



April 5, 2016

Dear Friends,

The month of March is famously known for its college basketball, yes, but that's not the only greatness that filled the month! Pacifica Institute also had its great share in coming together with her partners and putting together spectacular events!

What attracted the most attention, though, among all the activities is not one of the gatherings, talks or panels but an op-ed by Gerald Grudzen that appeared on San Jose Mercury News. Mr Grudzen wrote about some of the inclusive work Pacifica has undertaken here in the US and about the contrast reaction and repression of what its sister organizations in Turkey are facing right now.

Following this op-ed, we want to share with you an amazing interfaith panel that took place at Gahr High School in Cerritos, CA, organized by the school's Philosophy Club under the guidance of Mrs. Lori Rodig. This is an annual event to present students direct information from the faith practitioners themselves. Mirkena Ozer, who is a volunteer public speaker for Pacifica Institute, along with seven other representatives from different religions and faith communities participated in the panel where they shared their insights on their respective beliefs.

The next two events, we want to bring to your attention were presented and organized by teens. Pacifica teens participated in the memorial service of Chiara Lubich, organized by the Focolare movement. Chiara Lubich dedicated her life to peace and dialog in order to live in a better world. Among many presenters, three young volunteers from Pacifica spoke about the Hizmet Movement, Pacifica events and the Anatolian festival, which all share the vision that Ms Lubich had carried throughout her lifetime.

The second event is an inspiring celebration of diversity, organized by the Interfaith Youth Council of Orange County (IYCOC); the 12th Annual Youth Forum and Festival. With the support of New Vision Partners, over 173 individuals attended the program. Most of the attendees were high school students from over 12 different faith traditions.

Lastly, we want to bring to your attention the friendships that have blossomed and grown through the "Two Faiths One Friendship" initiative led by our friends, Sondos and Michal. Together we celebrated their first anniversary and what a spectacular turnout it was!

Our many events and activities carry a variety of different focuses but they all serve as a venue, a platform for people from all walks of life to come together and learn from, share with and appreciate one another.

As you can see, in line with the craze of March Madness, most of our events this month

were focused on the youth! Looking forward to sharing more of the interactions and friendships among our communities next month.

To learn more about the Pacifica's activities, please remember to like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

The Interfaith Youth Council of Orange County 12th Annual Faith Forum and Festival

On March 13th, 2016, the Interfaith Youth Council of Orange County (IYCOC) held their 12th Annual Youth Forum and Festival at the Pacifica Institute in Irvine CA. With the support of its administration, New Vision Partners, over 173 individuals attended the program. Over 120 of those were High School Students participating in the Youth Forum from over 12 different faith traditions.



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From San Bernardino to Brussels: The Struggle Against Global Terrorism

On March 31, 2016, Pacifica Institute hosted a panel discussion titled "From San Bernardino to Brussels: The Struggle Against Global Terrorism" Panel speakers included Salam Al-Marayati who is the president and co-founder of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, Horace Frank, LAPD Commander Anti Terror, and Ambassador Rudi Veestraeten who is currently the Consul General in Los Angeles.



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An Interfaith Panel at Gahr High School

On March 23, 2016 Gahr High School in Cerritos, CA hosted an interfaith panel organized by the school's Philosophy Club under the guidance of Mrs. Lori Rodig. Seven leaders of different religions and faith communities participated in the panel where they shared their insights on their respective beliefs and answered the questions directed to them by the audience.

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Pacifica Youth Joined the Focolare Community Event and Made a Presentation About the Institute

A group of youth from Pacifica Institute attended an interfaith event at the Christ Cathedral Academy along with the community of Focolare Movement. There were more than a dozen speakers to introduce their organizations and faith traditions.

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Coastal Protection Updates by Senator Ben Allen

On March 18, 2016, Pacifica Institute Los Angeles branch hosted California State Senator Ben Allen for a luncheon forum on Coastal Protection Updates.

In 2014, California State Senator Ben Allen was overwhelmingly elected to represent the 26th Senate District, which consists of the Westside and coastal South Bay communities of Los Angeles County, stretching from Pacific Palisades to the Palos Verdes Peninsula and from Venice to Hollywood.



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Pacifica Volunteers in Silicon Valley gathered for a Tree Planting Event

On March 19, 2016, Pacifica Institute Silicon Valley Branch volunteers joined a tree planting event organized by the Canopy, a non-profit organization in Palo Alto, CA.

[Read more](#)



Pacifica Orange County, in partnership with "Miss Understanding," Hosted the Fourth 2 Faiths 1 Friendship Mixer Event

On Sunday, March 6, 2016, the Pacifica Institute, Orange County branch, in partnership with "Miss Understanding," hosted the fourth 2 Faiths 1 Friendship Mixer event, which brought together about 150 Muslims and (Evangelical) Christians of all ages to learn from each other's faith tradition.



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"New Paths in Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Dialogue" by Rod Cardoza

Rod Cardoza presented a dynamic new model for Jewish, Christian and Muslim dialogue, showing how a growing movement of grassroots Jews, Christians and Muslims are building bridges of understanding and respect by uniting in compassionate service to the poor.



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The Art of living together in peace and harmony / Muslim and Jewish teens' interactive meeting

The sentence "When Ahmet & Fatma meet Aaron and Shoshana" meant a lot to the

teens from Pacifica Institute and Beth David. It was the theme of their first encounter hosted at the Pacifica Institute on Saturday March 12th . Pacifica Institute Silicon Valley in collaboration with Beth David organized a Teen Encounter program between Muslim and Jewish teens.

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Gerald Grudzen: ISIS and Turkey's crumbling democracy

The terrorist attacks Paris and now Brussels continue to undermine the life of pluralistic societies in Europe and encourage ever more repressive policies toward Muslim immigrants who have fled the violence in Syria for the safety and economic opportunities in Europe.

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Ashure (Noah's Pudding) Night in Sunnyvale

About 150 people from various backgrounds, cultures and faiths were gathered for the 6th Annual Ashure Night on March 19th at the Pacifica Institute Silicon Valley branch.

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Pacifica Volunteers Served Brunch to Homeless Youth

Volunteers from Pacifica Institute and Embrace Relief prepared and served a brunch at YouthCare's James W. Ray Orion Center in Seattle on March 12th, Saturday.

[Read more](#)



Community, Identity, and Violence in the Age of Social Media

Dr. Rahit Chopra spoke at Pacifica Institute Silicon Valley branch on the community, violence and social media.

[Read more](#)



Get Involved

Volunteer with Pacifica Institute

As a Pacifica Institute volunteer, you can make a real difference for the community, for yourself and for the organization. Volunteers at Pacifica Institute will have a chance to get involved in many projects for positive change, relationship and peace-building.

[Learn more](#)

Internship Program

Pacifica Institute offers an internship program that gives students and graduates the opportunity to make important professional contributions to society. Interns are assigned a long-term project that they work on during their 16-week internship, in addition to daily responsibilities. Pacifica Interns will not receive monetary compensation.

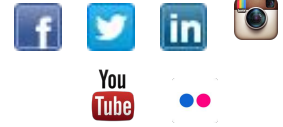
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