

BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK

BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK CELEBRATES THE HISTORY OF MOTHER'S DAY

Long before Hallmark, balloons and flowers, Mother's Day in the U.S. was a day of anti-war activism, begun after the Civil War by women who had lost their sons. In 1870, Julia Ward Howe, American writer, lecturer, and reformer, wrote the words of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and introduced the idea of Mother's Day. She proclaimed an anti-war Mother's day message that is a timeless reminder of the profound loss and pain war creates for all mothers. (See the back of this flier for Howe's anti-war message.)

Another Mother for Peace was founded in 1967 by a group of women strongly opposed to the war in Vietnam. They created a non-partisan organization "to educate women to take an active role in eliminating war as a means of solving disputes between nations, people and ideologies." Their slogan was, "War is not healthy for children and other living things."

Another Mother for Peace issued an appeal to conscience to everyone who would stand for the principle that war must be eliminated. Their first action was to make a Mother's Day card to send to members of Congress and the President.

The card read:

For my Mother's Day gift this year,

I don't want candy or flowers.

I want an end to killing.

We who have given life

must be dedicated to preserving it.

Please talk peace.

Two months later 200,000 cards had been sent!

Bay Area Women in Black revives and expands our historic tradition by standing as allies with the mothers of Israel and Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and the United States, who are losing their children to violence and war.

We realize that we live in a world that does not prioritize or protect our children's well-being, and that this will not change without each of us finding the courage and commitment to speak out on their behalf. By mobilizing our potentially transformative political strength, we can ensure the health, education, and safety of every child, not just a privileged few.

We encourage each of you to become active in your communities and take back the power of activist mothering.

MOTHER'S DAY PROCLAMATION

Julia Ward Howe

27 May 1819 to 17 October 1910.

Arise, then, women of this day!

Arise all women who have hearts, whether your baptism be that of water or of fears!

Say firmly: "We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies,

"Our husbands shall not come to us reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.

"Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy, and patience.

"We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says,
"Disarm, Disarm!"

The sword of murder is not the balance of justice! Blood does not wipe out dishonor nor violence indicate possession.

As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel.

Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.

Let them then solemnly take counsel with each other as the means whereby the great human family can live in peace,

And each bearing after her own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God.

BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK wears black as a symbol of sorrow for all victims of war and as a way to join in spirit with the more than 150 other Women in Black groups around the world who protest against militarism, violence, oppression, anti-Semitism, and racism, wherever it occurs.

We oppose unquestioned patriotic, militaristic, and fundamentalist leadership in all countries around the globe, including our own, and are committed to nonviolent resistance against tyranny. We believe all people must have the right to security, home, education and freedom.

BAY AREA WOMEN IN BLACK creates public rituals that express the desire for a world free of war and violence. Through music, art, poetry, spoken word and silent protest, we provide a place for people to gather and communicate the depth of their concern about our shared world situation. We also hold silent vigils through city streets, creating a visible presence as women in protest and mourning for all the lives that have been lost in religious, political and nationalistic struggles around the world.

To join our work, please contact us through our website.