Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence

Dr. Terry Beitzel, Director
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Location: Moody 107A, MSC 1205

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

Leadership
The Gandhi Center is led by advisory committees composed of faculty and community members who work closely with the director in articulating and implementing our vision. The Gandhi Center has sponsored two outstanding Nobel Laureate visits and encourages a range of center activities through its example and enthusiasm. The director reports to the head of the Department of Justice Studies.

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. Faculty 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 nonviolence, transnational and cross-cultural dimensions of nonviolence, 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. The center has hosted both student and international conferences and the Indian government has provided a scholar to serve as the Gandhi Chair. The center is an active participant in the international Peace and Justice Studies Association.

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 have included a number of events and programs: The Global Nonviolence Peace Camp for Children; an international art contest, "Drawing Peace," "Journaling for Peace," "The Gandhi Center Refugee Integration Partnership" and Alternative Weekend/Break building projects in the community. Service and the promotion of nonviolence are central for each volunteer and intern at the center. 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/Service Award
The Service Award is presented to a local community member who advanced nonviolence and social justice. In 2013 Dr. Vida Huber and Dr. Howard Zehr were the inaugural recipients.

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 Rose Library, is the first of Mahatma Gandhi in the Commonwealth of Virginia.