

*The Whole World is....*

# One World

*One World is a publication of Cultural Crossroads, Inc.*

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## **KANSAS CITY - STILL "THE HEART"**

The "Heart of America" is still beating strong. At Cultural Crossroads, we remember that Kansas City was historically and continues to be an important crossroad in America... of rivers, trails and highways – and of cultures. These crossroads afford us unique opportunities for respectful diversity.

With all the recent focus on organizations with exclusive platforms and their effect on our community, it is often easy to overlook the many examples of inclusiveness and sharing that occur here in the Heart of America.

In November, SIETAR-USA will hold its annual international conference in Kansas City. The Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research describes itself as an "interdisciplinary network" for the field of intercultural relations. SIETAR holds Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) status with the United Nations. The Kansas City conference theme of "Culture and Conflict: Courageous Conversations for Caring Communities" recognizes Kansas City as such a community. See their website at [www.sietarusa.org](http://www.sietarusa.org).

Kansas City is home to The Global and Multicultural Education Center (G.A.M.E.) and conducts varied educational activities, seminars, and conferences. <http://www.kcglobalconcepts.org/>  
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A thought-provoking discussion at the first Cultural Conversations sessions – see article inside this issue.

## **DESIGN CONTEST OPENS**

<http://www.culturalcrossroads-kc.org/WingsofPeaceAward.html>

## **ENCORE EVENT!**

*In conjunction with the city-wide Festival of Faiths, Cultural Crossroads and the Interfaith Council again co-sponsor a unique event...*

**“MANY SONGS/ONE VOICE”  
- Sharing Sacred Songs -  
interfaith - intercultural - interactive**

**Friday, November 9 – 7:00 to 8:30 pm  
All Souls UU Church, 4501 Walnut, KCMO**

Everyone in the community is invited to come together – from different faith traditions and from many faith traditions -- to gather and share songs of prayer and praise, petition and thanksgiving...voices uniting in friendship and sharing.

Singing will be led by various members of the faith traditions represented in our community and may be led with or without accompaniment or even by use of recordings – the concept is to build connections through song rather than to achieve technical perfection.

There is no charge for this event and all are welcome.

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## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

- Independence Heritage Festival
- Expanded calendar of events
- Report on Cultural Conversations
- **Wings of Peace Award** – contest opens!

## CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS

Hearty laughter and often-funny, often-poignant personal anecdotes punctuated the lively discussion of “The Positive Power of Traditions” – the topic of the first Cultural Conversations program sponsored by Cultural Crossroads, Inc. and held September 12 at the Plaza Public Library.

Participants came from a variety of backgrounds and included immigrants and first-and-second-generation Americans, as well as those who have traveled, lived and worked abroad and those who experienced a more traditional “mainstream” American childhood.

Conversation included sharing of experiences and ideas, a group consensus of a definition of traditions and their effect, and ideas of the future of tradition as a cultural paradigm.

The group defined a tradition as a custom or belief that causes a certain reaction in a person and that many of those reactions seem intrinsic and below the level of consciousness. It was acknowledged that one’s opinions are admittedly influenced by one’s cultural experiences -- personal knowledge and understanding influence our reactions as well as our interpretation of new customs we experience from others we encounter.

One question raised by the group was why people are sometimes insulted by the differences encountered in a multicultural environment. An issue of concern was raised also regarding a tendency, particularly in the United States and of the youth in some other “Old World” cultures, to often regard tradition as a negative influence and to not balance that opinion with a positive interpretation of the influence of tradition. It was thought that perhaps the American “spin” on tradition derives from the physical isolation of the US from other countries and the fact that Americans are generally accustomed to a “sameness” in all places: the same TV programs, the same national chain stores, and, until relatively recent, the same language. That is changing now with increased diversity and it is human nature to find change to be unsettling. Interestingly, the negative “spin” on cultural traditions expressed by the youth in other countries would seem to be based upon their desire to “be more American” in their viewpoint. *(Editor’s note: The image comes to mind of two people facing each other, each holding a mirror to the other...and each, therefore, seeing multiple images of themselves reflected by the other.)*

Tradition was acknowledged as an issue of one’s comfort level but it was also discussed that “comfort levels” change with new experiences. Everyone involved agreed that misunderstanding and fear are generally altered by direct, first-hand knowledge and contact. It was also a point of agreement that some traditions may serve a homogenous society well, but become unworkable in today’s global society.

The discussion then culminated with ideas about “new traditions” and it was suggested that our traditions evolve through these cross-cultural occurrences and practices -- and sometimes from a personal desire to create a new twist or affect an individual belief. The result is that, as a society, we give up old traditions that today’s sensibilities consider harsh or that no longer serve us in a global world. Today’s societies can, however, use those older traditions as models for modern inclusive traditions.

Our world and our society is evolving – although all acknowledged the challenges of change, everyone in the discussion seemed hopeful of a “new order” of tradition ... proving the truly “positive power of traditions” in an environment of understanding and respect.

*Calling all opinions...if you have comments on “The Positive Power of Traditions,” or suggestions for additional topics for Cultural Conversations, please contact us at [CulturalCrossroads@hotmail.com](mailto:CulturalCrossroads@hotmail.com).*

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## INDEPENDENCE HERITAGE FESTIVAL

For the second year, Cultural Crossroads was deeply involved in the Independence Heritage Festival, a community-based event which unites public and private sectors, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations. As a major component of the Children’s Area, Cultural Crossroads volunteers staffed an information booth, sold cultural items, held Culture Corners on Native American, Hispanic, Croatian, Scandanavian, African-American, and American settlers, conducted storytelling, original plays, and music performances.

### **No time to volunteer? You can still help!**

Email us if you can receive *One World* electronically. You will help us save postage money and get your newsletter quicker and in color, with some extra features. (See Heritage Festival photos online.)

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The International Relations Council (IRC), headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, conducts world affairs programs, educational events, discussion groups and resources for teachers and schools. IRC also provides an electronic calendar of events conducted by various organizations in the community. [www.irckc.org](http://www.irckc.org)

Interfaith communication is, by its very nature, intercultural, and Kansas City has long been a leader in interfaith work, beginning with the Center for Religious Experience and Study ([www.cres.org](http://www.cres.org)), which was the catalyst for the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council (<http://www.kcinterfaith.org>). That work achieves a new level with this year's Festival of Faiths, comprising two weeks of citywide events. See <http://festivaloffaithskc.org> for events held across the city by various organizations (including "Many Songs/One Voice" which is co-sponsored by Cultural Crossroads – see article elsewhere in this issue.)

Joining in the Festival of Faiths is KC Harmony, with more than 68 years of history in combating bias, bigotry, inequity, intolerance and oppression in greater Kansas City. See [www.kcharmony.org](http://www.kcharmony.org) for more information.

People to People International ([www.ptpi.org](http://www.ptpi.org)), created in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and based in Kansas City, is one of the oldest organizations working to enhance cross-cultural understanding and enhances Kansas City's global touch.

There are numerous other ongoing efforts in multicultural and inter-racial communication throughout the city, in local churches and communities, by local authors and book discussion groups, by one-on-one neighborhood dialogue.

One of these efforts is Cultural Conversations, created by Cultural Crossroads as an ongoing program, to provide face-to-face discussion opportunities on multicultural topics.

**We're coming to "that time" of year again...**

... get "double duty" from your holiday dollars, while remembering friends, family and customers.

Shop online at [www.giveline.com](http://www.giveline.com), where the prices are competitive and every purchase benefits your chosen nonprofit.

Give a Charity Giving Card ([www.gkccf.org](http://www.gkccf.org)) -- you get a tax deduction and your recipient gets to choose the desiring DonorEdge nonprofit.

Cultural Crossroads is enrolled in both programs and we hope you will remember us as your chosen charity.

(The pilot program occurred in September – see article in this issue – and will continue after the first of the year.)

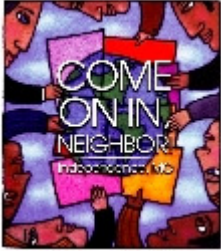
Beyond the scope of this article are the numerous local educational institutions which promote multicultural programs, the variety of ethnic and cultural organizations, museums and cultural centers, and the many private businesses which conduct multicultural programs to respect diversity in the workplace, the school and society. (That is the topic for another focus article and we welcome your comments and suggestions.)

Intercultural, interfaith, international... admittedly, Kansas City (as all communities) has problems to be addressed, but we should also all be mindful of the work already started by many caring individuals and the need to carry on with that work.

The work of multicultural education and respect for diversity will never be complete for we will always find something new and exciting to learn about each other!

*Such a short article as this cannot begin to encompass all the organizations, programs and people who work in the Kansas City community to build bridges, not walls. If you know of an organization or program that should be introduced to our readers, please contact us and we will acknowledge that organization/program in a future issue.*





## INDEPENDENCE HERITAGE FESTIVAL – 2007

Cultural Crossroads was responsible for two venues at the Festival, which is a broadly-based community event, celebrating the growing diversity of this Eastern Jackson County, Missouri, community.

The photos on this page highlight our information booth (with a theme of “Where is your head?”) and contained pictures of headware from different cultures and representative items for sale.

Cultural Crossroads was also responsible for operating Culture Corners in the adjacent gazebo, where people from various cultures shared information, history and stories.





Additional photographs can be found on the website of LINC (Local Investment Commission) [http://www.kclinc.org/slideshows/indep\\_heritage\\_fest\\_2007/indv.html](http://www.kclinc.org/slideshows/indep_heritage_fest_2007/indv.html) and on the festival website: <http://independenceheritage.org/default.aspx>

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### **FALL AND WINTER 2007-2008 EVENTS**

|          |                     |                             |                                |
|----------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Oct 6    | (week-long display) | Excelsior Springs Library   | Dolls of the World Display     |
| Oct 6    | (Saturday, all day) | McCoy Park, Independence    | Heritage Festival              |
| Nov 5    | (week-long display) | Dearborn Library            | Dolls of the World Display     |
| Nov 17   | (Saturday, 1:00 pm) | Olathe Indian Creek Library | Is This <i>Your</i> New Year?* |
| Nov 17   | (Saturday, 3:00 pm) | Olathe Main Library         | Is This <i>Your</i> New Year?* |
| Dec 10   | (week-long display) | Buckner Library             | Dolls of the World Display     |
| Jan 5    | (Saturday, 2 pm)    | Parkville Library           | Is This <i>Your</i> New Year?* |
| Jan 8    | (Tuesday, 7 pm)     | Liberty Library             | Is This <i>Your</i> New Year?* |
| March 15 | (Saturday, 1 pm)    | Excelsior Springs Library   | Reading & Rhythm               |

Stop by any of the week-long “Dolls of the World” displays in libraries throughout the metroplex. Volunteer opportunities are available and everyone of every age is welcome at all programs.

*\*Please sign up with the library before these programs or they may be cancelled.*

NOTE: Cultural Conversations will not meet in November, to allow adequate opportunity to attend the numerous other events in the city during that month, but will return after the first of the year.

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***embracing our past.....celebrating our future***

*Autumn 2007*