



Agape Foundation

Fund for Nonviolent Social Change

For Immediate Release
September 8, 2008
News Editors

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Generating Peace:

Peace Prize Honors Powerhouse Peacemakers Across Generations

When: Thurs, September 18th, Eve of U.N. International Day of Peace, 7pm

Where: The Green Room, War Memorial Veteran's Building, 401 Van Ness, SF

San Francisco, CA, September 18: The struggle against war spans generations tonight as the Agape Foundation honors peacemakers young and old. On the eve of the UN-declared International Day of Peace, Agape presents its 4th annual Peace Prize ceremony (September 18th, 7 p.m., The Green Room, War Memorial Veteran's Building, 401 Van Ness, San Francisco.)

Agape is an innovative social justice grantmaker that provides grants, loans and emergency funding to small and nascent social justice organizations in California. Since its formation in 1969, Agape has been an early funder of hundreds of transformative organizations including Amnesty International and the United Farm Workers.

“Tonight we are honoring powerhouse peacemakers who have changed the course of their generations by blazing a path for peace,” said Karen Topakian, Executive Director of the Agape Foundation. “These peacemakers have used the raw materials of their courage, creativity and organizing prowess to fuel movements against violence, war and exploitation. These are our peace heroes.”

Madeline Duckles, 92, is the winner of the **Enduring Visionary Prize** for her sustained effort to create peace nationally and internationally. Duckles was a leader in the 1961 Women Strike for Peace, mothers whose innovative demonstrations against nuclear testing were credited by President Kennedy with inspiring adoption of the first atmospheric testing treaty. Her organizing against McCarthyism and on behalf of war-injured children in Vietnam helped spark broad-based movements for change in the 1960s and beyond. Duckles' tireless efforts continue today as a key member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, working to stop a war with Iran before it starts.

The **Rising Peacemaker Prize**, winner to be announced at the ceremony, recognizes a new Northern California peacemaker who has made a critical difference towards progressive change within the last five years. Nominees include **Rachel Abileah**, national organizer with Code Pink, a women-initiated grassroots anti-war group; **Roni Krouzman**, founder of Next Generation, which educates children as young as elementary school about the war in Iraq, military spending and the impact on domestic social justice issues; and **Elizabeth Sy**, founder of Banteay Srei, an organization empowering young Southeast Asian women at risk of or engaged in sex work.

The Agape Foundation has awarded more than \$13 million in grants and loans to more than 800 grassroots organizations. Unlike many nonprofits, Agape does not solicit corporate or government grants. Agape raises its money from individual donors with median gifts of only fifty dollars.

“Agape’s social philanthropy is an important generator of support for new and emerging social justice organizations,” said Gwyn Kirk, member of the Agape Foundation Board of Trustees and the Peace Prize Awards Committee. “By gathering together funds from thousands of individual donors over the years, Agape seeds critical financial support to local and national efforts for peace and justice.”

Past winners of the Agape Foundation Peace Prize include Homies Organizing the Mission to Empower Youth (HOMEY), working with youth on both sides of the SF Mission District’s gang conflict to mend the rift and reduce violence; Pablo Paredes, a court-martialed war resistor who now helps young people reject military recruitment; Elizabeth Stinson, director of the Peace and Justice Center of Sonoma County; Banafsheh Akhlaghi, founder of the National Legal Sanctuary for Community Advancement, a leading voice in protecting the rights and dignity of people of Middle Eastern descent facing systemic discrimination; the Mosaic Project, helping elementary-school children to respond constructively to prejudice and discrimination; and Capacitar International, teaching wellness practices to communities affected by violence.

“Peace is a lifetime endeavor,” said Topakian, “and our honorees show that any time is a good time to start.”

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Ticket price \$50. Interested journalists and editors, please contact the Agape Foundation to arrange media passes and to request press packets. Isobel White, 510-828-3554, media@agapefdn.org.

AGAPE: A GREEK WORD MEANING UNSELFISH LOVE