Our View: Ashland is a City of Peace

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Ashland received recognition recently as an International City of Peace, its name added to those of 165 other cities, ranging from the well-known such as Amsterdam and Lucerne to cities few have likely even heard of, such as Dodoma, Tanzania and Durlesti, Moldava.

The recognition is an official acknowledgment of a culture that has long existed in this community. In fact, it was Ashland's Culture of Peace Commission that spearheaded the effort to receive the title. The commission was formed only in 2015, but it was built on a long tradition that has been carried forward by institutions such as Peace House, along with the thousands of individual citizens who understand the power of peace in effecting positive change in the world.

Many of the communities listed as International Cities of Peace — places like Bogota, Columbia and Kibuye, Rwanda — lived through terrors of war, violence or oppression and are all too familiar with the suffering that accompanies brute force. They are determined to find a better way, a way that builds community through respect for diversity, liberty and compassion.

Other places, like Ashland or Victoria, B.C., seem far removed from such terrors, but their citizens know that the world is neither a place in which suffering people should be partitioned from our consciousness nor a place in which oppression and intolerance should go unchallenged.

Inclusion on the international cities list confirms what Ashland has long demonstrated through its embrace of a culture of peace.

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