Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies

Become the Change

December 2010

Center Invites Peace Activist John Dear for MLK Week 2011

Center is bringing Father John Dear, a Jesuit priest, peace activist, lecturer, and writer of twenty books on nonviolence. Throughout his nonviolent activism he was arrested many times. He has received the Peace Abbey Courage of Conscience Award in September 2009 for his solidarity and leadership in nonviolent resistance, vegetarian life style and Gospel living. He was chosen for the 2010 Pacem in Terris Peace and Freedom Award and was nominated for the Nobel Prize by Desmond Tutu. Fr. Dear will be the guest speaker at the 2011 MLK Week Unity Luncheon on February 2, 2011. Later that day he will be presenting a lecture open to the campus community and general public.

SAVE THE DATE

January 2011:
Center for Nonviolence & Peace Studies Display in University of Rhode Island Library (Main
January 5th-8th
Civil Rights Tour/ Freedom Rides
January 8th-21st
Nepal & India Trainings
International Nonviolence
January 15th
Dr. King’s Birthday
January 17th MLK Holiday
Remember • Celebrate • Act
“A Day On…Not A Day Off.”
January 31st–February 4th
URI Annual MLK Week
February 2nd, 2011:
John Dear, S.J. MLK Week Unity Luncheon and 7:30pm Lecture
June 6th-17th, 2011
International Nonviolence Summer Institute

(Details on Page 8.)

Center Welcomes Tibetan Buddhist Geshe Thupten Tendhar

Thupten Tendhar was born on December 28, 1975 to Tibetan parents. He spent his early childhood living in the Tibetan settlement in Mundgod, Karnataka, India. In 1987, at the age of twelve, Thupten entered the Drepung Loseling monastery in South India where he studied for over 18 years, earning the respected doctoral level Geshe degree in Buddhist Philosophy. He served as the editor of DRELOMA Magazine of the Drepung Loseling Monastery, and director for the Loseling Altruistic Medical Association (LAMA). He also was actively involved in many other international and community services. In 2001, he worked as a teacher in residence and translator at the Instituto Loseling De Mexico in Mexico City, and toured as a spokesperson for the Mystical Arts of Tibet World Tour in 2005 through 2007. He received his Level I & II certification as a trainer in in Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation from the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies at the University of Rhode Island. He also holds certification as a pharmacy assistant from Boston Reed College. Until recently, Thupten worked in the Administrative office of Drepung Loseling Monastery in Atlanta, GA. As a Tibetan Buddhist, Thupten believes in the power of a flourishing smile, and has dedicated his life to promoting compassion for both individual and global peace.
International Nonviolence

In October, Nana Yaw Osei-Darkwa, Executive Director of Youth Icons Ghana, visited URI and was a guest at the Center during Diversity Week. The purpose of his visit was to lay the groundwork for a future partnership to promote nonviolence through youth leadership. The following article describes his work in Ghana. His story of nonviolence in Ghana shares important lessons for neighboring countries in Africa.

SAVING A NATION THROUGH NONVIOLENCE
By Nana Yaw Osei-Darkwa, Exec. Director, Youth Icons Ghana

Nonviolence can be expressed in different ways. Countries have used music as a way in which courageous people resist violence and oppression. The singing revolution of Estonia helped the country gain independence from the former Soviet Union. The color Orange sparked a revolution bringing liberation to the Ukraine. Great examples of Nonviolence, especially for countries in current conflict, such as Cote d’Ivoire, where the last election has led the country to an imminent crisis in which the UN has been forced to intervene. Ghana offers a recent example of proactive nonviolence in action that could be helpful to its West African neighbors in Cote d’Ivoire.

The December 7th 2008 elections would forever remain on the minds of Ghanaians for all the tension and anxiety it carried and so would Youth Icons Ghana, remembered for their 1GHANA PEACE PROJECT, a preventive nonviolence response to the increasing tension ahead of the crucial December 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. A team of dedicated young people, who saw that events leading to the elections clearly pointed to a disastrous end if measures were not taken to calm the nerves of the nation, to prevent another disaster in Africa. They were determined to ensure that Ghana was not added to the long list of African nations thrown into violent conflict due to elections, such as Kenya, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Somalia, Rwanda. Youth Icons Ghana under its inspirational founder and Executive Director, Nana Yaw Osei-Darkwa and its national honors award winner and showbiz ambassador musician extraordinaire Obour sought solutions to the then looming threat through the promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence among the youth. The 1GHANA PEACE PROJECT was aimed at promoting oneness and encouraged youth to shy away from violence. Believing that every noble cause needs a powerful theme song, the campaign for social change was driven by music.

The project team toured all ten regions of Ghana with the message of peace and nonviolence under the theme "We are all part of one country-Ghana for which we are jointly responsible". The theme drove home the critical importance of the responsibility every Ghanaian had towards ensuring that the country remained peaceful. Specific activities included peace walks, peace concerts; calling on youth groups, political parties and civil society to engage them on the need for peace through nonviolence. Ghanaians were encouraged to opt for dialogue rather than violent acts. In an address to over 3,000 young people after a peace walk, they were urged to "believe in yourself and never lose hope because the moment you give up on yourself, you become vulnerable. All we need is an atmosphere of peace to realize our full potentials."

On the eve of elections, a peace Concert was held at the Northern Region capital of Tamale. The concert, beamed live on TV Africa, rolled till the early morning of Election Day and peace and nonviolence were the key words on the lips of a huge crowd of young people. A nation’s fear was turned into wild celebrations and jubilation. Ghana passed a critical test. A new government emerged after a keenly contested election that had to go for a run-off. The world celebrated and praised Ghana as a shining example in Africa. Youth Icons played a major role. The force of our conviction and integrity of our dedication will surely see us breaking grounds and inspiring and empowering the youth of Ghana.
URI Kingian Nonviolence heads to Nepal and India

Following the visits of two Nepali peace activists, Prakash Bhattarai in May, and Dr. Gopal Siwakoti in July, the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies was invited to Nepal to join a collaborative project for nonviolence training being organized in partnership with the Collective Campaign for Peace and Social Work for Development. The training will be the first introduction into Nepal of Kingian Nonviolence, the URI Center’s signature training program. Currently experiencing a fragile peace and struggling to resolve transitional conflicts among various political parties, the nation is ripe for strategies for social change that avoid the violence of recent years, carried out by Maoist groups attempting to overthrow a 250 year old monarchy and gain power. Youth leaders, students, teachers, and NGO staff will participate in a multi-day training at Bistachhap, Godavari, in the Lalitpur area outside Kathmandu. Center Director, Paul Bueno de Mesquita will be joined by co-trainer Amy Dillon from Canada to facilitate this international training initiative, coordinated by Shiva Risal, who says the weather may be cold, but the views promise to be spectacular! Professor BdeM will be extra busy on his way home from Nepal, accepting an invitation to visit the Ghandian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Jammu, in Jammu-Kashmir, India. In addition to lecturing on Dr. King and Kingian Nonviolence, he will be facilitating a nonviolence workshop with co-trainers Dr. Seema Rohmetra and Dr. Sapna Sangra, professors at the University of Jammu, who completed their Level I training in Kingian Nonviolence last July at URI.

Memorable Moments from Fall Semester 2010 …

Commitment to International Peace: Members of the URI Student Nonviolence Involvement Committee joined by Ginny Fox from the Peace Flags Project, celebrated the annual International Day of Peace, on September 21. The URI community created hundreds of colorful peace flags, flown on the Quad. Later that evening a candlelight vigil was led by SNIC student leaders, with participation from Prof. Art Stein, Buddhist chaplain JoAnne Friday, and Jonathan Lewis of the Gathering for Justice. Braving the cold and wind to keep candles lit, the crowd of participants and even some URI parents, huddled up to express their commitment to global peace and nonviolence with a version of “This Little Light of Mine.” Center Sponsors Documentary Program on Middle East: On September 22nd, EMG Films visited the campus as part of a 10-day national release tour to promote Little Town Of Bethlehem, a documentary film about the growing nonviolence movement in Israel and Palestine. Visiting the Center and MCC for a conversation were EMG producer Bill Oechsler and film director Jim Hanon, accompanied by Sami Awad, Palestinian nonviolence leader featured in the documentary film. Later that evening, the Center hosted a film screening in collaboration with Brown University, followed by a panel discussion with Sami Awad and Israel Defense Force veterans, including Teny Gross, director of The Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence. The DVD is available for loan at the Center. Music of Social Justice: A Hardge Forum full of students at the MCC enjoyed a great Diversity Week program of protest music and a multimedia presentation featuring the social conscious-raising songs of Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, CSNY, and Michael Franti to name a few. After some extra encouragement, students joined URI Cognitive Dissident trio member, Professor Paul Bueno de Mesquita, in closing out the program with a rousing version of “This Land is Your Land!” Promoting Diversity: During the Diversity week, Center Faculty and students guided several workshops: Pathways to Graduate School; Promising Scholars: Graduate Student Research Symposium On Diversity; How College Students Can Change the World; and Peace and Harmony Meditation Hour. SNIC played an important role during the fall. The Student did a great job in the organization of the International Day of Peace and the Diversity Week. Mila Tsikhotskii facilitated a film discussion session focused on the documentary “Orange Revolution - Political Protest Leads to Liberation.” Michaela Cashman and David Nelson continue to take active roles in The URI Multicultural Center Dialogue Project: Deconstructing and Problem-Solving Issues of Diversity on Campus. Nonviolent Action on Campus: A special recognition to the Gay Straight Alliance for the great expression of nonviolence direct action and negotiation during their sit-in for improved levels of support and recognition on campus. A great example of how students have transformational power, perhaps more than they often realize. What cause will URI students stand up for next?
Nonviolence Theory: a Prevention Tool?
By Laura Dussault
Reprinted from Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence’s October 2010 Blog

I have been studying nonviolence and volunteering at the Center for Nonviolence & Peace Studies at URI for the past year and a half. This past summer I became certified in training classes on Kingian nonviolence philosophy – based on the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. -- which teaches conflict management for a better way of living.

As a survivor of domestic violence, I was interested in nonviolence theory and the framework it provides for conflict management, effective communication and healthy relationships. In an abusive relationship, there can be no conflict management because the abuser uses fear and intimidation to control his/her partner. However, I felt that educating others on the principles of nonviolence theory could promote the skills needed for healthy relationships, and perhaps work to prevent abusive relationships in the future.

Kingian nonviolence is all about conflict resolution, forging understanding and being open to listening to two sides of a conflict. The goal of the philosophy is for both sides to come to a win-win solution and create reconciliation amongst the people involved. This technique involves six principles, which translate to steps we can take towards conflict resolution and reconciliation.

In addition to the theories of Dr. King, I’ve also studied the famous philosophies of Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi-- read more here for Gandhi’s steps to nonviolence, plus examples of nonviolence theory used in history – as well as the works of Dr. Ravindra Kumar, formerly the Vice-Chancellor of Chaudhary Charan Singh University in Meerut, India. Dr. Kumar is a well-known scholar, writer, thinker and Indologist, in addition to being extremely experienced in nonviolence theory. Dr. Kumar sent me his writings on “non-cooperation” theory, as well as his book called Non-Violence and Its Philosophy.

His book starts, “With the descent of man on earth, ahimsa came with him as a natural tendency of his.” Ahimsa is a word used often by Gandhi, meaning “do no harm” and also, “by not harming any living thing we can create a universal love.” Gandhi popularized the word ahimsa, and associated it with the phrase nonviolence. We are born with this ahimsa instinct, (universal love/do no harm) and as we develop and explore our world we can better understand our existence, all while we are becoming a human person and experiencing all we can within our environment. It is our environment and experiences that can taint this universal love and positive feeling of being alive, and it can taint our instinct to strive to learn all we can. Imagining a life of ahimsa is possible if we all make sure that all children now grow with this universal idea of being.

People need to be well nourished, being fed with the sustenance of food, knowledge and an appreciation for life. Kumar speaks of non-cooperation and non-violence as part of existence throughout history. If you just take a moment to think about it, progress is only possible through change and thinking different than the norm. This non-cooperation – a refusal to cooperate with the existing norms in society -- causes conflict and when this conflict is dealt with nonviolently, we can develop peace.

The nonviolence framework for living, developed through philosophies of Martin Luther King Jr., is a good way to develop skills for healthy conflict resolution and effective communication, which are crucial for healthy relationships. Whether you’ve survived a violent relationship or not, everyone may find benefits in this positive living framework that is centered on understanding and peace.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."
-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Learn more about the place for nonviolence in your life.
I wish you all the Happiest Holiday Greetings and a Blessed New Year! As the old year 2010 fades away and the new 2011 is budding from the eastern corner of our globe, unfortunately, the problems of stress, depression and violence become more and more common and massively overwhelming our global society. To bring about change in the New Year we must bring about a positive change in ourselves. I believe that compassion has become more relevant than ever as an indispensable tool for overcoming difficulties in our daily life for peace and happiness. Compassion, according to ancient Tibetan and Buddhist teachings is a basic part of our greater human nature and value, and is equally helpful for maintenance and improvement of both our physical and mental wellness. Compassion, no matter whether you are a spiritual believer or not, is worth cherishing and generating within ourselves without any condition or boundary. But we need proper understanding and compatible skills for success of our mission for compassion cultivation. Enriching ourselves with compassion is important for transforming our whole environment into a greater compassionate world.

I have returned to the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies on the campus of the University of Rhode Island to explore the possibilities for developing a compassion enrichment program. A compassion enrichment program would be threefold. First, we need to study compassion in depth in order to reach a deeper and more meaningful understanding of this concept. Second, we must put our understanding of compassion into action. The practice of compassion on a personal level creates an experiential knowledge that can be translated into daily life. Third, to determine the benefits and outcomes of compassion enrichment study requires a more scientific evaluation process that can establish a scholarly evidence base. Initial evaluation studies can focus on which developmental factors lead to compassionate behavior, what is the nature of compassion and what contributes to its powerful influence, and under what circumstances can compassion meditation be used as a therapeutic tool.

Equipped with a deeper understanding and the tools of compassion one can put compassionate nonviolence into real life practice to help navigate the challenges of daily living in our fast-paced and often violent society. A comprehensive approach to compassion study and research is considered to be not only beneficial for URI students, but also would serve as an inspirational example leading all sentient beings to a more advanced civilization.

**Honors Colloquium Brings B.D. Wong to URI**

Fans of Law & Order: Special Victims Unit know him as forensic psychiatrist George Huang, but the actor is B.D. Wong. Initiating the Harrington School of Communication and Media Lectures at the University of Rhode Island, Wong spoke before a packed Edwards Auditorium audience on September 21. Titled, “All the World’s a Stage: Race and Identity,” Wong’s talk was part of URI’s Honors Colloquium, which during the fall semester focused on discourse around race.

Though Wong is most recognized for his television, stage and movie career, his great passion is speaking about race and particularly about what he has learned about love and compassion after becoming a parent. A gay Chinese American, Wong spoke with a mix of humor and sensitivity about what it felt like growing up as “other” in this country. Yet it was his experience as a parent that seemed to cement a strong speaker/audience connection. Though his relationship has ended, Wong and his then-partner wanted children, and Wong’s sperm was provided to a surrogate mother. Wong’s partner’s sister. She gave birth to twin boys, but one died shortly after birth and the other needed round-the-clock medical attention for weeks. To keep friends and family abreast of little Jackson Foo Wong’s struggle for life, the distraught father began writing detailed emails of the baby’s condition, his own feelings and realizations about love. Soon, the emails were being forwarded to others and eventually these became the basis for Wong’s book, Following Foo: the Electronic Adventures of the Chestnut Man.

Dr. Lynne Derbyshire, Chair of the Communication Studies Department and a member of the Honors Colloquium Committee brought Wong to her honors class. Derbyshire said that Wong remarked how impressed he was that the students were so well prepared for the discussion and that such is not always the case. About Wong Derbyshire said, “He is utterly and completely charming. He talked about his son and his interest in speaking on college campuses about race. He does not flaunt his celebrity in any way. He is remarkably self effacing.”
Nonviolence Trainers, Ryan Alexander and David Nelson Take to the Schools

By David Nelson

Ryan and I had the pleasure of continuing an 8 week Nonviolence training at Chariho Middle school for a small group of 7th and 8th graders. The after school program founded by Andrew McQuaide, covered all the main points of a two day core with the addition of a film focusing on the children's movement of Birmingham, Alabama. It was exciting to introduce nonviolence to this age group. Middle schools have been making the news lately and in a not so positive way, the focus being bullying. Bullying is a serious form of violence that nobody should have to experience. It was interesting to hear what the students had to say regarding violence both physical, verbal and internal. Overall the program was a success, with students asking if we would continue it next semester. Ryan and I would like to continue the training in the spring if all goes well. Greg Zenion, the principal of Chariho Middle welcomed our potential return and encouraged us to consider parent and teacher training as well.

Nonviolence Training at the MET School

By Gillian Bell

My name is Gillian Bell, I am a senior Anthropology student and Nonviolence and Peace Studies Minor at URI. This past summer I attended the 2010 Kingian Nonviolence Summer Institute and received my certification as a Level I Nonviolence co-trainer. Motivated to put my new knowledge to work right away, I built my Senior Honors Project around Nonviolence Education. Starting this semester, I have been leading an introductory Kingian Nonviolence curriculum at the East Bay Met School in Newport, RI for the entire 9th grade (24 students!) with great help from fellow URI student and Level I Trainer, Chelsea Longa. This first half of the year has been focused on bringing the 9th graders up to speed on the principles and steps of nonviolence by presenting them with information from the 2-day core in a 45min/week class on Mondays. Next semester I will continue with the 2-day core activities and lessons, and offer a project for interested students from all grades who would like to take a more hands-on approach, building community plans to work through the steps of nonviolent social change with a problem they think is important in their lives. I am so lucky to work at the Met, where fellow trainer Amy Leonard works as a nonviolence educator on the staff. It is a treat to be back at my high school, where I graduated from the Providence campus in 2007, teaching kids from my community about the value of nonviolence. Many thanks to the Center and all the hands that work to keep things moving there. I look forward to continuing to be involved there, and have especially enjoyed the activities I have taken part in as a new member of the Student Nonviolent Involvement Committee.

WHO’s WHO . . . URI Nonviolence Graduates, Where Are They Now?

By Nick Katkevich

Certified Kingian Nonviolence Trainer in Arizona. My life’s path is now defined by the experience I had at the Kingian Nonviolence Summer Institute held at the University of Rhode Island in 2009 Shortly after the Institute I moved to Arizona and have since have had the blessed opportunity to be a part of Kingian Nonviolence trainings and an active Kingian Nonviolence community in the state. In the past year and a half I have served as a trainer for several two-day cores trainings throughout Arizona as well as a facilitator for a youth training of trainers program and fast track Level I Training, both of which were held in Tucson. In 2011 I look forward to dedicating my time to the development of The Phoenix Nonviolence TruthForce and solidifying a Kingian Nonviolence movement in the valley of the sun. May the Nonviolence seeds we plant today continue to flourish and blossom for ages to come.
**Center Activity**

**Nonviolence Behind Bars: Update**  
*By Sgt. Linda Palazzo*  
The most recent prison graduation was October 13th, 2010. This class had to have been one of my most challenging classes. I had three very challenging inmates. Two were well educated and the third spoke mostly Spanish. I had to find a common ground for everyone. I put much thought into this class because I wanted to reach all of them. I used a process in class called, “Building The Beloved Community right here in class at The ACI.” I explained in great depth that it was time for them to start caring about the future for all of mankind. I assigned the planning for the graduation ceremony to my two educated inmates. It was the most amazing graduation I have witnessed. The valedictorian covered points from where the class had started and he ended with these words: “WE the Believers of Nonviolence have a deep faith in the future for all of mankind.” Please keep this picture in your mind: Pomp and circumstance to the tune of “Where is the Love!” We sure had some jail room rock that night!

**Student Nonviolence Involvement Committee Update…**  
*by Michaela Cashman*  
This past semester SNIC was successful in drawing in a new assortment of students and sustaining a thoughtful, nonviolently dedicated group. Chelsea Longa, SNIC member and Level I Kingian Nonviolence trainer, made us proud by being the SNIC representative for URI's I AM U URI-Unity in Difference Retreat. Chelsea said, “it was great to connect with other multicultural organizations to talk about how nonviolence can improve our campus climate.” SNIC members were active this semester in outreaching to schools. Gillian Bell and Chelsea Longa delivered nonviolence trainings to MET school this past semester, while David Nelson and Ryan Alexander continued the Chariho Middle School trainings. SNIC is planning to conduct nonviolence trainings with several student this Spring semester. We eagerly anticipate SNIC participation in MLK Week programs. We look forward to our upcoming collaboration with the Seekers Meditation Group.

**PASTRIES FOR PEACE – Students Bake Goodies to Support Nonviolence Training in Nepal**  
Justin Vendettuoli, Cara Sullivan, Christin Dickerson, Elliott Bertrand, Cara Mackler, and Yetunde Babalola sponsored the first fundraising activity for the Center on Nov. 18th in Hope Commons. Baking their own delicious cupcakes, cookies and brownies the students raised over $100 and helped to promote awareness about the work of the Center. Justin said “I don’t think all that many students know where it is or that we have such a Center on campus.” The highlight of the fundraiser was a raffle for an enormous mouth-watering chocolate cake emblazoned with a peace sign. In January, the funds will help support Nepali college students participating in Kingian nonviolence training being conducted by the URI Center in Kathmandu, Nepal. *Namaste*
2011 International Nonviolence Summer Institute

Kingian Nonviolence Conflict Reconciliation

Join Dr. Bernard LaFayette, Jr. for an intensive and transformative training experience. Study and learn in workshop-based experiential formats with participants from across the US and around the world.

Three training options offered:

- Introduction to Kingian Nonviolence June 6th-10th
- Nonviolence Training Certification (Level I) June 6th-17th
- Advanced Nonviolence Certification (Level II) June 13th-17th

For info about online registration and housing options:
http://www.uri.edu/nonviolence OR nonviolence@etal.uri.edu

This Spring 2011 Study Peace & Nonviolence

CSV301-0004 Stress Reduction and Meditation: Prof. Celina Pereira. (1-3cr.) Promotes inner peace in response to the health and wellness needs of our students and the URI community.

NVP200 Nonviolence & Peace Studies Colloq. Prof. Charles Collyer. (1 cr.) Speakers series introduce issues in nonviolence and peace studies.

PSY478 Applications Nonviolence: Prof. Paul Bueno de Mesquita. (3 cr.) Level I Kingian Nonviolence training of trainers equivalent course.

PSY425 Peace Psychology: Pamela Zappardino. (3 crs.) Combines cognitive, social, clinical and cross-cultural psychology that prevent violence and promotes constructive nonviolent behavior.

PSY500 Theory and Research on Nonviolence and Peace: Prof. Charles Collyer. (3 cr.) Surveys selected issues in the interdisciplinary field of Nonviolence and Peace Studies.

Inner Peace Meditation, Yoga, and Tai Chi. For info: 874.9037

Nonviolence and Peace Studies Scholarships Awarded

Art Stein Endowed Fund in Nonviolence and Peace Studies

The Center is pleased to announce Michaela Cashman and David Nelson as recipients of the 2010 Art Stein Scholarships in Nonviolence and Peace Studies. This endowed fund was created for the purpose of helping support a new generation of students interested in, and committed to, peace education, social justice and human unity. Michaela is a junior majoring in Environmental Sciences and Management and is president of SNIC. David is a third year Biology major and also a SNIC officer. Both students are completing the interdisciplinary minor in Nonviolence and Peace Studies offered through the Center. In making the award, the Center recognized both of these students because they have excelled in their studies, have shown leadership while being actively engaged in several important activities of the URI Center for Nonviolence & Peace Studies. Most notably they were among some of the first students to have completed advanced nonviolence trainings. Michaela and David received Level I certificate in PSY478 last spring semester, and Level II advanced certificate by participating in the International Nonviolence Summer Institute 2010 in July. Our thanks to Art for his spiritual & material forms of support!