



Ashland, Oregon goes to the United Nations

Irene Kai and David Wick, February 11, 2019

On March 11, 2019 the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission (ACPC) will present Ashland as a leading and innovative International City of Peace at the United Nations highlighting the iconic symbol of peace - the World Peace Flame Monument.

This opportunity comes from the deep relationship ACPC has with the UN NGO Pathways To Peace (PTP). David Wick has been a director of PTP since its founding in 1980. Pathways To Peace is an UN-designated Peace Messenger Organization and has Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and is a UN NGO member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The ACPC delegates will be attending the CSW63 conference, March 11 – 22, 2019, as members of the 17 member PTP delegation. There are approximately 10,000 people who attend the CSW conferences annually.

The Ashland Culture of Peace Commission delegation going to the United Nations includes co-founders Irene Kai and David Wick, Board of Directors President Patricia Sempowich, ACPC Interpersonal Peacebuilding consultant Anna Cassilly, and Board of Advisors member Manju Lyn Bazzell.

Since its inception as a local – global initiative in 2015, ACPC has had the intention of co-creating an on the ground, practical, and evolving local Culture of Peace, in a developing City of Peace, while creating an inspiring model that other cities and NGOs can learn from. This has been encouraged by many people and has become a reality with the invitation to present our accomplishments at the United Nations.

One example of this growing recognition comes from Fred Arment, Executive Director, International Cities of Peace, “I can say without reservation that through Ashland’s Culture of Peace initiatives, your community spirit is firing the imaginations and inclinations of peace leaders around the globe. With each action toward increasing the safety, prosperity and quality of life of ALL citizens in your community, you are issuing a clarion call to cities of peace in Uganda, Argentina, China, Mexico, Nepal and 46 other countries.”

The March 11 ACPC presentation, “Building a Culture of Peace: Models, Tools, and Technology” will be led by Irene Kai and David Wick and supported by other PTP delegates. The 1.5 hour workshop will be meaningful, dynamic, and informative, and intended to provide inspiration and hands-on information for Peacebuilders coming from around the globe.

As a model, ACPC highlights the work being done on the ground and also provides sources for inspiration to encourage and uplift our community to walk on higher ground. Since the inception of ACPC, Peace Ambassadors listened to empower each person's voice, so that all community members can be heard; invited our mayor to have conversations with the local homeless community during free meals at the railroad park; became one of the twelve community partners supporting the One Site homeless Winter Shelter; provides recruiting and training for the shelter volunteers and a listening program with compassionate listening for the shelter guests. ACPC also hosted a unique 2016 candidate forum for our city council and mayoral race guided by the ACPC values of Inclusivity, Respect, Accountability and Compassion; provided community trainings on implicit bias, compassionate listening and compassionate speaking, and provides bi-weekly Ashland Tidings newspaper articles on the Culture of Peace.

For inspiration: We installed the World peace Flame at the Thalden Pavilion creating a symbol of unity and highlighting that peace is the responsibility of each one of us. This is best accomplished through our mindful choices of action where each of us creates the world we want to live in, for ourselves and for our children. Exhibiting this directly, a class of the Ashland Middle School (AMS) students volunteered to be the flame keepers to refill the World Peace Flame oil lamp every Friday to keep the flame lit. As they move onto high school, the next class will be the flame keepers. It is perpetual and the flame is eternal.

Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the UN recognized the inspired dedication of the AMS students when he wrote, "What an inspiration to hear about the children's attachment to the culture of peace. Bravo to all those involved with the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission! I would encourage all of you to [read these stories](#) and learn about the young student's dedication to work for the culture of peace."

Irene Kai and David Wick are co-founders of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission David Wick is Executive Director and Irene Kai is director of Development

Your generous donation for supporting our work at ashlandcpc.org is greatly appreciated.