



Report to World Interfaith Harmony Week 2015
by
Silicon Valley Interreligious Council (SiVIC)



Event(s) title:

Compassion Games Interfaith League Competition celebrating World Interfaith Harmony Week 2015

Organizers:

Silicon Valley Interreligious Council (SiVIC) – www.sivicouncil.org/blog

and

Carry The Vision (CTV) – www.carrythevision.org

in conjunction with

Compassion Games International (Interfaith league)

Organization Mission Statements:

SiVIC – builds interreligious harmony and understanding so as to promote a just and compassionate society in Silicon Valley.

CTV – creating communities of compassion that lighten up the world, it offers tools, support, and inspiration for community leaders who are interested in the power of nonviolence to create positive change & a new way of living.

SiVIC – An interreligious organization with participating faiths that include: Christian (Baptist, LDS, Catholic, Quaker, Lutheran, Methodist); Islam; Judaism, Wicca, Jain, Buddhist, Hindu, Brahma Kumaris, Kriya Yoga, Sikh, Unitarian Universalist, Zoroastrian

SiVIC Member Organizations:

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community; Campbell United Methodist Church; Center for Spiritual Enlightenment; Chung Tai Zen Center of Sunnyvale; Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints; Northern Calif Council of Covenant of the Goddess; First Unitarian Church of San Jose; Church of Gnosis – Ecclesia; Jain Center of Northern California; Sikh Gurdwara - San Jose; South Bay Islamic Association; Temple Emanu-El; Universal Church of the Master; San Jose Friends Meeting (Quaker); Prince of Peace Lutheran Church; Brahma Kumari World Spiritual Organization; Carry The Vision; Global Ministries University; Hindu American Foundation; Interfaith Council on Economics and Justice/Working Partnership; Interfaith Space; Jewish Federation of Silicon Valley; Pacifica Institute, Silicon Valley Branch; Tzu Chi Foundation; Council of Churches of Santa Clara County.

Contact Info:

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Event Planning Committee:

Girish Shah (chair)- Jain; Rev. Joy-Ellen Lipsky- Unitarian Universalist & Kriya Yoga; Shelley Swan- Kriya Yoga; Mahmut Altun- Pacifica Institute (Islam); Beverly Kam- CSE; Rabbi Elisheva Salamo- Judaism, Rowan Fairgrove- Wiccan; Shobha Vora- Jain; Rev. D Andrew Kille- Baptist

Events & Activities:

The following events and activities were planned and executed during the World Interfaith harmony Week 2015 (Feb 1 to Feb 7) by the team members.

- A Virtual March for Unity in the Social Media (Facebook)
- SiVIC Religious Leaders Forum - Explore the Role & Responsibility of Faith Communities for a Compassionate Society
- Serve dinner at InnVision Shelter to the Homeless Community
- Support an organization serving children & adults with disabilities - Abilities United
- Organize "Sun-Up Our Sanctuaries" program to encourage and support efforts to convert local religious sanctuaries to solar power.
- Service Projects:
 - Plant a Creek: Permanente Creek Planting at Google Campus, Acterra Stewardship Program
 - Recycle Your Electronic Waste: drop off your electronic waste at the Jain Center
- Individual actions – Acts of Compassion – Secret Agent of Compassion

Summary Report:

All of the main activities were reported on the Compassion Games website (<https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports>). However, only some of the “individual actions” were reported as people do not have the time to report them (only to carry the action out).

The score board as reported to Compassion Games website (<http://compassiongames.org/coopetition-scoreboard/>) shows the following counts:

Team Name	Reports	Volunteers	Hours	Served	Dollars	Cans of Soup
Silicon Valley Interreligious Council	21	866	1179	15968	\$7200	110

Activity Reports:

A report on each individual activity is listed below.

A. A Virtual March for Unity in the Social Media (Facebook):

During the URI's World Interfaith Harmony Week webinar in January, in one of the break-out sessions, we discussed the critical need to spread the idea of global harmony virally, in a collaborative manner, through nonviolence and peace, and also demonstrate the power of social media. In light of the recent March for Unity in Paris, we agreed create a Facebook Page called “Global March for Humanity” and consider it a "virtual march" to stand together in unity with all people in nonviolent marches. A website was created and the message was spread through the social media.



The results were astonishing. Over 1500 people “liked” the Facebook page (thereby joining this virtual march), many “posts” were posted to encourage harmony and compassion, a “post reach” count reached almost 16000 spreading the message of interfaith harmony. The people joining the virtual march came from over 45 countries, in 10 languages.

This virtual march is continuing with messages being posted to urge the people to support all nonviolent actions. The recent count of Post Reach is around 20,000. So the march is still on.

This task was additionally supported by: United Religions Initiative North America; Compassion Games Int'l, * Abbey of HOPE (A URI Cooperation Circle), Pacifica Institute, SV; PeaceJam & 1 Billion Acts of Peace besides SiVIC & CTV.

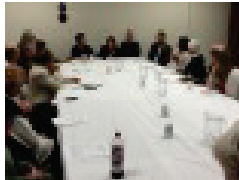
For detailed information click these Links:

www.facebook.com/globalmarchforhumanity

www.globalmarchforhumanity.org

<https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4125>

B. **SiVIC Religious Leaders Forum - Explore the Role & Responsibility of Faith Communities for a Compassionate Society**



SiVIC organized a forum of Interreligious leaders with a topic of "Role & responsibilities of Faith Communities for a compassionate & just society". This event was hosted by the Pacifica Institute SV at their facility in Silicon Valley and provided a lunch.

The forum was attended by 25 religious leaders and was led by Garth Pickett and Mahmut Altun, both Board Members of SiVIC. This was a very enlightening discussion where we learned that the compassion is very deeply rooted in all faith traditions. Although various words are used from Love, compassion, Karuna, empathy, charity etc, it is all point to have a very compassionate and just society. Only if the scriptures were observed as deeply, the world would be a better place.

Here is a reflection of one of the attendee:

[By Sari Heidenreich

Regional Coordinator, URI North America

There are special moments in life when things just click, when something you thought you knew takes on new life.

That happened for me yesterday with compassion.

It's not that before yesterday I didn't think compassion was important — or that I didn't seek to practice it everyday. On the contrary, I was doing both of those things. But yesterday, sitting around a table with 25 people, all seeking to understand the role of compassion in their religion and spiritual journey, my understanding of compassion ballooned.

Garth Pickett, a board member of the URI Cooperation Circle Silicon Valley Interreligious Council (SiVIC) and member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, shared with the group that, in the Bible, the word compassion is mostly used to describe a feeling while compassion in action is charity.

As someone raised in the Christian tradition, this set off about a hundred light bulbs in my brain.

Charity — that is the word used in that most famous and central of Bible passages — 1 Corinthians 13.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.” (1 Cor. 13:4-8a)

As the afternoon progressed, we embarked on a group discussion with brothers and sisters from different faiths sharing their religion’s view on compassion as part of an event hosted by SiVIC’s and the Pacifica Institute in celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week and as part of the Compassion Games’ Interfaith League.

“In seeing anyone else who is not at your level, your heart should cry,” shared Girish Shah, a member of the Jain faith and SiVIC board member. “If I see you as the ‘other’, it is a violence — violence of thought. We should see each person as a reflection of ourselves,” he continued.

Our Buddhist sister shared about the centrality of compassion in Buddhism and also emphasized the difference between compassion and pity — an entire conversation in its own right.

Our Unitarian brother shared that, in his tradition, they teach the inherent work and dignity of all. And our Unification brother passed along a central teaching of his faith, “When you see as a parent, there are no enemies.”

As we sat around that table, each sharing out of the heart and goodness of their faith, we became bound together in this mission of compassion for all. And I realized, in a new and deeper way, the Almighty’s calling of us all to a way and life of compassion.]

For more information click these Links:

<http://pacificasv.org/featured/2015/02/07/pacifica-institute-hosts-inter-religious-leaders-forum/>

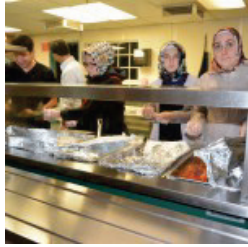
<https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4081>

<https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4139>

C. Serve dinner at InnVision Shelter to the Homeless Community:



On February 7, Silicon Valley Interreligious Council (SiVIC) joined the Pacifica Institute SV to serve a dinner to Innvision Shelter which was organized by the Pacifica Institute SV. This event was a part of the celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week jointly with Compassion Games International. Five Board members of SiVIC joined other volunteers for this event (Garth Pickett, Mahmut Altun, Girish Shah, Joy-Ellen Lipsky, Rowan Fairgrove).



Pacifica Institute SV has been organizing such dinners on a regular basis so this service event was added as an event for the WIHW celebration. The cost of dinner was \$1700 + a cash donation of \$500 was made to the shelter.

Stats: Total Volunteers= 27, No. of people served= 110, Volunteer hours, 8/person (8 x 27)= 216

A report from a volunteer (Garth Pickett) is as follows:

[We arrived at the Shelter at 5 PM with the food (rice, chicken in a very tasty sauce, a fresh salad, a desert and fruit drinks) and set up the food in the service area of the Shelter Center. We then visited until around 5:45 when the Institute members (5 men and 4 women) did their evening prayers and then we opened the food line and started serving. It was obvious that the Institute was very experienced with serving at this location. The preparation, set up and serving went very smoothly. Girish, and I were impressed with not only the food, but the warm atmosphere and how kind the Institute members were with the Shelter patrons. The patrons were very appreciative and most came back for seconds, commenting on how good the food tasted. The patrons gave a rousing applause to our group for the meal and service.

I am impressed with how organized the Institute was in providing this Compassionate Service at this homeless Shelter, and most of all, I was impressed how pleasant and happy the Institute members were in providing this valuable service. I especially enjoyed the visit I had with the Institute members and was intrigued with the phone app they had for not only determining the time for the evening prayer, but how they determine the direction they faced and bowed when praying. It is not in a straight line towards Mecca, but the direction of the shortest distance to Mecca, which would be the direction a plane would go to fly there.

I enjoyed my experience working with the Institute members I met. Thank you Mahmut for allowing us to participate with you. Clearly you and your team had this project well handled, and allowed us to come along for the experience. I hope this becomes a pattern and example of many projects to come where other faiths are invited to join and participate in joint service projects.

Garth Pickett

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter –Day Saints & SiVIC Board Member]

For more information click these Links:

<http://pacificasv.org/past-events/2015/02/11/3581/>

<https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4128>

<https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4140>

D. Individual or Group actions – Acts of Compassion – Secret Agent of Compassion:

There were many acts of kindness carried out by our members individually. The links below shows what was done by each of them or sometimes in a group.

- The Listening Post at San Jose State During Interfaith Harmony Week 2015 - <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4146>
- Compassionate Care- <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4145>
- Muslim Women's Council Dinner Dialogues- http://compassiongames.org/event/muslim-womens-council-dinner-dialogues/?instance_id=2005
- Participate in Nonviolence Coalition meeting - <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4133>
- Praise of Job well done - brings happiness even in children- <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4132>
- Act of Compassion -sacred in Jain Tradition - <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4131>
- An Act of Kindness - Help a mother - <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4130>
- Attend Live performance of Nelson Mandela Reenactment - WIHW Celebration - <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4129>
- Speaker Series: “Muslim Voices Against Extremism” - <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4138>
- Islam’s Jesus: A lecture by Zeki Saritoprak - <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4137>
- Multifaith Day of Service sends 525 volunteers throughout SM County - <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4136>
- An Overview of Islamic and Western Art & Architecture “ Mohammad Qayoumi- <https://compassiongames.crowdmap.com/reports/view/4135>

E. Support an organization serving children & adults with disabilities - Abilities United:

The goal was to collect material and/or money for this organization who is helping children and adults with disabilities. A cash contribution of over \$500 was made to this organization.

F. Organize "Sun-Up Our Sanctuaries" program to encourage and support efforts to convert local religious sanctuaries to solar power:

This is continuing program. Many organizations have shown interest in going Solar. These leads are being followed up and they will be assisted in their plans. This is part of the larger program by Compassion Games of Solarization project. We want to have 100 centuries going Solar by end of 2016.

G. Service Projects:

- a. Plant a Creek: Permanente Creek Planting at Google Campus, Acterra Stewardship Program:

Link: http://compassiongames.org/event/plant-a-creek-permanente-creek-planting/?instance_id=2011

- b. Recycle Your Electronic Waste: drop off your electronic waste at the Jain Center: Link: www.jcnc.org