



NEWSLETTER

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www.ahinsa.us

Creating and Nurturing a Culture of Truth, Peace and Nonviolence

AHINSA: Alliance for Humanitarian Initiatives, Nonviolence and Spiritual Advancement



Drawing inspiration from the lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and other Peacebuilders, AHINSA promotes **Peace and Nonviolence** and addressing **Humanitarian issues**, the existential needs of all.

In This Issue

- About AHINSA
- Vision, Mission & Goals
- Events & Activities
- Shared Experiences
- Gandhi Memorial Texas
- Quotes & Cartoons
- Community Initiatives
- Past Events & Stories
- Gandhi Day 2024
- Peacebuilding Workshop
- Opportunity to Donate
- Contact and volunteer

AHINSA: WHAT'S IN A NAME

The acronym 'AHINSA' stands for *Alliance for Humanitarian Initiatives, Nonviolence and Spiritual Advancement*. Conceptually, the main inspiration for AHINSA sprang from Mahatma Gandhi, who lived and breathed Truth and Nonviolence (Satya, Ahinsa), the eternal spiritual values of the great Indic faith traditions. He offered Nonviolence as the most effective method of combatting oppression, violence and brutality imposed on humanity by the colonial rulers of the time.

Deeper reflection shows that other proponents of the Nonviolence movement who followed the lead of Mahatma Gandhi - Martin Luther King, Jr., the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu – all have Spirituality as the foundational value of their lives. Besides, they all devoted their lives to humanitarian causes.

Hence, the three great pillars of AHINSA are:

- Humanitarian Initiatives,
- Nonviolence, and
- Spiritual Advancement

From Vision to Reality: The Creation and Growth of AHINSA

sOm Sharma, Founder & President, AHINSA



In the year 2000, with the guidance and help from Dr. Manubhai Sheth, a humble Gandhian living in Pittsburgh at the time, a forum to foster a culture of truth, peace, and nonviolence was envisioned by a small group of friends. The annual celebration of the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the inspiration behind this vision, was begun, which was primarily sponsored by the Monroeville Rotary Club. Over time, many sponsors, including temples and a few Indian organizations, joined the mission. Soon, the Gandhi Day program was enriched with informed speakers, peace activists, panel discussions, interfaith prayers,

and cultural performances. Besides occasional mention at the annual India Day celebrations at the Cathedral of Learning, strategic partnerships with local universities, spiritual institutions, and community organizations further strengthened the initiative, laying the groundwork for a broader impact.

Two decades later, in 2020, this evolving movement coalesced under the umbrella of AHINSA - the Alliance for Humanitarian Initiatives, Nonviolence, and Spiritual Advancement, highlighting the invaluable contributions of pioneering peacebuilders like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and others.

Besides Indian diaspora's profound contributions to medicine, engineering, academics, and science, AHINSA offers an even more enduring gift of peace and nonviolence, rooted in Indic thought as exemplified and popularized by Mahatma Gandhi. AHINSA is evolving into a diverse, multicultural, multi-ethnicity organization, transcending its Indian roots.

VISION Creating a peaceful global community where nonviolence, spiritual growth, and humanitarian action inspire a culture of compassion, empathy, respect, and harmony.

MISSION Fostering and nurturing a culture of peace and nonviolence through education, training, spirituality and service to diverse communities in Western Pennsylvania.

GOALS

Facilitate inclusive dialogue on peace and non-violence

Advocate for interfaith exploration and spiritual growth

Inspire young minds to creatively express peace perspectives

Tap into diverse networks and host innovative fundraising events

Honor Mahatma Gandhi's legacy and his principles

AHINSA EVENTS

Annual Gandhi Day Celebration • Interfaith Panels & Prayers

Creative Expression Contests • Peacebuilding Workshops

Peace Concerts & Cultural Events • Leadership Trainings & Summits

AHINSA PRESENTS MUSIC FOR PEACE

2025 GRAMMY AWARD WINNER
CHANDRIKA TANDON LIVE!

CARNEGIE MUSIC HALL
SEPT 7, 2025
AT 5:00 PM

GET YOUR TICKETS AT
[AHINSA.US/CONCERT!](https://ahinsa.us/concert)

Join us for an extraordinary musical experience that blends ancient chants with soothing melodies, bringing peace and tranquility. You can enjoy complimentary refreshments before the show!

Chandrika Tandon is an acclaimed Indian-American business leader, philanthropist, humanitarian, and musician. For more information about her, please go to chandrikatandon.com.

AHINSA is a multi-cultural and multi-faith humanitarian organization dedicated to promoting peace and nonviolence that has been around since 2000. More details about AHINSA at ahinsa.us.

🎵 TICKETS 🎵

\$30, \$50, \$75, \$100, \$200, \$250

Student discount available. 10%
Group discount with a minimum
purchase of 10 tickets or more of
the same value.

Please contact us for Group discounts.
Student and Group discounts cannot
be combined.

SPONSORSHIP

LEVELS

Platinum sponsor — \$5000
Gold sponsor — \$3000
Silver sponsor — \$1500
Bronze sponsor — \$500

Please reach out to our team
of contacts for sponsorships.

🎵 CONTACTS 🎵

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Shambhavi Desai: 412-728-6457

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AHINSA
Alliance for Humanitarian Initiatives
Nonviolence & Spiritual Advancement
Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi
www.ahinsa.us

UNIQUE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY DON'T MISS OUT! SECURE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

This extraordinary musical event blends ancient chants with soothing melodies and offers a unique sponsorship opportunity for individuals and businesses in the Greater Pittsburgh region!

Chandrika Tandon is an acclaimed Indian-American business leader, philanthropist, humanitarian, and musician. For more information about her, please go to chandrikatandon.com.

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SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD	PLATINUM
Donation Amount	\$500	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$5,000
Number of Seats	1	2	4	6
Access to Reception	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ad in Program Brochure	No	Half Page	Half Page	Full Page
Display sponsor marketing material in Music Hall lobby	No	No	Yes	Yes

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Elevating Human Happiness Through Music

BUY
YOUR
CONCERT
TICKETS
TODAY!



AHINSA HIGHLIGHTS & INITIATIVES

Essay & Art Contests

- Conducted essay contests for middle school & high school students and art contests for elementary school students for the last 8 years.

Leadership Training

- Organized peace leadership training seminar for high school students in collaboration with World Affairs Council Pittsburgh.

Inclusive Conversations

- Coordinated workshop for college students on Nonviolence and Building a Beloved Community in collaboration with the Center on Race and Social Problems, School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh on September 21, 2024.

Interfaith Engagement

- Participated and promoted interfaith prayers and presentations in different forums including a Gathering for Peace, an interfaith Prayer Meeting organized by the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh in solidarity with the Ukrainian community at St. Paul Cathedral on March 6, 2023, and the Tree of Life Groundbreaking Ceremony, June 24, 2024.

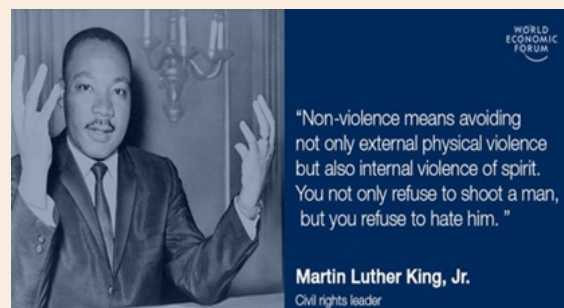
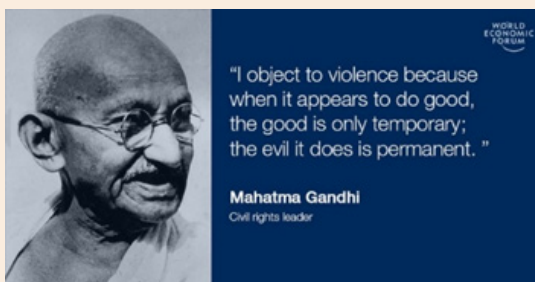
Cross Cultural Awareness

- Incorporated various cultural performances in AHINSA events:
- Dances invoking peace by Indian classical dance director Dr. Kamala Reddy and her students.
- Cultural performances by Sanskruti School of Indian Dance and Music.
- Dances by Nandanik Dance Troupe.
- Violin recital by Sarang Mulukutla.
- Fusion music using musical instruments - mountain dulcimer, sitar, harmonium, and tabala- by musicians of different ethnic origins played with the brass band from Center for Life.

Recognition Gifts

- Received the bust of Mahatma Gandhi as a gift from the Government of India, which is currently located in the Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh.

Additional details for some of these activities can be found at AHINSA's website www.ahinsa.us



My Visit to the Gandhi Memorial Plaza in Irving, TX

An active volunteer with AHINSA, Girija Rajagopal, while on a visit to Dallas, TX, learnt of the Gandhi memorial Plaza. Her article summarizes her very enjoyable and inspiring visit.

I have been volunteering for AHINSA since 2023. During my recent visit to Dallas, TX, I visited the Gandhi Memorial, and I am sharing my experience in this article. The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial of North Texas (MGMNT) was made possible by Dr Prasad Thotakura and Mr. Rao Kalvala – well known Indian American Community leaders. Their vision and passion to memorialize Mahatma Gandhi led to the initiation of MGMNT in 2010. With generous support from MGMNT, City of Irving and the Dallas- Fort Worth community, the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Plaza was unveiled on October 2nd, 2014.

“Gandhi believed non-violence was the greatest force available to humanity – more powerful than any weapon. Together, let’s build institutions to support that noble vision.” (UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 2024)



It is not often that ordinary, everyday moments lead to moments of remarkable discovery, but when they do, those moments of discovery are even more memorable. I had one such experience not too long ago. When I visited the Gandhi Memorial Plaza in Irving, Texas the only one of its kind in the US.

The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Plaza located in Thomas Jefferson Park in the Las Colinas neighborhood of Irving, Texas, is a profoundly inspiring place. From the moment I entered the park, I could feel a sense of peace and reverence. Known popularly as Gandhi Park, in more recent times by the locals, the 18-acre park is lush and serene, providing a perfect setting for reflection and remembrance.

The 7-foot bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi is awe-inspiring. Created by sculptors Burra Vara Prasad and K. Prasada Rao, statue felt incredibly lifelike, and the attention to detail was evident and remarkable. The plaza itself is built to last for generations, symbolizing the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) community's pride and respect for Mahatma Gandhi. Walking around the plaza, I noticed a diverse group of people who came to pay their respects. As my husband and I exchanged a few words with some of them, we learnt that they were residents of the surrounding neighborhood. They shared many happy memories of all the times that they and their family spend here.

The memorial also serves as a gathering place for various celebrations throughout the year, including India's Independence Day, the International Day of Peace, and Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. The plaza has become a focal point for the Indian American community in the DFW metroplex, and a testament to the universal values Gandhiji believed in. As the sun was setting in the western horizon, we left the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Plaza with a feeling of pride and respect for the monument.



Building a Beloved Community A Peacebuilding and Non-violence Workshop

Faith Dunn, Student (Bio-Chemical Engineering), Community College of Allegheny County

In celebration of the INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE (Sept. 21, each year), AHINSA collaborated with the Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP), School of Social Work, and the Frederick David C. Frederick Honors College, both of the University of Pittsburgh. Faith Dunn, of CCAC's Honors program attended the workshop. She presents her reflection in the article below.

On September 21, 2024, the University of Pittsburgh hosted, Building a Beloved Community- A Peacebuilding and Non-violence Workshop. Sponsored by the Alliance for Humanitarian Initiatives, Nonviolence, and Spiritual Advancement (AHINSA), this workshop was a collaboration between the Center on Race and Social Problems, the David C. Frederick Honors College, and AHINSA. The event featured multiple speakers from these organizations presenting on communicating with non-violence in mind, cultivating peace within our communities, art and empowerment, and more.



L to R: Ravi Sharma, VP, AHINSA, Jignesh Shah, Treasurer, AHINSA, Ron Oldoko, Assoc. Director, CRSP, School of Social Work, U. Pitt., sOm Sharma, Founder-President, AHINSA, Manzoor Mohideen, Secretary, AHINSA, Shrabani Basu, Member of the Board, AHINSA, Morgan Overton, Artist, Fredericks Honors College, U. Prtt Unidentified, CRSP; T. Raja Rosenhagen, Fresno State Univ., Main Speaker - Expert on Jainism and Nonviolence, Prof. Srujana Kanjula, CCAC; Kneeling: Sal Corbin, DC Peace Team, Specialist on Nonviolent Communication

Core values of resilience, community building, love, growth, and empowerment were kept at heart for each speech. The most difficult topics were brought up without shying away from truths usually kept hidden when discussing conflict resolution. Many exercises were also done along with the speeches that helped actively engage the audience and build stronger relations amongst each other. One of the activities included having people draw what they would love to imagine as a "future Pittsburgh." Another activity was aimed at building better communication skills, especially listening to a person at the table without interrupting once.

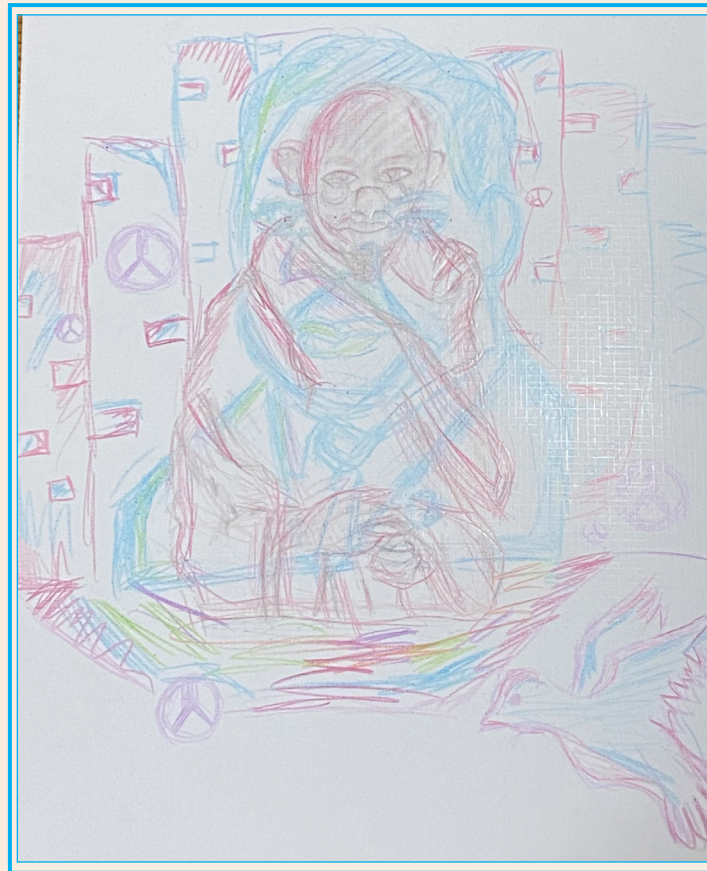


I thoroughly enjoyed the event, especially listening to the speaker's wisdom on how they implement community-building tactics within their organizations. I plan to incorporate some of these practices into my own life.

From left to right: Faith Dunn, Christopher Berdnik and Alexis Hayes, Students, CCAC.

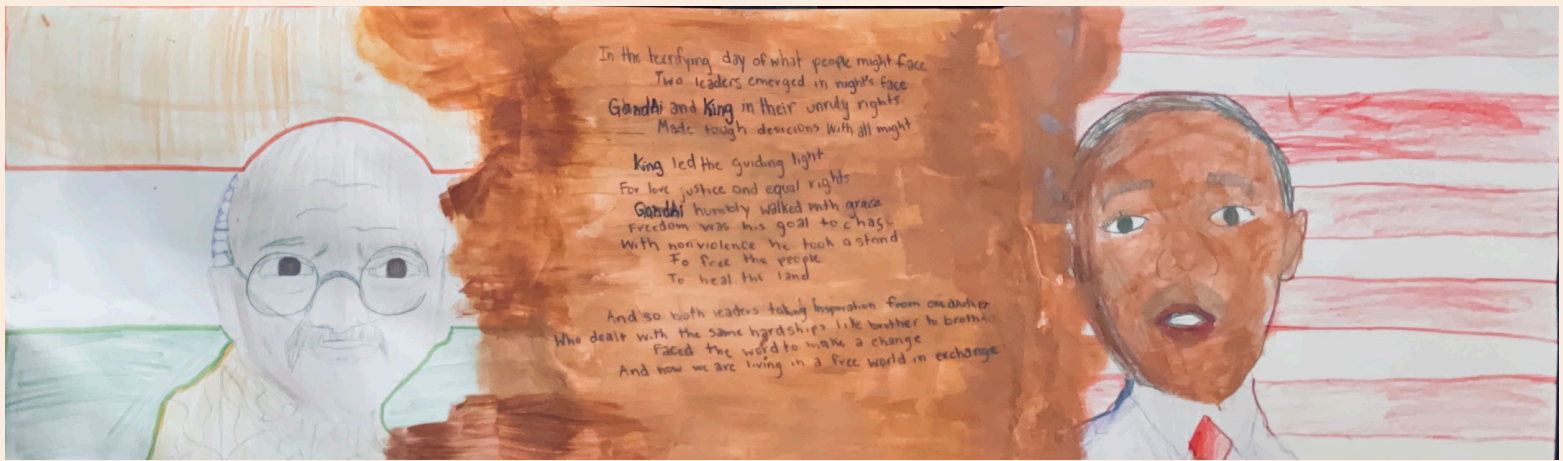
Anthology of selected articles from Gandhi Day (AHINSA), 2024

At the conclusion of Gandhi Day, 2024, AHINSA decided to publish an Anthology of the presentations by the school students at Gandhi Day and a few other selected CE entries. A representative sample is presented here.



I created a drawing of Mahatma Gandhi in red overlapping a drawing of Martin Luther King Jr. in blue. I drew it this way so that even though they are overlapping, you can still see them both separately. I drew city buildings in the background to show the modern world. I think this drawing shows that both their ideas were great alone, they were better together and it shaped the world today. (Also, this drawing is much better when you look at it through red and blue colored lenses!)

Julie Cunningham - St. Edmund's Academy



*In the terrifying day of what people might face
Two leaders emerged in night's face
Gandhi and King in their unruly rights
Made tough decisions with all might*

*King led the guiding light
For love, justice and equality rights
Gandhi humbly walked with grace
Freedom was his goal to chase
With non violence he took a stand
To free the people
To heal the land*

*And so both leaders taking inspiration from one another
Who dealt with the same hardships like brother to brother
Faced the world to make a change
And now we are living in a free world in exchange*



Peace Takes Us All: A Melody on Guitar

Link to the song: <https://youtu.be/EIJ6rZ9VjpQ>

This is the melody of the song, and the lyrics are written under the guitar part.

Purpose/Motivation

This song and its lyrics were written to inspire people to help the world. Repeating phrases like “And it all starts with you,” are meant to impact and inspire the listener to make this world a better place. The lyrics also explain how we can do this through nonviolence and communication. The song is meant to have a melancholy but hopeful tone, since even when things are looking down in society, people can work together to overcome differences. Overall, after listening to this song, the message of nonviolence and community building should stick with the listener.

Jack Bingham - Montour High School

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sOm Sharma: Founder-President
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Jignesh Shah: Treasurer
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**International Day of Non-Violence,
Oct 2nd, 2025**



“Non-Violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.”

MAHATMA GANDHI

UPCOMING EVENTS

Music for Peace Concert, September 7

Peace Walk and Talk, September 21

Gandhi Day, International Day of Nonviolence -
Sun. Sept. 28, 3 - 5pm, at Carnegie Mellon Univ.

“JOIN OUR TEAM”

“WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU”