

Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area

452 Wallace Rd.Schenectady, NY 12304

(518) 374-0637

grsjohnson@aol.com

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Gert Johnson

Interfaith Youth Storytelling Event April 30th

Schenectady, NY, 2006 The Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area presents a program of faith-related stories told by young people. The program will be hosted Sunday, April 30th at 1:30 PM, by The United Methodist Women of SUMC at the Shenendehowa United Methodist Church, 971 Route 146, Clifton Park. The community is invited to attend; children in attendance need to be old enough to sit quietly for stories.

The program is part of the Story Circle's Children at the Well project, which has won the 2006 Brimstone Award. This Award, given annually by the National Storytelling Network, headquartered in Jonesboro TN, focuses on the transformational properties of storytelling, and aims to increase understanding of the ways storytelling can promote change in individuals and communities.

The storytellers hail from the Notre Dame - Bishop Gibbons School, the An Nur Islamic School, the Hindu Temple Society of the Capital District and the Community Coalition for Jewish Education. Of the thirteen students, five are Jewish and from area synagogues. These are Kit Collins, daughter of Madelyn and Henry Collins (of Congregation Berith

Shalom, Troy); Nate Hoffmann, son of Melissa Putterman Hoffmann and Gary Hoffmann, and Ilyssa Simsek, daughter of Shari Hoffman and Glenn Simsek (of B’Nai Shalom Reform Congregation, Albany); Ben Russell, son of Linda and Jeff Russell, and Adah Hetko, daughter of Paula Weiss and Joe Hetko (of Congregation Beth Shalom, Clifton Park.)

The story that Kit will tell is “The Magic Spoon” from The Jar of Fools: Eight Hannukah Stories from Chelm by Eric A. Kimmel. Nate will tell “Hovering above the Pit” from Chasidic Tales of the Holocaust by Jaffa Eliach. Ilyssa’s story is “Yonkel’s Visit to Warsaw” from Jewish Read-Aloud Stories. Ben will tell “The Parakeet Named Dreidel” from Stories for Children by Isaac Bashevis Singer. Adah will relate a story of Serah, versions of which can be found in Jerusalem of Gold, retold by Howard Schwartz, and But God Remembered by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso.

The young people have each chosen their own stories, and have worked to adapt them for the telling. They have been meeting with storycoaches Mary Murphy and Marni Gillard since February to learn about storytelling and to prepare for the performance.

A vegetarian pot-luck will be held after the performance. Those wishing to attend the meal are asked to bring a dish containing no meat, poultry or fish. There will be an informal story-sharing for all afterwards.

The Interfaith Story Circle has been meeting for twelve years to share stories and storytelling resources. Their goal in this new effort is to value and nourish the gifts of the next generation and to give them the opportunity to demonstrate the transforming and healing power of story to family, friends and the broader community. As Br. Muhammad Kabir, Principal of the An Nur Islamic School, writes;

Storytelling is a way for people to find common connections. Who can think of a better way to transform the future than by building bridges within the next generation?

For more information on the April 30th performance of the Children at the Well, or the Interfaith Story, Circle please contact Gert Johnson at 374-0637 or GRSJohnson@aol.com.

#