

YMCA of Greater Vancouver

Power of Peace Awards



ymca*inspire*peace

THINK IT, SAY IT, DO IT!

Tuesday, November 23, 2010

Robert Lee YMCA



Bringing people together

THE POWER OF PEACE

Inspiring, Challenging, Leading for Peace

Thank you for joining us at the 2010 YMCA of Greater Vancouver Power of Peace Awards. Tonight we celebrate one of the greatest wishes in the world – peace. The YMCA's goal in hosting this unique, youth-focused awards ceremony is to celebrate peacemakers in our community.

Here we choose to celebrate those among us who are truly working to change the world – whether in Vancouver or in a developing country across the world. Our nominees recognized this evening are proof that each of us has the power to create a more peaceful world and that every individual effort can make a difference.

This year's Power of Peace Awards format differs slightly from past years in that tonight we wish to bring peace into a more intimate light. Tonight, we invite each of you to the peace table, as it were, to participate in lively dinner conversation about peace. Co-hosted by past and present Peace Award nominees we hope their tales will inspire and challenge you to leave here determined to affect peace in your life in some manner.

These inspiring nominees have given their time, energy and talents to make this world a better place and to influence others to do the same. They work in their own communities and elsewhere around the world: bringing people together, lobbying for change and in some instances, putting their own lives on the line. Each of them does so without resources or recognition, but with the huge reward of making a real difference.

The YMCA believes in celebrating those among us who are leading the way to a better world. We are proud to celebrate all nominees this evening, nominated by their peers for their unique efforts at home and internationally.

To each nominee we congratulate you for your contributions, and for your personal commitment to peace. To our supporters and volunteers, thank you for helping us to promote peace in our community. And to each guest here this evening, thank you for joining us for the 2010 YMCA of Greater Vancouver Power of Peace Awards.



Bill Stewart
President and CEO



Joanne Melloy-Webster
Board Chair

THE YMCA AND PEACE

All YMCA programs and services, however varied in scope and design, emphasize the development of people through a commitment to building character and promoting core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Through our global awareness and peace work, we can celebrate our diversity and achievements and inspire others to create positive change.

Internationally, the YMCA works to build peace in many creative ways. From helping Israeli and Palestinian children in the middle east deal with conflict to introducing a Peace, Reconciliation and Reconstruction Program in Sri Lanka, our organization has played a prominent role in conflict resolution and quality of life around the world.

Since 1987, YMCA Peace Medals have been awarded locally, and YMCA's across Canada have recognized International Peace Week in November since 1983. YMCA World Peace Week reminds us that any act of peace is a step in the right direction, and inspires others to do the same. As technology continues to connect people around the world, teaching children and youth to be socially responsible, to actively pursue peace-building activities and to appreciate cultural diversity is vital for a peaceful future.

YMCA YOUTH PEACE NETWORK

The YMCA Youth Peace Network offers three months of learning and volunteer opportunities to participants from all over the world, so that they may develop skills in leadership, peace building, conflict resolution, community development, asset building and global education.

Participants also volunteer with YMCA camps and meet with staff from community agencies. Through these opportunities YPN participants receive guidance in formulating action plans to help them incorporate their experiences into their home communities. The YPN program won the national Huguette Labelle Award for Excellence in Youth Programming for 2007 at the 15th Annual Canadian Awards for international Cooperation held by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME). In 2008 YPN also received the United Nations Association in Canada, Vancouver Branch, John Gibbard Award for youth promoting peace globally.

YMCA PEACE MEDAL NOMINEES

YMCA of Greater Vancouver Peace Medals are given to local individuals and organizations working to strengthen our communities by promoting peaceful solutions to violence, conflict discrimination, and justice.

Through their actions, the nominees have had significant impact on the lives of others, either locally or elsewhere in the world, without any special resources or recognition.

All awards recognize efforts dedicated to such activities as: ending war, bullying, discrimination, racism and armed conflict; and promoting cross-cultural understanding, diversity, education equality, human rights, mediation, social justice or prevention of violence and abuse.

Two YMCA Peace Medals will be awarded this evening:

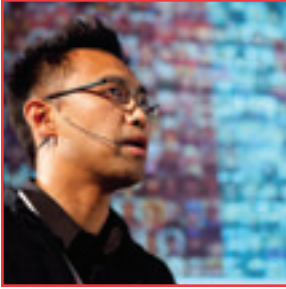
Local/International Peacemaker Award

An individual of any age or group working in their own community or international community for equality, justice and peace.

Emerging Young Leader Peacemaker Award

An individual or group under 30 years of age working locally or globally for equality, justice and peace.

Photo: Kris Krug



Alden Habacon

Alden is a peacemaker in the most active sense of the term. He engages Canadians of all ages and backgrounds in dialogue about diversity in a way that promotes understanding, mutual respect and equality. He is influential because his ideas around “Diversity 2.0” are helping to bring forward a fresh approach to the national discourse that defines Canadians beyond race and ethnicity. His provocative assertion that the mosaic model of multiculturalism is obsolete challenges us to think about the role we all play in deepening intercultural understanding. His ideas are influencing a generation of changemakers who are excited about the possibilities of creating a more respectful and peaceful world. Among his accomplishments, Alden is the founder and publisher of *Schema Magazine*. His work with the Asian Canadian Journalists Association, CBC, and now UBC reflects his impact. Alden is not only a thinker but a doer and is deeply committed to community service. He actively mentors young people and is a founding board member of RESPECT, a group working to create opportunities for Filipino-Canadian newcomers to Vancouver.

What does Peace Mean to Me?

“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.” (Albert Einstein)

Brent Granby and WERA

The West End Resident’s Association (WERA) is a group of community-based activists seeking to improve and maintain quality of life for West End residents of Vancouver. Through education and advocacy they celebrate and encourage greater community voice, responsibility and empowerment. They believe that addressing issues of social equity and environmental sustainability will benefit everyone in the community. Among the issues that WERA addresses are transportation, community gardens, affordability, liveability and ecological sustainability. In this regard WERA has been intensely involved in advocating for the transformation of public space to create more community. Brent Granby has been president of WERA since 2006. Since that time he has tirelessly stayed abreast of the issues, tracking them at various levels of government – alerting residents to opportunities for civic engagement. Brent is an eloquent spokesperson for the importance of discourse and engagement as a key element of a well functioning and peaceful society. He has acted on his belief by organizing activities which bring the community together to share their ideas and opinion in a respectful and open way. He has worked hard to create physical spaces where people can come together in informal and non-threatening ways to develop relationships and build community.



What does Peace Mean to Me?

“Focus on the change that you want and with patience and persistence work to those goals – i.e. keep your eye on the ball, WALK, ride or take the bus, the talk, BE the change you want.”



Angie Mapara Osachoff

Angie works towards creating peaceful communities that are educated on peace building techniques, human rights and issues impacting their communities and the world. Her formal work with *Equitas* has her working with members of the community to help them teach children and youth about human rights. She works hard to create programs for partner organizations to help best suit their needs, and to implement the *Play it Fair!* Toolkit. Her work with YOUCAN, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the Canadian Red Cross, the YMCA and *Equitas* has strengthened the community by promoting peaceful conflict resolution, human rights education and inspiration. Angie works passionately to represent the voices of youth, the importance of peace education and the need to recognize informal education as an important educational resource. She has had an impact on the lives of the people she works with and the organizations she has tirelessly given her time to.

What does Peace Mean to Me?

"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."

– Eleanor Roosevelt

Semiahmoo Rotary Club – International Committee

The International Committee of the Semiahmoo Rotary Club was started in 1989. This group of dedicated Rotarians is a brilliant model of what citizens working for change can do. They have made long-lasting changes for peace in their efforts. Most recently the group travelled to Haiti to learn about the culture, needs, and vision of the country. The members collaborated with a local Haitian NGO called Progressive Cooperatives Haiti, which has established agricultural co-operatives in Haiti for the past 20 years. Their organization not only helps to sustain rural communities by building basic business infrastructure that the community members then own, but it helps to build confidence and self esteem through a literacy program. Over the years, the group has lead projects helping to build essential services such as schools in developing countries, provided wheelchairs to people in South America, and funded a dentist who on his vacation takes a small volunteer team to Asia to provide essential dental care to poverty stricken villages.



What does Peace Mean to Us?

"Peace is the result of working together in partnership based on a relationship of understanding and respect."



What does Peace Mean to Me?

“A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead

Shanti Uganda

The Shanti Uganda Society began with a vision to bring the healing power of community to communities experiencing trauma in Uganda. Shanti is a Sanskrit word meaning “peace”. In order for communities to develop a greater sense of solidarity and unity, they must first allow themselves to heal from within and act from a place of love and compassion. The war in Northern Uganda has been waged for 23 years and has left nearly two million innocent civilians displaced. An entire generation has never known peace.

All projects are locally initiated in Uganda and supported by the Shanti Uganda community in Vancouver. Their programs include teen workshops for Ugandan youth, continuing education workshops for midwives and a women’s income-generating group. The group has run multiple birth education workshops for midwives, provided over 100 Safe Birth Kits, and graduated over 28 HIV positive women from the savings and craft training program. In 2009 the first Shanti Uganda Birth House & Learning Centre was constructed. Shanti Uganda is currently working towards a long term goal of reducing maternal and infant mortality in Uganda.

Amber Houssian

Amber Houssian and her partner Avi Goldstein, founded the organization, SocDoc Studios that has just completed a series of films that highlight the stories of perseverance and creativity found in the refugee camps in Gaza, West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria (www.peacestartshere.org). These films exemplify the cross cultural understanding and awareness of equality, human rights and social justice that are the necessary tools for ending violence and war. Amber is Canadian of Lebanese descent and Avi is Israeli American. Their collaboration exemplifies the power of peace, bringing art and deep humanity to the challenging work for justice in the Middle East. The two started SocDoc because of their commitment to film as a catalyst for social change. By telling authentic stories across the borders that might hold them back they are bringing the voices of marginalized people to a global audience. Amber has served as a board member on a local Vancouver organization called *Peace it Together* and represented the organization in the Middle East. *Peace it Together* brings Israeli, Palestinian and Canadian youth together to collaborate on short films while building peace one friendship at a time. Amber is walking the talk.



What does Peace Mean to Us?

“We support and embrace everyone within the global family and believe in the power of unity to change the world. Moving towards a vision of ‘we’ allows us to act and serve from a place of love and compassion.”



What does Peace Mean to Me?

“Peace is four things. Peace is knowing that your children will be safe. Peace is knowing that you can hold your head high. Peace is freedom from fear. Peace is to have great hope.”

Sarah Youngblutt

After taking several backpacking trips across Southeast Asia, and seeing the consequences of the international war that had been waged in Cambodia in the mid-20th century, a war that left the land so damaged that generations later children were born with horrible deformities, while others in the fields were all too frequently blown up by the thousands of land mines left across the land, Sarah Youngblutt decided to utilize her academic background to make social, economic and sustainable change. The war was followed by an even greater ugliness of a civil war leaving the country virtually leaderless.

At the same time, the cultural legacy of hundreds of extraordinary temples buried underground across this area of the world, was being taken away from the Cambodians by foreign archaeologists, removing not only objects but the possibility of Cambodians learning about their own history. What was needed was to have the people themselves work on these legacies in order to rebuild confidence and pride in their country. Over the past 5 years, Sarah has laid the groundwork, building connections and trust, founding a non-profit society, fundraising and collecting medical supplies, textbooks and lab equipment, to ship to a Cambodian archaeological university so that Cambodians can reclaim their cultural heritage after decades of exploitation. As a result she is helping not only to rebuild a productive university but also to rebuild a productive, healthier and less vulnerable community.

Jennifer Sterne-Pownall

Jennifer has inspired many people in her life by openly sharing her life-changing journey when she achieved her weight loss goal over the period of one year. She tells her tale in order to demonstrate that everyone can achieve their goals if they are determined and pursue their dreams. As a daycare worker she affects many young lives and has served as a role model and inspiration to these children and their families. Jennifer is dedicated to completing her “Life List” which includes a breadth of philanthropic activities from folding 1000 origami cranes to taking action on the environment by completing a two-day portion of the Paddle for Wild Salmon. As such, Jennifer’s life demonstrates a commitment to small but significant actions of peace in daily life.



What does Peace Mean to Me?

“Peace is not something you wish for; it’s something you make, something you do, something you are, and something you give away.”
(Robert Fulghum)



ACTS OF PEACE
Plant a peace garden



ACTS OF PEACE
Volunteer your time to help others



ACTS OF PEACE
Write to a Peace Pen Pal in another country



ACTS OF PEACE
Create a peace mural



ACTS OF PEACE
Listen to a peaceful music



ACTS OF PEACE
Make a pledge for peace



What does Peace Mean to Me?

"For those of us who have survived the war, the challenge becomes surviving the peace and finding the courage to mend ourselves and inspire others to do the same. War does not end with peace agreements. It ends when people are given the opportunity to rebuild their lives, when neighbours trust each other again. It ends when women are safe and respected, and human rights are guaranteed and upheld by the rule of law. Without justice and equal access to opportunities, there can be no lasting peace."

Ivo Haggerty

Ivo Haggerty is a young leader whose growth as a person, passion and commitment to reducing youth violence in his community of Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories, and beyond has led him to become one of LOVE's most exceptional leaders in the movement against violence. His inspiring story demonstrates how youth can overcome tragedy, and in the process empower themselves and those around them. Ivo's ability to effectively communicate what he has learned on his journey opens up critical dialogue, helps others going through difficult situations to take action to reduce violence in their lives and communities. Ivo creates a space of safety within which other youth can give themselves permission to be who they are, speak their truth about violence, and build strategies for change. The dialogues he facilitates often lead to participants making commitments in their personal lives. As a spokesperson for LOVE, Ivo engages youth and facilitators around BC to adopt the LOVE mission of reducing and preventing violence.

Anita Tavra

Born shortly before the demise of Yugoslavia, Anita has lived through horrific civil war, where she saw death, destruction and suffering. She witnessed unimaginable violence and as a young survivor of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Anita has always been determined to advocate for peace. She graduated from UBC with a BA in political science. The reason, she said for taking up her studies is to understand why people make decisions to start and continue wars. She now studies Youth Justice, and she hopes to go to post conflict zones after obtaining a Masters degree to help women and youth with capacity building so that they can rebuild and empower their communities and live in peace. She has a strong connection to her home country Bosnia-Herzegovina where she was one of the founding members of an organization, the *Association of Young Bosnians and Herzegovinians across the World*. The organization aims to connect young people originating from Bosnia-Herzegovina to work together to help youth fight for equality, obtain an education and work towards reconciliation. She served on the board for 3 years, was the representative from Canada and planned a multi-city youth summit that brought over 100 young people from over 13 countries to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Anita is currently involved with Oxfam Canada, where she co-chairs Advocacy and Outreach.



What does Peace Mean to Me?

"The work I do in my community is from an anti-oppression, grassroots community based, arts based/ heart-based approach. I am only an expert of my own experiences. I am a peer, friend, and community member in all of my work."



Zoe Lawler

As a leader in the YMCA youth programs, Zoe volunteers to help plan and deliver programs, manage safety and behaviour needs, and engages children and adults. She was a key organizer of an exchange with Ontario youth where many projects focused on the 8 Millennium goals of the United Nations. She took a lead role in planning her high school's "Change Revolution", a benefit concert that raised \$6,000 to support people in Darfur and Ghana as well as local environmental and multicultural projects. Zoe demonstrates a dedication to ensuring a safe, peaceful society. Her efforts to organize anti-bullying workshops in her school for all grade 8 and 9 students when her school received public criticism speaks to her mature initiative and strong peacemaking capabilities.

What does Peace Mean to Me?

"If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children."

– Gandhi

Canadian Red Cross Global Issues Symposium for Youth

Celebrating 26 years this year, the Red Cross Global Issues Symposium for Youth is built around challenging experiential activities that compel participants to learn and empathize through experiencing as opposed to just listening. These "role plays" encourage a personal exploration of how war affects people and of the daily realities of many people around the world.

Symposium helps youth take action by providing tangible tools through skill-development workshops that enable youth to take initiative in their schools and communities. In addition, participants are introduced to a variety of other related opportunities with other local and international humanitarian organizations at the Take Action Fair of the conference. Ultimately this event is about making peace tangible for young people by providing them with the knowledge, connections, and tools so they can make a difference while helping empower them so they *want* to make a difference.



What does Peace Mean to Us?

"To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing."

– Raymond Williams



What does Peace Mean to Me?

“Peace cannot simply be the goal we are striving towards, but peace must be ingrained in every action we take towards that goal. To reach peace we must forgive, look back, and choose to forgive again...we cannot improve the world if we simply dwell on the mistakes of the past. Nor can we improve the world if we choose to fight against it, becoming frustrated and angry with all of its injustices and inadequacies. Instead of spending our energy in sorrow about the way the world is, we must spend it in joyful work towards creating the world in the way it could be. “

Krissi Bucholtz

After spending time in Sierra Leone, Krissi was moved to start an organization that gave voice to young women in the Sierra Leone community to counter the gender discrimination and sexual abuse they face in the aftermath of the civil war in that country. She founded the organization, *Planning for the Elimination of Poverty through Love and Education (or PEOPLE Foundation)*, while studying at Capilano University Global Stewardship Program. As a result, youth now receive valuable education about HIV/AIDS and sexual abuse through a mentoring program that they can make educated decisions and pursue a positive future. She also raised enough money last year to send 2 students to university. Krissi now attends SFU where she was recently awarded the Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship for “voluntary community services in areas related to peace, justice and human rights.” Her goal this year is to send 4 more students to university. She will return to Sierra Leone in the summer to work with her partners. Krissi continues to model leadership in building peace by regularly returning to her high school and the Global Stewardship Program to encourage and mentor students following after her.



ACTS OF PEACE

Listen to what others have to say



ACTS OF PEACE

Share your message of peace



What does Peace Mean to Us?

“Where ignorance is our master, there is no possibility of real peace.”

– His Holiness The Dalai Lama

Free the Children, Western Office

Since 2008, Free the Children’s Western Office in Vancouver has provided support to the hundreds of schools and youth across Western Canada to engage local and global initiatives. Expansion to the West Coast has been extremely successful in partnering local students with communities in Ecuador, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, India and rural China. While supporting local community members to exact change internationally, Free the Children also focuses their efforts at home. In the past 2 years, 34,000 students from over 700 schools have attended WE Day Vancouver to celebrate the power of young people to change the world. One of the many local schools Free the Children has worked with is Templeton Secondary School. Through their Community Connections Program, 90 students successfully adopted local households, helping to rake leaves, shovel snow, carry groceries, and a host of other activities. In addition, Templeton students collected 8,000 canned food items for the Greater Vancouver Food Bank and held a talent show that raised \$1500 for the Strathcona Community Schools Breakfast Program. By working to empower youth, their ability to make positive changes is not limited to Free the Children communities. Transformations occur in the lives of people at both the project sites, as well as here at home. BC student John McGill, 15, traveled overseas with their sister organization Me to We, to visit Free the Children Communities. “I spent 16 days in Kenya, and I can honestly say that those were the best two weeks of my life... I felt like something I never knew was missing had been found.” John is one of the thousands of young people across the province who is impacted by the mentorship, programs and resources provided by Free the Children’s Vancouver office.

ACTS OF PEACE
Take a walk and enjoy nature

ACTS OF PEACE
Make peace bracelets for others



ACTS OF PEACE

Create a puppet show about peace



ACTS OF PEACE

Learn about a new culture



ACTS OF PEACE

Help a neighbour



ACTS OF PEACE

Create a "peace zone" in your house



ACTS OF PEACE

Collect change to donate to charity



ACTS OF PEACE

Make a new friend

Peace has many dimensions. It is not only a state of relationship among nations. We cannot expect to live in a world of peace if we are unable to live in peace with those close to us — even those who differ from us.

In the midst of increased conflict, violence and confrontation, we must seek possibilities to be peacemakers. The responsibility for peace begins with each person, in relationship with family and friends, and extends to community life and national activities.

YMCA World Statement on Peace, 1981



ymca **inspire** peace

THINK IT, SAY IT, DO IT!



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