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International Peacemakers Assemble in Kabul, March 17 – 24, to Join Afghan Youth in Solidarity Delegation and Tree Planting

CHICAGO, IL.- From March 17th to 24th, a group of 25-30 international peace activists will meet with Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers (AYPV) in Kabul, Afghanistan to learn about their experiences and support an AYPV campaign called “I Wish to Live Without Wars.” www.livewithoutwars.org.

On March 17th, several dozen Afghan youth from all ethnicities will celebrate a widespread wish to live without wars by walking hand-in-hand through the streets of Kabul. On March 19th, they will join with the internationals to plant trees of peace and hold a candle light vigil commemorating children who have been killed by war in Afghanistan and throughout the world.

During October and December 2010,Voices for Creative Nonviolence members spent three weeks in Afghanistan as guests of the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers, first in Bamiyan and then in Kabul. Together, they met with representatives of various NGOs and with leaders of civil society. They also met with Afghans who have been displaced by the war and now endure wretched conditions in a Kabul refugee camp.

The AYPVs, many having lost family members in years of conflict, call for an end to war and are determined not to exacerbate spiraling violence based on desires for revenge. They encourage wide-scale friendships that will cross all borders towards nonviolent and conciliatory relations. They ask, 'Why not love?'

To learn more about Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers, visit www.ourjourneytosmile.com

Travelers leaving from Chicago include Kathy Kelly, three-time nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize; Mary Dean, Co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence; Ceylon Mooney of Mid-South Peace and Justice Center; Patrick Kenelly of the Center for Peacemaking at Marquette; John Volkening, activist and psychiatric social worker at Evanston hospital and Jake Olzen of the White Rose Community.

For a full list of delegates and their biographies, visit <http://vcnv.org/biographies-of-participants>.

Voices for Creative Nonviolence (www.vcnv.org) has deep, long-standing roots in active nonviolent resistance to U.S. war-making. Begun in the summer of 2005, Voices draws upon the experiences of those who challenged the brutal economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. and U.N. against the Iraqi people between 1990 and 2003.

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