

## Las Vegas's Peace Cup Soccer Tournament Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr.

Leslie Rigney  
January 16, 2017



The Inaugural USA Jr. Peace Cup Soccer Tournament Las Vegas A Jr. Peace Cup Soccer Tournament was held on January 16, 2017 at the Las Vegas SportsPark. The tournament included 6 divisions of soccer with 'Champions' and 'Finalists' awarded for each division.

The event came about initially out of Ward 5 Chamber of Commerce President, Katherine Duncan's passion to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day in a meaningful way. In connecting with the LVSounders Soccer Club, the idea of a Peace Cup tournament came up. Realizing that the Peace Cup was a cherished project of the late Dr. Sun Myung Moon, partnership expanded to the Universal Peace Federation. LVSounders Coach, Ricky Towers, Jr. organized teams to participate. There were 32 teams participating, and 384 players, ages 8 to 16, boys and girls. Each team played 3 times in the competition. Ricky Towers, Sr. oversaw many details of the event. Thanks to the financial support of FEEF, the Family Education and Empowerment Foundation and Mimi Morse, the Universal Peace Federation of Las Vegas, Century 21 Real estate, Caesar's Entertainment, Primerica, Project Neon, Berkshire Hathaway, Creative International LLC, Dem Noles Bois, The Painters Union, Ward 5 resources, and many other supporters and vendors, the event took place. Medals were awarded to players: 'Champions' and 'Finalists', with beautiful trophies awarded to 'Champion' and 'Finalist' Teams. A display trophy was also created where the winning teams would be listed and the trophy displayed in a public place.



Ricky Towers, Sr. was emcee for the event. We started with Mr. Towers' singing the National Anthem and Leslie Rigney encouraging "Let the Games Begin". There were several soccer fields, including an indoor soccer field. Families stayed much of the day in the cool weather, watching their children play.

Rosemary Flores with "Waking Up As One Nation" organized entertainment indoors which included Morelense Cultural Group, Entertainer Little J. Gambino, Rose Love, Sparkle SBFUG Project, Stephanie

Thompson, Thumpasaurus, There were vendor tables and raffles for Lake Mead Cruises for those who visited each table. Several participants were so happy to receive the cruise, which was donated. Food vendors provided food all day. Georgette Dante gave free face painting, sponsored by FEEF.



Before the finalist game of the senior division, a young man Nixon Lopez sang the National Anthem and Rev. Ken Doo, our local pastor spoke how important soccer was to our founder, who founded the original Peace Cup Soccer in Korea. Rev. Ken Doo said that soccer is a healthy activity for young people and that healthy individuals help to create a healthy nation. He especially spoke of the True Parents' interest in soccer, that the games bring people together in a team who unite together to win, and that this unity can be a foundation for bringing peace in the community and in our world. Indeed, each team in our tournament had a variety of races, and nationalities, with boys and girls all playing together.

Three Ambassadors for Peace were appointed, who exemplified Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's vision for peace: Minister Stretch Sanders, a young African-American Minister who serves the Homeless, Naweed Yusufzai, Muslim UNLV Student who stepped out in courage to show that love is more prominent in peoples' hearts than hatred, and Tygel Pinto, a Navajo young man who brings peace through his music and love for the creation.

Our vision is to expand the soccer to inner city communities and bring this healthy sport to all the young people in Las Vegas, breaking down barriers of ethnic, socioeconomic differences and offering character building, peace education, as well. The Tower father and son are deeply committed to work with us on this venture! And especially thanks to Katherine Duncan for her passion to bring the Jr. Peace Cup to Las Vegas!

Respectfully Submitted,

Leslie Rigney with James Rigney  
Executive Director, Universal Peace federation, Las Vegas