



Press Release

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**For Immediate Release & heads up for August event & films to be screened on July 27 and August 5**

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### **Annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki Vigil to be held in Ashland, August 6-9**

#### **“Hiroshima to Fukushima – Lessons from Disaster”**

#### **Films, speakers, music, dance and the “Nuclear Maze”**

The nuclear disaster at the Fukushima nuclear plant in northern Japan earlier this year and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki 66 years ago will be commemorated and the dangers of nuclear weapons and power plants displayed during the annual Hiroshima & Nagasaki Vigil in downtown Ashland from August 6 through 9. This will be the 26th year for the vigil in Ashland.

Two programs associated with the vigil will actually get underway before the vigil begins with the screening of two excellent documentary films: *Nuclear Tipping Point* (to be shown on July 27th) and *The Last Atomic Bomb* (Aug. 5th). Each will be screened at Peace House in Ashland at 7 p.m. on their respective dates. (See more about the films below.)

The opening ceremony for the vigil will begin at 8 a.m. Saturday, August 6th on the lawn at the entrance to Lithia Park just off the Plaza in Ashland. Performers and speakers on the opening day will include:

**Ashland Mayor John Stromberg** (Welcome at Opening Ceremony)

The children's Music and Movement class of the newly formed **Japanese Association of Southern Oregon (JASO)**, will perform (12 noon, Aug. 6, Ashland Plaza. The audience will be encouraged to fold Peace Cranes with the class after the performance.

**Jane Ayers** (independent journalist specializing in nuclear matters) will speak on the dangers of nuclear power, nuclear weapons and nuclear fallout at 2 p.m. in the Ashland Plaza

**The Whistling Elk Drum** group will perform at 3 p.m. Aug. 6 in the Ashland Plaza

“Japan’s people have suffered tremendously from nuclear disasters. With the meltdowns of three reactors at the Fukushima nuclear plant after the horrible earthquake and tsunami, this year’s vigil will honor the victims of that recent disaster as well as the hundreds of thousands of victims from the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings,” said Jill Mackie of the Ashland branch of the Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom. WILPF is the lead sponsor of the annual vigil.

The vigil will begin with the lighting of a memorial candle at 8 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 6, on the lawn at the entrance to Lithia Park near the Plaza in downtown Ashland, followed by a moment of silence.

The candle is lighted annually in remembrance not only of the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki blasts and now the Fukushima disaster victims, but also for the many victims of all aspects of the nuclear cycle, including those who died or became ill while mining, processing, testing, installing or otherwise being exposed to nuclear weapons, nuclear reactors and nuclear explosions and waste materials. Ashland Mayor John Stromberg, a member of the international Mayors for Peace organization, will give the opening address and remind those attending that Ashland is designated a nuclear-free zone.

At 12 noon Aug. 6 the children of Music and Movement Class of the Japanese Association of Southern Oregon will perform. JASO was formed in March 2011 to educate the public about the Japanese culture and to raise money to help victims of the earthquake/tsunami/radiation disaster in northern Japan earlier this year. So far JASO has raised more than \$30,000 for the relief effort.

At 3 p.m. Aug. 6 the Whistling Elk Drum group will perform on the Plaza. Whistling Elk is a Native American drum group, part of the Red Earth Descendants community. Whistling Elk is based in Ashland

After the opening ceremony, the public will be invited to explore a “Nuclear Maze” on the Plaza. The educational display will be open around the clock as the vigil continues until 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 8.

A closing ceremony for the vigil will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 9, to mark the 66th anniversary of the Nagasaki bombing. The ceremony will be in the Japanese Garden in Lithia Park. The public will be invited to float sunflowers, the symbol of the nuclear-free movement, down the stream that flows through the Japanese Garden to Ashland Creek.

“We hold these events to inform others of the horrors of nuclear war and its devastating effects on innocent populations and the planet, to remember the victims from all aspects of the nuclear cycle, and to provide opportunities for expression, dialogue and action,” Mackie said.

**In conjunction with the vigil, [two free films](#) will be shown at Peace House, 543 S. Mountain St. in Ashland on July 27th and August 5th:**

- **“Nuclear Tipping Point”** will be screened at **7 p.m. Wednesday, July 27** at Peace House. This film features interviews with four men intimately involved in American diplomacy and national security over the last four decades. Former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry and former Senator Sam Nunn share the personal experiences that led them to write three Wall Street Journal op-ed’s, in support of a world free of nuclear weapons and the steps needed to get there. Their efforts have reframed the global debate on nuclear issues and, according to the New York Times, “sent waves through the global policy establishment.” The film is introduced by retired General Colin Powell, narrated by Michael Douglas and includes interviews with former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.
- **“The Last Atomic Bomb”** can be viewed at **7 p.m. Friday, August 5**, at Peace House. This film challenges widely held assumptions while presenting the inspiring stories of survivors to pass on to future generations the human consequences of using nuclear weapons.

**Local sponsors of the vigil are:** Ashland WILPF, Peace House, Rogue Valley Peace Choir, Citizens for Peace & Justice, Red Earth Descendants, Rogue Valley Peace Veterans, Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice, Collateral Repair Project, Veterans for Peace Rogue Valley Chapter 156, United Nations Association of Southern Oregon, One Sunny Day Initiatives, United Church of Christ Congregational of Ashland, the Social Justice Action Committee of the Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, South Mountain Friends Meeting, and the Japanese Association of Southern Oregon.

Founded in 1915, **WILPF** is the oldest peace organization in the United States and has branches in 37 countries. WILPF acts to promote peace, social justice, racial equality and women's rights. Previous members include Nobel Peace Prize laureates Jane Addams, Dr. Linus Pauling and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

For more information, contact Jill Mackie, 541-488-9286.



**“Nuclear Maze” display at the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Vigil last year**