

Press Release:

Season for Nonviolence 2009

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MANHATTAN -- "Food, food systems and human relationships" is the theme for the 8th annual Season for Nonviolence at Kansas State University, with activities planned from January 30 to April 4.

The "Season for Nonviolence" begins and ends on assassination anniversaries of two famous peacemakers -- Mahatma Gandhi (January 30) and Martin Luther King Jr. (April 4). The 64 days between gives us a time each year to introduce people to the practices of nonviolence.

The Season for Nonviolence was started by a new generation of nonviolence proponents in 1998 on the 50th and 30th death anniversaries. It has grown into an international event commemorated in hundreds of communities. This is the ninth year K-State's Campaign for Nonviolence (CNV) and a network of social and environmental justice groups have organized events for the local community.

"We generate a long list of nonviolence-related projects each year," said Susan Allen, Director of K-State's Nonviolence Education programs. Events and activities vary widely to demonstrate the many ways we can practice nonviolence in our relationships," she said.

Cammie Lehman, junior in Women's Studies and American Ethnic Studies from Hutchinson, and other CNV organizers planned the 2009 Season for Nonviolence to highlight the human relationship with our food and food systems.

“We all have a relationship with the Earth and with our food,” Allen said. “The more nonviolent that interaction becomes the more sustainable the relationships will be. Healthy relationships are like good nutrition,” she said. “The key is balance.”

Season highlights include a Local Food Fair featuring local growers, producers and cooperatives such as Farmer’s Market, UFM Community Gardens, K-State Student Farm, and People’s Grocery; a keynote presentation by K-State Sustainable Agriculture professor, Dr. Rhonda Janke; and a film and discussion about fair trade by K-Staters involved with fair trade organizations.

A “Favorite Food Books” discussion led by Manhattan librarian Carol Barta will be at the Manhattan Public Library; and several K-Staters will tell us about the choices they have made to eat as a vegetarian, a carnivore or something in-between.

Event planners are excited to use the 64 day Season to raise \$500 so all of us at K-State can buy and give a life-sustaining heifer calf to a family in Africa through Heifer Project International.

"An underlying aim of nonviolence is to encourage people to change our individual and collective minds about how we deal with the inevitable conflict in our lives," Allen said. One way to do this is to take into account a more complex and realistic range of response options beyond polarities like "fight or flight." This includes expanding the way we think about food. For example, there are many alternatives beyond "either commercial agriculture or sustainable agriculture," "either meat eating or no meat eating," either local foods or imports, and so on.

"The aim of the CNV and other nonviolence education programs is to show that the tactics and tools of active nonviolence are practical, daily ways to maintain sustainable relationships," Allen said.

All Season events are free and open to the public. See the calendar, below.