

GLOBAL CONCEPTS

G.A.M.E. NEWSLETTER

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GLOBAL & MULTICULTURAL
EDUCATION
CENTER

Director's Reflections

...Sara Pedram

GLOBAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION (G.A.M.E.)
and SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL (SGI-USA)
Buddhist Association for Peace, Culture & Education

We invite you to join us AS WE
"Celebrate"
G.A.M.E.'s 8th Annual Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
A World Fit for Children with an exhibit
"Building a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World"
Tuesday, October 14, 2014
Opening Reception 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Program 7:00 - 8:00 pm
UMKC Miller Nichols Library*, 3rd Floor
5100 Rockhill Road -
Kansas City, MO

RSVP for Reception, Program
by October 1, 2014 to:
info@sgiusa.org or 816-733-0373

Theme for student Art, Essay, and Poetry
Contest
"My vision of peace for me, my family and
the world is...."

TEACHERS: If you and your students are
interested, guidelines will be emailed to you
upon request.

The exhibit is open to the public
Oct. 14-Nov. 15
Organizations and schools with similar missions may "host" a day, with
advance reservations by September 20.
Contact G.A.M.E. at
info@kcglobalconcepts.org
www.kcglobalconcepts.org

Come celebrate with us on October 14 as we kick off our **8th Biennial "Activism for Human Rights" event!** Since 2000, Global and Multicultural Education has offered conferences on the U.N. Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Neither of these treaties has yet been ratified by the U.S. Senate - so we continue to advocate for the human rights of children and women around the world.

In partnership with Soka Gakkai International (SGI-USA), we are bringing a stunning 30-day exhibit "*Building a Culture of Peace for the Children of the World*" to the UMKC Miller Nichols Library, 51st and Rockhill Rd., Kansas City. The Opening Reception/Program is Tuesday, October 14, 6:30-8:30 pm, 3rd Floor. (Exhibit is open to public October 14 - November 15 during Library hours.)

The exhibit concludes with an Awards Ceremony on Nov. 15 for area students who have submitted entries for the Art, Essay and Poetry Contest on the theme "My vision of peace for me, my family and the world...." G.A.M.E. and SGI-USA are pleased to present this unique opportunity to our friends and families in the Kansas City community! For complete details, go to <www.kcglobalconcepts.org> and click on Exhibit 2014.

Over 3,000 Women in Fiji ... *by Bambi Shen*
Member - GAME Board of Directors

In August 2014 I experienced the amazing opportunity of speaking to over 3,000 women in Fiji. It was because of my participation in the Kansas City Sister City organization.

In 2012 I traveled on a tour sponsored by the China Friendship Society with foreign countries. That particular trip was for China with foreign countries where English is spoken. Therefore the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji were included. At those big hotels buffet breakfast, the guests pick up their choice of food and find a table where to sit. From my

habit of networking with the world, I never sit with someone I already know. I noticed this dark-skinned woman with an impressive afro hairdo. I asked if I could get to know her and sat by her. Come to find out she is Dr. Luveni, the Minister of Social Welfare, Women, and Poverty Alleviation of Fiji. That is her full title.



I told her I wrote a memoir that tells the story of my life and I dedicated it to the empowerment of women because I am a survivor of 4 years of Japanese concentration camps during the Second World War. I also suffered gender and racial discrimination, and domestic violence from my first husband. That struck a vibrating cord in Dr. Luveni.

The culture of Fiji is very patriarchal. The population is made up of 50% local Fijians of Afronisian tribal culture, plus 40% of 5th, 6th, and 7th generations East Indians, descendants of the lower caste Indians whom the British Colonialists imported to Fiji to work the land, producing cotton, coconut, and sugar. That was in the 1800 when Fiji was a British colony.

The English missionaries arrived. One of the first things they did was to put clothes on the natives because in those days, the women were bare-breasted and the men only wore a small loin cloth. Now the women wear a *sulu* or ankle-length skirt with a matching top called *jaba*, that can be anywhere from hip length to below the knees. The men adopted a wrap-around black skirt, just below the knees, with a regular shirt and tie, and a jacket for formal occasions, or with what we would call a Hawaiian shirt with floral prints for casual wear.

The missionaries also worked at converting the people, a task that was not always so easy because they were cannibals. They used to kill and eat their enemies. In 1867 a Wesleyan Methodist Minister, Thomas Baker, greatly displeased the natives, perhaps by preaching monogamy versus the local practice of polygamy, perhaps he was too "fire and brimstone" in style. Anyway, he ended up in a pot and his flesh was shared with neighboring villages. It was told that the natives even tried to cook his shoes. One of his shoes is on display at the Fiji Museum.

For my husband and me, after a near 13-hour flight from Los Angeles, we arrived at the international airport in the town of Nadi, but pronounced as Nandi. The Secretary General of the Ministry of Social Welfare met us at the door of our plane and escorted to the VIP lounge. All our landing, visa, immigration, and customs formalities were taken care of for us. We were treated with all the courtesies reserved for visiting diplomats. Then we boarded a domestic plane that took us to the capital city of Suva in 20 minutes, instead of taking the three-hour trip by road. We were treated like royalty.

At the capital city we were met by Minister Luveni herself. We were given a dedicated car and driver, and a female assistant who escorted us every step of the way and kept us on schedule to all the places we needed to be. Courtesy calls to the U.S. Ambassador and the Ambassador of China were arranged ahead of time. They needed to be informed that I was a guest of the Fiji government and what I was doing there.

The next morning was the opening of the first Women Expo, spear-headed by Dr. Luveni. Over 3,000 women gathered from all over Fiji, the cities on the big island and the villages on the smaller outer islands. The purpose was to showcase the talents of the women and to make them more aware of the new laws that are protecting them.

As I mentioned before, Fiji is a very patriarchal society where domestic violence is rather common. The government has recently put in place a system of "Gatekeepers". These are women and men in the villages and communities who are trained to be peacemakers in conflict resolution and intervention whenever a dispute arises and before the conflict escalates into a physical fight. Finally in the last 2 years or so, laws have been passed to make domestic violence a crime. Now police can be called and can intervene in such cases.

Gene and I arrived in Fiji 41 days before the next election. The Prime Minister, who opened the Women's Expo, is running for re-election. The women love him and support him because his campaign slogans are: "Real men don't beat women. Every woman and child deserves to be protected and safe." In his opening speech he said, "Laws to protect you are in place, but cultural habits are slow to die. So we must work together to achieve a peaceful home and a peaceful society."

During my keynote speech I told the women how I used empowering tools to break out of the most confining limitations imposed by my culture and the blame and shame heaped upon me by my own mother. I have become an empowered woman and I was there to share my secrets and my action steps. Also told them I brought the book I wrote to sell because it recounts more than I could tell them during my short visit. I especially wanted them to know that we are all entitled to a fair profit for our work. I made them the promise that when they buy my books, I will not take any of the Fijian dollars back to the U.S. Instead I will spend them all with them, shopping for what they had made.

I was privileged to conduct 3 workshops with different groups, the Council of the "Gatekeepers", the first Council of Tribal Women Leaders, and the Council for the Disabled and the Aged. The subject of my workshop is a program I developed called S.H.E.L.F. using it as an acronym to represent the 5 tools of empowerment, 5 areas of our lives we must take responsibility to become empowered. S.H.E.L.F. stands for self-image, health, education/training to be able to make a living, legal rights, and finances.

When Minister Luveni saw us off as we were leaving Fiji, she said to me "You really left a deep impression on my women, we want you to come back next year!"

GLOBAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION *FOUNDER'S FUND*
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G.A.M.E. appreciates your gift to its Endowment at the Greater Kansas City
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Join the World: Become a member of G.A.M.E.!

The strength of any organization depends upon the level of support and financial resources provided by its members and friends. G.A.M.E. is no exception. Take Action--Join Today!

Membership Form: Date: _____

Individual..... \$ 20.00

Family \$ 30.00

Student \$ 15.00

Organization/School....\$ 50.00

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Name _____ Address: _____

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Mission Statement: G.A.M.E. assists in the enhancement of knowledge of global interdependence and awareness and appreciation of our common humanity.