



For Immediate Release
November 17, 2008

YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington inspires peace building in all ages during YMCA World Peace Week

Hamilton, Ontario – Each of us has the potential to be a peace builder in our daily life as emphasized by this year’s YMCA World Peace Week theme, “the power of peace...the power of people.” The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington, together with YMCAs across Canada, is inspiring and empowering kids, youth and adults to make a positive impact especially during this week which runs from November 15-22, 2008.

To celebrate this week, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington is proud to welcome Mariatu Kamara, UNICEF Special Representative of Children in Armed Conflict, with award-winning author, Susan McClelland, to the Annual YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast.

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| What: | YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast The Peace Medal is awarded annually to individuals or groups, both children and adults, who model how each of us can contribute to peace. Without any special means or resources, these individuals have created positive social change either locally or further afield. |
| When: | Wednesday, November 19, 2008 7:30 am – 9:30 am |
| Where: | Hamilton Convention Centre |
| Who: | Master of Ceremonies, Connie Smith Keynote Speakers, Mariatu Kamara with Susan McClelland At the young age of 12, while living in a small rural village in Sierra Leone, Mariatu Kamara was attacked and tortured by armed rebel soldiers – many no older than children. They cut off both her hands. Stumbling through the countryside, Mariatu miraculously survived. The sweet taste of mango, her first food after the attack, affirmed her desire to live, but the challenge of clutching the fruit in her bloodied arms reinforced the grim new reality that stood before her. With no parents or living adult for support, she lived in a refugee camp and turned to begging in the streets of Freetown. Now 22 years old, Mariatu lives in Toronto, and is a UNICEF Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflicts. As told to her by Mariatu, award winning journalist and recipient of the 2005 Amnesty International media Award, Susan McClelland has written the heartbreaking true story of the brutal attack, its aftermath and Mariatu’s eventual arrival in Toronto where she pulled the broken pieces of her life together. <i>The Bite of the Mango</i> , is Susan’s first book. |
| Why: | Medal to an individual or group who, without any special resources, demonstrate a commitment to peace through special contributions made within their community or overseas. |
| Visuals: | 8:25 am – Awarding of the YMCA Peace Medals by Connie Smith, CHCH News and Jane Allison, The Hamilton Spectator 8:45 am – Keynote Speakers Address |

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“In today’s globalized world, we are all connected to each other more than we may realize,” says Jim Commerford, President & CEO, at the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington. “Through our consumption and production we are connected on a daily basis by a huge number of environmental and social issues, which call us together to create a more sustainable world. By instilling a sense of global responsibility, compassion, and justice in our friends, families and colleagues, we can inspire each other to make the world a better place,” says Mr. Commerford.

As a values-based charity dedicated to health promotion and healthy living, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington serves 107,000 people of all backgrounds, abilities and stages of life. The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington’s mission is to help people achieve personal growth in spirit, mind and body through participation and service to the community.

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