



NICKI KOHL • TH Media

Hannah Eby (from left), of Dubuque, Stacia McDermott, of Dubuque, and Sara Alfayoumi, a Loras College student, join

other demonstrators during a peace rally Monday along University Avenue in front of the University of Dubuque.

Pleading for peace, faith-to-faith

Children of Abraham organize rally in Dubuque to spotlight religious tolerance.

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More than 200 people spoke with their presence Monday in Dubuque, rallying against religious intolerance.

Organized by the Children of Abraham, a local interfaith group comprised of Christians, Jews and Muslims, the peace rally at the University of Dubuque provided visual evidence of the beliefs of those gathered.

"Recognize and clearly go on record by saying that violence in the name of religion is the savagery that it is," said University of Dubuque professor Alan Garfield, one of the event organizers.

"Violence against Jews, Muslims and minorities is diametrically opposed to basic human rights."

Participants marched to UD from Loras College, Clarke University and Wartburg Seminary, many holding signs. The group then stood on University Avenue in front of Blades Hall. Many motorists honked and waved.

Later, six speakers spoke of personal experiences and decried acts of violence against Christians, Jews and Muslims throughout the world, including the United States.

"We must be a thunder of love against the howling winds of hatred."

TH see for yourself
Video of John Eby and Alan Garfield discussing the peace rally, **THonline.com**

said John Eby. "We must unite in the spirit of love and have an appreciation of diversity of all sorts."

Meryem Ouahbi, of the Tri-state Islamic Center, described herself as a "very average practicing Muslim," and added, "I am one of you. Let's stand together against injustice."

She said there has never been a "radical" Islam, noting the religion is one of peace.

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PEACE: Garfield says religions are about love, not hate

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Garfield said in his speech that those in attendance "should never forget especially that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are religions of love, not hate."

"All of us — Jews, Christians and Muslims, brothers and sisters in Abraham's family — must choose another way," he said. "This rally, with your presence here, is a testament to that other way, a neighborly way."

Beth McCaw, of UD Theological Seminary, said all three religions practice a love that is "hospitality, a true welcome into one's home."

The turnout impressed Donald Wood, a member of both Temple Beth El in Dubuque and the Children of Abraham.

"The weather was perfect," he said. "All the speakers were great and spoke from the heart and were adamant in their messages. Peace is a necessity to survive."

Dr. Tauseef Khan marched from Clarke. "I feel proud to be in Dubuque and see this kind of spirit and collective effort," he said. "It's important to us, our children, our town and community to stand together against these things."

Mohamed Mustafa



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People join hands in prayer during a peace rally Monday in Blades Chapel at the University of Dubuque.

attended the event with his wife, Erin, and children Adam, Maria and Hanneena.

"We came in the idea

that all religions have to come together in peace," Mustafa said.

Added his wife, "I just want to support Dubuque

"We came in the idea that all religions have to come together in peace."

MOHAMED MUSTAFA, WHO ATTENDED THE RALLY WITH HIS WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN

and my community. I care about my community. I was born here and my kids as well. We all have a right to worship. I want that to continue and to dress in a hijab and all of the religious rights that are afforded Muslims. I support everyone's right to believe what they want to believe."