World Interfaith Harmony Week

February 2015

Interfaith Event Submission and Summary

Faith Talk Show: Names and Languages

The Faith Talk Show was launched in December of 2014 by my organization CIDI (Community Interfaith Dialogue on Islam). Partnering with the Rochester, MN Public Library, this monthly show is hosted by myself and features a different guest each month representing a different religion or spiritual practice. The Faith Talk Show is essentially public education on world religions but presented in a fun, relaxed, talk-show atmosphere. The focus of the show is not on Islam or myself necessarily but rather on the guest and the guest’s religion. I do however highlight our similarities and therefore share verses from the Holy Qur’an or *Hadeeth* of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) when appropriate. The show allows the religion of the guest to shine. The fact that there is a Muslim host (myself) who asks questions to a non-Muslim guest about his/her beliefs also demonstrates the true tolerance and respect inherent in Islamic teachings.

On February 4th, the third Faith Talk Show, titled *Names and Languages*, featured guest Rabbi Michelle Werner of B’nai Israel Synagogue of Rochester, MN. The previous two shows featured Christian guests. So on that night the public who attended the show, about 50 people in addition to those who watched via the live stream, were able to learn more about the Jewish faith. The guests on my show never know the questions ahead of time. Each guest is assured that Faith Talk Show is not about religious debates. I never ask trick questions or anything too personal. Each show demonstrates that we can discuss our similarities as well as our differences peacefully and respectably.

The show with Rabbi Michelle demonstrated that a Muslim and a Jew can gather together in mutual respect and in the search of mutual education and knowledge. The Rabbi certainly gave the audience, as well as myself, a look into the world of Reform Judaism. Rabbi was able to share with us knowledge and insights into the Torah, as well as the practices observed during a *Shabbat*, or Sabbath service. Also, the mainly Christian audience witnessed how much the Rabbi and myself respect and love each other. As the host, I endeavor to create a nice mixture of education and comic relief, as was certainly demonstrated with the Rabbi.

At the end of the show the audience was able to ask questions to both the Rabbi and myself. There were questions from Muslims, Jews, and Christians. Even though there were a couple of tough questions, and air of respect was maintained throughout. After the show concluded we were all able to openly greet each other and talk more with the audience. I have received nothing but positive feedback from those in attendance, library staff, as well as the Rabbi herself.

I was grateful to be able to dedicate that show to the World Interfaith Harmony Week. My organization CIDI was formed last August. The Faith Talk Show is just one project CIDI runs in order to foster interfaith dialogue, which is so badly needed in our world.

I will also be submitting pictures, feedback from the show, as well as the YouTube video of the show. CIDI’s YouTube channel houses each show.

Thank you to all who are responsible for making World Interfaith Harmony a reality for another year.

Peace and blessings,

Regina Mustafa

(Founder)

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