



PURE LAND LEARNING COLLEGE ASSOCIATION INC. MULTI-FAITH MULTICULTURAL CENTRE

EVERYONE MATTERS - TOOWOOMBA, A MODEL CITY OF PEACE & HARMONY



March - April 2024, Issue 123



GLOBAL SPIRITUAL MAHOTSAV



Global Spiritual Mahotsav, a gathering of spiritual and faith leaders from around the world, united in meditation and support for the common goal of global harmony and peace, was held 14-16 March at Kanha Shanti Vanam, the Heartfulness headquarters in Hyderabad India. Organised by the Ministry of Culture India, this event saw representation from various nations including Australia, with Reverend Yvonne, Shannon, Dr. Uma Kumar, and Haniff representing the Australian delegation, thanks to the invitation extended by Heartfulness Australia. With a turnout of approximately 75,000 attendees, the event was officiated by Her Excellency Smt. Droupadi Murmu, President of India. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to President Heartfulness, the revered Reverend Kamlesh Patel, affectionately known as Daaji, for his leadership in bringing together this remarkable assembly of peace advocates in a unified front for the betterment of our world.



QUARTERLY ABRAHAMIC FAITH GATHERING



On 6 March, we had the privilege of being invited to the Quarterly Abrahamic Faith Gathering, where we explored the concept of peace from the perspective of the Abrahamic faiths.

It was an enriching evening filled with the exchange of stories, shared meals and the opportunity to strengthen bonds and trust within our Toowoomba community.





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OPENING CEREMONY



On 8 April 2024, the Pure Land Learning College Association Inc.'s Westbrook Campus hosted the Inaugural Opening Ceremony for the Advanced Diploma of Buddhist Studies (ADBS) and Advanced Diploma of Sinology Studies (ADSS) Classes, facilitated by the Royal Brisbane Institute of Technology's Department of Sinology Studies. We were honored to welcome Venerable Dr Wu Dao, President of the Corporation Republic of Hwa Dzan Society, and an esteemed Honorary Doctor of Literature from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, to grace the event. He will be delivering lectures on 'Design and Deliver Lectures on Sutras' for the course.



2024 ABBEY SYMPOSIUM AND YOUTH CONFERENCE

On 13 April, the Moreton Bay Goodwill Committee, alongside the Pure Land Learning College Association Inc, hosted the third Abbey Annual Multi-Faith & Cultural Dialogue Symposium, themed 'Embracing Diversity Celebrating Unity' at the Abbey Complex in Caboolture.

The Symposium successfully brought together people from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds in the Moreton Bay & Caboolture Region to delve into the ways in which we can foster unity by embracing our differences and shared humanitarian values. Attendees included members from the Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group and the Toowoomba Youth Peace Group.

The Symposium was complemented by a Youth 4 Youth Forum, where young adults aged 15 to 22 gathered to delve into the theme. They came together to establish a cohesive team, aiming to collaboratively work towards improving the world by fostering greater understanding and acceptance of one another.



Panel Discussion at the Symposium



Q & A at the Symposium

VIGIL HELD FOR BONDI VICTIMS



On 18 April, the Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group, comprising representatives from diverse faith denominations, joined by senior police officers and members of our community, gathered in solidarity and compassion at St. Stephen's Uniting Church. Together, we extended prayers for the victims and their affected loved ones following the recent tragedy in Bondi. Our unity and support served as a source of solace and strength during this somber period. Toowoomba truly stands as a blessed city to reside in. We are privileged to possess responsible leadership and a community brimming with love and compassion for all. Toowoomba is fortunate to have in place mechanisms for fostering both religious and social harmony, a fact mentioned by a research study conducted by Dr. Samuel Hogan from Deakin University.

Christine Schindler with various members of different faith offering prayers for the six people, including five women, who were stabbed by former Toowoomba man, Joel Caschi, at the World Junction Westfield shopping centre on Saturday. Margaret Green, a member of the Uniting Church, said it was such a sad situation and she felt for everybody involved. She was pained a thought for the parents of the killer, who live in Toowoomba. Joel Caschi was shot dead by a police officer at the scene. "They would be feeling absolutely dreadful," she said. "We offer our love and compassion to all those impacted, for lives lost, families grieving and communities in shock." Reverend Bruce Moore told on behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia. "We live in a time when social isolation and polarised missions on social media and news can work to separate us from each other," Reverend Moore said. "Representatives of the police as well as members from the Baptist, Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist faiths also offered prayers and thoughts."





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UPCOMING EVENTS

TOOWOOMBA COMMUNITY FORUM 2024 CENTERED AROUND 'SOCIAL FLOURISHING'

Announcing the Toowoomba Community Forum 2024 on 18 May, focusing on 'social flourishing'. We're thrilled to feature two prominent speakers, Professor Edwina Pio and Mr Anthony Jamal Green, both renowned for their work in building trust and fostering social flourishing in diverse communities.

Mr. Anthony Jamal Green, a writer and community leader from New Zealand, has dedicated himself to fostering inclusive conversations and authentic belonging through initiatives like 'Mahia te Aroha'. His efforts in promoting understanding and empathy exemplify the transformative power of compassion in rebuilding trust.

Professor Edwina Pio, a diversity professor at Auckland University of Technology and visiting professor at Boston College and Cambridge University, will share insights from her research on management, ethnicity and spirituality. With a diverse background as a university director, registered counselor and author, her current focus is on religious diversity in organisations.

Join us on 18 May to explore practical community engagement in the digital age, guided by compassion and connection. Don't miss out!

Free registration: <https://events.humanitix.com/social-flourishing-a-toowoomba-community-forum>



Together For Humanity
Educating for intercultural understanding

"OUT OF THE BOX" PROGRAM

In today's world, embracing diversity is not just a moral imperative but also a key factor in nurturing a thriving and dynamic learning community. Together for Humanity, an educational non-profit organization, collaborates with school communities to combat prejudice, empower students in navigating differences and assist educators in establishing culturally inclusive classrooms.

On 14-16 May, our centre in collaboration with Together for Humanity, is offering a program called 'Out of The Box' for schools in Toowoomba. It is a one-hour anti-prejudice workshop in which facilitators from diverse cultures and faiths invite students to examine their assumptions about Australian identity and stereotypes. It is presented in an interactive way, focusing on student-led Q&A. The program aims to equip students, educators and staff with the tools and knowledge needed to celebrate differences, foster mutual respect and create an environment where everyone feels valued and included. If your organisation is interested, please contact us via email for further details.