

Promoting a culture of peace in the OAS Adjacency Zone

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Belizean and Guatemalan school children promoted a "Culture of Peace" as they sang, danced and acted in an all day variety show concert and art exhibition hosted by the Organization of American States in the Adjacency Zone at the Western border post between Belize and Guatemala last Friday, October 16.

Costumed as conchs, crabs, fishes and other creatures of the sea they told the story of the barrier reef and its importance to the lives and economy of Belize and its neighbors. Other players, Brer Anansi and Brer Tiger, with a supporting cast



Ambassador Raul Lago, the OAS Secretary General's representative for Belize-Guatemala Affairs, encouraged both border communities to celebrate a culture of peace.

of butterflies and forest flowers told the story of living in harmony with Mother Nature, stressing the importance of protecting our Mother Earth.

Young musicians from the Benque House of Culture and its counterpart in Melchor de Mencos

performed the song "Promoting Culture and Peace" as composed and arranged by music teacher Haroldo Pivaró.

peace also inspired many young painters in art courses at both institutes, and their paintings were displayed as part of the cultural presentation.

The event had begun



Young musicians from the Benque House of Culture performed the song "Promoting Culture and Peace" as composed and arranged by music teacher Haroldo Pivaró

with the students of Mount Carmel Primary School playing the Belize national anthem and the Banda Melchorensis Emmanuel playing the

Guatemalan national anthem. The importance of promoting a culture of harmony, brotherhood and peace was emphasized by

OAS director of the Adjacency Zone Miguel Angel Trinidad in meetings with Benque Viejo Mayor Nicholas Ruiz and
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Memorandum of Understanding signed between Minister of Health - Belize and



Brer Tiger stressed the importance of protecting Mother Earth



Children costumed as butterflies

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Mayor Ricardo Avila of Melchor de Mencos in preparation for the concert..

Mayor Nicholas Ruiz expressed the hope that the show would become an annual event, symbolizing the constant interaction between the two border communities, for it provides an opportunity to examine ourselves as nations and as people, to find that we have much more in common than that which divides us. We celebrate our common qualities as revealed by closer examination: bloodlines, brotherhood, a common language and a similar culture which unite us as people.

Ruiz called on the young artists to inspire us with their music, paintings and drama to achieve that heaven on earth we are called to build, rather than the discord which often mars Belize-Guatemala relations, so that the enthusiasm for this culture of peace might continue to grow each year. For his part, Mayor Ricardo Avila echoed these sentiments when he addressed the gathering.

Ambassador Raul Lago, the OAS Secretary General's representative for Belize-Guatemala Affairs, encouraged both border communities and by extension, the people of Belize

and Guatemala, to continue to celebrate the bonds with unite us in a culture of peace, to overcome the differences which might otherwise divide us.

German Ambassador to Guatemala, H.E Peter Linder took the opportunity to present musical instruments, recorders and guitars, to Nalleli Trujillo for the Benque Viejo House of Culture and to Elser Fuentes for the Melchor Institute of Culture. Linder and Trinidad also presented diplomas to art teacher Edwin Pivara Toledo, and music teacher Haroldo Taylor, who had promoted the Culture of Peace with six-month courses in painting and music

for the students of the Benque and Melchor Houses of Culture. Art students Sulmi Xiomara Esquivel and Oscar Obando thanked Ambassador Linder by presenting him with a painting symbolizing unity and peace.

After a break for lunch and refreshments, the variety show continued into the evening, including a performance by the Ballet Folklorico from the Instituto Politecnico of Chetumal, Quintana Roo.

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