



Diversity, Race Relations and Inclusivity Award Nomination Form

L-L-C-C-I
C-A-N-A-D-A

NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name of organization: King's University College	
Business Address: 266 Epworth Avenue	
City: London	Postal code: N6A 2M3
Name(s) of contact people (including position titles): Maija Wilson, Minister to Youth at Office of Campus Ministry / Christ the King University Parish	
Business Telephone: (519) 963-1477 ext	Business Fax:
Business E-mail: maija.wilson@kings.uwo.ca	
Category: (check one)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Small business/small labour (49 or fewer employees/members)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Large business/large labour (50 or more employees/members)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social/community services (including Not-for-Profits) (49 or fewer employees/members)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social/community services (including Not-for-Profits) (50 or more employees/members)	
<u>XYouth/young adult groups or organizations (<26 years of age)</u>	

INITIATIVE INFORMATION (attach additional sheets or supporting material as required)

Program initiative: London Interfaith Peace Camp
Date of implementation: August, 2013
Key department(s) or committees involved: King's University College; Al-Mahdi Islamic Community Centre; Temple Israel; Or Shalom Synagogue; Christ the King University Parish; Anglican Church of Canada; Valleyview Mennonite Church
Key people involved: Rabbi Debra Dressler; Rabbi Catharine Clark; Maija Wilson; Mayssa El-Sayegh, project coordinator at the Islamic Centre of Southwestern Ontario (many others)
Description of initiative: The London Interfaith Peace Camp (LIPC), is a collaborative community project that encourages understanding and cooperation among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faith groups. Rooted in the shared values of these Abrahamic traditions, the LIPC is a week-long day camp offered to students in grades 1 through 8. Through this day camp experience, the campers and the staff build friendships and understanding with peers from other local Abrahamic faith traditions. The informal social setting of a camp, combined with intentional presentations about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, teach enduring lessons about building peace across all three Abrahamic faith traditions
How has the initiative contributed to the promotion of diversity, race relations, inclusivity and human rights in London and promoting London as a welcoming city? "Bringing a message of peace-making to our campers, teenage leaders, and their families has been a powerful experience. Learning about each other's faiths, and recognizing our shared values has fostered enduring understanding and friendships among groups who rarely have the opportunity to learn from each other. We truly believe in the power of sincere dialogue and shared experiences to bring peace and justice to our world," says co-host Rabbi Debra Dressler. As Mennonite pastor Charleen Jongejan Harder says, "I want my child to say, 'I am a Christian in this diverse world and it's OK to be Christian, and it's wonderful what the Jewish and Muslim faiths have to offer.' I want my child to be articulate and literate and respectful and loving of other faiths." There is a video of the camp :- http://tinyurl.com/shalomsalampeace


What short or long-term impact has/will the initiative have on the promotion of diversity, race relations, inclusivity and human rights in London and promoting London as a welcoming city? From the *London Free Press*, August 21, 2014:- "Rabbi Debra Stahlberg Dressler of the Temple Israel, one of the head organizers of the camp, said international conflicts involving faith make the values at camp that much more essential. "Situations across the world are a bit of an abstraction when dealing with each other face-to-face; getting to know each other as people first is really necessary," she said. "It's part of why we want to do this. So that when life gets complicated, we have these friendships, understanding and trust."

What is the potential for expansion and/or inspiration for replication of the initiative? The program has grown from 30 to 60 children, with 17 teenage counsellors, and is based on a similarly modelled Peace Camp in Virginia hosted by Eastern Mennonite University. As more faith groups become involved, the program will continue to expand.

How can receiving this Award be used to further promote diversity, race relations, inclusivity and human rights in London and to further promote London as a welcoming city?

The award reinforces London's status as a welcoming city, wherein all faiths co-operate in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding, while accepting differences.

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name: Ian Silver	
Address: 104-1500 Richmond Street	
City: London	Postal code: N6G 4V8
Telephone: 519-858-9272	Fax: 519-858-9272
E-mail: ian.silver@alumni.utoronto.ca	Signature:
Date: 2016-09-28	 Note: By signing this form you are hereby confirming that the Nominee has consented to the nomination.

Submissions must be received by September 30 to:

London Diversity and Race Relations Advisory
 Committee c/o Committee Secretary, City Clerk's Office
 City of London
 300 Dufferin Avenue, PO Box
 5035 London, ON N6A 4L9

Phone: 519-661-2500 Ext. 5417
 Fax: 519-661-4892
 E-mail: jmartin@london.ca

NOTICE OF COLLECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please be advised that all nominations submitted for the Diversity, Race Relations and Inclusivity Award become part of the public record. The nominations will be published on a public agenda and made available electronically through the City of London public internet website. The personal information collected on this form is collected under the



**London Interfaith Peace
Camp
King's University College**

**August 15-19, 2016
9:00 am - 4:00 pm**

The London Interfaith Peace Camp (LIPC), is a week-long day camp offered to students in grades 1 through 8, and teen counselors grades 9 to 12. Through this day camp experience, the campers and the staff build friendships and understanding with peers from other local Abrahamic faith traditions. Central to the camp are visits to local synagogues, mosques and churches to enhance learning in authentic settings. The central camp program and site visits combine to engage participants in projects such as: large and small group work, cultural art, theater and music, healthy food and recreational activities, service learning projects, and an evening family potluck featuring food from each camper's cultural heritage. The informal social setting of a camp, combined with intentional presentations about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, teach enduring lessons about building peace across all three Abrahamic faith traditions.



Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

(we begin and end each day at King's, 266 Epworth Avenue)

Family Pot-Luck Dinner, Thursday August 18, 6:00 pm

Cost: \$50 (Lunches are provided)

For more information, or to register students and counselors, [click here.](#)



Interfaith Peace Camp helps bridge the religious divide

Erica Howes

Our London | Aug 21, 2014

Christian, Jewish and Muslim children came together at King's University College last week, spending five days learning about how the three Abrahamic faiths aren't all that different.

"It's important they learn about other faiths before prejudices are allowed to settle in," said Valleyview Mennonite Church Pastor Charlene Jongejan Harder. "Now they know a rabbi, minister and imam, and it allows them to be an expert among their peers."

The five-day Interfaith Peace Camp was designed for children entering Grades 1 to 8. Campers travelled to a mosque, temple and church to learn about the traditions of each faith. Harder said they had 33 campers and 14 councillors, more on both counts than a similar camp last year.

The idea for the camp came from a similarly modelled Peace Camp in Virginia hosted by Eastern Mennonite University. Harder said the community at her church had connections to the Virginia camp and with local support from the other Abrahamic faith groups, they decided to try it out in London last year.

With support and inspiration from Virginia's camp, Harder said this is just the beginning for London.

"We're hoping to build on the momentum we have right now. Each year we learn a lot more about how to run a camp, how to make it run more smooth and efficient," she said.

Mayssa El-Sayegh, project coordinator at the Islamic Centre of Southwestern Ontario, helped organize events at the camp and agreed there was a lot of enthusiasm for learning last week.

El-Sayegh said the children were amazed learning about the similarities Christianity, Judaism and Islam share. For instance, she explained the children learned that one Mennonite prayer means the same in the Muslim faith, just in a different language.

Although they did not directly discuss the conflict in Gaza, El-Sayegh said it is meaningful that all three faiths came together here at the same time.

"It was wonderful to think, while everything is going on over there, we are still able to bring our children together in harmony and peace," she said.

Rabbi Debra Stahlberg Dressler of the Temple Israel, one of the head organizers of the camp, said international conflicts involving faith make the values at camp that much more essential.

"Situations across the world are a bit of an abstraction when dealing with each other face-to-face; getting to know each other as people first is really necessary," she said. "It's part of why we want to do this. So that when life gets complicated, we have these friendships, understanding and trust."

Dressler's daughter, Casey Wright, was a second-time staff member this year who helped with the kids. At 21, Wright said she also learns something new every year about other faith groups. But it's the campers, she said, who are the most curious.

"They'll ask anything," she said. "They'll ask straight up, do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe in Mohammed? It's good because it's an open space where they can ask questions that they may not have anyone else to ask especially with other kids their age."

It's the friendships that form out of this open space that Dressler said is the main thing she hopes the kids take away from camp.

"They have the experience of knowing and becoming friends with someone who is Christian, Jewish and Muslim and felt welcome at different places of worship," Dressler said. "Then they remember that we have much more in common than we have different."



Elementary school-aged children learned about the three Abrahamic faiths through camp games and activities at the Interfaith Peace Camp at King's University College recently.

A specialist provider of
insurance solutions and services
Protecting those who enrich the lives of others


ECCLESIASTICAL
INSURANCE YOU CAN RELIEVE IN



ANGLICAN JOURNAL

Since 1875

September 28, 2016

Search

[HOME](#) | [REGIONAL NEWS](#) | [DEPARTMENTS](#) | [DONATE](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#) | [ADVERTISE](#) | [ABOUT US](#) | [ARCHIVES](#)

Shalom, salam, peace

BY DIANA SWIFT ON AUGUST, 08 2016

(2) Add a Comment (3) Like



Campers and counsellors give the victory sign at the 2015 session of the London Interfaith Peace Camp. Shown at the rear are the organizers: Sister Shahin Pardhan (left); Rabbi Deborah Dressler (right); Pastor Charlene Jongejan Harder (far right). Credit: Sukeina Bhimji

What happens when Jewish, Muslim and Christian kids attend an interfaith summer camp together?

Yes, the campers at the London Interfaith Peace Camp learn about the moral and spiritual values shared by practitioners of the three Abrahamic religions—"the People of the Book," as they are known in Islam. But, perhaps more important, they learn to empathize and co-operate with adherents of all three creeds long before prejudice sets in. The seeds of a chance for more harmonious future are sown in their young minds.

"At the most basic level, they make friends with children of the other faiths. And there is interface and dialogue that promote peace and solidarity," said Natalie Hleba, camp director, who serves as a Roman Catholic lay minister to youth at Western University's Office of Campus Ministry at King's University

News Alerts

Sign up [here](#) to receive timely news via email

ADVERTISEMENTS

Food for Life

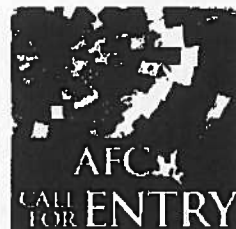


The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund

Christmas in the Caribbean
December 19, 2016 - 15 Days



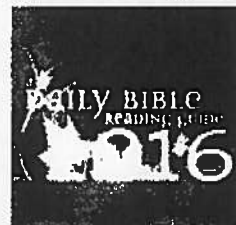
 CRAIG TRAVEL



Yellowknife, NWI's
Holy Family
Lutheran Church
needs a pastor on a
minimum 3 year contract.

 [holyfamilylutheran.ca](#)

[lutheran@ccimicro.com](#)



Giving
with Grace

God's promises
Our commitment
Growing with Grace

Most Recent

Most Read

Most Commented

College in London, Ont. This personal contact can offset biased and negative stereotypes they may see in the media in the context of political strife. "At the end of camp, when they hear about people of these faiths in the news, they can think of a friend and see the person rather than the public perception," Hleba said.

Now in its fourth year, the week-long \$50-per-session camp attracts ever-increasing numbers of children entering Grades 1 to 8, and even has a waiting list. For the 2016 session, August 15-19, the campers included 29 Christians, 21 Muslims and five Jews. In addition, there were 16 interfaith teen volunteers and three adult co-ordinators: Sister Shahin Pardhan of the Al-Mahdi Islamic Community Centre, Rabbi Deborah Dressler of London's Temple Israel and Pastor Charlene Jongejan Harder of Valleyview Mennonite Church.

The peace camp, in fact, has Mennonite roots: it's modelled on a successful U.S. initiative launched by the Center for Interfaith Engagement at Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. This year, the London session is being sponsored by the Centre for Jewish-Catholic-Muslim Learning at King's.

The children enjoy the usual social life and outdoor activities of summer camp, but also spend time going beneath the surface of the Abrahamic religions to discover both their common core and the idiosyncratic beauty of each. They learn to build on these for harmony and co-operation, and little could arguably be more essential in a world of conflicts often fought along religious divides. They meet an imam, a minister and a rabbi, and are free to question each other about their beliefs.

"We are all looking to create a peaceful world for future generations," said Sukeina Bhimji, a Burundi-born Muslim filmmaker who made the compelling documentary *Shalom, Salam, Peace* about the 2015 session. "This camp addresses the questions the kids have and discusses interfaith differences in a fun way," she said. "It was beautiful to capture the children at the moment when the counsellors explain what is happening. And the counsellors are so passionate about what they're doing."

One of the most interesting learning exercises relates to Scripture and the common teachings in the sacred books of all three faiths. "The rabbi put up passages from the Torah, the Bible and the Qu'ran, and asked the kids to identify which book they came from," said Pardhan. "They can't tell which comes from which. Each passage contained verses about love and respect for one another, common themes across all faith groups."

Her twin sons, Khaleel and Qasim, now age eight, have attended the camp for the past three years. Asked if they enjoyed learning about other faiths and were looking forward to this year's session, the duo simultaneously responded with a resounding, "Yeah!"

Hands-on fun at the 2015 London Interfaith Peace Camp. Photo: Sukeina Bhimji

The campers also visit mosques, churches and synagogues. "For many of them, it's the first time they've been inside the place of worship of another faith," Pardhan said. Back at the centre, the educational program emphasizes shared beliefs, such as one transcendent deity, as well as common religious observance—for example, similarities in dietary laws in Judaism and Islam, and the practice of covering one's head when entering a synagogue or mosque.

The sessions focus on religious similarities young campers kids can easily relate to. "When kids ask why they have to remove their shoes at the mosque, we explain that Moses was asked to remove his sandals when he went to speak to God at the burning bush," explained Pardhan.

Many Christian children are surprised to learn of the important roles played by Jesus and Mary in Islam. "When I share with them that the name of Jesus is mentioned in the Qu'ran more often than the name of Muhammad—25 times versus four times—they are shocked," said Pardhan. And an entire chapter of the Qu'ran is devoted to Mariam, the Arabic name for Jesus' mother, Mary—and a model for understanding why some Muslim women cover their heads in public. "Mary is treated with high

Saskatchewan community struggles with reconciliation in wake of killing

Bishop raises \$22,000 cycling across Saskatchewan

We are what we post

Indigenous bishops criticize same-sex marriage vote

Bishop of Huron to retire November 1

Privett re-elected metropolitan of B.C. and Yukon



Anglican Journal

Like Page

Share

2 friends like this



Anglican Journal
1 hr

Check out reader submissions depicting the theme "Light," for Picture Your Faith, the Journal's online photo gallery depicting stories of faith. Cover photo by: Chris Hooker





esteem in Islam, and when Muslim women wear the hijab, they are trying to emulate her modesty and chastity," Pardhan said.

Each year, parents and counsellors have a festive potluck supper at a mosque. "It's wonderful to see adults of different faiths mingling together and learning from one another," said Pardhan. And each year, there are requests to launch a peace camp for adults.

The benefits of the camp are quickly spreading by word of mouth, and the organizers are gearing up to accommodate more and more campers. "Word is quickly getting out to the wider community," said Hleba.

As the camp grows, the organizers hope it will become an even stronger beacon for

interfaith understanding and a robust emblem of Canada's tolerance and religious diversity.

[Back to Top](#)

Related Articles



Religion scholars release declaration of rights
An international, interfaith group of scholars has released a...



Rabbi in Residence for New England cathedral
The Bishop of Western Massachusetts in the US-based Episcopal...



Motion to delete prayer for Jews fails at General Synod
A prayer for the conversion of the Jews may remain in...



Harvard launches free online course on world religions
Anyone interested in world religions can now learn about them...



[Donate here](#)