

## Ashland Culture of Peace Commission: Does Ashland matter globally?

By David Wick / Ashland Culture of Peace Commission

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*Editor's note: This is the third installment of an ongoing column highlighting work of the **Ashland Culture of Peace Commission**. Previous columns are available online at [www.dailytidings.com](http://www.dailytidings.com). Future columns will appear every other Monday. Aging Happens by Ellen Waldman now appears every third Wednesday, starting April 13.*

Does Ashland matter globally?

"I want to emphasize that Ashland is ahead of the curve. I have a lot of communication with cities around the world, and you guys are definitely ahead of the curve on all of this!" declared Fred Arment, executive director of International Cities of Peace. More than 120 cities, towns and villages around the world are proclaimed as International Cities of Peace and are following a vision to foster peace and to promote safety, prosperity and quality of life.

Arment was referring to the launch and development of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission (ACPC). From the outset the ACPC has brought together the city government, business, nonprofit organizations, educators, community members and others to co-create this effort. "You have basically made a very sophisticated approach involving political with grassroots organizations and done it in a way that has integrity and promise, unity and purpose. You guys are leading the pack, and I'm really interested in doing a case study of your city and your approach for the rest of the world to see."

The culture of peace is new territory that is about shifting mindset and behavior to embrace humanity's interconnectedness. International Cities of Peace encourages each municipality to find its own path to peace. ACPC has developed a platform that invites the entire Ashland community to define its path and participate in local peace building.

The Ashland model is already being recognized as progressive and innovative. Is there any wonder at this? A glance at the news, seeing the challenging darkness that affects so many, certainly opens the eyes of people to look for bright lights such as Ashland.

Yes, Ashland does matter globally! As we walk this pathway of the Culture of Peace and learn its lessons, we will inspire other cities and new leaders to also take bold steps forward. This has economic implications as Ashland becomes known as a City of Peace.

Actions we can take to further brand Ashland as a Culture of Peace City and to provide a positive model include:

- On Sept. 21, 2016, the first year anniversary of ACPC, Ashland will join International Cities of Peace.
- The World Peace Flame Foundation in The Hague, Netherlands, has granted Ashland the opportunity to erect a World Peace Flame Monument, the 12th in the world.
- Ashland can create a culture of peace hospitality that will potentially draw those in the growing peace tourism movement.
- Louis D'Amore, the Founder and President of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT), has already stated that he would support having a Global Summit on Peace-Through-Tourism, here in Ashland. The Ashland Hills Hotel stands to become a Culture of Peace Hospitality Center.
- Establishing itself as a new destination-of-choice, Ashland would be involved in conferences and trainings as novel Culture of Peace components are developed.

These initiatives are all being drawn to Ashland because this is the place and now is the time for the Culture of Peace to come alive!

In its strategic planning, the ACPC identified an important cultural shift for a more peaceful community — the need to move from independence to interdependence. Compassion, inclusivity, authenticity, change, and

accountability were recognized as primary values needed to accomplish this shift. We must move forward thoughtfully, care for and listen to each other, and be open to emerging possibilities. Everybody counts and everybody is a co-creator.

When asked what else the Ashland Community should know about, Fred Arment said, “Just the idea of your being in the United States — and for peace — gives encouragement and support to other cities around the world. So it’s not just Ashland that you are dealing with. When Ashland proclaims that it is a City of Peace, other cities in war-torn areas see that as a way forward. So it’s very powerful!”

*David Wick is executive director of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission. Send comments and questions to [ashlandcpc@gmail.com](mailto:ashlandcpc@gmail.com), drop by the commission office at 33 1st St., Suite 1, and like the commission on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/AshlandCultureofPeaceCommission](https://www.facebook.com/AshlandCultureofPeaceCommission).*



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