

Title: Chicago Interfaith Fair Celebrates 10th Anniversary of World Interfaith Harmony Week

Event Report: The Parliament hosted the *Chicago Interfaith Fair: Our City, Our History, Our Movement* on Thursday, February 6 in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of [United Nations World Interfaith Harmony Week](#). The fair was a special celebration of the city, its interfaith history and the critical role it has played in the global interfaith movement.

Between 150-200 attendees enjoyed community organized programming, featured performances and presentations from local partners, and interfaith exhibits. Chicago interfaith organizations and faith communities represented at community tabling included [Arise Chicago](#), [OMNIA Institute for Contextual Leadership](#), [Faith in Place](#), [Spiritual Playdate](#), [Interfaith Youth Core](#), [Niagara Foundation](#), [Hyde Park & Kenwood Interfaith Council](#), [Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants](#), [United for Peace USA](#), [Chicago Theological Seminary's InterReligious Institute](#), [Catalyst Club](#), [MTO School of Islamic Sufism](#), [McCormick Theological Seminary](#), Chicago Baha'i Community, [Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#), [Lincoln Park Presbyterian](#), and [Little Sikhs](#).

The fair featured three streams of engagement for attendees and partners.

First, attendees had the opportunity to engage with one another through organizational and community tables. As attendees walked into the historic Chicago Cultural Center they were able to connect with local interfaith organizations and their representatives, learning about their mission and ways to get engaged for future events. When they ventured into the main hall they were able to connect with community partners from around the city. The Parliament made tables available upon request and communities of faith, local seminaries, and even an interfaith choir excitedly reached out to get involved.

Second, the fair features an exhibit area curated by the Parliament with community engagement. The exhibit area featured four key areas:

1. Timeline of [interfaith history in Chicago](#) and background information on [WIHW](#)
2. The [Faiths of Chicago Poster Series](#) featuring pop-up posters regarding individual faiths and their history in the city and [quotes from local leaders](#) on why interfaith is important to them.
3. [Interfaith quotes](#) from global leaders and photographs from past Parliament convening highlighting religious and spiritual diversity.
4. Community art featuring Lotus Grooves art, featuring religious figures and themes across diverse religious traditions, and select banners from the Goddess Banners collection,

depicting sacred images of the Divine Feminine across diverse cultures from around the world.

Content created for the exhibit was designed and printed as sustainable as possible and 100% of the items produced for the exhibit can be reused for future events.

Third, presentations and performances featuring local partners and organizations. From 12pm - 2pm, members of the community presented on key issues facing their communities.

1. A group of high school students participating in Catalyst Club's Cultural Connections program presented their research on *Engaging Communities of Faith on Preventing Underage Substance Abuse*.
2. Elisabeth Graffy, Senior Sustainability Scientist at the [Global Institute of Sustainability](#), led a conversation on climate action in an informal climate workshop.

From 2pm - 6pm, interfaith partners presented to a steady audience of 30-40 attendees throughout the day on their work and the importance of community engagement. As part of the programming, the Parliament made sure to include a mix of cultural performances from local communities including an Indigenous blessing and performance, a Hindu dance, a Bahá'í workshop performance, a Sikh Shabad, and Japanese drummers.

1. The [full program](#) of the event is attached.
2. Video recordings of presentations are available on the [Parliament YouTube Channel](#).
3. [Slides](#) of the program are attached.

Overall, the interfaith fair provided two key outcomes for the Parliament.

1. An opportunity to connect with local interfaith colleagues and provide them an opportunity to learn about World Interfaith Harmony Week, connect with local partners, and share the inspiring work that is possible with interfaith harmony.
2. An opportunity to connect with individuals and organizations in the community who had some knowledge of interfaith or perhaps none at all and highlight the importance of an initiative like World Interfaith Harmony Week to unite the efforts across the city and the world.

These two outcomes were especially evident in the feedback from attendees and partners, a number of them who went on to organize their own celebrations and the ones that reached out to the Parliament hoping to have the fair become an annual observance of World Interfaith Harmony Week in the city.

Relevant Links:

Parliament Blog post -

<https://parliamentofreligions.org/blog/2020-02-26-1600/parliament-hosts-chicago-area-faith-and-interfaith-leaders-celebration-wihw>

Images from the Event -

- Online Folder - https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bL176HULVpj3ZnZqAM6SGmjKP7ErZSp_
- Zip File - <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1t4SSd-6w8RdjQzlBXMvrJrhX3MxaPzvz>