



# Bringing the World Together!

THE *NEW* UP WITH PEOPLE NEWSLETTER

CATCH UP WITH THE CAST: [WWW.UPWITHPEOPLE.ORG](http://WWW.UPWITHPEOPLE.ORG)

*"Meeting the needs of communities, countries and the world by building bridges of understanding for world peace."*

## Where We Are Going; The Best Of Who We Are

*In September 2007, for the first time in the history of Up with People, Cast Manager Martin Brennan and Cast B were invited to break the holy Ramadan fast with the Muslim community in Las Vegas, Nevada. The visit exemplifies the relevance and impact of Up with People in today's world.*

**By Lindsey Wielgos**  
*Development Coordinator*

Last Fall, Cast B visited the land of neon lights and gambling dice: Las Vegas, Nevada. Cast Manager Martin Brennan, left Cast C in Europe to provide support for Cast B's Las Vegas visit.

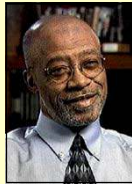


Martin Brennan

One week prior to the cast's arrival in Las Vegas, Brennan sat down with Imam Muja-hid Ramadan, a local leader in the Muslim community, to explore the possibilities of Up with People reaching out to the Muslim community and to Muslim youth.

Brennan explained to Imam Ramadan Up with People's history and the organization's mission of "building bridges of understanding as a foundation of world peace." Brennan shared the view that in today's world, there exists a need to

build bridges of understanding between the Muslim world and the non-Muslim world.



Dr. Aslam Abdullah

During the course of their meeting, Imam Ramadan insisted Brennan meet Dr. Aslam Abdullah, the Director of the Islamic Society of Nevada's Mosque, Jama Masjid, and a noted Islamic scholar and author.

Later that week, Brennan accompanied Imam Ramadan to the Jama Masjid Mosque to speak with Dr. Abdullah. After nearly an hour of conversation, the evening's call to prayer brought a close to their meeting. Brennan joined the two men in breaking the fast, participating in prayers, and eating the evening meal together.

### Common Ground

As they ate, Dr. Abdullah called over leaders from the local Egyptian, Pakistani, and Afghan communities. He asked Brennan to explain the Up with People program to these leaders. Brennan explained Up with People's international casts travel the world to work with local communities and create cultural understanding. Dr. Abdullah suggested that the cast visit the mosque later that week to break the fast with members of the community.

"I knew immediately that the invitation Dr. Abdullah extended was exactly the

reason that Up with People exists," Brennan said.

Dr. Abdullah has often built bridges of understanding between Christians and Muslims in the United States as vice-chair of the American Muslim Council (AMC). He would like to encourage Muslims in Las Vegas to intensify their outreach program and become proactive in talking to non-Muslims. "Our response has to be educated and peaceful," he said. He would like non-Muslims to come to the mosque to learn firsthand what the faith is like.

The elders of the Pakistan community were going to be responsible for preparing an evening meal for the coming Thursday, so Dr. Abdullah asked their permission to invite the cast of seventy-five to join. The Pakistani leaders nodded as Dr. Abdullah spoke. Of course, the students would be welcome. Upon hearing this, Dr. Abdullah invited the cast to join his community.

### Open Arms

On Thursday evening, Dr. Abdullah and Imam Ramadan welcomed Cast B to the largest mosque in Las Vegas. The entire cast quietly filed into the mosque and took off their shoes before they moved into main prayer hall.

For the first 45 minutes, Dr. Abdullah  
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## Ticket Sale for February 9 Denver Premiere; Temple Buell Theatre

*One-hundred percent of the ticket sales will be donated to the Metro Denver Habitat for Humanity on this historic night.*

**Up with People.**  
Presents the  
Up with People  
Premiere Show  
February 9, 2008  
Temple Buell Theatre

**COLDWELL BANKER**  
RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Benefiting Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver. Tickets available now at [www.upwithpeople.org/denver](http://www.upwithpeople.org/denver)

Please come to experience the beat, the music, and the energy of Cast A 2008 on **February 9th, at 7:30 p.m.** Up with People partners with a local charity in every city we visit throughout the world to engage in community service. We look forward to seeing you there!

Please visit [www.ticketwest.com](http://www.ticketwest.com) for tickets; prices range from \$18 to \$36.

## Denver Office Welcomes New Staff Members and Intern



**Faith L. Walls** just completed her student semester on the road with Cast C 2007 and has now accepted an Admissions Department Internship position in the Denver

office. Faith comes to Up with People with an undergraduate degree in Psychology, and a Masters in Educational Administration and Policy from Howard University in Washington D.C. Faith will be working in the Admissions office through mid-February. Up with People is very fortunate to have Faith as a part of our team.



**Amanda Egan** has previous work experience with The Nixon Center in Washington, D.C., where she served as an executive program assistant to the President. This position has

greatly prepared her to be the Assistant to the President at Up with People. Amanda graduated magna cum laude with undergraduate degrees in International Relations and Russian Studies from Colgate University in New York. She speaks nearly-fluent Russian and has traveled extensively, including living abroad in Russia.



**Liz Hansen** has rejoined Up with People Denver staff as an Admissions Intern. Liz was an intern this past summer and will now be back for another semester. Liz will be out in the

field representing Up with People at local college fairs in the metro area. Liz attended Bear Creek H.S. and is a former Leader's Challenge participant. Liz is currently a senior at the University of Colorado in Boulder and she is pursuing a degree in Communications with an emphasis in Economics.

**Interested in volunteering at the Denver Up with People headquarters?** *There are many opportunities for volunteers at the Up with People office in Denver depending on the season and your interests and talents. Please contact Development Coordinator Lindsey Wielgos, [lwielgos@upwithpeople.org](mailto:lwielgos@upwithpeople.org), for more information on how you or someone you know can contribute!*

## \$250 Flight Voucher Awarded by Admissions

*Project Prospect is a six-month prospective student recommendation contest hosted by the Up with People Admissions Department. All alumni are eligible to participate.*

**By Joel Mauney**  
*Associate Director of Admissions*

Up with People is proud to announce Olga Mireya de la Vega Moreno (Cast A 2006) from Tepic, Nayarit, Mexico as the winner of the Fall 2007 Project Prospect Admissions Challenge.



Olga Mireya de la Vega Moreno

Olga turned in a list to the Denver office complete with contact information for more than 70 student prospects. We are happy to report that two individuals from Olga's list have already been interviewed and accepted to the program.

Olga said, "It was easy to find people who were interested in Up with People." She went to her local Rotary Club, to which her mother belongs, and spoke about Up with People to many of the young exchange students. Olga talked to young people who visited her family's jewelry store. She talked to

young folks at her university, then emailed and phoned them to tell them more about Up with People.

She simply asked family members, friends of friends, family member's friends, and even her former host family in France to identify prospects who might be interested in traveling, performing, and doing community service around the world.

Up with People cannot thank Olga enough for her efforts and support. We would like to congratulate her with a \$250 voucher from United Airlines. Olga, enjoy the friendly skies!

**Please read next month's newsletter for more information on future contests!**



*To participate, send a list of prospective names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses to [info@upwithpeople.org](mailto:info@upwithpeople.org), subject line: Project*

*Prospect. The winner will be determined by who has the most names on the list!*

## The Golden Passport

The Golden Passport is a \$1,000 scholarship available to alumni to award to young Up with People prospects. The gift is awarded by Up with People, in the alumni's name, to the recommended future student(s).



**Who:** Prospective students  
**What:** \$1,000 scholarship  
**When:** To be awarded to student upon acceptance

The purpose of the Golden Passport is to empower our alumni to have input in the future makeup of our casts by seeking, finding and awarding a young student the chance of a lifetime to travel in Up with People.

Alumni can award as many Golden Passport awards as they wish providing students are accepted by Up with People. **Please remember that each individual student can be awarded only one Golden Passport scholarship.** Thank you to all alumni who have given a young person an incredible opportunity!

# Bringing the World Together!

and Imam Ramadan answered questions from the cast. Then the cast left the main prayer hall and the women were led to the social hall. The men walked outside to a tent set up in the parking lot, and the entire cast fanned out to sit among members of the mosque community. At sundown, 6:33 p.m., everyone broke the fast of the day.

After a few moments of eating, the cast members reentered the mosque for prayer. As guests, the young men were invited to the front of the congregation, and the women stood behind the last row of men—the same way Muslims prayed behind the Prophet Muhammad in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

## When in Rome...

Several of the male cast members asked the Muslim men for permission to pray beside them, and soon nearly two thirds of Cast B's men stood among the Muslim men in prayer.

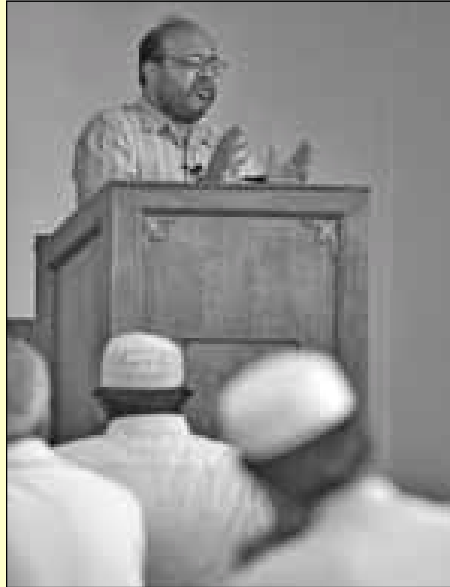
When the prayers began, a harmonious swell filled the room; a crescendo of chanting voices. As the prayer leader sang his undulations, the students sat up very straight, admiring the enveloping sounds.

As the worshippers knelt, so did the students. They placed their foreheads on the ground, paused, rocked back onto their knees, stood up, and repeated. Often, while standing, the worshippers whispered their prayers quietly to themselves, and in the acoustics of the room, every whisper was amplified, as if someone was breathing Arabic prayers into the cast members' ears.

"To see the men of the cast stand shoulder to shoulder with men of the mosque in such a respectful manner,"

said Brennan, "was really touching."

When prayers had ended, Dr. Abdullah introduced the cast to the community and explained that their



Dr. Aslam Abdullah helps to diffuse social tensions amongst Muslims and other faiths as the Director of the Islamic Society of Nevada.

purpose was to understand the Islamic faith. Cast members waited patiently for the congregation members to join them at the tables outside.

## Breaking the Ice

Moments later laughter could be heard throughout the tent. As Brennan walked around to each of the tables, he overheard the men sharing stories about misunderstandings and feeling threatened as a minority. The students leaned closer, engaged in the conversations as questions were traded across the table.

"After awhile, the men and women

began to mingle, and the first thing I saw were twenty young women standing in a group, laughing, and gently tying head scarves on one another," Brennan said.

For many of the cast members, it was the first time they had ever had the chance to sit down and talk with a Muslim.

## Beyond the Mosque

The Jama Masjid Mosque strives to do much more than serve the Muslim community through religious services. The mosque leaders provide education to all sections of the community in order to lead life in the current multi-cultural society as ideal citizens. According to the Jama Masjid website, it is important to these leaders to not only preserve the Muslim community identity, but to help diffusing social tensions amongst Muslims and other faiths, and to "protect Muslim youth from extremism and such trends that result in social instability."

At the end of the night, Dr. Abdullah gave thanks to the cast for joining his community at the mosque that evening. He said that he was truly taken back by the sincerity of the visit, by the intelligent questions, and the respect that the cast demonstrated. Many cast members commented on how the evening broke stereotypes they had held about Muslim and corrected false impressions they had about Islam.

The evening proved a great success for all involved. Bridges were built and both communities left the evening changed. Up with People now has a standing invitation in Las Vegas to visit Dr. Abdullah and the community at Jama Masjid. "This experience is the best of what Up with People is about," said Brennan.

*Comments? Email [lwielgos@upwithpeople.org](mailto:lwielgos@upwithpeople.org)*



## Cultivate the Next Generation of Up with People

*Are you planning to attend an Up with People show this spring?*

If so, consider bringing a prospective student to the Backstage Tour before the Up with People show! This is your chance to change a young person's life...

Remember, someone once told YOU about Up with People.

[www.upwithpeople.org](http://www.upwithpeople.org)

## Social Responsibility, Service Guides New Model into 21<sup>st</sup> Century

*In each city, the cast is immersed in local culture while living with host families. During the week stay, they engage in more than 500 hours of collective service with community partner organizations. This type of servant leadership fosters a belief in each participant that he or she can make a difference in society.*

**By Jessica Trabert**  
*North America Tour Coordinator*

Social responsibility and a dedication to community service are two of the core elements of the Up with People program.

Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

### A Lasting Impact

The idea of volunteerism first began when people had to band together to overcome obstacles and ensure survival. The problems that our world faces are no less

important than they were centuries ago. The bottom line is that we need each other.

Cast A 2008 is made up of 96 individuals from 26 countries. During their six-month journey with Up with People, participants will have the opportunity to be involved in service projects in each city that they visit. Service projects give participants an opportunity to leave a lasting impact on the communities that they visit. It is a chance to grow, both as a group and as individuals.

The cast recently participated in its first day of community service in Denver, during the third week of January. For some, this was their first volunteer experience.



Two members of Cast A 2008 of work on a Denver Habitat for Humanity construction site. All ticket sale proceeds from the February 9th Denver Premiere show will be donated to Metro Denver Habitat for Humanity.

cast members helped to sort and pack food at The Food Bank of the Rockies. This food bank, located in Denver, provides food supplies to more than 1,000 hunger-relief programs across Colorado and Wyoming.

The rest of the cast worked at a

**“After a full day’s work, the consensus was that no matter how small the task —everyone can make a difference.”**

Habitat for Humanity construction site alongside new home owners. Their efforts will enable a family to achieve their dream of owning their own home. After a full day’s work, the consensus was that no matter how small the task —everyone can make a difference.

*If you have a community partnership suggestion, email [jtrabert@upwithpeople.org](mailto:jtrabert@upwithpeople.org)*



### Margaret Was Right

The cast worked with three local organizations that were all in need of a few more helping hands in one program area or another. For instance, one cast group worked at the Denver African Community Center, a resettlement program for refugees, by helping them to move to a new office facility.

Another group of