

## ***Friends of Compassion***

### ***Organizational First Meeting***

***Wednesday, May 19, 2010***

***Unitarian Universalist Church 7 p.m.***

John Hancock began the meeting by saying that it was a discussion of business and ethics that started this process. Many organizations have come together through this project and are now deciding what to do while we're waiting for the Dalai Lama's response. Following are questions John asked and the audience's responses.

#### **What does compassion mean?**

- Caring for others
- Action!
- Active, loving kindnesses – dethrone you and put other there
- Understanding others pain, through yours
- Care MORE for others
- Combination of sensitivity and motivation
- Sacrifice
- Truly connect with others
- Warmth, affection, respect
- Selfless love
- Forgiveness of yourself and others
- Empathy
- Compassion is unity – wholeness. It is experiencing the fact that we're one.
- Compassion challenges diversity.
- All inclusive caring
- Recognizing a common humanity in all people

- Expand it to world and all sentient beings
- Realization of our shared predicament
- Goes beyond to see through others eyes

With regard to law enforcement, John talked to an EWU & a Cheney police officer (who were in charge of Geshe-la's security at EWU) and asked their opinion. They wondered, "how do you think leniency will work out?" The audience suggested that:

- Offenders first step must be to take responsibility in making things right
- Responsibility, respect, restoring
- Golden rule
- When you take the time to listen to offenders – you may not approve of the behavior but you can learn about the individual.
- Protect not only society but individual from themselves.
- Non-violence

Law enforcement is interested in how compassion could work. Sherriff Ozzie Knezovich wrote an endorsement letter that was included with the proposal letter to the Dalai Lama. Sherriff Knezovich commented that, "Our community is moving from darkness to light." He also thanked the Dalai Lama for spreading peace and tolerance.

**Compassion is not:**

- Leniency
- Faceless
- Always sweet

**What are some reasons for volunteering with Friends of Compassion?**

- Relationship – earth, each other, ourselves

- There are so many faiths. There must be some ultimate truth.
- It doesn't matter which god you worship. It's how you live your life.
- Stop being a jerk
- Relationship – earth, each other, ourselves

Part of the project is to make this community a better place. The Dalai Lama has had such an effect on inspiring compassion. Rotary Club 21 is testing religious and philosophical ideas within their business club. Rotary Club is neutral regarding faith. Rotary Club 21 President, Debbie Rauen, was introduced.

Marianne Miller read the Sravasti Abbey / Rotary Club 21 co-sponsored proposal letter. Venerable Chodron personally delivered this letter to the Dalai Lama.

### **Compassion in action – What are we doing now?**

- Spokane Falls is sending students abroad to teach computer skills and English. They are bringing Tibetans to SFCC. Compassion and mediation course (in Tibet tradition) will be offered in fall – non credit.
- Coyote Ridge has a prison dharma group. Sravasti Abbey makes meditation CDs available to them and write letters so the prisoners know that they are not forgotten. They teach mindfulness.
- EWU's Compassionate Interfaith Society is working with students, faculty and administration to put compassion at the center of the university.
- Radha Center sponsored a "Charter for Compassion" unity and diversity event called "Sun, Seeds and Services – 108 Sun Salutations." Practitioners of many faiths came together for the service.
- We should challenge compassion toward ourselves.
- Unitarian Universalist Church gives the Sravasti Abbey meditation group use their facilities (every Monday night at 6:30)
- The Presbyterian Church is sponsoring an interfaith program. University professors and religious leaders are presenting the beliefs of various faiths.
- We're meeting like minded people - one on one relationships are forming that normally wouldn't occur.
- "Action Against Hate Symposium" will be held next year at Gonzaga. They will look at hate from an interdisciplinary perspective. How can compassion lessen hate?

- Educational Institutions are working together. Professors from Gonzaga have been featured speakers at EWU. Whithworth, EWU and Gonzaga supported Geshe Phelgye's speaking engagements at each of the universities.

## **INCLUSIVENESS:**

Rotary Club 21 will post Friends of Compassion information on its webpage. They will be a source of information by posting events and volunteer opportunities for groups. But they will not "push" specific events/projects.

John asked for assistance in finding diversity – there are still some blanks

No first nations – find common ground – this will happen one person at a time

Several minority groups aren't here.

## **IF the Dalai Lama comes in two years, and we need one year to prepare, we have a year for moving potential projects forward. WHAT CAN WE DO?**

- Music, dance, art – bring people together – festivals
- "Compassionate Cities" (out of Seeds of Compassion). Go to City Council for a resolution.
- Political Action – let's spend money on compassion instead of new jail. This will be decided by who we elect. If we want leaders to act compassionately – we need to tell them what we want and how many of us that there are.
- Should we spend 200 million for a jail or to get rid of polio?
- Radio Stations – get on to talk about project.
- Political Action – get to reporters and have them ask questions about compassion.
- Jaycee Commission – dialogue with young people
- Singing, singing and more singing
- Have a community building where people can gather and be cared for. The people that come for help can then help others. In this way they've "earned" their help.

- Emphasize compassion in schools to reduce bullying and drop-out rate
- At these meetings – bring in someone to introduce a compassion practice
- Create a “facebook page”
- Submit articles to “FIG TREE” (only \$10 per year for subscription)
- Start a “compassionate” book club
- Sravasti Abbey needs volunteer help with their forest service work. They have firewood available to anyone wishing to make a donation.

**Our next meeting will be:**

Wednesday, June 16th

7 p.m.

Spokane Buddhist Temple (927 South Perry Street, Spokane)

For further discussion about organizing, current affairs, links to other organizations and potential work together.

(Donations of socks for the homeless will be joyfully, compassionately, and gratefully accepted.)