

Student Art/Poetry Winners to be announced at 12th Annual ‘Race Unity Rally’ on June 7

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPRINGFIELD, IL....May 12, 2009--The 12th annual ‘Race Unity Rally’ will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, June 7 in the State Capitol rotunda. Organizers say the rally is an opportunity to celebrate our diversity, while recognizing the unity of the human race. The rally will feature remarks from Springfield District 186 School Supt. Dr. Walter Milton, Jr., live music and dance, and the announcement of winners in a children’s race unity art and poetry contest.

The deadline to enter the children’s art and poetry contest is May 29. Entries may be dropped off through May 29 at the Main Lincoln Library branch (located at 7th and Capitol). See www.springfieldbahai.org for more contest details.

“The race unity rally and children’s art/poetry contest represent a chance for participants to make new friendships, recognize our shared humanity, and celebrate our diversity,” said Mary Lou McLaughlin, chairwoman of the rally’s organizing committee. “We hope everyone in greater Springfield will consider what steps they can personally take to make Springfield a more unified community—one that respects and values all of its diversity.”

The rally’s keynote speaker, Dr. Walter Milton, Jr., is a native of Rochester, New York. He earned a B.A. from the University of Albany, and holds a Doctorate of Education degree in leadership and policy from the University of Buffalo. A former school teacher, Dr. Milton previously served as Supt of Public Schools in Fallsburg, New York and Flint, Michigan

Dance groups, drummers and other musicians are scheduled to perform at the rally (and post-rally gathering), including well-known Springfield singer Natalie Randall, multi-instrumentalist Kenneth Humble, and groups of African and African American drummers.

At the rally, numerous children will be recognized as winners in the Vision of Race Unity Art and Poetry Contest. Organizers say the contest is designed to have youth start thinking about what it takes to have a truly unified community. The contest is open to students in grade school (grades 3-5), middle school, and high school--and includes prize money that will be awarded to winners at the rally.

Immediately following the rally, cake and refreshments will be served at the Capitol Visitors Center located west of the Stratton building. If it rains, the refreshments will be served at the Springfield Baha’i Center, corner of 8th and Allen.

The rally is sponsored by Frontiers International Club of Springfield, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Regions Bank, Illinois Times, the Greater Springfield Baha’i community, the Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist congregation, Pax Christi, Delta Sigma Theta, the Dominican Sisters and Springfield’s Lincoln Library.

More information on the rally is available at www.springfieldbahai.org, or by calling 553-5978. The above website will include photos of winning art and poetry entries by the end of June.

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