

PRESS RELEASE: **For Immediate Release and heads up for July 14 film showing**

EVENT DATES: July 14, August 6 - 9, August 11

FROM: Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF), Ashland, Oregon

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30th Annual Rogue Valley Hiroshima-Nagasaki Vigil: "Arm-in- Arm: Time to Disarm" August 6-9

With origami peace cranes fluttering in the background, a gong will break the morning quiet of Ashland's Lithia Park on Thursday, August 6th during the 8 AM opening of the Rogue Valley's 30th annual peace vigil. The gong will sound at 8:15 to mark the moment the atom bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima, Japan.

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are commemorated with a vigil every August 6 through August 9th by members of the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF), along with other local organizations. The vigil will provide an opportunity to reflect, and also to learn. A large canvas structure with photos and text—the "Nuclear Maze"—will be assembled on the Ashland Plaza that details the history of nuclear weapons and their impact on various communities worldwide. Information will also be presented about the legacy of radiation contamination, problems with reliance on nuclear power, and alternatives available to meet our energy needs.

The theme of this year's vigil is "Arm-in-Arm: Time to Disarm" in recognition of the 70th anniversary of the devastating bombing of Japan and the growing world-wide movement for total nuclear disarmament.

Officiated by Reverend Norma Nakai Burton from the Ashland Unity Church, the vigil's opening ceremony begins at 8 AM on August 6th on the grassy entrance to Lithia Park. There will be a reading of Ashland's proclamation designating the City as a nuclear-free zone and a Mayors for Peace City, followed by a moment of silence as the memorial candle is lit. Members of the public will be invited to participate in a Japanese water ceremony symbolizing the easing of suffering and share personal reflections. Music will be provided by internationally recognized singer/songwriter Masako Cross. After the ceremony, the public is welcome to wander the Nuclear Maze, consider actions to take, fold peace cranes, and write haiku for the Peace Tree. The vigil will continue on the Plaza until 7 PM on Friday, August 7th.

On Saturday, August 8th at 7:00 PM, WILPF will partner with Rogue Climate to present "Art, Music, & Words" at the Ashland United Church of Christ (UCC) at 717 Siskiyou Boulevard. The event will feature a collaborative art project, a peace dove collage that will be created by attendees. Music will be provided by Kim Griswell, Rob Lowry, and Neil Holland of Peace Rock and by international performer Masako Cross. Dr. Linda Richards of Oregon State University will read her original poem "The Day the Train Stopped" inspired by her trip to the 2010 Hiroshima Nagasaki

commemorations.

The closing ceremony will commemorate the victims of Nagasaki and will be held in the upper Japanese Garden in Lithia Park on Sunday, August 9th at 7:00 PM. Reverend Caren Caldwell from the Medford Congregational United Church of Christ will officiate. Members of the Japanese Association of Southern Oregon (JA-SO) will sing, as will guest artist, Dr. Mina Carson of Oregon State University. At the vigil's end, participants will be invited to float sunflowers, the international symbol of the anti-nuclear movement, in the stream while accompanied by Richard Williams on shakuhachi flute.

In conjunction with the vigil, two free films will be shown at 7 pm at the Medford Library, by cosponsors Citizens for Peace & Justice and Occupy Medford. **On July 14** "Crying Earth Rise Up!" will show the human cost of uranium mining and its impact on Great Plains drinking water. The **August 11** film, "Into Eternity", documents Finland's attempt to build the first permanent repository for high-level nuclear waste, raising questions the U.S. must face.

The 30th annual Rogue Valley Hiroshima-Nagasaki Vigil is hosted by the Ashland branch of Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF). Founded in 1915, WILPF is the oldest women's peace organization in the world and has branches in 37 countries. WILPF acts to promote peace, social justice, racial equality, and women's rights.

Vigil Co-sponsors include Peace House, Medford Citizens for Peace & Justice, Veterans for Peace-Rogue Valley Chapter 156, Ashland/Talent Clergywomen, Occupy Medford, One Sunny Day Initiatives & OSDI Japan, Japanese Association of Southern Oregon, Red Earth Descendants, Rogue Valley Peace Choir, Ashland United Church of Christ, SOU United Nations Club, Social Justice & Action Committee of R.V. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, South Mountain Friends Meeting, JC Pacific Green Party, Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice, Ashland Unity Church, FlowerTyme, and Medford Congregational United Church of Christ.

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