

PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release

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

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Annual Hiroshima & Nagasaki Vigil In Ashland To Feature “Nuclear Alley”

Thursday, August 6, 2009 8:00 AM-7:00 PM Ashland Plaza

On the 64th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) invites the public to a ceremony commemorating the event. The ceremony will begin on Thursday, August 6 at 8 AM on the Plaza in downtown Ashland with the lighting of a memorial candle in remembrance of the victims of the bombings. There will be a moment of silence at 8:15 marking the exact time the bomb was detonated by the U.S. above the city of Hiroshima. A reading of the 1981 proclamation designating Ashland as a nuclear-free zone will follow.

After the ceremony, the public will be invited to wander the “Nuclear Alley” until 7 PM. Built by WILPF members, the alley is a large canvas and wood structure created to teach about the history of nuclear weapons and their impact on local and international communities. The walls will become teaching tools with photos and text addressing the issues of the nuclear era.

On Sunday, August 9, the date of the bombing of Nagasaki, the vigil will close with a ceremony at the Japanese Garden in Lithia Park at 3 PM. Local activists will float sunflowers, the symbol of the nuclear-free movement, down Lithia Creek.

Local WILPF member Nancy Spencer has a personal link to the vigil because her brother was a navigator on the aircraft that followed the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombers to photograph the devastation. Spencer says, “I think we need constant reminders like this vigil to remind ourselves of the horrors and inhumanity of war.”

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.

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