

Jews and Muslims bond in hopes of peace

By KELLY LANDY
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In an effort to bond Jews and Muslims, a peace festival was held for the two groups to learn their similarities and differences.

Nearly 300 people attended the JAM & All Festival for Peace event at the Darul Uloom Islamic Institute in Pembroke Pines on July 21.

"Through the JAM organization, we're hoping to branch out all over the country and all over the world so people can go to a place and get their questions answered, and get help if they need because ...like the Beatles' said, 'All we need is love,'" said Antoinette Ali, JAM volunteer.

JAM, or Jews and Muslims and all, was created in response to Sept. 11.

"I believe that fear of the unknown causes more grief and stress, and once we get to know each other we will be able to eradicate hate and develop a better understanding and dialogue between us," said Mohammad Javed Qureshi, committee and peace activist. "When we analyze the situation, we cannot find or identify the source of hate.

"After all, we are all children of Abraham and we must do everything in our power to live in harmony."

Co-founders of JAM, Moshe David Kamrat, community activist and businessman in international telecommunications, and Maulana Shafayat Mohamed, ameer of Darul Uloom Islamic Institute gave the

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Pompano Beach

opening remarks for the event.

The festival offered people an opportunity to meet others of different backgrounds. There were speakers and activities for all ages, including a bounce house, face painting, games, a dunking tank, basketball, a fire truck, and exotic kosher, Halaal and vegetarian

food from around the world.

Sharon Hordes from Ramat Shalom in Plantation opened with a song that included "Shalom," the Hebrew word for hello, goodbye and peace, and "Salaam," a song for peace in Arabic while Robert "Bob" Offer, a spiritual activist, author and international businessman, played a native American flute.

The main guest speakers of the event include Dr. Patricia Wickman, a scholar, lecturer and author who spoke about intercultural issues and Vincent Mathias from Patrick Air Force Base in Cocoa Beach who spoke about getting rid of stereotypes.

In addition, Salma Mohamed sang an Islamic song in-between the

speakers.

Ihana and Jack Miller of Boca Raton attended the event. They founded and were active at Temple Samu-El Or Olam in Miami for many years.

"I think it's wonderful," Ihana Miller said. "I think it will have a positive effect on local, national and hopefully international relations.

"On a very local level ... within the Muslim community and the Jewish community ... there are people like-minded in every community that can work together to help promote peace in our community and in our nation and around the world."

Ken and Sandy Fagen from Pompano Beach also attended. They are members of Temple

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Adath Or.

"I hope that other Jewish people and Muslim

people can see there's no reason that we cannot be together on this planet, and strive for the same goals of peace and joy and love and prosperity together," Sandy Fagen said. "We're all one people and we can actually celebrate our differences rather than use them to separate us."

Kamruz Hosein from

Pembroke Pines, a member of Darul Uloom, joined the celebration.

"I feel we got to take the blow by the horn and show people that we can exist in peace," he said. "It just demonstrated the fact that it is possible, it is practical and it's a beautiful experience.

"I hope from this we will have national recognition from this effort, and have some reaching effects and have impact on what's going on over in the Middle East. Hopeful-

ly, we will be able to work towards a peaceful and harmonious resolution."

Finally, Antoinette Ali, an 18-year-old South Broward High School student from Hollywood thought the event was great. Ali volunteers and does artwork for the JAM organization as well.

"I'm just sick and tired of all the bloodshed because everybody can see that we all have the same red blood and pink flesh, and we can just come together as one race," she

said. "I really believe, I'm related to you, you're related to me and we just need to get a big family reunion to get to know each other again.

"I hope that we can all sit down someday and have the biggest dinner in the world and join hands and pray in peace."

Visit www.JAMforpeace.org for upcoming events.

The Web site is currently under-construction and should be working by the fall.