

Center for Living Peace Announces New “Living Peace Series”

Irvine, Calif. - (December 9, 2010) - The Center for Living Peace in partnership with the University of California, Irvine (UCI) hosted its first “Living Peace Series” to benefit the Charlize Theron Africa Outreach Project (CTAOP) on Saturday, December 4, 2010. The ongoing series seeks to create important dialogue about how to generate a more peaceful, just and sustainable world by inspiring series participants to take action. Following the speaking engagement was a fundraising gala attended by over 100 people at the Center for Living Peace.

Ms. Theron addressed the audience, both live and via webcast, about her project which is committed to creating a safer and healthier life for impoverished children and communities of South Africa, with a particular focus on individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Earlier in the day the Center for Living Peace invited local community leaders, school groups, philanthropists, peace and service organizations, academics, researchers, and non-profit leaders in the field of work being discussed to take part in working groups. Some of the attendees were representatives from: Soka University, UCI, Tia’s Arms, The Africa Project, Team Kids, Girl Scout Troop 227, Orange County High School of the Arts (OCHSA) and Corona Del Mar High School. They worked together find ways to contribute to the needs of CTAOP through service initiatives, fundraising projects, and raising awareness in the community. During the working group sessions, a local philanthropist committed to match the fundraising efforts of her group for up to \$10, 000. “We are very thankful for all of the students, business leaders, philanthropists and clubs who participated in the Center for Living Peace workshop. The participants came to a better understanding of their potential to create a more peaceful, compassionate, just and sustainable world and are a wonderful example of living peace,” said Kelly Smith, Founder of the Center for Living Peace.

Through the exposure of Twitter (the event received more than 1.5 million tweets), two South African young women who both lost their mothers, typical of the millions of children and youth in Africa that are struggling to cope with life in a poverty-stricken environment, learned of the event and were invited to attend. Both women won full scholarships to study at Concordia University after participating in a girls’ choir project to raise funds for Themba, an organization that provides support to kids from poor, deep rural homes. Both girls are gifted singers and sang an impromptu Zulu song.

“Having them with us was particularly poignant because they exemplify the purpose of Kelly Smith’s visions for the Center - bringing the world together in peace, love and compassion,” said Nancy Christiano, spokesperson for the Center for Living Peace.

The next event will feature guest speaker Sir Richard Branson on Tuesday, January 25, 2011 at UCI. Mr. Branson will be discussing his non-profit organization, Virgin Unite, which was created to connect people to tackle tough social and environmental problems in an entrepreneurial way. For more information about the Living Peace Series, please visit: www.livingpeace.uci.edu/.

About the Center for Living Peace

The Center for Living Peace in Orange County (goodhappens.org) was founded in May 2010 and believes in making "Good Happen" by providing classes that promote peace; including classes in peace-making and effective communication, inner work and development, safeguarding the environment, and arts and culture. The Center's goal is to create a place where each and every person can discover their special gifts and feel empowered to make a difference.