Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence

Gary Race, Director
Phone: (540) 568-7249 / (540) 568-4060
Location: Cardinal House

Email: GandhiCenter@jmu.edu
Website: http://www.jmu.edu/gandhicenter/

Mission
Our mission is to promote justice and nonviolence through education, scholarship and engagement.

Leadership
The Gandhi Center is led by an advisory board composed of faculty and community members who work closely with the director in articulating and implementing our vision. This active board has sponsored two outstanding Nobel Laureate visits and encourages a range of center activities through its example and enthusiasm.

Teaching
The Gandhi Center brings students and faculty together for discussion, learning and outreach. Faculty and community members provide regular workshops and seminars designed to advance the study and understanding of nonviolent solutions to human conflict. Faculties affiliated with the Gandhi Center are invited to make use of the center’s special topics course and to assist in sponsoring student-led volunteer projects. Our teaching and outreach reaches across disciplines, engaging students and faculty from across campus in the peace-making projects of the center. The center works closely with groups across campus with similar goals and assists in sponsoring lectures from visiting scholars who promote the goals of global justice.

Research
The Gandhi Center supports research across disciplines with particular emphasis on scholarship that bridges theory and practical application: Theories and critiques of Gandhi; transnational and cross-cultural dimensions of Gandhi and his legacy and relevance; nonviolent praxis through everyday modes of living; alternative visions of nonviolent approaches to human relations and world affairs; and alternative moral and political theories. Additionally, nonviolent solutions to conflict from a variety of religious, social and cultural traditions are consulted as partners and heirs to the Gandhian traditions, as we seek the widest possible portfolio for understanding and ameliorating human conflict. We recognize the leadership and contributions of great men, women and groups of every nation and region in our mission.

Mahatma Gandhi Chair
The Mahatma Gandhi Chair in Global Nonviolence has been established at the Gandhi Center in collaboration with the government of India through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The holder of the chair is designated as the Government of India-James Madison University Mahatma Gandhi Professor of Global Nonviolence. It is a rotating chair with two-year tenure. The GOI-JMU Mahatma Gandhi Professor will undertake a broad range of teaching, research and outreach initiatives to advance the mission of the center. The chair was established in 2009.

Student Volunteers and Interns
Recognizing that the work of our students is the lifeblood of the Gandhi Center, we facilitate and support a number of student-led and implemented programs. These include recognized annual events: The Global Nonviolence Peace Camp for Children; an international art contest, “Drawing Peace,” ”Journaling for Peace,” Smithland Elementary, “The Gandhi Club” Thomas Harrison Middle School, “Gandhi Center Refugee Resettlement Partnership” and Alternative Weekend/Break building projects in the community. Students are asked to serve as volunteers at the center for at least one semester prior to applying for an internship. Internships may be taken for academic credit, at the discretion of the director. The program began in 2006.

The Gandhi Award
The Mahatma Gandhi Global Nonviolence Award is bestowed upon individuals with global recognition who believe humans everywhere are to be peacemakers, support nonviolence, love their enemies, seek justice, share their possessions with those in need and express and demonstrate these beliefs in their words, life and actions. The inaugural award was given in 2007 to the Most Reverend Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa and 1984 Nobel Peace Laureate. The second award was given in 2009 jointly to former U.S. President and 2002 Nobel Peace Laureate Jimmy Carter and former first lady Rosalynn Carter.

The Gandhi Statue
The government of India has presented a larger than life-size bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi as a gift to the university in recognition of the work of the Gandhi Center. The statue was dedicated and unveiled on October 2, 2008, the International Day of Nonviolence and the birth anniversary of the Mahatma, by His Excellency Ronen Sen, Ambassador of India to the United States of America. The statue, which is located on the ground floor of JMU’s new Rose Library, is the first of Mahatma Gandhi in the Commonwealth of Virginia.