

Peace: A Universally Shared Local Matter

Interview with Ms. Deborah Moldow, World Peace Prayer Society and Co-Chair, International Day of Peace Committee at the United Nations.

By Mariko Siegert*

August 27--Peace Day Philly takes place around and on the United Nations International Day of Peace (IDP), or 'Peace Day'. How will it be celebrated this year, and what does IDP mean to us as global citizens? Why are local peace initiatives, such as PDP, are important in promoting a culture of peace globally? Ms. Deborah Moldow, World Peace Prayer Society and Co-Chair of International Day of Peace Committee at the United Nations explains.

What will happen at the UN for Peace Day?

There will be a very special observance at the UN on September 16th this year, the final International Day of Peace of Ban Ki-moon's term as Secretary-General. He will ring the Peace Bell as usual, and then move into the student video conference – along with two women Nobel Peace Prize laureates and several UN Messengers of Peace, including Dr. Jane Goodall, Midori and Michael Douglas, who will serve as M.C. There will be a live hook-up to two UN Peacekeeping missions, in Cyprus and Liberia. Students will present their own peace projects and enjoy a rap video on the Sustainable Development Goals, which are this year's theme as "Building Blocks for Peace." At 12 noon, Mrs. Ban will ring a Bell of Peace made of recycled weapons of war and lead a Minute of Silence that the students can replicate on September 21st, joining many thousands across the globe.

Why do you think civil society has responded so strongly to a global day of peace?

We are becoming a global civilization, so we need global holidays that we can celebrate together as one humanity. Because the International Day of Peace was established by a UN resolution, it belongs to every nation of the world equally. In addition, a day to celebrate peace reminds us of all the components of a culture of peace that go beyond the cessation of conflict, such as activities for children, faith and/or interfaith services, and concerts, art exhibitions, sporting events, poetry readings, environmental projects and more.

What would you like to share about how initiatives like Peace Day Philly, Build the Peace, Peace Day Austin etc. are raising the visibility of and engagement in the IDP?

Local initiatives for the International Day of Peace such as Peace Day Philly, Chicago Build the Peace, Peace Day Austin and others are tremendously important for building the kind of healthy communities that lead the way to a culture of peace. Everyone can get involved in the celebration. Cities and towns that host such events can not only influence their nations to proclaim Peace Day, but also form a global network of joy and peace.

Most of us are so busy we do not have many opportunities to think about how our lives - what we think and do - is connected to what it happening across the city and across the world.

Realizing this interrelatedness beyond the boundaries of time and place, I think, is very important. Globalization has been making our world smaller and smaller for decades, which means many things yet includes greater interconnectedness. Ms. Moldow's reflection about how Peace Day can be a very meaningful way to embrace the ideals of a culture of peace reminded me of something I have learned: Unless I am able to take good care of myself, I could not think, feel and act compassionately toward others and myself. The International Day of Peace is a wonderful reminder that our lives are part of the global community. ■

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