



**February 25, 2013**

**To: World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize Committee**

**From: Reverend Dr. Linda Groff  
Interfaith Minister  
University Professor, California State University Dominguez Hills**

**Re: Letter of Recommendation for Renee De Palma, Founder of “World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival: Creating Harmony Through Cinema,”  
Los Angeles, California, USA, February 6-10, 2013**

This is a letter of recommendation for Renee De Palma for her groundbreaking work in creating the First Annual World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival in Los Angeles, California, February 6-10, 2013. Los Angeles is not only the film capital of the world, but Los Angeles and California in general are also a mixing place of many different cultures and religions, making this a perfect place to initiate such an annual interfaith film festival—a five day event packed with many interfaith film screenings, panels of film makers, film writer’s workshops, opening and closing events, awards to film makers in different categories, and different themes for the films shown each of the five days, as follows:

- Wed., Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, Opening Night
- Thurs., Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, Women in Cinema
- Fri., Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, Environmental Cinema
- Sat., Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, Children, Family, & Community Day
- Sun., Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>, Interfaith Films, a Film Nominees and VIP Reception, culminating in a closing World Interfaith Harmony Awards Program (with Business Attire or Black Tie Encouraged)

Renee is an old friend that I have known for 8-9 years in Los Angeles and this is a truly major achievement that she has organized and brought into being. Renee was the perfect person to pull off this combined interfaith and film event, having had these two twin passions and tracks in her life for many years—just as Los Angeles also perfectly combines many people interested in both interfaith and film, which have now been brought together for what will become an ongoing annual event.

Renee’s twin interests in interfaith and film include graduating from the University of California, Santa Cruz with a double major in both Film and World Religious Studies, which was followed by graduate work and a Master’s Certificate in Entertainment Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles. Renee has also worked for 26 years producing, directing, writing, and editing films, including various documentaries. Some of the companies she has worked for include ABC, HBO, Discovery Channel, Discovery Health, The Travel Channel, PBS, Paramount, Sony, and Warner Brothers

studios. Renee has also been involved with various different interfaith organizations in the broader Los Angeles community, including Unity-And-Diversity World Council, Culver City Interfaith Alliance, Westside Interfaith Council, Southern California Committee For A Parliament Of The World's Religions, Westside Interfaith Council For A Parliament Of The World's Religions, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Multi-Faith Clergy Council.

My own background for writing the above recommendation for Renee is that I have been a University Professor for 40 years—teaching and writing in areas of global futures, peace, and intercultural/ interreligious dialogue issues. I also recently became an interfaith minister, and also started monthly Spiritual Salons—L.A. (we've now had 27 salons). I've been involved in various interfaith organizations for many years, where I also met Renee. When I got the idea to start monthly Spiritual Salons, which are open to people from any faith tradition, Renee jumped right in and offered to help support them, which she has done as a Co-Founder from the beginning. In December 2010 and December 2011, we also created an Interfaith Holiday Celebration honoring the light that all our spiritual-religious traditions bring into the world. Then in December 2012, the Spiritual Salons combined with Unity-and-Diversity World Council and 20 other co-sponsoring organizations to create an Interfaith Celebration of Light, which was a totally participatory event for all the organizations and people attending, and which is planned as an annual event.

I am totally delighted that Renee created the idea and took the initiative—based also on her very strong background in both interfaith and film areas—to start an Annual World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival in Los Angeles, which is sure to become an even bigger and more significant event for the community each year. Even in this first year, filmmakers also came from various other countries—including Germany, India, Italy, and Canada, making this also a global event. There was also a category for youth filmmakers. It was great to see all the filmmakers nominated be so enthusiastic and excited to participate in this groundbreaking event and to also have their films recognized and appreciated. This is an event whose time has come!!

Please endorse this wonderful event so that Renee and the other organizers can continue to implement the World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival on an annual basis. Any financial help would be very useful to them, as this level of endeavor requires a lot of support.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

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

Reverend Dr. Linda Groff Ph.D.  
Interfaith Minister  
Board Of Directors  
Southern California Committee For A Parliament Of The World's Religions  
Professor California State University Dominguez Hills