



Contact
Steve Stone
Director of Memphis
Friendship Foundation
stevestonesr@gmail.com

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Memphis Friendship Foundation brings cross-cultural Laugh in Peace Comedy Tour to Crosstown Concourse to help “build world peace one joke at a time”

MEMPHIS – A good joke can defuse a tense situation, and an outstretched arm can put new neighbors on a path to friendship. Is it possible something so simple is the secret to world peace?

Mid-South residents can explore that question during a unique presentation next year at the Crosstown Concourse theater, 1350 Concourse Avenue, Memphis. The Laugh in Peace Comedy Tour will take the stage Wednesday, January 8, 2020 to benefit the Memphis Friendship Foundation. Tickets will be on sale for \$27 each and only 425 seats available. They are two groups that share an inspiring philosophy – that conversation and laughter between people of different backgrounds can build a lasting legacy of friendship and peace.

The Memphis Friendship Foundation highlights the diversity of Memphis's faith community as well as the city's bighearted Southern hospitality. The Foundation has its roots in the bond between Heartsong Church, a United Methodist congregation; and the Memphis Islamic Center, a mosque. When the Heartsong family learned land across from their church had been purchased as Memphis Islamic Center's future home, they placed signs warmly welcoming their new neighbors. The Memphis Islamic Center community responded with gratitude, and the two groups embarked on the journey of getting to know each other through fellowship and service. Despite their different faiths, they found more to unite them than set them apart and began to look for ways to do more good.

Inspired by overwhelming positive feedback locally, nationally and even internationally, Memphis Islamic Center and Heartsong founded the Memphis Friendship Foundation. Today, the congregations continue to set an example of how simple gestures of friendship build bridges, resulting in a lasting legacy of public service and outreach.

Now, the Foundation has joined with a likeminded group, the Laugh in Peace Comedy Tour, to entertain and enlighten Mid-South residents. Laugh in Peace is a cross-cultural show featuring stand-up comedians Gibran Saleem, Rabbi Bob Alper and Reverend Susan Sparks. Saleem is Muslim, Alper is Jewish and Sparks is Baptist. Together, they are a hilarious “odd trio” that uses the power of laughter to show audiences where their worlds overlap, helping them move past differences and find common ground. The Laugh in Peace players do not shy away from the religious stereotypes they live with – they face them head-on. They believe humor creates a “safe space” for difficult conversations, guiding us to productive, positive dialog. As Saleem, Alper and Sparks like to say, they're trying to “build world peace one joke at a time.”

Now, Mid-South residents can experience their unique blend of comedy and empowerment, all while supporting the Memphis Friendship Foundation. The Laugh in Peace's January 8, 2020 show will raise money to help the Foundation expand its service to the community. Reserve your seat soon, limited seats available. For more information, visit <https://www.memphisfriendshipfoundation.org/>.