

SUN Thisweek

Sunday, June 18, 2023

Lakeville residents gather for worldwide celebration



The Azerbaijani Association of Minnesota participated in the International Day of Living Together in Peace event in Lakeville.

International Day of Living Together in Peace held May 20



One activity during the International Day of Living Together in Peace event in Lakeville was painting tiles as part of a community mosaic. Madelyn Beyer and Kyle Beech, both high school students in Lakeville, helped to design the mosaic, which is 5-by-4 feet and is titled “Sharing Peace.” Over 50 community members contributed by painting a tile.

The sixth annual International Day of Living Together in Peace event was held May 20 at Valley Lake Park.

While attending the International Day event in Lakeville, children and adults could paint a community mosaic tile, chalk the sidewalk, learn about different organizations, play games, and more.

“I am very thankful to all the community groups that collaborated to celebrate the International Day of Living Together in Peace,” Lakeville City Council Member Joshua

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Lee said. "This event demonstrated the power of the community working together toward a common goal, and the fact that there is a place for each of us to thrive here in Lakeville. Events like (this) offer us an opportunity to embrace the city's enriching growth and progress."

According to AISA International, an event such as the International Day transmits universal values such as empathy, solidarity, and respect for others and the environment.

The International Day of Living Together in Peace provides a means of regularly mobilizing the efforts of the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity, and an occasion for one and all to express the profound desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable world of peace, solidarity and harmony.

The *Azerbaijani Association of Minnesota* was one of the organizations in attendance at the event. Lakeville resident and AAM President Gunel Krishnan prepared and performed a traditional Azerbaijani dance for the guests in attendance.

"Seeing communities coming together in Lakeville was a joy," she said. "The exchange of the stories, traditions, and missions was fascinating. We were so happy to see people expressing genuine interest in the information about the Azerbaijani community in Minnesota."

"What a wonderful event on such a lovely day," said Denise Lewis, who hosted a table with information about the South of the River CROP Hunger Walk. "CROP walks don't seem to be familiar events in this area, so I was pleasantly surprised to talk with several people who shared stories of their own experiences with CROP walks. I guess it makes sense that people who would want to celebrate living together in peace would also support annual events that are working to create a world where there is enough for all."

"I had fun with the children and youth, asking them about their learning/experience with recycling," said event participant Paula Nordhem. "Every family recycles, and many had questions that I could answer. I was also able to help people direct their trash to the correct receptacle. It was a great day and positive all around. I had a ringside seat to all the enjoyment people had together while eating delicious food."

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Event partners included Lakeville Rotary, The Church of Jesus Christ, AISA ONG Internationale, Minnesota Multi Faith Network, Lakeville Friends of the Environment, Azerbaijani Association of Minnesota, Crossroads Church, City of Lakeville, Lakeville Police Department, Lakeville Fire Department, Friends of the Lakeville Heritage Library, CROP Hunger Walk, Center for Nonviolent Communication, JustServe, InterFaith Creation Care South Metro, Lakeville South Cougars National Honor Society, St. John's Lutheran Church of Lakeville, South Metro InterFaith, and Dakota County Recycling.

“I hope the city of Lakeville will organize more events in the future that will involve diversity and different cultures, like the International Festival in Burnsville,” Krishnan said. “Diversity and inclusion are so important for the city as each of us brings our own value to the community.”