



Message from Archbishop Desmond Tutu

“Congratulations to all of you who have made the Cyprus Friendship Program such a success—especially all you wonderful young people who reach out the hand of peace and friendship to your neighbours. You are truly fantastic. I remember being so impressed with Thalia, Idil, Michael and Tayfun (CFP 2009 teens)-who helped me and my

fellow Elders-Jimmy Carter and Lakhdar Brahimi- better understand the deep scars that are felt by many people of this island-but who also made us feel that there is the potential for lasting peace and healing. Thank you, thank you to all of you young people who have the courage to stand up for peace.

Sometimes you might feel that you are alone in this kind of work.

Today, take a look around and realize that you are all part of something much bigger-bound together by shared commitment to our common humanity. Remember that the sea is just drops of water that have come together. And together you can do extraordinary things. God bless you.”

“We are bound together by our humanity-in Africa we call this idea Ubuntu. It means that I can be human only through the humanity of others.”

The Cyprus Friendship Program would not exist without volunteers, hosts and donors!

Everyone involved in Cyprus Friendship Program is a volunteer contributor, especially those opening their hearts and homes to host a pair of Cypriot teens. Many of you who cannot host have been making a real difference through your tax-deductible financial support to the program. I hope that you will help us to carry the program forward by making a year-end gift to the program. We are making a difference. You can be an important part of it.

Your tax-deductible contribution will go toward the airfares and travel insurance for Greek-speaking-Turkish-speaking pairs of teens to come to the US in July seeking to pursue friendships with a future leader from the “other side”. It costs \$3500 for each teen to participate, youth and families are asked to contribute \$1200. Donations make up the difference.

Checks should be sent to Cyprus Friendship Program, Inc. P.O. Box 981, 48 Whitegate Road, Wolfeboro, NH 03894-0981. Or directly on-line www.cyprusfriendship.org



Graduating Peace-Bound Leaders: A Rare Celebration in Cyprus

On October 6th, over 450 people braved the torrential rains to celebrate the graduation of the 2012 Cyprus Friendship Program teens at the European University of Nicosia. Cypriots, from both sides of the island, came together to honor these young leaders who have committed themselves to building friendships in their divided country. The teens’ families and friends were joined (physically and virtually) by a growing group of supporters from around the world – the United States, Crete, Ireland, South Africa, and Sierra Leone. The event gained so much press that John Koenig, the US Ambassador in Cyprus, requested an invitation to see for himself the merits of CFP. He and everyone else in attendance were very impressed.

To be sure, it has been a life changing year. After four months of getting to know each other in Cyprus, the sixty teens paired up, one Greek Cypriot and one Turkish Cypriot, to spend July 2012 in one of four areas in the US: Atlanta (Georgia), New Hampshire, Portland (Oregon), and DC (including northern Virginia and Maryland). While in the US, each pair lived with American host families, discovering how much they have in common and solidifying their friendship. At least once a week, they came together as a group for leadership and peace building activities.

The graduation, to say the least, was fabulous. Finding this many Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots together celebrating a common cause is rare, and the teens took advantage of this to showcase all they had learned in their past year. Each of the groups shared their experiences through speeches, poetry, song, dance and video. Both Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Bernice King, supporters of CFP, sent laudatory and inspirational messages to the graduates, captivating the audience. It was a fitting close to an important year of building friendships, developing leadership skills, and concentrating on peace.

Graduation Message from Bernice King



Bernice A. King presented via video a crucial message to the young Cypriot graduates at the October 6 graduation. Addressing the people of Cyprus, she spoke of the youth that attended the NOW

Encounter program with teens from metro Atlanta, New Mexico and Alabama in July. She was impressed by their commitment to the peace process, their accomplishment in the program, and their ability to provide future leadership for Cyprus. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King's commitment of non-violent social change involved the importance of the involving youth in civil rights movements as being critical to social change. She expressed that she was proud of the Cypriot youth and the program that brought them together.

Atlanta Cypriot Youth Study at MLK's Nonviolence at Martin Luther King, Jr. Center Camp

In July 2012, Cyprus Friendship Program (CFP) expanded to Atlanta, GA. Chris and Cemre were a part of the Atlanta group participating in the N.O.W. (Nonviolence Opportunity Watch Encounter Youth Nonviolence Camp of the King Center). Chris and Cemre joined 65 metro-Atlanta, New Mexico and Alabama peers to learn about Dr. King's teachings/principles and how these ideas can be applied to heal divisions, prevent violence and promote understanding and goodwill between ethnic communities in their homeland. Our CFP teens ended up becoming an integral part of the camp, and the leadership at the MLK Center was very impressed with their efforts, participation and leadership in N.O.W.



Photo credit-Martin Luther King, Jr. Center

Atlanta Hosts Bev and David kept a blog on their experiences. Here's part of their story: "We have been truly blessed with the girls who are staying with us. Both Cemre & Chris have been a joy since we met them at the airport for the first time last Friday. They so enjoy each other's company and are inseparable. When presented with an option, they discuss it and come to a mutual decision. They are more like close sisters than friends who just met about two months ago. Their English is outstanding and they are both very intelligent.

As for the goal of the program to bring the kids together, it is very interesting when the subject of Cyprus comes up. We are asked not to directly question about the politics or reasons for the division within the country. However, the subject does come up in indirect ways. Sometimes when we ask a general question the answer begins with the statement, "In the north we do this" and then the other will say, "In the south we do this..." The other term they use is "on my side..." It is during these moments when Bev & I realize the true value of the Cyprus Friendship Program and the importance of these children being in our home in the U.S."

A message from the Cypriot Coordinators

Dear Friends of the Cyprus Friendship Program in USA,

We want to thank you for your most valuable contribution to our struggle to promote a culture of peace and understanding in our divided island. With your support we can be far more effective in creating hope when there is hopelessness, in building bridges where there only walls, in changing attitudes from indifference to deeply caring for people from the 'other side'. More and more people are noticing the effectiveness of the Cyprus Friendship Program as a unique project that brings together not only the teens from the two communities but also their families. The one month of hosting by American families is recognized as another unique feature that is a major factor in creating the bonds between each pair of teens.

In our struggle to erode the deep prejudice between the two communities there is another prejudice that we are eroding that I must share with you. In Cyprus for a proportion of the population there is a deep suspicion for anything American for a variety of political and historical interpretations. This negative stereotype is destroyed when people hear of and, even more so, experience the kindness of the American host families and other people involved in the project. In the words of one surprised Cypriot to whom I explained the program: "I did not know that Americans can be so generous!" We therefore, thank *you for walking with us in this incredible journey!*

Sarper Ince

Turkish Cypriot Coordinator

Nicos Anastasi

Greek Cypriot Coordinator

If only Cyprus could be made whole with cupcakes and frosting...from host Stephanie Minter

“Cupcakes?” they asked in unison. While staying in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, Maria and Buse were asked to help out at *A Night of 1000 Cupcakes*, an event hosted by the Jaffrey Civic Center, to raise money for the community. Maria and Buse could not wait to bake cakes in little paper cups, to decorate them, to experience a night when everyone came together to eat cupcakes.

These 17-year-olds joined the Cyprus Friendship Program (CFP) a few months ago. Now they find themselves so far from home, in fairy-tale surroundings--rural New Hampshire, U.S.A.--a place where cupcakes are a cause for celebration.

So we check the Internet and find hundreds of ideas for elaborately decorating cupcakes. We bake and bake and bake.



Then there are trips to pick up supplies: a knock-off Barbie, candy, sprinkles, food coloring, marshmallows, colored sugars, more candy, boxes of confectioner's sugar and butter. We decide to make a cupcake skirt for our Barbie and decorate her world with baskets of marshmallow flowers. More cupcakes become a map of Cyprus highlighting the capital.



The results are spectacular, creativity unleashed. Barbie's display alone weighs several pounds. She is sparkling in pink, surrounded by pastels. And, lo and behold, she wins a judge's ribbon entitled, "What a Doll!"

No one has compiled statistics on how much frosting it takes to re-glue a country split for the past 30 years, but if "Cupcakes" is any indication, probably five pounds will do it. The whole New Hampshire CFP delegation attends the event, laughs together, cheers together, smiles broadly for the camera and is brought together. Maria and Buse, speaking clearly to one another in English, become friends from the start, supportive, curious, and devoted. Cupcakes simply cemented

their connection. Their commitment to peaceful co-existence and a united Cyprus remains as firm, as royal icing.

Photo credits: Love's Token Photography



Conflict Resolution: Peace, Truth and Justice

Alusine Kamara, of Schools for Salome, Sierra Leone, presented at New Hampshire's CFP Conflict Resolution workshop where they discussed the relationship between peace, justice and trust. Kamara is an international peace activist, basing his life on integrity and has been great supporter of CFP.

Alusine sent this message to graduating 2012 Cypriot students. "... As some of you may know, Sierra Leone has had our own fair share of war, terror and violence during some eleven years of conflict. During and after that war, I was fortunate to work with organizations to help my nation turn a new page in life. And as I grew up through these organizations, I learned a few lessons. I would like to send these lessons to you as you graduate. First, in any situation one should not see him or herself as victim because when you do your chances of helping yourself are not very good. Secondly, as a group, you will be able to do as much as you could to help other people, including your family and yourself to grow from individual strength to community strength. Thirdly, the training you received from the Cyprus Friendship Program is a flashlight, not just for you, but for all of Cyprus.

In turn, now that you are back in Cyprus, use what you have learned to show your peers and community members that you are here to help create a stronger, more peaceful, and everlasting society."

Kamara looks forward to working with Cypriot youth in 2013.

Portland Cypriots Helped Build Habitat for Humanity Apartment Building

July 2012 marked the second year for the Portland Oregon area Cyprus Friendship Program. Five pairs of girls and two pairs of boys stayed with nine host families living in Portland, Oregon, Newberg, Oregon, Vancouver, Washington and



Battleground, Washington. The Portland area CFP teenagers participated in trust and team building activities like the ropes course at Oregon Episcopal School. They helped Habitat for Humanity build an

apartment building in Southeast Portland. They met with local Rotary leaders. They spoke with Cypriot academics at Portland State University who were leaders of the bi-communal citizen peace movement that began in the 1990s in Cyprus. The highlight of the Portland area program was a weekend campout at Nehalem Bay State Park on the Oregon Coast. The beach was big and beautiful. Typical of the region coast, the water and the weather were shockingly cold for the Mediterranean teenagers.

One aspect of the Portland area CFP that was different from the other groups was a partnership with the Baobab Foundation for Sustainability (Cyprus and Netherlands). With



support from the Foundation, the Portland area CFP teenagers completed a research project on sustainable practices in Portland. Each pair focused on one of seven areas of sustainable practices: energy, water, food, buildings, transportation, waste management, and communities. The CFP pairs presented their research to attendees of the CFP Celebration on July 28th in Portland. Upon their return to Cyprus, the pairs evaluated which of the sustainable practices they observed in Portland would be applicable in Cyprus. They presented their research and analysis at the Cyprus Friendship Program graduation event on October 6, 2012 and at other venues in the future.

*A special note of gratitude to **Cheron Calder**, who is leaving as the Portland CFP Coordinator. Thank you for your endless energy! And a warm welcome to **Jack Bradley** for joining the CFP team and heading up Portland. We are in good hands!*

From Warren Muir, Chair Board of Directors

Cyprus Friendship Program is modeled after the very successful Children's Friendship Program of Northern Ireland (CFPNI). In 2007, that program ended after 21 years, when political differences reached a point when the Irish children didn't need a neutral country to meet. CFPNI is credited with having strongly contributed to peace in Ireland. My family hosted 15 pairs of youth from Ireland and I served as chair of their board for many years. Many involved in CFPNI are involved as program coordinators or volunteers for the Cyprus Friendship Program.

We are bringing what we learned at CFPNI to another country with some similar issues and but many differences. The divide in Northern Ireland has been much better known in the US than the one in Cyprus. In the news, there has been little news of the violence in Cyprus reaching us as the two communities have been divided for nearly 40 years by UN peacekeepers. The cost of airfare between Cyprus and the US is almost triple the cost to travel to Northern Ireland. Few Americans have ever met a Cypriot teen!

But, unlike CFPNI, the Cyprus Friendship Program is one of very few seeking to bridge the divide between the two communities on the island. On the upside, CFP has a high profile in Cyprus, and it is transforming the lives of our Cypriot teens, their families, and their friends. The CFP friendships are being witnessed by students in schools and youth clubs across the island and by hundreds of friends of each participant via Facebook and other forms of social media. These new friendships between teens and families are being prominently featured in newspapers and TV across the island. CFP is being given a weekly one-hour Friday night radio program that will be broadcast on major stations on both sides of the divide. And the CFP Graduation that is held annually in October was attended by 400-500 Cypriots, clearly the largest and probably most important regularly scheduled bi-communal activity on the island.

In Cyprus, there is a corps of amazing Cypriot volunteer program coordinators, taking risks and dedicating enormous time and energy to selecting, mentoring, and supporting the CFP teens and their families. This program is witness the passion and commitment they have to cross-community friendship.

Change in Cyprus will not come quickly, but if it is to come, it will be from the bottom up. CFP is making a major difference. Teens, their families, and their friends are being transformed and forever changed. I believe, that only when the people call for peace and reconciliation, will political leaders of the two communities will reach an accommodation.

Peace,

Warren Muir, Chair Board of Directors



Just Want to Live in Peace

We just want to live in peace
 We just want to share our love
 All we need is forgiveness
 All we need is a spark of hope

Cause we don't deserve
 Living separated
 We hope to live united
 Even in a country divided!

Today we have that spark of hope
 Revealed in our hidden love
 We all forgave our past and now we're here

Show them that we are ready
 Show them that we can live in peace
 Do not let them change your mind
 'Cause we'll erase those borders from their minds

Song performed by Cemre with her partner Andria at the DC closing dinner and at CFP graduation.

*Until this year, CFP has combined Northern Virginia and Maryland into one DC regional group. We are pleased to announce that we have enough support in this region to now hold two groups, one in Northern Virginia and one in Maryland. Thanks to **Amanda and Mike Messinger** (Northern Virginia) and **Tom McCarthy** (Maryland) for all your hard work. We are looking forward to a great year in 2013!*

In a Country Divided, People United

Last January, when most of the teenagers started signing our applications for the Cyprus Friendship Program, we thought that we were joining each other for a one month trip in the US, so as to prove to ourselves that co-existence between the Turkish-speaking and Greek-speaking communities is possible. However, one thing that none of us expected was the long-term impact the program would have on us.

The program has helped us to gain more knowledge on the two communities; has expanded our skills in peace-making and public-speaking; has helped us to identify ourselves as equal to each other and above all--has helped us in realizing how effective the strength of each individual is. The motivation we have received from our special CFP coordinators, our host families in the US and the peacemakers we have met has encouraged many of us to come back home and face the political situation in a better way, as well as approach peace from a different angle.

The memories each of us experienced in the US might have been different from each other's, but we all came to the same conclusion: we have both suffered during the 1974 war, and as CYPRIOTS we want peace in our country. We have come to realize that the change will be brought about by us, the Cypriot youth, and certainly not by any external force. Therefore, we are now even more actively involved in peacemaking events, expressing our beliefs through the media and bringing people from the two communities in touch. We are proud to be the exception to the rule by proving to people that reunification is easier than what we can imagine. The key idea is to stay true to ourselves and think out of the box in order to succeed.

Obviously, the CFP has engaged us in a peacemaking **life-long** journey. We now know that individuals like us make up part of the long chain of the system, and if with commitment we manage to break free from it, there goes the chain - it is broken. As a huge step forward, we have stopped making use of the word "them", but instead, we now use the word "us", looking forward to a future where people in our country will live united, as they are supposed to do, and with no physical symbols of division, like the green line. Besides, there is nothing else there which separates us.

I would like to end with a comment given by a CFP 2012 teenager regarding the importance of this peacemaking effort: "We come here with one wish. We wish to be the wind of change which will blow away the hatred and discrimination that is profound in our country, and give way to hope, love and peace."

Ariadne, DC CFP teen

BE PART OF BUILDING PEACE IN THE WORLD...

Host families and volunteers are being recruited for the July 2013 program. Please contact the Coordinator in your area if you are interested:

Jeanie Cook, Atlanta, Georgia
jeaniec@cyprusfriendship.org

Cassie Cleverly, New Hampshire,
cassiec@cyprusfriendship.org

Jack Bradley, Portland, Oregon
jackb@cyprusfriendship.org

Tom McCarthy, Maryland
tomm@cyprusfriendship.org

Amanda and Mike Messinger, Northern Virginia
mikem@cyprusfriendship.org

If you would like to volunteer beyond hosting, or if you would like to bring CFP to your area, please contact Cassie Cleverly at
cassiec@cyprusfriendship.org



Board of Directors and US Embassy officials surrounded by Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking Cypriots at graduation

The Cyprus Friendship Program Board of Directors is an international all-volunteer group of dedicated professionals without any political or financial agenda. We are grateful for their efforts to support the CFP goals of peace-building and leadership training for today's Cypriot youth.

Nicos Anastasiou, Larnaca, Cyprus

Mehmet Betil, Washington, DC & Istanbul, Turkey

Mary Bull, Peterborough, New Hampshire, USA

Cassie Cleverly, Dublin, New Hampshire, USA (Exec Dir.)

Nick Germanacos, San Francisco, CA, USA & Crete, Greece

Sarper Ince, Nicosia, Cyprus

George Lordos, Nicosia, Cyprus

Manthos Mavrommatis, Nicosia, Cyprus

John McKinney, Omagh, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland

Warren Muir, Arlington, Virginia, USA, (Chair)

Erdil Nami, Nicosia, Cyprus

Margo Oge, McLean, VA, USA

Linda Ziglar, Potomac, Maryland, USA



A 501(C)(3) nonprofit, CFP brings together teenagers from the Greek-speaking Cypriot and Turkish-speaking Cypriot communities together to promote peaceful interaction and

understanding between the two groups. CFP is a year-long peace building and leadership training program in Cyprus, with a four week cultural exchange component in the United States in the summer. By developing cross-cultural friendships, the teens build mutual respect for each other, breaking down the historical stereotypes and mistrust that exist. Upon return to Cyprus, the teens are in a position to share the message with family and friends of their own communities that Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking Cypriots can live together peacefully. Indeed, many of the students who have participated in the program are doing just that – working together for peace. **Your support can help us to continue this vital work. Please consider donating today!**

Your tax-deductible contribution will go toward the leadership training, peace building activities, airfare and insurance for Greek-speaking-Turkish-speaking pairs of teens to come to the US in July seeking to pursue friendships with a future leader from the "other side". Each teen needs \$3500 to participate; youth and the average Cypriot family contributes \$1200. Donations make up the difference.

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