

CORE AGREEMENTS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN

WITNESS AGAINST WAR 2008: FROM CHICAGO TO ST. PAUL

July 12TH – September 1ST 2008

Thank you for your interest in participating in **Witness Against War 2008 (WAW)**, a walk from Chicago, IL to St. Paul, MN. The walk is being organized by Voices for Creative Nonviolence (VCNV). The following information is to assist you in preparing for your participation in the walk.

As much as possible, we aim to foster, along the route, a community of walkers dedicated to goals of living simply and sharing resources equitably. We look forward to developing a welcoming and friendly project. We're fortunate to have been able to consult seasoned activists who've worked to develop interstate, cross-country and multinational walks. Their advice has been helpful in forming these guidelines.

VCNV asks that each participant in the "Witness Against War" project endorse the following by offering their signature of agreement:

Statement of Nonviolence

Voices for Creative Nonviolence is committed to nonviolence and nonviolent action. All participants are expected to share the same commitment to nonviolence and nonviolent action. VCNV is adopting the following principles for this particular action.

- 1) Our attitude will be one of openness and respect toward all whom we encounter in our actions.
- 2) We will use no violence—verbal, physical, or otherwise—toward any person or property.
- 3) We will not destroy, damage or otherwise harm property.
- 4) We will carry no weapons.
- 5) We agree not to consume alcohol or use illicit drugs while participating in the walk.
- 6) We will not retaliate if physically challenged or injured.
- 7) We will seek dialogue with those who may disagree with us and maintain a spirit of openness, friendliness and respect towards all with whom we engage.
- 8) There will be zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment based upon gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical appearance, ability, creed or political perspective. Harassment is defined as epithets, derogatory statements and slurs based on any of these qualities. We will respect everyone's right to express their identity.

9) We will honor one another's desire for personal space. There will be zero tolerance for any unwanted touching, sexual advances, or sexual assault.

10) Anyone feeling that they are experiencing discrimination, harassment or assault is asked to bring the issue as soon as possible to a member of the working team.

Dr. Martin Luther King enunciated the power of nonviolence, summarizing its essential components as:

1. Nonviolence is resistance to evil and oppression. It is a human (and humane) way to struggle for justice.

2. Nonviolence does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his/her friendship and understanding.

3. The nonviolent method is an attack on the forces of evil rather than against persons doing the evil. It seeks to defeat the evil and not the persons doing the evil and injustice.

4. Nonviolence means willingness to accept suffering without retaliation.

5. The nonviolent resister avoids both external physical and internal spiritual violence - not only refusing to shoot or strike, but also to hate, an opponent. The ethic of real love is at the center of nonviolence.

6. The nonviolent resister has a deep faith in the future, and believes that the forces in the universe are ultimately on the side of justice. To quote Dr. King, the moral arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Walk Logistics

Housing

VCNV will work to find housing for walk participants on the following basis:

1) VCNV will arrange housing for the walkers who have agreed to form a 15 person “working group.” These walkers will be with the campaign for all or most of the walk.

2) VCNV will endeavor to find housing for people who will walk for one or more weeks. We may or may not be able to arrange housing. The earlier we know when and for how long you can join us, the more likely it will be that we can find housing for you.

3) If you are able to walk for less than one week, the probability is high that you will need to arrange your own housing, though VCNV may be able to help.

Food

VCNV commits to funding food costs for those who are able to participate for the entire walk. This will be in the form of shared meals. We will ask those who walk for a portion of the walk to contribute funds to defray food costs (see below on funding). Expenses incurred while eating at restaurants during the walk will be at the walker's own expense.

Funding

1) VCNV will cover walk related expenses for the walkers who have agreed to form a 15 person "working group." These walkers will be with the campaign for all or most of the walk. VCNV does ask you to consider making a financial contribution to the walk if possible.

2) If you are participating for a portion of the walk, we ask that you contribute \$75 each week that you are on the walk. This \$75 will be used for food costs and to defray costs for shelter. If it becomes necessary to stay at a hotel due to inclement weather, in those rare circumstances, it will be necessary for you to provide additional funds for a room.

3) If you arrange your own housing and food during the walk, the \$75 per week contribution is not necessary.

4) If you are having difficulty raising funds to participate in the walk, please be in contact with VCNV. We want to avoid having finances be the sole barrier to a person joining the walk.

Contingent Participation

VCNV and the core walk group reserves the right and ability to ask a person to discontinue participation in the walk if an individual's behavior is proving to be detrimental or counter-productive to the walk. This ability has been reserved in prior actions and has not, to date, been exercised.

Witness Against War Working Group

The WAW Working Group will consist of not more than 15 people who will walk together throughout all or most of the WAW campaign. They will convene at least once daily during the course of the walk and will act as the primary decision-making body. They will share a common understanding as to the goal and nature of the WAW campaign. The Working Group will assume the responsibility of carrying out regular tasks and resolving issues that arise during the course of the walk. If there is an opening in the WAW Working Group, a guest walker, after a trial period, can apply to join the Working Group.

Waiver of Liability

The volunteers who have organized Witness Against War have made every effort to minimize risks and insure the safety and well being of all participants. Walkers should be aware that VCNV is a low-budget, non-profit organization that does not have general liability insurance, nor can it provide medical insurance coverage for participants in case of injury.

I, _____, take full responsibility for my personal actions during the Walk and will not hold Voices for Creative Nonviolence or organizers of the Witness Against War campaign liable for any damages or injuries. I am responsible for my own medical care coverage.

Print Name of Walker _____

Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Medical and Health Information

VCNV asks that you provide emergency contact information before you join the walk. For those who will be on the walk for a longer duration, we will ask you to provide us, in advance of your participation, with additional medical information (e.g., blood type, health insurance information, medical conditions which might impact upon a medical emergency, emergency contact information, allergies, etc.). We ask for this information in order to most effectively assist you, should an emergency arise while you are participating on the walk—but you may decline to provide information.

Emergency Contact Name _____

Phone number: Daytime (_____) _____ Evening (_____) _____

Relationship to walker _____

Insurance company _____ Phone number: (_____) _____

Any medical or mental health concerns, dietary restrictions, allergies, etc.? Please list any medications your regularly take.

Blood type _____

Endorsement of Core Agreements for Witness Against War

I, _____, have studied and am willing to endorse and accept the proposed nonviolence guidelines as well as the proposed guidelines regarding Housing, Food, Funding, Contingent Participation, the WAW Working Group, the Waiver of Liability and the Medical & Health information.

Print Name of Walker _____

Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

Signed _____ Date _____