



## *Perspectives*

by Warren Muir, Chairman and Founder of Cyprus Friendship Program

**T**his week the world is mourning the death of the remarkable peacemaker Nelson Mandela. Most of the memorial tributes have focused on his visionary leadership in bringing about a peaceful end to apartheid in South Africa. This transition was truly extraordinary.

However, his influence has gone far beyond his native country. For example, one of his many accomplishments was to found “The Elders,” a small group of senior, internationally-recognized leaders, whose mission is to promote peace around the world. Recent peace efforts by The Elders have included Cyprus and have featured four of the 2009 CFP teens. (See [www.theelders.org/cyprus](http://www.theelders.org/cyprus) .)

Perhaps Nelson Mandela’s greatest contribution has been his influence on ordinary citizens. As former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan argues in the [Financial Times](#), the most important lesson of Nelson Mandela's life is that each of us, not just visionary leaders, must play a role building just, equitable societies—and each of us can make a difference.

**T**he Winter 2013 Cyprus Friendship Program newsletter, which most of you have received and which is also available at [www.cyprusfriendship.org](http://www.cyprusfriendship.org), describes some of the growing activities of CFP in its fifth year. We have come a long way in a short time. Seeing the strong bonds of friendship between the teens and the emotions of their proud family members makes clear the immediate impacts of our efforts. I would encourage anyone who hasn’t attended a graduation celebration in the past to try to do so in the future. They are traditionally held in October over the U.S. Columbus Day holiday weekend to minimize work disruption for Americans wishing to attend.

We will soon start getting insights into some of the longer-term impacts of the program as the teen participants from the first couple of years of the program start to return to Cyprus after completing their university degrees and/or military service. In 2009 and 2010, CFP operated as a pilot-program involving 19 pairs, so the numbers returning to Cyprus to start their careers and to form new families will be small at first. However, they represent the initial seeds of a new generation for peace on the island and more will be joining them in the coming years.

Thanks for being a part of the CFP family. Together we are making for a brighter future in Cyprus.

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This series of messages is intended to keep the Cyprus Friendship Program family around the world better informed about the activities of the program, to provide perspectives on its impacts, and to offer some reflections on its background and context. It is intended supplement and not substitute for the semi-annual newsletter and other communications by the program.

Please share these messages with others whom you think might be interested in them. A compilation of the messages are archived on the CFP website ([www.cyprusfriendship.org](http://www.cyprusfriendship.org).)