

For Immediate Release

May 5, 2011

LOCAL POETS JOIN TOGETHER TO SUPPORT JAPAN

A few days after Japan's March 11 earthquake and tsunami, local writer Kate Aver Avraham called her friend Linda Holiday, Chief Instructor at Aikido of Santa Cruz, to share their concern over the profound devastation. Both women have deep cultural and personal ties to Japan. The two friends wanted to do something to help the Japanese people, and began to envision a poetry benefit to raise funds for recovery efforts. They contacted their mutual friend Carolyn Flynn, a local poet and writing teacher, and soon the benefit, **"One World, Many Voices for Japan: Poetry, Music and Prayer" Friday, May 20, 2011 at the First Congregational Church** had been born.

"So much of my life has been linked with the people and land of Japan," says Linda Holiday, who lived for three years in the remote, sacred Kumano region of Japan in the early 1970's, as a young Aikido student. As a result of her residence and traditional apprenticeship in the coastal town of Shingu, in 1974 the cities of Santa Cruz and Shingu became "Sister Cities"--a mutually supportive relationship that has thrived for 37 years. Holiday goes back to Shingu every year, bringing her students, but had to cancel her April trip due to the the turmoil in Japan, and ongoing concerns about radiation.

"The scale of the devastation is so hard to comprehend," says Holiday. "Working on this fundraiser is deeply healing. Our goal is that the evening itself, in addition to raising substantial funds, will raise the spirits of all in attendance, and send healing prayers to the people of Japan."

Kate Aver Avraham, winner of the 2011 In Celebration of the Muse Chapbook Prize, became involved with Japan in the 1960's when her family hosted a Japanese AFS exchange student, Mariko. Kate traveled to Japan two years later, where Mariko's family adopted her as their "American daughter." She lived with them and traveled throughout Japan. The families exchanged visits over the years, most recently in 2004 when Kate returned for the wedding of Mariko's daughter.

"The essence of the Japanese is a pureness of spirit and humble generosity," says Avraham. "The fundraiser will evoke the deep and prayerful mystical side of Japan."

100% of the funds raised will provide disaster relief to Natori City, once a thriving city of 70,000 people in the north of Japan, which was utterly devastated by the March 11 tsunami. Natori is a Sister City, within Japan, to Shingu. Avraham knew that Shingu was giving aid directly to the people of Natori, and had requested help. **One World, Many Voices for Japan** will send funds, through this long-standing Sister City connection, to directly aid the recovery of Natori City.

The evening benefit will include poets Len Anderson, Kate Aver Avraham, Dane Cervine, Carolyn Brigit Flynn, Lea Haratani, Peggy Heinrich, Linda Holiday and Joan Zimmerman. Music will be offered by Emily Bording, Coleen Douglas, and Cheryl Anderson & the Cabrillo Youth Chorus. Ikuyo Conant will present Japanese classical dance, and the Santa Cruz Zen Center will offer Buddhist prayer chants.

This event is co-sponsored by the Santa Cruz Sister Cities Committee, Aikido of Santa Cruz, Aikido of Monterey, First Congregational Church, Santa Cruz Sentinel, Watsonville Taiko, Santa Cruz Zen Center, Poetry Santa Cruz, and the Japanese Cultural Fair. On the web: www.facebook.com/CityofSantaCruzSisterCities

EVENT INFORMATION

One World, Many Voices for Japan,

Friday, May 20, 2011, 7:00 pm

First Congregational Church

900 High Street, Santa Cruz

On the web: www.facebook.com/CityofSantaCruzSisterCities

A fundraising and healing event featuring poetry, bamboo flute music, Japanese classical dance and community song

100% of the proceeds will benefit Natori City, Japan

Suggested donation is \$20 - \$30

Featuring poets Len Anderson, Kate Aver Avraham, Dane Cervine, Carolyn Brigit Flynn, Lea Haratani, Peggy Heinrich, Linda Holiday and Joan Zimmerman

Music by Emily Bording, Coleen Douglas and Cheryl Anderson & the Cabrillo Youth Chorus

Japanese classical dance by Ikuyo Conant

Japanese prayer chants by the Santa Cruz Zen Center