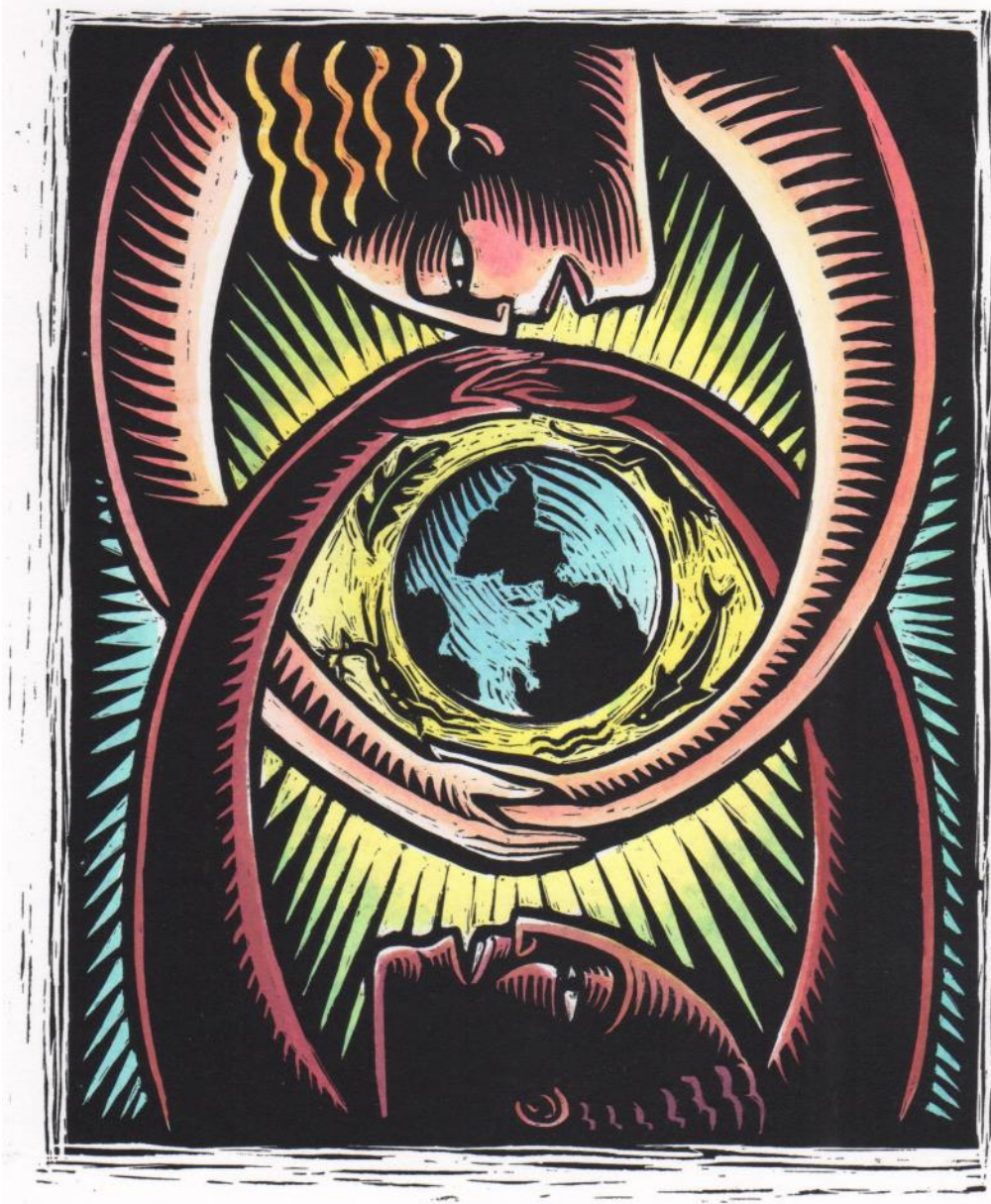


Peace Gazette

**Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center
Summer 2024**



ATTENTION MEMBERS AND FRIENDS!
SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON
at the Peace Center!

Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center

Creekside Commons
1035 Carol Lane
Lafayette, California 94549

Our purpose is to work for a culture of peace through education, advocacy and community building.

The Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

FOUNDER: Andy Baltzo, circa 1969

PEACE CENTER BOARD:

Amneh Ma'bad Ahmed, Bob Spies, Karen Perkins, Margli Auclair, Thomas Brom, Bob Maxwell, Rick Sterling, Andrew Kodama, Kathleen Barr

PEACE GAZETTE

Established by Arne Westerback, 1969

EDITOR/LAYOUT: Margli Auclair / Thomas Brom

PROOF-READER: Thomas Brom

PEACE GAZETTE EMAIL:

info@ourpeacecenter.org

PEACE CENTER ONLINE

WEB TEAM: Margli Auclair/Bob Spies/ Thomas Brom

WEEKLY ACTIVIST ALERTS:

info@ourpeacecenter.org

SOCIAL MEDIA:

www.facebook.com/MDPJC
[Instagram: mdpeaceandjustice](https://www.instagram.com/mdpeaceandjustice)

PEACE CENTER WEBSITES:

ourpeacecenter.org
creatingpeacefulschools.weebly.com

The *Peace Gazette* is a project of the Communications Committee of the Peace Center. The views expressed are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily speak for all members of the Center or its Board of Directors.

Contact us:

info@ourpeacecenter.org
(925) 933 7850

Summer 2024

Greetings Members and Friends!

The Center has had a particularly busy and focused year since publication of the 2023 *Peace Gazette*. This issue is both a review of our past events, and an invitation to attend the annual membership luncheon scheduled for September 28th at Creekside Commons, where we have our offices.

In early summer 2023 we began to finalize decisions for the Center's annual fundraiser, our Peace & Justice Awards Dinner, scheduled to take place in November. It was the 75th anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba, so we chose to highlight that historical event and organizations working towards peace in Palestine and Israel. Three were chosen, representing anti-war sentiment in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities.

Once the events of October occurred our plans changed. We decided to donate all our net proceeds to the Palestine Children's Relief Fund. The event attracted more than 170 attendees and raised over \$7,000.

Support for Palestine relief efforts dominated subsequent events, including a presentation by Rev. Munther Isaac of Bethlehem that filled the sanctuary of Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

But we also hosted the annual luncheon for winners of the 2024 Art & Writing Challenge and Youth Activist Award. And in June we celebrated the release of Julian Assange from 14 years of harassment and incarceration for releasing evidence of U.S. war crimes in Iraq.

Friends of the Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center, an affiliated club in Rossmoor, held a series of parallel events. Those ranged from an assessment of JFK's presidency and assassination in 1963, to a presentation by former CIA analyst Elizabeth Murray, who is now a member of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity.

Finally, we mourned the passing of longtime peace activist and board member Bob Hanson, who died at Rossmoor at age 92. Presenté, Bob!

We really hope you'll join us at our luncheon on the 28th! It's an opportunity to see new faces, meet new members, break bread together, and share ideas for Center priorities/events for the coming year.

Yours in Peace,

Margli Auclair

JULIAN ASSANGE IS FREE!

“If wars can be started by lies, peace can be started by truth.”

– Julian Assange



OFFICIAL NOTICE OF ASSANGE’S RELEASE POSTED ON WIKILEAKS:

Julian Assange is free. He left Belmarsh maximum security prison on the morning of 24 June, after having spent 1901 days there. He was granted bail by the High Court in London and was released at Stansted airport during the afternoon, where he boarded a plane and departed the UK.

This is the result of a global campaign that spanned grass-roots organisers, press freedom campaigners, legislators and leaders from across the political spectrum, all the way to the United Nations. This created the space for a long period of negotiations with the US Department of Justice, leading to a deal that has not yet been formally finalised. We will provide more information as soon as possible.

After more than five years in a 2x3 metre cell, isolated 23 hours a day, he will soon reunite with his wife Stella Assange, and their children, who have only known their father from behind bars.

WikiLeaks published groundbreaking stories of government corruption and human rights abuses, holding the powerful accountable for their actions. As editor-in-chief, Julian paid severely for these principles, and for the people's right to know.

As he returns to Australia, we thank all who stood by us, fought for us, and remained utterly committed in the fight for his freedom.

Julian's freedom is our freedom.



PC members Elicha and Rick at Belmarsh, June 2020



Julian at home with family, June 2024

Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center's
15th PEACE & JUSTICE AWARDS DINNER and
FUNDRAISER for the CHILDREN OF GAZA



This year, during a time of intense conflict in Palestine and Israel, we chose three groups that have worked for many years to promote justice and peace for all in the Middle East. Although chosen before the horrific events of Oct. 7th, the days since only made it clearer how important their work is.

VOICES FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE—ROSSMOOR

Organized as an official club in the retirement community, “Voices” holds monthly programs to educate and provide accurate information about Palestine including its history and current events. Its mission is to promote peace and justice by offering perspectives rarely heard.



JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE—BAY AREA

A chapter of the largest U.S.-based grassroots organization dedicated to promoting full equality, democracy, and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians.

NORCAL SABEEL A local chapter of Friends of Sabeel, the international non-profit Christian organization seeking justice and peace in the Holy Land, working together with Jews, Christians and Muslims.



**HELD ON NOVEMBER 4th, 2023,
ALL NET PROCEEDS (over \$7,000)
WERE DONATED TO
PALESTINE CHILDREN'S RELIEF FUND!**



Board Member Bob Spies and Leila Amro congratulating VJP representative Kathleen Densmore



Palestinian Youth Speakers Noor Ahmed and Ahmed Ahmed



Amneh Ahmed presenting a “Local Heroes for Peace” award to Clyde Leland, representing JVP



All eyes were on the keynote speaker’s powerful address!



Keynote Speaker Mazin Qumsiyeh, Ph.D., by video from Bethlehem

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY!

- Amalfi Fusion (Palestinian-American owned) donated the fabulous dinner;
- Creekside Commons donated the use of the premises; and,
- Attendance was the highest ever for this annual event!

THANK YOU ALL!

Mazin Butros Qumsiyeh is a Palestinian scientist and author, founder and director of the Palestine Museum of Natural History and the Palestine Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability at Bethlehem University.



SCENES FROM
THE DAY
MARCH 14th, 2024



Proudly Sponsored
by Mt. Diablo Peace
& Justice Center

Soul of my Soul Exhibit

*Raising awareness about Palestine
through children's art*

**CREEKSIDE COMMONS
(THE COURTYARD)
1035 CAROL LN, LAFAYETTE, CA
SATURDAY, MARCH 16 FROM 1-4 PM**

To submit art or volunteer, visit:
tinyurl.com/art4pali

Note: In case of rain, event will be
indoors and start at 3 pm

Parking: Use Parking Entrance A nearest to Mt. Diablo Boulevard
For clarification on start time on day of event:
Call/text (925) 360-4529






**FROM THE FRONTLINES:
Eyewitness Accounts from Palestine
EAST BAY**

**HEAR FIRST HAND EXPERIENCES OF
PALESTINIANS FROM OUR COMMUNITY**

Including keynote presentations from Dr. Mohammad Subeh's recent medical mission to Gaza and Dr. Jess Ghannam

**REGISTER FOR IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL TICKETS:
tinyurl.com/FrontlinesEvent504
ASL interpreters available**

SATURDAY, MAY 4 FROM 2-5 PM
Doors Open at 1:30, event will start promptly at 2PM
Mt Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church (MDUUC)
55 Eckley Ln, Walnut Creek, CA


Keynote speakers Drs. Jess Ghannam & Mohammad Subeh
Photo by Loay Dahbour



Photo by Loay Dahbour

This impactful event was planned by the *SOUL OF MY SOUL EXHIBIT* organizers with additional support from:

- Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center
- Jewish Voice for Peace—Bay Area
- Healthcare Workers for Palestine—Bay Area
- Arab Resource and Organizing Center

Special thanks to:
Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church—host



Photo by Loay Dahbour

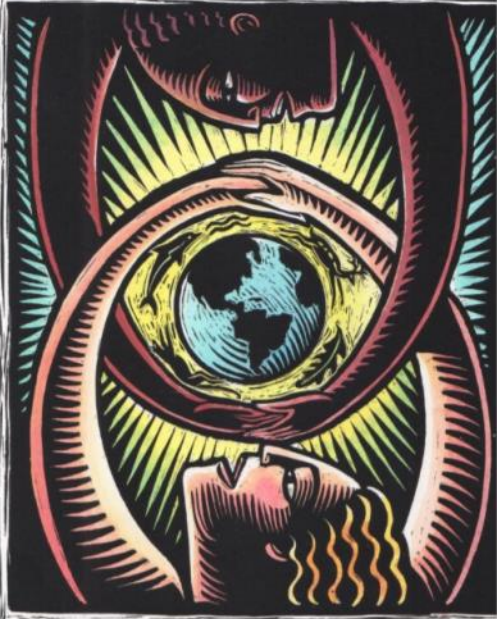


Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center's
26th ANNUAL ART & WRITING CHALLENGE and
YOUTH ACTIVIST GRANT AWARDS – 2024!

ENCOURAGING LOCAL YOUTH TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH THE ARTS, WRITTEN WORD, AND ACTIVISM!

**ATTENTION
 MIDDLE AND HIGH
 SCHOOL
 STUDENTS IN
 CONTRA COSTA
 COUNTY!**

**SUBMISSION
 DEADLINE EXTENDED
 APRIL 27th
 AWARDS LUNCHEON
 MAY 11th!**



**THREE
 CATEGORIES!**

- CREATIVE WRITING
- ESSAY
- ART (including video, original music, visual art, sculpture, or photography)

**PRIZES FROM
 \$100—\$250!**

2024 ART & WRITING CHALLENGE TOPIC:
WE LIVE IN A WORLD IN CONFLICT BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON HOW WE CAN RESOLVE DISPUTES, BRIDGE BORDERS and PROMOTE JUSTICE FOR ALL?

2024 YOUTH ACTIVIST AWARDS: *Help us recognize those leading the charge! The community is invited to nominate a youth organization, an individual or a group of young people, who show leadership and dedication on issues of peace and social justice.*

AND THE WINNERS ARE!!!.....

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Chamin-Uils Davaasuren Art: 1st Place
- Lucy Szela Art: 2nd Place
- Elise Cheung Art: 3rd Place
- Twinkle Rui Creative Writing: 1st Place
- Diane Wu Creative Writing: 2nd Place
- Maya Alhamadsheh Creative Writing: 3rd Place
- Sarah Chu Essay: 1st Place
- Zahin Shah Essay: 2nd Place
- John-Noah Chang Essay: 3rd Place
- Zayan Kajani Youth Activist Award

HIGH SCHOOL

- Xena Robertson Art: 1st Place
- Natalie Delianides Art: 2nd Place
- Alexa Fo Art (music): 3rd Place
- Surabhi Verma Creative Writing: 1st Place
- Magdalena Meyers-Dahlkamp Creative Writing: 2nd Place
- Emily Kim Creative Writing: 3rd Place
- Ethan Kim Essay: 1st Place
- Iman Andar Essay: 2nd Place
- Maryam Kermani Essay: 3rd Place
- Lucas Miranda Youth Activist Award

SCENES FROM AWARDS LUNCHEON—MAY 11, 2024



For more information: go to our peaceful schools website: creatingpeacefulschools.weebly.com.

WRITING EXCERPTS FROM OUR WINNING ENTRIES:

Ending the Cycle of Murder

By Surabhi Verma

Again familiar sounds of death blare distantly. One shot. Two shots. Perhaps a third?

Yes. Straight into the heart.

The rest of the story is the same – people get angry for a few days, petition against gun violence and laws, mourn over the dead body, news becomes big – and a few weeks later, things are back to normal. We are trapped in a cycle of murder.

destroyed ground
cycle of violence
repetition of sound
one hundred and four dead”

countless hours
my fingers on the flute
melody, melody
a movement pursuit

Words

By John-Noah Chang

Stories preserve history, provide entertainment, and convey emotions like nothing else. They bring people together, and they spread ideas that speech itself could not. They resonate with humans. This is why novels paint journeys, people like to gossip, and even why advertisements try to tell a story. By telling stories, people can connect much deeper than we do today, with quick texts and short conversations. We need real connections, and stories are the tools we need to take advantage of to bridge this gap. Stories invoke emotion, which is why characters in stories come alive, why we empathize with words on a page.

Thistle

By Zahin Shah

As I stared out my window, I noticed a thistle growing in our herb garden. How did it get there? Why was it doing so well? It looked so different from the other plants. I was tempted to pull it out, but I didn't. Many people would have pulled it out because it didn't belong there. But I thought it belonged there, it was growing so well, even though it stuck out. There are a lot of people who do not like thistle. Thistle is a spiky weed that keeps on coming back. Thistle is a gardener's nightmare; it just takes over a patch of land and can be overwhelming. Many people think of immigrants in this same way. Immigrants have continued to come to the United States for many years. Like thistle, people may find them annoying because they stand out from the rest of the population or they “take over” neighborhoods. Thistle can crowd out other plants for resources. People may think of immigrants in the same way and talk about how they take up resources. My grandparents were immigrants. I wonder if they felt like thistle.

However, I think that thistle is actually beautiful and I have learned to appreciate their value. Thistle are beautiful plants with their bright purple flowers. They can attract pollinators to help nature. Although the spikes can scare away bunnies and deer, the thistle seed is loved by animals such as the goldfinch. Immigrants are similar to thistle. Just like thistle helps spread pollen, similarly immigrants help spread new ideas that can help communities. Finally, thistle is resilient, and like immigrants, they can go through many hardships in order to survive.

The Orange Tree

By Diane Wu

Warm, buttery sunlight filtered through the cracked windows of my new home in America. Rubbing my eyes, I drowsily yawned. My name is Zahara. I, the youngest, get to celebrate my birthday today. I usually get roasted chicken with spicy fish sauce, but I only want my orange tree this year.

Back home in Syria, we had a small garden with a glorious orange tree. Its tangled branches bore the sweetest, juiciest oranges that would make your mouth water. Soft as a yam gliding down after three thrilling chews. Plucking one right off the tree and peeling away the bright skin was so simple I took it for granted before the war arrived like a terrible storm.

The bombs started falling one sunny afternoon while I played outside under the orange tree's shade.

"Zahara! Get inside, now!" My mother screamed, pulling me into our home as thunderous explosions shook the walls. Our village got torn apart in an instant. Homes crumbling, families running in every direction, lives lost. Thick black smoke and awful smells filled the air. I started to run outside to check on my orange tree when Papa yanked me away.

"We must leave immediately!" My father urged, shoving a few belongings into a bag, his usual warmth now gone from his face.

"B-but, my orange tree?" I asked, panicking.

"There's no time!" Mama yelled. "Go!"

My family joined thousands of others fleeing the violence. I didn't even get to say goodbye to my beloved orange tree, not knowing if I'd ever see our home again.

~~~~~

. . . . . It was January, three months after I had arrived at the camp, when aid workers ushered us into a large conference room. My mind dizzy, I raised my hand to make a speech for youth refugees on ending conflicts. Soon enough, I stood on the stage, my heart pumping like fists against my chest. My gaze swept across the faces: eyes that had witnessed much loss and hearts that ached for home.

"This war scattered our dreams like petals," I started, "But we are the seeds carried by the wind. For every conflict we end, we nurture a seedling of peace and one day, our groves will bloom."

I remembered the citrusy scent of orange blossoms and the laughter of Sayid and me playing beneath its boughs.

"An orange tree doesn't care if you're Muslim or Christian, Canadian or German," I told them. "Its branches bear sweet fruit for anyone. We can grow into an unwavering forest that shelters ALL people and bears the fruits of unity. Let us be the branches that intertwine. Bridges that span borders, hearts, and histories." . . . . .



**FOSNA** FRIENDS OF SABEL NORTH AMERICA

A Christian Voice for Palestine, presents:

## Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac

Spend an evening with the Palestinian Christian Lutheran pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, currently touring the U.S.

He will address the impact of the silence of many U.S. churches in the face of mass civilian casualties and destruction of the Palestinian homeland.



"Let it be clear: Silence is complicity, and empty calls for peace without a ceasefire and end to occupation, and the shallow words of empathy without direct action—are all under the banner of complicity...this genocide must stop now."



Isaac is a renowned international speaker and author who gained global attention in December 2023 for his sermon, "Christ under the Rubble" which was heard by tens of millions of people.

**Sunday, August 11th ~ Reception 6 PM ~ Speaker 7 PM**

**Sanctuary at Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette, California**



HOSTED and SPONSORED BY:

**Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center**

more info: [www.ourpeacecenter.org](http://www.ourpeacecenter.org) /  
(925) 933-8500 / [info@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:info@ourpeacecenter.org)



## “SILENCE IS COMPLICITY”

“It's your tax money. If you're silent about the way your tax money is being spent—to send money for apartheid, for a genocide—then who will speak? It's time to hold those you elect accountable. Let them hear your voices.”

“When people ask me what about November, about the elections, I say I don't care about November. I care more about September. I have more hopes if those students will go back to the streets to demonstrate, to the sit-ins, to the country. And the faith leaders, I say, continue to go. Those of you who are going to those demonstrations, please continue to go. And if you're not going, encourage others to go. Please support them, defend them, encourage them, comfort them.”



WE HAVE A CORE GROUP OF CENTER MEMBERS WHO ARE RESIDENTS OF ROSSMOOR!  
(Rossmoor is a local retirement community in Walnut Creek, population ~ 10,000)

SEVERAL YEARS AGO THEY ORGANIZED AN OFFICIAL CLUB:  
“FRIENDS OF MT. DIABLO PEACE & JUSTICE CENTER”

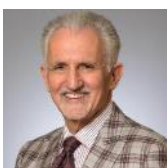
Here are some highlights from the free monthly events the “Friends” have organized:

**November 19, 2023: Professor Gary Aguilar, UCSF and Attorney Bill Simpich**



*“JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died, and Why It Still Matters”*

**March 16, 2024: Law Professor George Bisharat, UCSF**



“South Africa’s charges against Israel via International Court of Justice”

**March 28, 2024: Elizabeth Murray, Former CIA Intel Officer**



Member of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity  
“From Intelligence Office to Peace Activist”

**May 22, 2024: Seth Morrison, leader at Jewish Voice for Peace**



“Gaza, Zionism and Jewish Voice for Peace”

**June 13, 2024: Helena Cobban, Journalist, Publisher, Mid-East Expert**



“Palestinian Resistance, From the PLO to Hamas”

**August 22, 2024: Feroze Sidhwa, MD**



“What I saw on a Medical Mission to Gaza”

“I went to Gaza with the Palestine American Medical Association and the World Health Organization. I didn’t go there to treat Hamas. I went there because children were being ripped to shreds and pregnant women are being killed.”





We were sorry to lose one of our most passionate and supportive members this past year. Bob "Big Ideas" Hanson was a force of nature. He was 92.

We've been collecting donations made to the Center in his memory this past year and will be planting a tree in his honor this fall. More info to follow.

### ACTIVISM = EMPOWERMENT

Your talents are needed! info@ourpeacecenter.org

- Photographers/videographers
- Partiers/foodies
- Musicians/artists
- Teachers
- Free Thinkers
- Activists
- Writers/Readers
- Mailing Crew
- Organizers



## CONSIDERING MEMBERSHIP IN THE PEACE CENTER???

- It's a great way to meet other activists in the community and connect over common goals and concerns.
- We're currently functioning with an all-volunteer crew to get our events planned, promoted and financed. More hands make less work!
- If you have a passion for Peace & Justice, please join us!



### Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center / DONATION or MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION FORM

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me the *Peace Gazette* by snail mail  e-mail

#### I request an Annual Membership in the following category:

- ◇ \$50 Basic Membership
- ◇ \$100 Family Membership (2 or more persons)
- ◇ \$20-\$50 Student/Sliding Scale
- ◇ \$100-\$250 Membership Plus
- ◇ \$250-\$500 Supporting Member
- ◇ \$500-\$1,000 Sustaining Member
- ◇ \$1,000-\$2,000 Peace Giver
- ◇ \$2,000 + Visionary

**CHECKS** payable to *Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center* and mail to **1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette CA 94549**

#### CREDIT or DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS:

I would prefer to make a pledge **Monthly**  **OR Quarterly**  **OR Annually**  in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

If you would like us to handle the processing of any ongoing pledges, please check here .

**I hereby authorize the Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center to charge my credit/debit card for the above amount.**

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

You may also make an **ONLINE DONATION** via credit card or PayPal, using this **QR CODE**, by going to our website <https://ourpeacecenter.org> or send in a check payable to:

*Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center*, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette, CA 94549

**THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**





Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center  
1035 Carol Lane  
Lafayette, CA 94549

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**CONSIDER THIS OUR  
INVITATION TO YOU!**



~ WELCOME TO THE PEACE CENTER! ~



**1035 Carol Lane  
Lafayette, California**

**PLEASE JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 55th YEAR!**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON!**

**WE'RE HAVING A POTLUCK, FAMILY-FRIENDLY, GET-TOGETHER!**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th from 11 am—1 pm**

**In our beautiful courtyard & inside overlooking Las Trampas Creek**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

For headcount purposes, please contact the office at (925) 933-7850  
or [info@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:info@ourpeacecenter.org) to let us know how many will be in your party