



February 27, 2013

Dear Jury of the UN Interfaith Harmony Week,

The World Interfaith Harmony Week Film Festival was a five day community building event which had a broad appeal for people for audiences from all walks of life who attended travelling from all parts of North and South America, Europe and Asia to take part.

The selection committee for the films which were accepted into the festival made every effort to feature the broadest selections of films which at their core, amplified the theme of caring for creation and reverence for all beings. This was indeed a great source of inspiration to festival attendees and members of the selection committee, and stands as a testament to the deep desire of this community to appreciate the rich interfaith and intercultural content that these films embodied. Festival designer and founder Renee De Palma deftly recognized this in planning the festival, and its tremendous success was due in large part to her keen understanding of her community's willingness to embrace these principles.

The content of the films were steeped in high ideals which emphasized protecting the sacred and the dignity and beauty of the natural environment as well as cultural heritage, and in celebration of this, present at each day's venue at the festival, a Roerich Pax Cultural/Banner of Peace was on display as an symbol of commitment to foster a Culture of Peace which was the intent of the festival from its inception.

What made the festival distinctly special was the broad representation of multiple spiritual, religious and Indigenous traditions all featured and celebrated for their unique beauty in splendor and equal measure. It was indeed an honor to be selected as the recipient of the Ambassador of Harmony award at festival and shared this distinction of recognition alongside esteemed visionary and interfaith pioneer of over 60 years Rev. Leland Stewert and Humanitarian Sura Das Kadetz.

I am looking forward to taking part in future World Interfaith Harmony Film Festivals with Renee DePalma keenly planning and implementing expert programming and discussion around films with great meaning and inspiring content.

This unique Festival was enriched the lives of many, and I wish it continued success.

In Peace,

Rebecca Tobias

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The purpose of the United Religions Initiative is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings. –
See more at: http://www.uri.org/about_uri/#sthash.Md5YRH3E.dpu



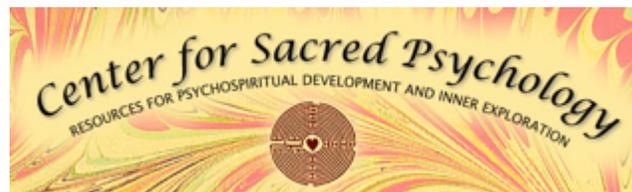
The World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival was an exceptional expression of interfaith harmony while exemplifying the spirit of collaboration and creativity.

Founder Renee De Palma and her team succeeded in manifesting an event that brought artists, filmmakers and the greater community together to explore interfaith understanding through the art of cinema in the settings of the Skirball Jewish Cultural Center and Iman Muslim Cultural Center.

From the opening ceremony blessings by Chief Phil Lane and Chief Ruben George to the closing awards ceremony, this event was thoughtful, dynamic and provided a fresh medium for interfaith reconciliation and harmony. I first met Rene De Palma at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Australia in 2009. Since then, I have worked with Renee in the interfaith community of Southern California and find her focused, solution oriented and pragmatic. As a filmmaker, Renee achieved her goal of using her skills and passions to address the needs in the world with the result being the World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival.

Sande Hart

Chair of the North American Region of the United Religions Initiative



Dear World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival,

You are to be congratulated for pioneering this awesome Multi-Cultural Interfaith Film Festival.

I was delighted to meet the Directors and experience their sacrificial passion in planning their films. I felt most impressed by the depth of the themes on PEACE AND JUSTICE, INTERFAITH HARMONY, THE GOLDEN RULE, DEEP RESPECT FOR THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) as well as Buddhism, Hinduism, Baha'i, Sikhism, and Native American Spirituality. How did you get such amazing films and Directors from India, Asia, Africa, Europe, and throughout the U.S.A.?

I look forward to your 2014 World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival! You have begun a visionary interfaith project that will demonstrate the UNIVERSAL THEME OF THE GOLDEN RULE.

May you receive the needed gold to build and develop this most needed forum for interfaith dialogue and harmony worldwide. Let it be so.

Gratefully,

Dr. Thomas M. Hedberg, Ph.D.

Center For Sacred Psychology

Chaplain Southern California Committee For A Parliament Of The World's Religions



I was recently invited to attend the 1st annual World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival in LA, where our Film on the Golden Rule was awarded Best International Short Film.

It was an honour to be selected to compete and be screened in a Festival that acknowledged the importance of Interfaith relations globally. In attendance were filmmakers from all around the world, with a wide variety of offerings from dramatic feature length films, to short films created and produced by youth.

Following our win, I have been invited back to be part of the Festival planning committee and jury for next year, which is not an honour I take lightly.

Our film was received with cheers and smiles by those in attendance. The warm audience reception informs me that our work at Scarboro Missions is valued not only locally, but internationally- something we should all be proud of.

I look forward to the Festival's 2nd year, which will place it on the Interfaith map globally- for its efforts to bring together artists and their work - building bridges of peace, dialogue and understanding for the world.

Sincerely,

Tina Petrova
Visionary Media Inc.
283 Danforth Av. #188
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Scarboro Missions

Dear United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week Committee,

I had the pleasure of seeing Renee De Palma join both of her passions in life by solely creating the 1st Annual World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival.

She is someone who had an idea and held that vision in place so that others could join together to share a common dream of world harmony through interfaith dialogue and cinema.

It is a lot to put together even a one day event, but she accomplished a five day event packed full of movies, workshops, Interfaith dialogue and more from all faith traditions. She even had a free day for children, families in the community in which she resides, Los Angeles, California.

Filmmakers traveled from India, Germany, Italy, Canada and all across the United States.

I'm grateful to have witnessed this entire event from conception to fruition. She has created something that should be honored.

My hope is that she be recognized with the Grand Prize for holding the event that is still being discussed throughout the Interfaith Community.

Respectfully and Blessings,

Mildred Detro
Marketing Director



February 27, 2013

TO: 2013 World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize Award Selection Committee
FROM: Viveka Davis*
RE: Guest Testimonial: World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival, Los Angeles

I will now strongly recommend the World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival for the Grand Prize and any and all special funding. When contemplating the global need for peace makers, Art is the language that transcends social, political, economic and cultural boundaries to reveal our inherent relatedness at a time on this planet where our collective life depends upon it.

How can we best spread the word and truly create a culture of peace? It must begin with the true harmony of the world interfaith vision. I am here to bring this message and to find a festival that will launch the peace-building era. This festival, for the first time has galvanized key peace makers, sacred activists, environmentalists and visionary leaders of our time, and provides a dynamic forum for ideas and the inspiration to focus energy and create a future worth living into -- a truly multi-cultural, intergenerational event.

This event became a catalyst: an opportunity to cross-pollinate and weave together the various grass-roots movements, social networks and traditional religious institutions. It brought forward a dynamic international interfaith community, the Global Alliance for Transformational Entertainment (G.A.T.E.) <http://gatecommunity.org/gate3/> and Peace Link Live <http://gatecommunity.org/gate3/>. It showcased stories of forgiveness, compassion, community, as well as environmental sustainability. The international filmmakers and artists who brought their sacred visions forward are the voice of possibility in this next cycle, which will be a pro-active shift towards a world that works for everyone.

This festival had workshops, dialogues and networking opportunities. It allowed participants to gain skills and insights empowering them as storytellers and seeding community projects. When you plant a tree of this kind it will produce fruits for the good of all for generations to come. The legacy of this festival is profound, personal and powerful. I believe that cinema -- which includes music, movement, humor and drama -- is the most effective and practical way to share the wisdom cultures, and celebrate our diversity while realizing our unity.

Please award the prize and all available resources to grow this as the premier global focus of the U.N. World Interfaith Harmony Week's endeavors.

* Viveka Davis is an artist, actress, filmmaker, sacred activist and international businesswoman. Her film and television credentials can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viveka_Davis



The World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival was a remarkable offering to the people of Los Angeles, a society marked by great diversity while also being diffuse and spread out. Much of our lives are pulled in various directions in search of that which is vital and central to being human. Sometimes, that very offering is right here in our city.

The UN World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival elegantly and earnestly made possible a coming together of community representing various faiths and persuasions and diverse points of view, with offerings of deeply informative documentaries on the state of the world with a call for active and profound change.

As a truly creative person and visionary educator-poet, I was honored to be a part of the proceedings on some days. I take this opportunity also to thank Renee De Palma for her dedicated gift to the city of Los Angeles.

A new flower peeks its face into the light and its fragrance spreads gently. Suddenly, this tiny flower becomes a tree, then a forest, and the whole city learns there is something greater than the usual storm and stress of existence. If we can find our greatness through art and poetry that enlivens and renews spirit while revering peoples of the world and our beautiful ecosystem, then we can shed the weight of ignorance and the shallowness of arrogance to find our greater humanity.

I say this is that time. And a festival such as this is what we need for sustenance of the greater spirit which resides within, as we envision the fulfillment of our greater destiny as individuals and as community.

I thank Renee for allowing me to be part of this process. I also thank her for acknowledging several accomplished filmmakers and, most of all, for noting the fine work of community leaders like Reverend Leland Stewart of Los Angeles and Educator Rebecca Tobias of Vancouver, British Columbia

~ Professor Ambika Talwar
Educator-Poet-Artist-Author-Wellness Consultant
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**Jewish-Palestinian
Living Room Dialogue Group
of San Mateo County**

February 27, 2013

Dear Renee,

Back home from your **First World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival (WIHFF)**, we must tell you how impressed we were with your vision and courage to innovate so successfully.



Our audience was moved -- sometimes to tears, actually -- to depart from the traditional, dry post-screening "Q&A" and move into face-to-face, intimate engagement with Dialogue in small circles that gave voices and ears to every single person in the theater.

Thank you for your bravery allowing us to innovate. You trusted to allow your WIHFF audience to actually experience interfaith harmony among them -- discovering from our film shared meaning, listening skills, new social intelligence, and authentic community. The attendees exited your auditorium with practical tools for communication excellence at home, on their campuses, and perhaps globally.

In over 20 years with our [Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue](#) we have had many film festival experiences. Yet this screening with audience engagement -- multiple floating microphones in the viewers' hands -- was a real breakthrough in participatory cinema.

Distinctive was your own host committee's love, support, and encouragement resulting among the film makers in a seeming surrender of competition, in favor of mutual support and encouragement of each other's diverse, divine genius to tell stories of people on roads to global community. Seeing you do this amazed us.

The newness, beauty, and practicality of your stunning way of presenting cinema will surely keep lifting up the Los Angeles, national, and global interfaith community. You can depend on us to support you.

Renee, we have learned to identify the new breed of artisans of film and of communication excellence. To us, you and your new World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival innovators are the best of both.

Yours,

Elizabeth "Libby" Traubman, B.A., M.S.W.

Lionel "Len" Traubman, D.D.S., M.S.D.

Co-founders -- Jewish Palestinian-Living Room Dialogue

Co-producers -- [DIALOGUE IN NIGERIA: Muslims & Christians Creating Their Future](#)

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February 26, 2013

TO: 2013 World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize Award Selection Committee

FROM: Rev. Doris W. Davis, Interfaith Minister

RE: Qualifications of Prize Competitor, Renee De Palma, founder of World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival

Ms. De Palma's professional qualifications as a filmmaker have been outlined to you by Professor Jack Tucker, but there is a dimension of her activity that makes her uniquely qualified to produce an Interfaith Harmony Film Festival: **she is a practicing Buddhist**, one who is both a student and a teacher of her faith.

I first met Renee when I was President of the Culver City Area Interfaith Alliance during the years 2002-2006. She contributed greatly to our organization by adding her wisdom and her unique point of view to the membership, which included Christian (both Catholic and Protestant) Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Baha'i members. The aim of that organization is to bring about interfaith understanding through fellowship, dialogue, education and community service..

Later and concurrently we were both members of the Southern California Committee for A Parliament of the World's Religions <http://socalparliamentofreligions.org/page4> and traveled together to the Parliament in Melbourne, Australia in 2009. The shared purpose of members of the SCCPWR is to foster understanding and peace among people of diverse faiths.

Renee and I both live in Culver City, California, a city which calls itself "The Heart of Screenland." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culver_City,_California This is because Culver City has been a significant center for motion picture and television production, in part because it was the home of MGM Studios, and now Sony makes its headquarters here. It has long seemed a fitting idea to several of us in the interfaith community to generate an interfaith film festival from this part of the world, and now Renee has taken action and established it. It is her vision and tenacity which has laid the groundwork for what has been launched here, and promises to become a sustainable ongoing effort to encourage the production and distribution of films that deliver a transcendent and hopeful message of peaceful co-existence and cooperation among the members of world's diverse faith traditions.

I believe it is also significant that the two venues Renee chose for the World Interfaith Film Festival, the Skirball Cultural Center for the first three days http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skirball_Cultural_Center and the Iman Cultural Center for the last two. <http://www.yelp.com/biz/iman-cultural-center-los-angeles> It is a credit to Renee and her vision that the choice of venues (Jewish and Muslim) so perfectly reflects the spirit of interfaith cooperation.

Renee De Palma,
World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival
February 2013

Madam President,

What a tremendous joy it is to have attended the World Interfaith Harmony Film Festival 2013! I am so grateful to have such an intimate experience, by getting to know personally, film makers who have created and presented their films from a labour of love, passion, depth, and artistry! I am truly blessed to have the opportunity to be a part of an emerging interfaith culture which honors & celebrates diversity, uniqueness, and an inherent oneness of human-beings, fortitude of the human spirit, of love, strength, courage & forgiveness, so beautifully represented in the many films in this festival.

These films took us from the depths of humanity, our current economic & ecological challenges, and inspired us to know that we can change the direction that has been set in motion by the age of industry and money as more than currency, but as a culture, by our own inspired intervention & faith practices. I am changed by my participation, and know that if anyone sits in my seat, they will be to!

Thank you so much Renee for making this Festival, an idea, which some may have had, but that *you have made a reality!*

Please convey my love & appreciation to the filmmakers who traveled locally & globally to be here, and to present their films.

In deep appreciation & gratitude,

Reverend Pastor Joanie English, MSCS, ALSP
Agape Peace Ministry
Mystic Artist & Visionary Evolutionary