

David Wick — submitted 10/21/14
Public Forum - City Council



Culture of Peace Initiative - Ashland

Box 524 Ashland, OR 97520 info@cpi-ashland.org www.cpi-ashland.org

Dear Mayor Stromberg and Ashland City Councilors:

Ashland has a unique culture that needs to be celebrated, nurtured and expanded. We are writing to you to ask you to schedule a formal agenda item to create a city *Culture of Peace Commission (CPC)*. It is our deep belief that this formal on-going recognition of such an effort serves the City's outreach and tourist efforts, as well as enhances the operation of city government and the community for us all.

It has become well-established that the pathway to a peace culture is through local efforts in business, education, community and environment that come together to better understand each other and share activities in a way that enables deeper connections and wider collaboration in challenging times. A culture of peace requires a new mindset and way of thinking, bringing the lens of peacebuilding to all relationships. Last year after 175 community members gathered for our International Day of Peace, Feast for Peace, we decided to move beyond dinners, words and proclamations to practical ideas for formalizing a culture of peace in Ashland.

After a year of meetings and dialogue with more community members we find there is **overwhelming support** for such a measure. Clearly if it is brought forward as an election initiative, as some are suggesting, it would receive substantial majority support. However, before taking such action we are asking that the council to demonstrate creative leadership, work with us to create the parameters of such a Commission and avoid the costs of the election campaign.

Enclosed you will find a number of documents that support this action, including the Powers and Duties of a proposed CPC in Ashland from our draft ordinance. The objective is to bring together a formal Commission whose members are skilled in non-violent communication, compassionate listening, mediation, and other peacebuilding disciplines. While a few other cities around the country have taken steps to create peace commissions, Ashland would be the first in the world to break new ground by creating a 21st century commission founded on a *culture of peace*. Through this significant action we would be helping further change the way our cities, states and world identify themselves and function. This aligns with the courageous, visionary steps taken by earlier city leaders resulting in Ashland's recent Oregon's "eCity" award.

Creation of a formal city Culture of Peace Commission demonstrates leadership by the Council to set a tone and direction for the City, a step toward being proactive, rather than reactive to the challenges ahead, and holding a vision for new ways of functioning.

We look forward to working with you in moving us forward.

Toward a Culture of Peace,

Kathleen Garner
 Kathleen Garner,
 SOU UN Club

Jeff Golden
 Jeff Golden
 Immense Possibilities

Dave Hyde
 Dave Hyde
 UU Social Action Committee

Iren Kai
 Iren Kai
 Pathways to Peace

Herb Rothschild
 Herb Rothschild
 Ashland Peace House

Patricia Sempowich
 Patricia Sempowich
 Communications Company

Eric Sirotkin
 Eric Sirotkin
 Ubuntuworks Peace Education Project

David Wick
 David Wick
 Pathways to Peace

David Adams



Global Movement for
a Culture of Peace

September 13, 2014

Mayor John Stromberg
City of Ashland
20 East Main Street
Ashland, OR 97520

Dear Mayor Stromberg and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to you to support the development of a City Peace Commission in your city. I am a member of the New Haven City Peace Commission, and have extensive experience in this regard, having been the Director of the United Nations International Year for the Culture of Peace in 2000 and coordinator of the Culture of Peace News Network (<http://cpnn-world.org>) at the present time.

The New Haven Commission was established during the 1980s to support citizen involvement with the Nuclear Freeze and people-to-people contacts with the former Soviet Union, as well as to deal with the considerable problems of violence in our city. It serves in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and the Board of Alders, and includes Alders among its members.

Among our activities is an annual report on the state of the culture of peace in New Haven, derived from interviews with community activists, and providing recognition of gains and deficits in our city's culture of peace.

Although we have not yet fully exploited the possibilities, we believe that we can help the city establish itself as a "peace city" to make us more attractive to tourism. In that regard, I will be representing the Commission at the congress next year of the International Institute of Peace through Tourism, that will take place in South Africa.

Through the Commission, the city has long been linked to international networks of peace cities. We would like to see the growth of peace cities and networking around the world, and are ready to provide you with any help we can to become a peace city and take part in this growing movement.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Adams

95 Lyon Street, New Haven, CT 06511 - 203-772-6672 david@cpnn-world.org
websites: <http://cpnn-world.org> and <http://culture-of-peace.info>

Culture of Peace Commission – Proposal to Ashland Mayor and City Council
When: Tuesday, October 21st 6:30pm Supporters Rally, 7:00pm Presentation
Where:

Goals of Culture of Peace Initiative – Ashland

Our goal is an Ashland that identifies itself as a culture of peace, both as a commitment to itself and a self-presentation to the world. Integral to achieving that goal are:

- Official guidance of this enterprise by the City of Ashland through a peace commission.
- A commitment by the Ashland School District to promote peace education throughout the schools, including the use of nonviolent communication and conflict resolution at all grade levels.
- On-going, inclusive explorations of what it means to be a culture of peace, identification of ways to more completely realize that culture, and frequent publicizing of Peacebuilding work.
- The awareness by all segments of Ashland of how they are already building a culture of peace, and their commitment to develop further that dimension of their activities.
- Widespread use of Peacebuilding tools that emphasize mutual respect and restoration of right relationships.

What is a Culture of Peace?

*“A culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life...”**

Ashland thoughts: “Redefine our societal definitions of success that is based on our interdependence that we all prosper in a culture that respects and values the contribution of all parts of the community.”

“Conscious of the rights and well-being of each other and to live to support that well-being in all actions and decisions at all levels.”

“Becoming more conscious of the human dynamic.”

“Awakening to what is the essence of being human.”

“Living together in a community on all levels - local, state national international.”

“Respect for people with different views and ideas.”

“Society where we value each other. It takes a village so what does that look like? Work in harmony with each other.”

“Understanding of our interdependence - a bright future depends on a bright future for us all. A shared human identity and common destiny. Opposite of violence and prejudice.”

A culture of peace has been a dream and hope for human beings for thousands of years, even though different words may have been used. In the last half of the 20th Century a more precise focus and language has emerged which serves as a guideline for those seeking and leading in this quest.

“...my experience and research have convinced me that the world is on the verge of the greatest change in human history: the transition from the culture of war that we have had for tens of thousands of years to a new culture, a culture of peace.” David Adams, Director, UNESCO

This is about shifting mindset and behavior in all aspects of our societies as we move from force to reason, from conflict and violence to dialogue and Peacebuilding and embrace humanity’s interconnectedness and inner oneness. It has become well-established that the pathway to a peace culture is through local efforts in NGOs, education, government, business, and environment that come together to better understand each other and create new possibilities. Education, and specifically peace education, is an essential ingredient.

Cities are the real societal structural level where the Culture of Peace rubber meets the road. The individual person is always the bottom line in Peace and Peacebuilding daily choices, but it is the city that has the reach, authority, responsibility and influence to set the positive tone and direction for so many people. This can be done by beginning to use the Culture of Peace as a compass for guidance and a lens to see and understand differently. This is relatively new territory in the early stages and where we are co-creating together.

The growing Culture of Peace is actually alive and well in many cities, but is often invisible and not identified or nourished directly. The results and benefits of embracing and living in a Culture of Peace are enormous and pervasive in health, happiness, prosperity, sustainability and a legacy for future generations!

As defined by the United Nations, the Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations (UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13).

* United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace (A/RES/53/243).

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