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Hiroshima Nagasaki Commemoration Events, August 5, 6, and 9, 2009

For twenty-five years, the Hiroshima Nagasaki Commemoration Committee has *offered events to the community to encourage reflection on the past and hope for the future through action in the present. It calls for the total abolition of nuclear weapons throughout the world as one measure of ensuring a just and lasting peace.* With President Obama calling for the end of the nuclear arms race, our remembrance of the past will give us hope for the future.

The commemoration begins with a formal tea ceremony performed by Yukimakai tea study group at the Lyndale Park Peace Garden in Minneapolis at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, August 5. This meditative event occurs at the exact moment that people in Hiroshima are remembering the dropping of the first atomic bomb. Come at 5:30 to listen to the Arden Recorder Consort set the tone for the evening.

The centerpiece of the commemoration events at the Lyndale Park Peace Garden is the Ceremony of the Cranes, which begins at 7:30 a.m. on Thursday, August 6 and ends with a moment of silence at 8:15 a.m., the time the bomb was dropped. Roger Hale, chair of the board of directors of the Ploughshares Fund, is the keynote speaker. Retired CEO of Tennant, Roger speaks eloquently of a nuclear-free world. Renee Weeks-Wynne and her grandparents will tell the story of Sadako Sasaki, who came down with the 'radiation sickness' ten years after the bombing and who tried to fold 1,000 cranes to restore her health. The storytelling is part of the Minneapolis Mosaic summer program.

The all-day vigil in the garden will feature poetry, music, and a special ceremony at 11 a.m. Veterans for Peace and the Women in Black are planning an 11 Bells ceremony. First begun in 1918 to mark 'The War to End All Wars,' Veterans for Peace is bringing this event to the Peace Garden for the first time.

Barbara McAfee, well-known for her leading of community singing groups, and Kairos Dance are featured at the Concert for Peace at Lake Harriet Bandshell at 7:30 p.m. on the evening of August 6. Kairos will perform an original dance, commissioned by the HNCC, to the song *A Thousand Paper Cranes* recorded by the Junshin singers from Nagasaki.

On Sunday, August 9, the ceremonies shift to the Global Harmony Labyrinth at Como Park in St. Paul to remember the bombing of Nagasaki. The ceremony begins with the reading of the Peace Declaration by Nagasaki Mayor Taue. Music will be provided by the Japanese women's choral group Mu Min. The centerpiece is the reading of *ON THAT SUMMER DAY*, a picture book which talks about the spirit of Nagasaki and the dropping of the bomb. A moment of silence at 11:02 A.M. is followed by people walking the labyrinth, which is designed like two hands clasped in friendship.

The Hiroshima Nagasaki Commemoration Committee plans these events annually. WILPFMN hosts the primary website. The St. Paul Nagasaki Sister City Committee cosponsors the August 9 event. All of the participants are volunteers. If you are interested in participating in the planning of next year's events, please contact JoAnn at msphncc@gmail.com.