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News from the Wilson Center

The Wilson Center

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News from the Wilson Center

Seasons of Love – November 2016



Dear Friends,

My son has been performing in a production of *Rent* this past month, a musical written in the 1990's by Jonathan Larson. It touches on themes of love, friendship, AIDS, and homelessness – but most of all, love.

One of the songs in the show is called “Seasons of Love”, and as I have listened to it over and over again this past week (it’s message in deep contrast to the anger and acrimony of the election coverage), I have been thinking a lot about how we measure the work we do at the Wilson Center.

Do we measure in numbers of people attending our

events? Numbers of students in the student group? Amounts of food we have cooked? Money we have spent or money we have saved? Events we have hosted?

All of those things matter and by all of those measures we are doing very well (see the list of activities later in this newsletter). But in the end, I realize they are not how I measure the work that we do. In the end, I measure in love. And while I cannot quantify or calculate or “spread-sheet” love, I feel it, see it and hear it around me every day.

I hear it in conversations between UMaine veterans and peace activists who thought they might have little to say to one another and discovered connections and common perspectives they never envisioned at the Paul Chappell event last October.



New sign on front of Wilson Center says Peace in 11 languages

I see it in candles flickering on our altar and in heads bent together at a “Come to the Table” dinner in order to better hear the words of a classmate met for the first time that evening – a classmate from a faith tradition or belief system different from one’s own.

I smell it in the crunchy leaves raked up at the Ronald McDonald house during a Multifaith Day of Service and I taste it in the stir-fry cooked up for a Wilson Center dinner.

I feel it in the energy that permeates our building after every meditation or worship event and in the reverberation of a guitar played at a live-music coffee house on a Friday evening.

I sense it every time I walk into this beautiful, heart-felt space and I am grateful for it every day.



Our world needs more nurturing spaces. Spaces where we can be our authentic selves and listen to those around us with curiosity and an open heart. Spaces where we can hear one another’s fears and react with compassion instead of panic or judgment. Spaces where we can work toward healing the divides in our communities and in our own hearts.

For years the Wilson Center has provided such a space to the UMaine community. May it continue to do so

for years to come. And may your own life too be measured in love.

Sarah

Please join us for an Art Auction Fundraiser! DEC 3, 5-8pm

On Saturday Dec 3rd from 5-8pm the Wilson Center’s Board of Directors will host its first Art Auction fundraiser entitled “Art for Dialogue”. Come enjoy hors d’oeuvres, live-music by student musicians, Sue McKay’s great auctioneer skills, and some beautiful artwork. All proceeds from the auction will benefit the Wilson Center and the Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine. In case



of snow, consult our website for rescheduling information: umaine.edu/wilsoncenter

Photography as Spiritual Practice

The Wilson Center was blessed this fall to have Rev. Grace Bartlett lead us in a workshop on photography as spiritual opportunity. Thanks to the generosity of Fred Robie, students were able to wander along his property on the Stillwater River taking photos of what “called” to them. Grace has made cards from some of these photos and they will be on sale at the Dec 3rd auction. Those contributing \$100 or more to the Wilson Center between now and Jan 1st will also receive a set of cards in the mail as a thank you for supporting our work!



The Wilson Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, funded by private grants and donations from individuals like yourselves. Please consider supporting our work! Contributions can be made through the donate now button on our website: umaine.edu/wilsoncenter or can be mailed to the Wilson Center at 67 College Ave, Orono ME 04473

Paul K. Chappell of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation speaks on “Why World Peace is Possible”

The Wilson Center hosted Capt. Paul K. Chappell of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation for a campus visit this October. Paul met with Veterans in the UMaine Veterans lounge over lunch



for an informal question and answer session and then presented at the Wilson Center later that evening on “Why World Peace is Possible.” It was an inspiring day with more than 90 people getting to interact with Paul at one event or another and groups of students who may not have interacted much in the past getting to know one another a good bit better! For more information about Paul and his work go to: <https://www.wagingpeace.org/> or <http://paulkchappell.com/>

New UMaine Faith Leaders Luncheons and Multifaith Days of Service

An exciting new program at the Wilson Center this year is a once-a-semester gathering of faith leaders on campus. These luncheons are a chance to get to know one another a bit better, share projects we are working on, and build collaborations and initiatives together. At the first such luncheon in September we had 22 leaders from 9 different faith



groups involved – the Spiritual Coexistence Student Group, Black Bear Catholic, the Muslim Student Association, UMaine Hillel, Navigators, Intervarsity, Cru, Alpha Chi, and Life. Out of this luncheon came our new Multifaith Days of Service initiative. This project provides UMaine faith groups with a chance to come together to do good in the larger community. Our first day of service happened on Oct 30th at the Ronald McDonald house in Bangor where 24 students and leaders from 5 different UMaine faith organizations raked leaves, cleaned-up the yard, cleaned rooms and cooked dinner. A big success and a lot of fun for all! Thank you to Wilson Center staff member Shane Cushing for coordinating this event. The next multifaith day of service will be held at Food AND Medicine in Brewer at

the end of November.

Are you an alumni of the Wilson Center/MCA? If so, we would love to hear from you! Many of our records, especially from the 1970's to 2000 have been lost, and we would love to hear your stories and recollections! Please contact our Director, Sarah Marx, at smarxmccgill@gmail.com or 866-4227

Shabbat Dinners:

Another new program at the Wilson Center this fall has been launched by UMaine Hillel. Hillel will be hosting a Shabbat dinner one Friday evening each month. Students of ALL faith traditions and backgrounds are welcome to attend these dinners. Contact Arielle Frank for more information: arielle.frank@maine.edu



Ongoing Programs at the Wilson Center:

“Wednesdays at the Wilson!” – homecooked food each Wednesday followed by a wide-variety of multifaith activities, discussions, speakers, celebrations, worship, and more. Lots of music, art, laughter and connection. Average attendance: 30

“Come to the Table” monthly dinners – our Spiritual Coexistence Student Group, UMaine Hillel,

the Muslim Student Association and the South Asian Association of Maine together host a multifaith dinner followed by small-group discussions. Topics discussed this fall include “Welcoming Differences”, “The Importance of Ancestors” and “Forgiveness”. Average attendance: 35.

Meditation circle – facilitated by Steve McKay and Theodate Lawlor in the style of Thich Nhat Hahn. A chance to slow down and get centered in a busy week. Thursdays from 4:15-5:15pm. Open to both students and the wider community.

SpiritualiTEA – a member-facilitated group made up of students and recent graduates. A place to discuss big spiritual questions and sacred texts over a cup of hot tea. Also open to the larger community. Tuesdays from 5:30-6:30pm.

Live music Coffee Houses – community-building and connection to the soul through music and creativity. A tradition at the Wilson Center for more than 50 years! Donations are sent to the Shaw House for Homeless Youth in Bangor.

Orono Friends Meeting – Quaker worship service each Sunday morning from 10-11am. Contact Fred Irons for further details: fsmax11@gmail.com

SCOPE grants for social justice and community service –given in honor of Rev. Elizabeth Morris, chaplain of the Wilson Center from 1990-1993. They are awarded to UMaine students for innovative community service and social justice projects. (See write-up on next page for last year’s winner)

Dorothy Clarke Wilson Peace Writing Prize – this \$500 writing prize is awarded in honor of Dorothy Clarke Wilson each year at the Martin Luther King Day breakfast. This year’s topic is about racial and religious profiling and the changing face of America. Look for the winner to be announced on our website in January and join us at the MLK day breakfast if you can!

Multifaith Luncheon series – co-sponsored by the Wilson Center and UMaine Judaic Studies Program, with a generous grant from the Jewish Community Endowment Associates, this series of 5 free yearly luncheons gives members of the wider community a chance to experience the Wilson Center’s multifaith dialogues up-close and personal. So far this year, we have hosted

two luncheons with panelists from various spiritual and religious traditions. Topics have been: “Feasting and Fasting in our Traditions” and “A Conversation with Millennials on Faith, Religion, Spirituality and Culture”. If you would like to be added to the email invite list for these luncheons please contact Phyl Brazee: Phyllis.Brazee@umit.maine.edu

Winner of the Spring 2016 SCOPE grant: Antonia Carroll for her project UMaine Talks Back.



Antonia writes “UMaine Talks Back is an initiative to start conversations about race, Islamophobia, and discrimination on campus. Our goal is to reach as many students and faculty as possible so that we can continue building a more inclusive, open minded, and cohesive community for people of all backgrounds. UMaine Talks Back works by approaching organizations and departments on campus to discuss these issues as well as by hosting question and answer panels, discussions, and workshops and expanding through social

media.”

Meet our new staff!

Hi! I'm Shane Cushing, a second-year student in the Master's of Education Program in Student Development in Higher Education. I graduated with a BA in Psychology from the University of Maine at Farmington in 2015. I wear many hats here at the University of Maine and am excited to continue to branch out in my new role as Coordinator of New Programs and Initiatives here at the Wilson Center. I have been so lucky to engage in interfaith dialogue and make new connections with so many brilliant people. I can't wait to continue to work together and grow our community further. Please feel free to contact me with any ideas you may have for programs or events you would like to see at the Wilson Center!



Hi, I'm Russell Fascione. I'm a third-year undergrad in Psychology. I've been going to Wilson Center events for 3 years now and I love connecting with everyone over good food, fun activities, and inspiring dialogue! In addition to cooking Wednesday night dinners here, I'm the secretary for the Spiritual Coexistence Student Group and an Outreach Assistant for the Counseling Center. I hope you can join us at the Wilson Center sometime!

Hello! My name is Colleen Dougherty and I am a second year graduate student pursuing my Master's of Education in the Student Development in Higher Education program here at the University of Maine. I am very excited to be joining the Wilson Center as the program coordinator for the SCOPE Social Grant and Dorothy Clarke Wilson Peace Writing Prize programs. In addition, I will also be advising the Spiritual Coexistence Student Group. This work with the Wilson Center is at the very core of my passions to create inclusive spaces for all community members. Currently, I work as a graduate assistant with the College of Education and Human Development, recruiting potential students for the Student Development in Higher Education program and coordinating marketing and social media for the program. In my spare time, I love to read, cook, and spend time outdoors with friends.



The mission of the Wilson Center is to create progressive, ecumenical and multifaith dialogue for the University of Maine community and through worship, study and service to work for social justice, honor diversity and offer opportunities for spiritual growth.

Lyrics from Seasons of Love by Jonathan Larson

Five hundred twenty-five thousand
Six hundred minutes
Five hundred twenty-five thousand
Moments so dear
Five hundred twenty-five thousand
Six hundred minutes
How do you measure - measure a year?
In daylights - in sunsets
In midnights - in cups of coffee
In inches - in miles
In laughter - in strife

In - five hundred twenty-five thousand
Six hundred minutes
How do you measure
A year in the life
How about love?
How about love?
How about love?
Measure in love

Want to hear the Broadway cast? Go to the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp5Eyt7knus>.

The Wilson Center

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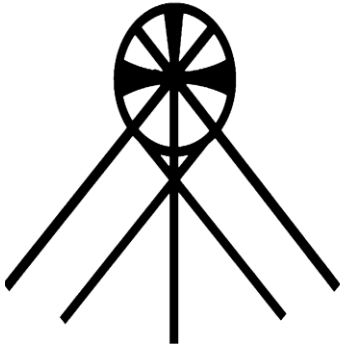
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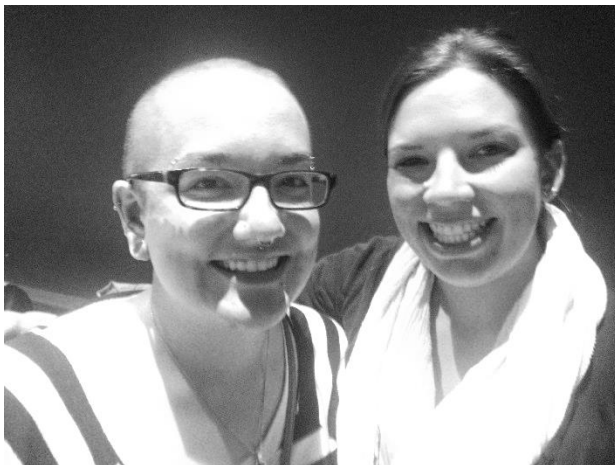
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in love!**

