



Camp promotes peace through respect



JHV: MICHAEL C. DUKE

Kids4Peace campers worked with artist in residence Natalia Zukerman to produce a four-panel mural at Christ Church Cathedral that will be installed at the Episcopal Health Foundation across the street.

By MICHAEL C. DUKE | JHV • Thu, Aug 20, 2015

At a local summer camp, a group of Muslim, Christian and Jewish teens learned that conflict isn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Conflict can be a catalyst for change," said Stuart Kensinger, co-director of an organization called Jerusalem Peace Builders that partners with Kids4Peace International to host an interfaith camp in Houston each summer.

"Our attention needs to be on how we manage that conflict," Kensinger told the JHV.

This year's Houston Kids4Peace camp brought together 38 middle schoolers for 12 days of programming, Aug. 6-17, that focused on identity, relationships and social justice.

The teens hailed from Israel and from the East, West and Gulf Coasts of the United States. One-third were Muslim, Christian and Jewish, and they were evenly split between boys and girls.

They spent time at Camp Allen in Navasato, Texas, and toured NASA, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Project Row Houses and Holocaust Museum Houston. In addition, they visited different houses of worship, and local faith leaders led day-long seminars, teaching the values and traditions of their respective faith communities.

The campers spent a lot of time in small discussion groups, learning to listen and to speak up. They worked with artists in residence to write and perform original music, and to create original artwork, expressing their individual and collective desires for peace.

"The concept of peace is really important to me," said Omar, one of the Muslim campers from Jerusalem. "Solving [the Arab-Israeli] conflict is one of my greatest ambitions."

Omar said he learned a lot about Judaism and Christianity during the Kids4Peace camp.

TOP STORIES

Texas Hillel vandalized with antisemitic graffiti

UOS preps for Purim

Galveston's Beth Jacob dedicates restored chapel

Houston To Host Young Jewish Professionals Regional Summit

Israel establishes an annual commemoration of the Oct. 7 attack — but not on Oct. 7

Houston 'Grogger Guy' goes bigger in 2024

Trump: Any Jew who votes for Democrats 'hates their religion'

White House confirms death in Gaza of Hamas No. 3 Marwan Issa

The J honors former Houston mayor in benefit for Meals on Wheels

Camp Young Judaea's Frank Silberlicht: Israel needs us now, more than ever

Greene Family Camp's Erin Mason: A visit like no other

Something new is cooking at The Medallion

Enroll now for a variety of Jewish-themed classes

Netanyahu says Schumer's call for new elections is 'totally inappropriate' amid deepening rift with Biden

ISRAEL AT WAR Read the latest

SPECIAL SECTION

Dining Out Guide Entertainment! Jewish Herald-Voice Section B February 29, 2024

JHV COLUMNS

JHV FOODIES Cantor Francyne Davis Jacobs & Russell Weil

BEYOND THE BIMAH Rabbi David Rosen

DEFINING JEWISH WOMEN Yael Trusch

THE KAMIN CORNER CITY HALL UPDATES Abbie Kamin

PRESERVING OUR PAST Dr. Joshua Furman

BeWell A MENTAL HEALTH COLUMN FROM JFSUJH

Read the e-edition

JHV PURIM

EXTRA! Read ALLLLL!

IT'S FINAL Introducing monthly, 2-page Click

Summer Acad

A two-week program for students inter

July

OFFICE OF HARRIS COUNTY CHRISTIAN I REGISTER

"It taught me to be more open-minded and to learn about the other side and what they think about us," he said. "You need to understand someone in order to earn and give respect."

Rafael, a Jewish camper from Boston, said he learned that respect leads to peace.

"I believe the problem is that the sides don't know each other, so they are afraid of each other," he said. "Learning about each other is the way to make peace."

Thea, a Christian camper from Vermont, said peace can be different things for different people, but, for everybody, it's a process.

"Peace, for me, is when people learn to respect each other," she said. "You should be able to walk down the street and not be afraid that people will judge you or hate you."

Art was interwoven with every activity at Kids4Peace camp. According to camp co-director, Tamika Evans, art is an effective conduit to promote dialogue and to foster peace.

"People need different media to express themselves," Evans said. "We need different ways to be able to communicate with each other, because words aren't always enough, especially when the conversations are hard."

Kids4Peace camp is a progressive program that ultimately trains former campers to come back as staff to help run the camps.

Louis, 17, worked as a counselor at this summer's camp in Houston. An Arab Christian from Jerusalem, he was a Kids4Peace camper several years earlier.

"My camp experience cemented the idea that we can live together," Louis told the JHV. "As a counselor, I enjoy teaching the next generation about the conflict.

"I know it and teach it in a way that's not accusatory. I explain that mistakes were made and we need to move on and find a way to connect," he said.

"Things are getting more violent back home and it doesn't look like it's progressing in the right direction," he added. "It's easy to get discouraged and to feel hopeless. I hold on to hope because I really want a better future.

"I want to live in a safe place," Louis said.

Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism's Rabbi Steve Gross has taught the Jewish component of the Houston Kids4Peace camp for the past two summers.

"These teens are immersing themselves in a process that's, in many ways, against the grain of what they're surrounded by every day," Rabbi Gross said. "What they're doing is bold and courageous.

"What they're doing represents tremendous hope in the future for peace," he said.

[submit your comments](#)

Mask up and crush Haman

Emanu El to host 'Israel Briefing with Bret Stephens'

Bearing Witness: Federation Israel trip sees horrors of Oct. 7, but also hope with fundraising dollars at work



ASK THE RABBI



RED + BLACK
real sisters. real life.

GET TO KNOW YOUR RABBI & CANTOR!
from their pets to their pet peeves

KENNY & ZIGGY'S
NEW YORK DELICATESSEN RESTAURANT

HOUSTON JEWISH FUNERALS
Jewish-owned and operated since 2001

JUDAICA
from the Kaplan M at Congregation



Realtor A
Martha Turner



HAWT
LUXURY RESI