit family together."



Ikuna Tavake



Megha Kundra



Kaho Horiuchi



Amber Wolff

Fellow student Amber Wolff agrees. "I came from Grace Lutheran (school) which was so small. Juan Diego had a lot more people, but everyone was so nice; suddenly my family grew." She is a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and has traveled on eastern European missions to Russia and Ukraine teaching English. She said that in theology class, she learned that her faith is similar to Catholicism, but she could comfortably talk about the subtle differences with her peers.

Megha Kundra, a Hindu who moved to Utah from New York, and Kaho Horiuchi, an international student, both shared initial concerns about being different from "mainstream" Utah.

Kaho, who is Shinto, was surprised at how often Americans refer to religion, and also how it is also depicted in symbols, which is so different from her native Japan. She said there are 40 international students, most of whom are Asian, but are also from very diverse countries and cultures. Megha also found that diversity makes for good topical discussions. She noted, "It really helped me become a better Hindu, but more importantly, a better human being."

Interfaith Youth Committee Luncheon / Continued

Zachary Schonrock, a Juan Diego student ambassador who has attended the school since first grade, led guests on a tour of the campus. He completed a summer science internship at the University of Utah through Juan Diego's Academy of Sciences. And he spent the fall rehearsing as Scarecrow in "The Wizard of Oz." In his spare time, Zach runs on the cross country and track teams.

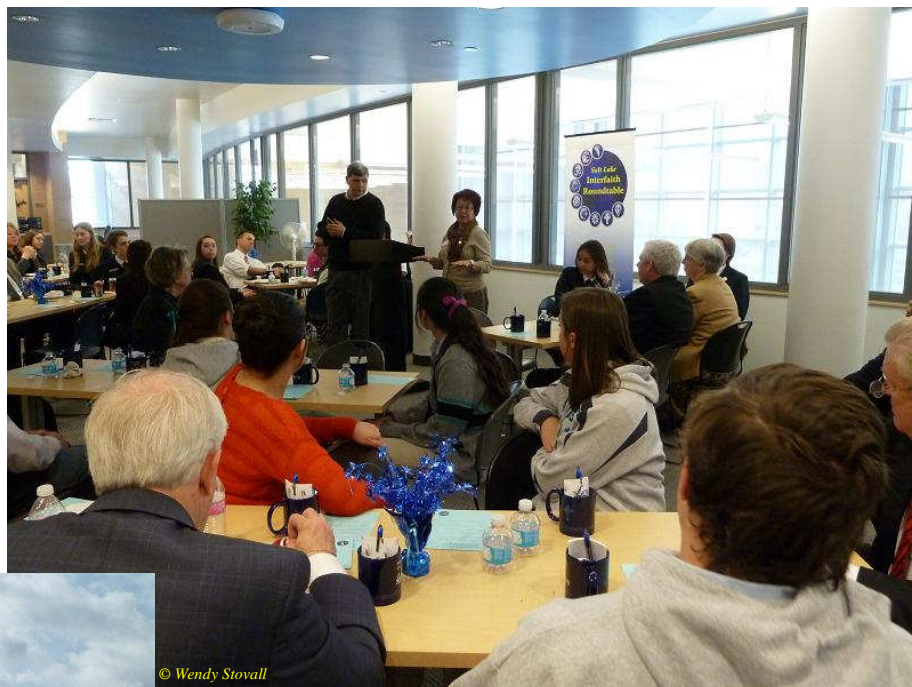
He says what he appreciates most about being in a Catholic school (besides the many academic and extracurricular offerings) is the "ability to talk about God in a classroom with kids of other faiths without worrying about having the discussion."



Zachary Schonrock



Dr. Galey Colosimo, Principal of Juan Diego Catholic High School



St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of each member or member organization. The Roundtable encourages open discussion and dialogue.

A Deeksha Night of “Unconditional Loving” / Continued from first page



Janet Eakin

Deeksha member Diana Fawn sang the opening prayer, her own version of the Moola Mantra, an ancient Sanskrit prayer that is thousands of years old. According to Alan, “It is taught to us by the founders of the Oneness University in India, Sri Amma Bhagavan.” Deeksha Trainer, Janet Eakin, who traveled to India to become a trainer, led the evening, and Hala Yuda, a monk from the Krishna Temple, gave a few words about their Krishna tradition.

As a special tribute to Interfaith Month, the evening included a beautiful variety of music from many faith traditions, while Deeksha Blessing Givers took the opportunity to move around the room and give Blessings to the partici-



Diana Fawn

pants. The Deeksha/Oneness Blessing is a process of transfer of divine grace that initiates a journey into higher states of consciousness.



Hala Yuda



The Deeksha Utah community (awakeningoneness.com) was honored with the 2014 Community Service Award from the New Consciousness Expo in March. The community was acknowledged for countless hours of volunteer Deeksha Blessings and credited with helping to raise the Consciousness of the community in the state of Utah. There are over 1200 Deeksha Blessing Givers in Utah. Every day of the week there is an opportunity to receive a Deeksha Blessing in Salt Lake, Davis, and Utah counties.

Interfaith Blessing Ceremony / Continued from first page

This was the second year that Lacey has conducted an Interfaith Month blessing ceremony in the Capitol rotunda. He is also a Roundtable Board member, and has conducted prayers for the world during the annual Interfaith Musical Tribute and other Roundtable functions.

Lacey wore ceremonial dress and decoration and chanted the blessing in his native Ute language, while waving an eagle wing fan. The wing fan is symbolic of the First Nation People's belief that the eagle is the bird that flies the highest and carries their prayers.

He prayed also for unity among all people, including those who consider themselves nonbelievers. "They still have a place with us," he said before beginning the ceremony, as he put together a ceremonial pipe and stem that represented the unity of the spiritual and the temporal.

His prayer asked his four brothers—the north, south, east, and west—to give their gifts to us. He explained that praying in the four directions was symbolic of the gathering of many faiths that morning. He also said that the pipe ceremony symbolizes our existence on Earth and ties to the Creator:



Above: Roundtable Chair Rev. Fr. Elias Koucos greets guests
Below: Roundtable Board Member Lacey Harris performed the blessing ceremony



Pacifica Institute Utah presented two Turkish rugs to Gov. Herbert.
Left: Bunyamin Aysan; Coskun Kariparduc, the director of Pacifica Institute Utah (center); Pamela Atkinson (right)

Video and still cameras were not allowed during the blessing as a sign of respect for the sacred ritual.

After the blessing, the governor received an unexpected gift of two Turkish rugs from Pacifica Institute Utah, which were specially made for him. One was woven with a picture of the governor, and another, with a picture of him and his wife, Jeanette. Coskun Kariparduc, the director of Pacifica Institute Utah said they did this to thank the governor for his inclusion of religions in the state. "It was perfect. He was very happy," said Coskun.

The Roundtable Board thanks Gov. Herbert and Pamela Atkinson for taking time from their full schedules to participate in this event and acknowledge the valuable assistance of the governor's office staff.

Quaker Meeting House Workshop

"This Land Was Your Land: Examining the Doctrine of Discovery and its enduring impact on America's native peoples"

February 19, 2014

In response to a call from the World Council of Churches, the Salt Lake Meeting (Quaker) invited the community to a free participatory workshop examining the Doctrine of Discovery and its enduring impact on America's Native Peoples.

The Doctrine of Discovery is based on a presumption of European Christian superiority that guided European colonization throughout the world. The doctrine stated that if lands were "discovered," they could be claimed, and the inhabitants, if they did not convert to Christianity, could be killed or enslaved.



Andalin Bachman performed with flute



© Elaine Emmi
Lacee Harris (left) with moderator Paula Palmer



© Wendy Stovall

In 2007, after a process that lasted over 20 years, the United Nations adopted a Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous peoples then called for repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, which continues to be part of the legal system, especially with regard to land ownership. The World Council of Churches responded in 2012 with a resolution repudiating the doctrine and asking all member churches to do so as well.

Workshop facilitator Paula Palmer, a Quaker from Boulder, CO, has lived and worked with and for indigenous peoples in many parts of the world. She had been closely following this process and felt a spiritual calling to develop a workshop to help Americans understand the impacts of the doctrine in their own country.

The workshop begins with three speakers at the edges of the room: a narrator, a European colonist, and an historian. An indigenous speaker stands on a stool in the middle of the room.



© Elaine Emmi

Quaker Meeting House Workshop / Continued



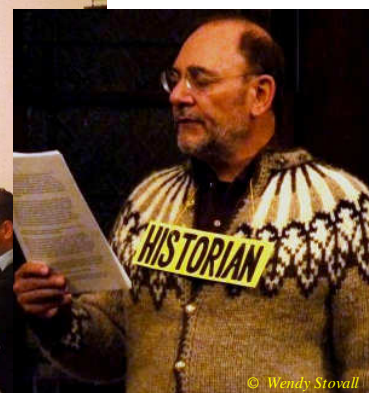
Elaine Emmi

For the Salt Lake workshop, the part was spoken by Roundtable Board Member Lacee Harris. Participants stood around him on blankets laid on the floor, which represented indigenous territories. Lacee recounted the indigenous experience since colonization, and read what were for the most part, actual quotes of colonists, historians, and indigenous leaders.

As the history proceeds, the blankets are rolled up and the indigenous territory shrinks. Indigenous peoples die from disease and war and the stress of relocation. Participants are asked to step out of the center of the circle and take seats until only the speaker and one other person remains in the middle. "The spoken parts include some language that is difficult to hear because of extreme insensitivity to the humanity and suffering of indigenous peoples,"



Beth Blattenberger (standing) helped co-ordinate the workshop



Phil Emmi



Roseanna Hopper

according to Beth Blattenberger of the Salt Lake Quaker community.

After this part of the workshop, participants share how they were affected, sometimes emotionally. "There is no prescriptive action. The first step in healing is better understanding of what has happened," says Beth. "Some participants expressed a desire to learn to conduct additional workshops." For information on how your faith community can conduct a workshop, contact Beth at bblatten@aol.com.



Wendy Stovall

The Art of Living: Utah Yoga Rave

Spirituality through movement and meditation for all ages

February 19, 2014



The Desibels

For a second year, The Art of Living hosted a yoga rave for Interfaith Month, this time on Wednesday evening, February 19, in the University of Utah Old Union Ballroom, where around 95 people attended.

The yoga rave is a new concept in fun. It is a mix of the popularity of yoga, meditation, and music. The idea originated six years ago in Argentina as an alternative to the smoke, drug and alcohol party scene. Its goal is to have clean, healthy fun in a safe space without the use of damaging substances.

Spiritual rapper Daniel Moss opened the event. He is an Art of Living Foundation volunteer who teaches yoga, meditation, and beat boxing. His philosophy is that life is meant to be shared and celebrated with gratitude for our many blessings. Throughout the evening, participants enjoyed Daniel performing rhyming lyrics of peace, hope and love.

There was basic yoga for the inexperienced and curious, led by Santosh Maknikar, who has practiced yoga since the age of five. He is the founder of Yoga for People, a nonprofit charitable organization which takes yoga to individuals struggling with addiction, illness, and depression.

In addition, a local Indian music band, The Desibels, performed a blend of mantras and chants with modern beats and bright, colorful stage lights, and projected images, in a wholesome atmosphere. They played a variety of music, characterized as a blend of beautiful healing vibrations from ancient Sanskrit mantras combined with electronic music.

Daniel Moss closed the evening with a brief guided meditation, intended to offer serenity and a deep rest for the mind and body.

Dr. Ed Fila, a participant, said, "I loved it, just wish it was longer with more yoga and dancing." Another participant, Ashish Mahajan, remarked, "I have to say that it was a really energetic, fun-filled evening..."

The Art of Living Foundation is a nonprofit, educational and humanitarian organization operating in over 157 countries. It was founded by spiritual leader and humanitarian Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.



THE ROUNDTABLE

**Increasing Harmony and Understanding
in our Communities**

The Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) organization. Your tax deductible contributions are very much appreciated and help to make our work of faith cooperation and event planning possible. We could also use donations of office supplies, such as stamps and copy paper.

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