



Meaningful World

The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP)

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Press Release

Meaningfulworld Celebrates 25th Anniversary on the International Day of Peace

Lyla Parvez & Lorraine Simmons

While the International Day of Peace was celebrated in various ways by millions around the world, The Bronx Museum of the Arts and Meaningfulworld added to the healing energy of peace with enthusiasm and joy. On Sunday, 20 September 2015, close to 100 people gathered to hear words of wisdom and encouragement, listen to lively music, honor peacemakers, consume a delicious homemade brunch, and best of all—we recognized the vulnerability of people all over the world and raised them up in our Heart-to-Heart Circle for healing and love. Standing holding hands, connecting to each heart in the room, each heart in the Bronx, each heart in the United States, and then to all people and living things on the earth was a powerfully moving experience.

Kathy Orchen, Meaningfulworld VP for Intern Relations, began the festivities by welcoming all and introducing **Dr. Ani Kalayjian**, Meaningfulworld Founder and President. She said passionately that the International Day of Peace (IDP) is a special day of inspiration. It has been proclaimed by the United Nations for observance on 21 September as ‘a global day of ceasefire and non-violence by all nations and people to honor a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day. The Day has been celebrated since 1982.



Kathy Orchen



Dr. Ani Kalayjian addressing the audience



She continued by saying that seed of peace exists in all of us, but like a diamond we must be able to clean it, shape it, and work on it mindfully to see its brilliance. Peace cannot be imposed from outside; it must be realized from within. We all must make efforts to inculcate peace in ourselves. We can change the world only within, one heart at a time, one person at a time, one loving kindness at a time. She went on to discuss how the Secretary General had a 100-day countdown to the International Day of Peace and Meaningfulworld had a 30-day countdown as well, providing peaceful quotations, poetry, and songs to

our community. Dr. Kalayjian discussed with emotion how nonviolence must be achieved on a global scale and posed the question as to why the International Day of Peace cannot be celebrated and lived every day. She encouraged and urged each person present to tell at least three people about what they would learn while attending the event.

Next the *Meaningfulworld Interns & Officers*, holding a flag from the country that we have served, spoke to what peace means to them, either through their own words or through a quote from an idol. It was a beautiful way to display the meaning of peace through the eyes of various individuals.

Longtime friend of Meaningfulworld, vocalist *Nirvana Lucie Nixon*, entertained the audience with soothing heartfelt songs that eased us into a place of mindfulness and peace.

“*Partnerships for Peace—Dignity for All.*” was the theme addressed by the interfaith distinguished panelists:



Paul Jaffe



Rick Ullford-Chase



Imam Syed Sayeed

Paul Jaffe discussed the Buddhist perspective and the idea that humans may sometimes not pay attention to internal thoughts of peace. Once we recognize that “the life of the other person is my life,” then we will understand what peace truly means and how to move toward a more peaceful existence. Paul discussed three key points: the experience of peace is not fundamentally arranged by outer conditions, though there are outer conditions which conduce to the feeling of peace and those which make it very difficult to find. Essentially, one way to arrange peace is that once individuals understand through deep examination that everyone is connected at a deeper level, the process of peace with one another can be achieved. Second, he discussed the Buddhist tradition within the realm of selflessness and more so, recognizing the lack of permanence in all our formations, physical, mental and philosophical. Third, the emotional texture that emerges out of the vision of interconnectedness is one that is full of love and compassion.

Rick Ufford-Chase discussed the union of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, highlighting how a residential community in the Hudson Valley is composed of members of various religions. The individuals of this community discuss how these religions can work together to build a better, more peaceful world. He provided an example in Ferguson, when they asked the community to send a delegate of religious members to supply some voice of peace. When discussing the matter of peace, Rick spoke about how there have always been extremes and how he has never met a religion whose purpose was evil. Then he went on to discuss how there have always been people who interpret religion as they desire and we must stand up and direct them toward the positive. Rick also shed light on the gap between the wealthy and the poor, highlighting that until the gap is lessened, there will not be change for the positive. Currently, social media provides an outlet for voices of extremism, making it more difficult to stop it in the process. Ultimately, if we keep approaching extremists by killing them instead of due process and not talking with them then we will never live in a secure place.

Imam Syed Sayeed, Muslim Chaplain and Muslim Life Advisor at Columbia University, discussed the Quran and the meaning behind some of the verses, highlighting the Prophet and the essence of what peace means in the context of Islam. He also discussed the origin of many prophets and the beauty of the world’s religions. When responding to the answer on peace, Imam Syed Sayeed provided an example of two brothers, one whose sacrifice was not accepted and one whose sacrifice was accepted. The brother who was denied decided to kill his brother, displaying irrational behavior that is ever-more present in today’s world.

A wonderful, homemade and organic celebratory brunch was served.

Speaking with Rhythms, a children’s percussion group from East Harlem, provided wonderfully energetic entertainment for the day through their innovative and very interesting compositions and captivated the audience with the rich sounds and use of multiple instruments. Speaking with Rhythms brightened the mood for the entire event.



Speaking With Rhythms Dr. Ani Kalayjian’s Heart-to-Heart Circle of Gratitude and Love

The Meaningfulworld Youth Peace Award was given to: **Emily Brewer**, MDiv, co-director at the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF), a nationwide community of Presbyterians who seek to follow the nonviolence of Jesus by working to reduce war and violence in the world. It is one of the oldest peacemaking organizations in the country. Emily has spent time in Guatemala, Colombia, and most recently Palestine. During her mission trips, Emily’s desire to provide assistance and promote nonviolence flourished and began to take shape.

Accepting the Meaningfulworld Peace Award for **The South Bronx Rising Together** was **Deneisha Thompson**. The South Bronx Rising Together is a collaborative network of program providers and community stakeholders who work together to create a community that is college and career ready by leveraging the expertise of a network of families, educators, business leaders, community advocates, and service providers to support the lifelong success of families and youth in the community.



Emily Brewer



Deneisha Thompson



Nutritious Brunch

A lively raffle drawing followed. Global gifts from our Humanitarian Missions were displayed and gifted. Followed by Dr. Ani’s signature Heart-to-Heart Circle of Gratitude and Love, where everyone held hands and placed their right hand on the heart of the person to their right. Dr Kalayjian, in a guided meditation, invited for each person to name a country to uplift, while the entire audience chanted “May Peace prevail in” and then the name of the country in distress, such as: Syria, Sierra Leone, Karapagh, Nepal, USA, NY, etc.

For more than 25 years Meaningfulworld has been committed to service of humanity, creating healing, instilling peace, and transforming generational pain and suffering. We have worked in more than 46 countries around the globe in seven regions: Africa, Asia, North and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Middle East, transforming the lives of more than a million people. Meaningfulworld has organized more than 60 programs at the United Nations and has more than 100 research publications, more than 500 local and global healing programs, more than 250 national and academic symposia, and more than 2,000 global educational programs. To honor and celebrate Meaningfulworld’s 25th Anniversary we sang “Happy Birthday” as Dr. Kalayjian cut a cake that was shared with all. Congratulations to Dr. Kalayjian for marking this extraordinary milestone and her commitment to helping so many people all over the world.

Special gratitude to our cosponsors: The Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP), Meaningfulworld, the Armenian Constitutional Rights Protective Centre of Armenia, Armenian American Society for Studies on Stress & Genocide (AASSSG), Institute for

Multicultural Counseling and Educational Services (IMCES), Voices for Freedom, Mr. Der-Artinian, Alexander Simmons, and ***Special gratitude to our organizing committee:*** Dr. Ani Kalayjian, Kathy Orchen, Lorraine Simmons, Lyla Parvez, Raman Kaur, Brianda Quinones, Isreal Adeyanju, Irene Tananyan, Andre Der-Artinian, William Szilagyi, Shirley Julien, Felicia Wu Wuchen, Caroline Pinsky, and Upuli Ranaweera.



Founded in 1990, Meaningfulworld, the Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP), affiliated with the United Nations, has achieved international recognition as a leader in training humanitarian outreach professionals as well as responding to two decades of global and local disasters. Meaningfulworld is committed to global education promoting state-of-the-art scientific theory, peace and consciousness research, and the development of technical skills to train mental health professionals, teachers, psychologists, art therapists, nutritionists, alternative medicine practitioners, clergy, nurses, mediators, interfaith ministers, and laypeople committed to service. Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Outreach teams make a daily difference in 45 countries in people's lives helping to transform tragedy and trauma into healing through post-trauma growth, guidance, empowerment, mindfulness, and meaning-making through a new worldview. Ask yourself... Ask your friends... What makes your world more meaningful?

Our Motto: When one helps another, BOTH become stronger