

Mother Meyerhof, protector, peacemaker & champion of the children of the earth



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Hunt Henion

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September 11, 2001: The Twin Towers had just been demolished and everyone was rushing to get away from the destruction and chaos -- almost everyone, anyway.

Nina Meyerhof was in New York for the UN International Day of Peace, meeting with the Secretary General, Jane Goodall, and other peace activists, when the order to evacuate was given. However, according to Dot Maver, PhD, president of the National Peace Academy, instead of going north, home to Vermont and safety, Mother Meyerhof (or

Mama Nina, as the kids call her) headed to Ground Zero!

Dr. Maver told me during our interview that “Nina went immediately to the leaders of the fire brigade and policemen saying, ‘*You have to give us a space for the children who are already impacted.*’ She was given a corner of the armory closest to Ground Zero and proceeded to create a healing center for the children in the danger area. This center was visited and supported by Mayor Giuliani, Michael Jackson, Raffi, and the Clintons. Following that, President George Bush *honored Meyerhof at the White House with a National Service recognition award for her work with the children.*”

Nina told me of her experience with **Raffi** calming down the children with his music during the **1992 Earth Summit in Rio**, and said he probably did the same with them before they were led to her station in the armory during the September 11th tragedy. Relaying a story of how he had delighted the 250 or so street children in Rio with his music, she said, “He was like a Pied Piper.”

Once the children and youth were all gathered in the armory on September 11th, she organized and lead them in an impromptu workshop on Children's Rights with **James Olmas**, who also donated food for each participant.

The workshop was patterned after a similar Children Rights training she'd recently delivered at Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch with his *Heal the World Foundation*.

Nina Meyerhof is not only the president and founder of **Children of the Earth**. She is a champion of the children everywhere! Her lifetime of work advocating for youth has won her the Citizen's Department of Peace Award, the International Educators Award, and **The Mother Theresa Award**. Mother Meyerhof is a living legend as the worlds foremost advocate for youth and youth-based programs!

She holds Master of Arts degrees in both Special Education and in Counseling, as well as a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Psychology and a doctorate in Educational Policy, Research, and Administration from the University of Massachusetts, where she developed a self-esteem model that has been used in many schools such as the Windham Central Supervisory Schools in VT.

Her work in self-esteem has led to several theories about what it takes to develop a peaceful individual. Dr. Meyerhof explains that “We recognize all human beings as individuals and that we are all part of the family of human kind. Therefore, developing one's spirituality is the key.”

Ron Miller, author and activist in the field of holistic education says that “Meyerhof energizes people – not just kids, but whole communities. She is completely convinced that empowering young people to become aware of what is goin on in the world and address it by becoming part of a local network, then knitting that into a global network, is the way to heal the world. She has a total commitment to her vision.”

That vision is expressed in a book she co-authored called **Conscious Education: The Bridge to Freedom**. It is also described in the Guiding Principles of The Children of the Earth's Handbook that everyone accepts so religiously in the the 30+ countries that COE serves. Those guiding principles are:

- Trust your intuition
- Demonstrate dignity and respect
- Communicate with honesty and clarity
- Assume the good intentions of others
- Support shared leadership
- Celebrate diversity
- Be inspired to take risks
- Allow decisions to emerge and embrace the process
- Understand the whole is greater than the parts
- Strive to support sustainability both personally and environmentally
- Honor agreements and take ownership for outcomes.

Growing up in Vermont and basing her Children of the Earth organization there, she finally won the recognition of the State on April 8, 2010. After no less that nine “whereas” statements, *“the Senate of the State of Vermont honored Dr. Nina Lynn Meyerhof for her international leadership as an educator and peace advocate...”*

Dr. Meyerhof is also the founder of the Vermont Peace Academy, a division of the National Peace Academy, a non-profit organization that promotes learning peace practices and taking leadership in teaching them to others through cross-cultural communication.

Meyerhof's, United Nations-recognized, Children of the Earth (COE) organization also inspires youth to contribute to the peace process through this same means. COE is creating a network of leaders committed building a better future for all generations, and it has been providing training and community networking opportunities for youth for over 25 years. They sponsor educational workshops, conferences, and national and international presentations promoting the building of multicultural understandings and greater global cooperation.

COE is also recognized as a world leader in education for ethical consciousness and interfaith unity. Nina has said that **“spirituality is key in transcending political, dogmatic, and religious boundaries.** ... (We need to) concentrate on what makes us the same instead of what makes us different; only then can we deal with the challenges ahead. It is imperative that we spend our time and resources...to promote respectful communities, common ethics, sustainable practices, peace and economic opportunities.”

However, Mother Meyerhof's actions are even more passionate than her words. In just the last twelve months, she has spearheaded the following projects:

- Kazakhstan: She took six youth to the Noosphere conference to help her make a presentation on Global Ethics. Reverend Patrick McCollum, the recipient of the last year's Mahatma Gandhi award and internationally recognized spiritual leader in the Pagan/Earth-Based religions, who happens to be on the Board of the Children of the Earth, accompanied and assisted them with this project.
- Thailand: Meyerhof took a group of spiritual elders to the Dhammakya Meditation Center for a five day united inter-faith retreat, and later participated in a celebration attended by 250,000 Buddhists.
- Indonesia: She accompanied Lama Gangchen as a private guest to discuss better inter-faith communication.
- Nepal: Mama Nina took 25 youth and adults to Nepal for group trainings, workshops and cultural exchange with host families.
- Burlington, VT: Dr. Meyerhof presented at the National Peace Institute on the subject of peace and the efforts and projects of the Children of the Earth.

- Romania: Meyerhof and her Children of the Earth hosted a large gathering of youth to discuss the Gypsy/Romanian issue as well as self esteem issues.
- France: Mother Meyerhof presented on spirituality and the strategy and projects of the Children of the Earth to a large gathering.
- Switzerland: She organized youth to help present info on the COE youth program at the youth gathering and Universal Peace Celebration.
- Jordan: Dr. Meyerhof organized a workshop for the Common Bond MidEast Dialogue, leading Jordanian, Lebanese, Palestinian and Israeli Jews through her process of transcending conflict.
- UN International Day of Peace : She organized the youth trip to attend the NY event (as she does every year).
- Vermont: She organized the ongoing Teddy Bear Project for child victims of natural tragedies, and so far has sent teddy bears and bear virtual bear hugs from children in the US to the children of Haiti, Rwanda, and to the US child victims of Katrina.
- California: Dr. Meyerhof was one of the 40 leaders who participated in the Evolutionary Leaders Meeting, discussing cutting edge consciousness movement programs.
- New York: Nina was one of 14 chosen to participate in the Wisdom Thinkers Network, where they discussed "Building a New Narrative."

Nina Meyerhof is not only an indispensable mentor for tomorrow's leaders. As you can see from the list above, she also performs an invaluable function with today's political and spiritual leaders. Buddhists, Christians, Jews, pagans...all find a common meeting ground with Mother Meyerhof's wise assistance.

Her heart-felt, humanity-centered priorities transcend all political and religious boundaries, making communication and understanding possible. This understanding in turn, combined with her increasing global network of COE centers and devoted advocates, is actually making Peace on Earth possible. We can only pray that she gets the support she needs -- for the

sake of all of the children of the earth.

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