03 - 11 August
Placerville Camp
Rapid City, South Dakota

2019

Paha Sapa
[Black Hills]
Our Mission

Satyagraha Institute works to promote the understanding and practice of satyagraha as a way of life and a method for social change.

Our Vision

The Satyagraha Institute promotes the uplift of all beings by cultivating leadership in the pursuit of truth and nonviolence.
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In August 2019, we converged once again in the Black Hills for our annual Satyagraha Institute program. Our cohort of around 20 included a wide range of ages and backgrounds, reason for attending, and a collective deep interest in learning more about how to engage in this world from a position of nonviolence. In visits to Bear Butte, Pathways Spiritual Sanctuary, and Sheridan Lake, we shared stories, and at Placerville Camp we shared lessons from Gandhi, from years of working with trees, and from the act of birth itself. Collectively, I think we came away stronger. The truth is, in this era we are bombarded with chaos; the program this year enabled us to step back and deepen our understanding of and commitment to nonviolence in a violent world.

By the end of the program this year participants were equipped with a new community and new ways of engaging more deeply in their work.

For the 2020 program, we envision focusing on recruitment for the full program on youth - college students and others who might find a cohort of others committed to nonviolence helpful in navigating the unique landscape facing the next generation. Secondly, we are considering to invite attendees from the previous five programs to participate in the final three days of the 2020 program. The primary objective will be to learn from each other, share how we have grown and developed in our understanding and practice of nonviolence, and to discuss the future of the Institute in the United States as we look forward into the next decade.

"The truth is, in this era we are bombarded with chaos; the program this year was a place to step back and deepen our understanding of and commitment to nonviolence in a violent world."

Sabrina King
Director of Campaigns, ACLU of WY, ND, SD
Paha Sapa Co-Coordinator
Participants Suzanna Waters Hardin and Jess Fahlsing Hike Bear Butte
Participants

This year there were 18 participants, representing 9 states in the U.S. (Alabama, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, Maryland, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Wyoming), 4 countries (USA, Mexico, Colombia and India) and 4 indigenous nations (Lakota, Dakota, Sicangu Titunwan and Yucatec Mayan).

Audrey Wicks
Nurse Consultant – Pennsylvania

Ava Torres
Student / Yoga Instructor – Iowa

Carol Ebel
Retired – South Dakota

Clark Hanjian
Buddhist Chaplain – Massachusetts

Coy Yonce
CTO – South Dakota

Darlene Pipeboy
Dakota Elder – Lake Traverse Reservation

Denise Breton
Executive Director of Living Justice Press – Minnesota

Edward Valandra
Community for the Advancement of Native Studies – Minnesota

Jess Fahlsing
Board member of Wyoming Equality – Wyoming

Jonathan Burns
Communications Consultant – South Dakota

Katie Lautar
Executive Director, Baltimore Green Space – Maryland

Laura Ramnarace
Mediator / Author – New Mexico

M.P. Mathai
Professor at Gujarat Vidyapith – India

Marvin Kammerer
Rancher and Activist – South Dakota

Michael Joseph
Peacebuilder – Colombia

Suzanna Waters Hardin
Doula, Student and Mother – South Dakota

T. Marie King
Activist, Workshop Leader and Political Organizer – Alabama

Yazmín Novelo
Mayan Musician and Activist – Mexico
Dr. M.P. Mathai has taught participants about Gandhi’s philosophy at every program we’ve offered since 2015. He is a Professor at Gujarat Vidyapith, the university founded by Gandhi in Ahmedabad, India. A well-known speaker in the East and the West, he recently spoke at the signing of a peace pledge between some 400 members of rival gangs in Monterrey, Mexico.
Having had an amazing experience at the 2018 Satyagraha Institute I was afraid that the 2019 Institute could possibly be a letdown. But it turned out to be the opposite. In a word, it was wonderful. I am amazed by the quality and breadth of experience of the Institute's participants and resource people.

It was a balm to my soul to gather with such caring and committed nonviolent activists from all over the United States, Latin America and India.

Michael Joseph has worked for peace, justice and human rights in the country of Colombia for the past twelve years. He most recently coordinated the Cafepaz Peace Studies Center based at the Baptist University and Seminary of Cali.

Michael Joseph
Peacebuilder
Faculty
We had our first wedding this August of Satyagraha Institute participants. Yazmín Novello and Michael Joseph met during the 2018 program in the Black Hills. They didn’t have any serious conversations with each other till the last day of the program. Soon we saw them together periodically on Facebook posts and then came an announcement they were a couple.

Before joining the program again in 2019, they had separate marriage ceremonies with Yazmin's family in Mexico and Michael's family in Tennessee. The third was with the Institute family at Camp Placerville. The ceremony took place at 5:30 AM in a meadow, across the creek and up the hill, an area they made especially sacred through symbol and ritual. Although most of the gathering were unaware of the wedding at sun rise, their one year anniversary, everyone celebrated that evening with a wedding cake and dancing.

Yazmin and Michael will make their home in Mexico, with plans for the future that will be shaped by their commitments to nonviolence and peace making.

Our second SI wedding took place a little later in September in Nigeria, with Abadoni Joy and Victor Mathias. Congratulations and good wishes to both couples.
Donors

Satyagraha Institute is fortunate to have the support of the following individuals.

Sustainers

$2500 – 4999

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$1000 – 2499

Carl & Brenda Kline
Patricia Fishback
South Park United Church of Christ
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Allegra of Brookings
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Biggi Unger-Brogden
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Chris Klug
Dan & Michele Kemp
Dan & Patricia Galt
Daria Meshenuk
David Hansen
David Hartsough
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Paul Wolf
Philip Baker Sr.
Phyllis & Jihong Cole-Dai
Richard & M.J. Benton Lee
Susan & Jim Thompson
Tami Hanson
Tom Unzicker

Staff

Abhay Mistry
IT Strategist / Designer - South Dakota

Carl Kline
Coordinator - South Dakota

Kate Irick
Paha Sapa Program Co-Coordinator - California

Marlyes Blumhard
Kitchen Assistant - Minnesota

Melinda Williams
Cook / Kitchen Manager - South Dakota

Sabrina King
Paha Sapa Program Co-Coordinator - Wyoming

Lois Andersen
Treasurer - South Dakota
Partners

Elders & Advisors

Betty Abah
Nigeria

Fernando Ferrara
Mexico

Andrea Novotney
USA

Clare Hanrahan
USA

MP Mathai
India

Darlene Pipeboy
Lake Traverse Reservation

Clark Hanjian
USA

Chris Ehidiamen
Nigeria

Laura Brenneman
USA

Erika Tritle
USA/Israel
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Peace & Conflict Studies Coordinator, SDSU

John Paul Lederach
Professor, Kroc Institute

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Staff Director, Dakota Rural Action

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Patricia Fishback

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Allegra of Brookings
South Mountain Company

Brookings UCC
South Park UCC

SD Conference UCC
Professor Edward Valandra is Sicangu Titunwan/Oceti Sakowin Oyate and was raised in his homeland, the Great Sioux Reservation. He is the founder of the Community for the Advancement of Native Studies (CANS), an organization that promotes the application of research and study for all aspects of liberation and sovereignty with respect to Native Country and his research focus is on the national revitalization of the Oceti Sakowin Oyate, the disciplinary development of Native Studies, and the development and use of community-based participatory research in Native communities.
When asked to write about my experience I struggled to find the words that fully encompass what the time with the Satyagraha community has meant to me and my work. How could I communicate to you the way it feels to stand on the holy ground of the Black Hills and receive the wisdom of elders and peers working to increase the possibilities for all of us during frightening times? How do I explain what the words and presence of love, truth, and healing have done for me? I would need more time and more words and perhaps a river. But what I can tell you is that I feel fortified, that my doubts are quieter, that I can think of the land and each of the teachers and participants when standing in a landscape that will force one to wonder if love is real.

Katie Lautar
Executive Director, Baltimore Green Space
Participant

“I feel fortified, that my doubts are quieter, that I can think of the land and each of the teachers and participants when standing in a landscape that will force one to wonder if love is real.”

I am blessed to work with neighborhood leaders to protect the green spaces of Baltimore which neighbors care for and/or create. I get to amplify the voices that remind our struggling city that there is beauty and nature here and that it matters to all of us. We work to flip the assumption that urban forests and gardens are traumatic landscapes and demonstrate that they are actually sacred ground to be protected. And thanks to the spiritual centering and teachings of the community of care at Satyagraha, I return fortified and renewed in strength, courage, and conviction. Thank you for supporting this, and us, and the world.
Coordinating Committee

This globally represented committee meets virtually once per month to discuss updates and make executive decisions that impact all facets of the Institute. All members are past participants.
This has changed my life. I am so full of hope. I am a birth worker and am closely tied to the unfolding of life; peaceful transitions into this world positively impact parents and children. The absence of fear allows space for peace to rule in the most powerful ways. The Satyagraha Institute was a truly pivotal moment of revelation about nonviolence as a way of life and is an extension of my existing belief about birth and parenting.

The connections with others who are like minded, have a similar passion for nature, kindness, peace, joy and want to promote social, and environmental advocacy, is a beautiful example of how the world can be. I have a renewed hope for the future, and tools to help me actively pursue peace.

"The Satyagraha Institute was a truly pivotal moment of revelation about nonviolence as a way of life and is an extension of my existing belief about birth and parenting."

Suzanna Hardin
Doula, Student and Mother
Participant

Bear Butte / SW Hardin
Finances

Satyagraha Institute is an independent organization. We are grateful to our fiscal sponsor, Dakota Rural Action, a nonprofit corporation who shares our vision and enables us to receive charitable contributions.
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