

Attached is an article about the World Religions Day celebration in Lytton B.C. in Jan. 2016

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TWORIVERSNews

Celebrating 9th annual World Religion Day

NONIE MCCANN

The dark, stormy days of winter can feel oppressive at this time of year, but a group of volunteers in Lytton organized an event to lighten the days last week. Local artist and library worker Georgia Lesley, who is also one of several members of the Baha'i faith in Lytton and the surrounding areas, worked with a

team of volunteers including members of the Lions Gate Buddhist Priory in Lytton, Peggy Chute, Maurice Michell, Heidi Cassell-Hamammi and Karen Kimble to organize the ninth annual event for Lytton people of all faiths.

On Sunday, Jan. 17, more than 50 community members gathered at the Parish Hall around noon

to celebrate World Religion Day. World Religion day is an interfaith observance initiated in 1950 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, celebrated worldwide on the third Sunday in January each year. Although initiated in the United States, World Religion Day has come to be celebrated internationally, and includes all religions. Its purpose is to promote the idea that the spiritual principles underlying the world's religions are harmonious, and to suggest that religions play a role in unifying humanity.

Community members of many faiths, including First Nations, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Sikh and Baha'i, spent an afternoon at the Parish Hall together celebrating their similarities. The event started with a welcome song by local drummers and singers.

Then Karen Kimble led children in the recitation of a story, "Whoever you are: We all have one nose, two eyes," complete with costumes representing children from all over the world. Everyone enjoyed a fabulous potluck lunch featuring a wide selection of food from the diverse group of people assembled to enjoy some time together. The tone was relaxed and welcoming, as those in attendance visited, ate and generally hung out together enjoying each other's company, and taking in the several informational displays representing different faiths that were set up around the hall.

Following the meal, the group



The potluck lunch featured a wide selection of food.

Photo Credits: Georgia Lesley

assembled to join in a prayer/sharing circle, to sing, drum and pray together. One of the highlights of the gathering was a short film made by a group of youth in Papua New Guinea. The young people from a Baha'i group in Port Moresby put together a short video about their community, featuring the youth in their community. It was a fascinating glimpse into another place in the world far from here; and motivated others to create a similar video about Lytton to share back. Georgia Lesley and Tracy Fallstrom collaborated on a couple songs to pull it all together, and wrap up the afternoon of sharing and friendship at around 3 p.m.

Organizing events such as this takes a lot of energy and faith that enough people will come to make

it worth the time spent. At the same time, the amount of energy and time spent organizing and informing about the event will be reflected in the turnout of supporters.

Things get pretty quiet in our small town during the winter, and supporting local events such as World Religion Day helps us to enjoy all that is good about living in a small town. Appreciating the diversity of our fellow community members in friendship and respect makes this a special and wonderful place to live and to raise our children.

Organizers such as Georgia Lesley, who volunteer their time to make it happen, deserve our respect, admiration and support for what they do. Thank you!



Georgia Lesley singing "One Planet, One People" with the children.