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Israeli Jewish, Christian and Muslim Children Perform in USA for First Time

Peace Drums Steel Band Concert Tour Showing Commitment to Each Other and to Reconciliation Performances in Delaware, Pennsylvania & New York April 10 - 19



The Peace Drums Steel Band brings peacemaking through music in the group's US performances this April. The project was created as a conflict resolution initiative involving Jewish, Christian and Muslim children in the Galilee region of Israel performing together.

Peachmaking through music is the essence of the Peace Drums Steel Band that, for the first time, is touring the United States this April. The project was created as a conflict resolution initiative involving Jewish, Christian, and Muslim children in the Galilee region of Israel performing together. Founded by Delaware Churches for Middle East Peace and created by Philadelphia percussionist Harvey Price, the

band is coming to the United States to demonstrate their new passion for Caribbean steel drum music as well as their commitment to each other and for reconciliation between all Israelis.

Their first US tour begins on **April 10, 2016** with performances scheduled in Wilmington, Philadelphia, Abington, PA, and Mt. Kisco, NY. In a visit planned by the Consulate General of Israel to the Middle Atlantic Region, the ensemble will meet with Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney at City Hall on Tuesday, **April 12** at 10:30 a.m. to perform and give him lessons on the steel drum. Peace Drums will tour three Mid-Atlantic States giving the following performances:

- **Wednesday, April 13** – 7:30 p.m. in Wilmington, DE – Cab Calloway School of the Arts, 100 N. Dupont Road.

- **Thursday, April 14** – 7 p.m. in Mt. Kisco, NY – Bet Torah Synagogue, 60 Smith Avenue.

- **Saturday, April 16** – 5 p.m. in Newark, DE – University of Delaware, Perkins Student Center at 325 Academy Street.

- **Sunday, April 17** – 3 p.m. in Abington, PA – Performing with the Delaware Steel Band at Abington Presbyterian Church, 1082 Old York Road.

- **Tuesday, April 19** – 7 p.m. in Philadelphia, PA – Finale performance at Congregation Rodeph Shalom, 615 N. Broad St.

It was Harvey Price, the University of Delaware Associate Professor of Percussion, who had the idea many years ago to form a steel band of Jewish and Arab students in Israel as a way to get them to see each other in a different light. In 2013, with the support of clergy from Delaware Churches for Mid-East Peace, that dream became a reality. It was Price who negotiated an alliance between Israeli Arab partners at the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in the Galilean village of Ibillin and Israeli Jewish partners at the Leo Baeck School in the City of Haifa.

The Peace Drums tour has the sponsorship of the Consulate General of Israel to the Middle Atlantic Region. Consul

General Yaron Sideman said recently, "Peace Drums' young ensemble is the dream and hope for the future. Through their music-making these young Israeli Christian, Muslim and Jewish drummers are bringing together their families and communities showing themselves and now Greater Philadelphia that respect, communication, understanding are the path to building a peaceful resilient nation and world. We look forward to welcoming them and learning from them."

Retired Melkite Catholic Archbishop of the Galilee region, Elias Chacour, founder of the Mar Elias Schools, will accompany the Band. Abuna (Father) Chacour believes strongly in the Peace Drums Project saying recently, "The children are creating the image of what we want Israel to be – a state for all its citizens, a place where happiness, joy, thriving and equality is the rule. They show that brotherhood and justice reign and IS possible!"

Harvey Price explains the use of the steel drum for this peace mission. He said, "When I first started teaching students to play steel drums, I noticed they formed a really nice bond. Using steel drums seemed ideal because they are instruments from Trinidad and have nothing to do with either culture – Arab or Jewish – something brand new for all the students. In addition, the steel drum itself was born out of conflict in Trinidad and Tobago and used for conflict resolution. Perfect!" Price, who travels to Israel several times a year to work with the students and their teachers, is overwhelmed that this US Tour is taking place. He added, "I can't wait to see the response to the students when they are here in the United States demonstrating their love for the instrument and their appreciation of each other. It is my dream that they become models for others, who will come together through music and focus on their similarities instead of differences."

The co-chairs of the Peace Drums Project are Rabbi Michael S. Beals, Congregation Beth Shalom, Wilmington, and The Reverend Dr. Gregory Knox Jones, Head of Staff, Westminster Presbyterian Church. They shared their excitement about this program that not only showcases the band's musicianship, but also is fostering interfaith collaboration and reconciliation in the Delaware Valley. Rabbi Beals said, "What could be better than the combination of children, music and peace! It's not about leaders to leaders, it's about people to people and, hopefully, growing a culture of peace that will be sustainable." Reverend Jones added, "We want to promote understanding and empathy between three faiths in Northern Delaware and throughout the Mid-Atlantic States and thousands of miles away in the Holy Land. There is a future of hope for children and for everyone."

The Honorary Chairs of this initiative are Martha Carper and Carla Markell. Co-Sponsors of the Peace Drums Project are: Abrams Realty & Development, Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware Council on Global and Muslim Affairs, Delaware Churches for Middle East Peace Episcopal Diocese of Delaware, Jewish Federation of Delaware, Jewish Community Relations Committee, Music School of Delaware, Pacem in Terris, People to People and Delaware Chapter Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Consulate General of Israel to the Mid-Atlantic Region.

For information, visit <http://peacedrumsproject.org>.