

# MIGRANT HERITAGE CHRONICLE

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## Inter-Faith and Migrant Leaders Unite in Quest for Global Peace

By Joana Quiambao

The global quest for peace takes active shape in Washington, DC with the recently concluded multi-religious and cultural gathering of various groups in the event called Global Peace Festival USA last August 9.

"One family under God" was the rejoicing theme that lifted thousands of people from all walks & faiths of life at Capitol Hill and along the National Mall. The meaning of the Global Peace Festival is centered on the notion of people coming together as one family and participating in action for others in order to achieve peace in society. "Peace, Shalom, Salum Alakum!" A sea of people from different faiths and backgrounds reclaiming and singing together to witness the call for peace from faith-based leaders, community organizations, and everyday citizens and workers in the U.S. Dr. Joseph Lowery delivered a profound reminder of what Dr. Martin Luther King stood for 45 years ago on the March on Washington, D.C. during the 1960s, and how many before us came to bring peace onto the world. The need for respect towards others regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, and status, is what needs to be practiced, and Lowery stressed the end of hatred, violence, and poverty are both in the U.S. and abroad.

The festival opened with lively performances from various ethnic groups, dance troops, bands and hip hop artists on the National Mall lawn. Migrant Heritage Commission Cultural Resource Program wowed the crowd as they performed traditional Filipino dances such as the Itik-itik, Pandango sa Ilaw, Subli, and the Tinikling coupled with the energetic emceeing of Philippine movie actor Bernardo Bernardo. MHC Executive Directors, Grace Valera-Jaramillo, Jesse Gatchalian and Arnedo S. Valera, Esquire led the Fil-Am community contingent and the Philippine

delegation in the said event. The spirit of unity is carried throughout the festival as thousands of people gathered on Capitol Hill grounds to hear prominent speakers and performers call for the much-needed peace for all peoples of the world.

An interfaith peace prayer directed by Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi was also conducted with a special delegation of Islamic leaders preparing gathered before they embark on a peace mission to the Middle East. Other presentations consisted of speakers from the Barig Family Forum organization – a young man from Israel and his friend from Palestine came together to form this organization in order to help refugees – both Israeli and Palestinian – who are victims in the Israeli conflict. They stressed that enough is enough, and it is easy to hate and be angry and harder to work for peace; however, it is up to us (the community and its members) to end hate, anger, racism, and discrimination. Choir performances by the Black Bear Singers & the GPF Interfaith Choir kept a vibrant audience engaged

in songs of peace and unity. Artists such as David Phelps, Yolanda Adams, and Brotherhood of Jays – Bolivian Dance Ensemble also performed during the evening as well. The call for peace truly transformed all that were present for the Global Peace Festival – reinforcing the idea for peace for all and working in solidarity to achieve this.

Migrants from all regions of the globe are seekers of peace. They seek peace for themselves, their families, and for their children, says Arnedo Valera, MHC executive director. Migrants strive for basic human necessities and struggle to protect their human rights. Because of social, economic and political turbulence in their homelands, migrants must travel to various countries in order to survive and build/rebuild their live and homes. For some migrants their decision to leave their homelands is caused by economic struggles derived from unjust policies that take advantage of land, resources, and labor. In certain places of the world all such dynamics of corruption

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## Make Your Vote Count! Immigration's Prominence in this Election

By Kristine Tungol Cabagnot, Esq.

There is a countdown that is closely watched around the world; a battle that pits two U.S. political giants in which the victor is chosen by the people. Exercising this right to vote is a civic duty that no American citizen should take lightly, for the road to that ballot box is paved with much blood, sweat, and glory. Thus, from this country's fight for independence to the constitutional

amendments that gave all men and women of legal age and social status the right to vote comes this great opportunity to elect the leader of "the free world."

### Our Civic Duty

Like many naturalized citizens, I take this civic duty seriously. I made a conscious decision to embrace this country as my second home, and

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