

# DIVERSITY Memphis

promoting tolerance among all people

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Edited By Tara Johnson

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## Freeland Youth Camp



- This years Freeland Youth Camp took place July 6-12. The camp sponsored by Diversity Memphis, brings high school students of varying ethnic and religious backgrounds together for one week.

## Zach Sakaan Speaks His Mind by Tara Johnson



Whether or not Zach Sakaan would be a delegate at Freeland Youth Camp was hardly in question, explained Sakaan, 15 year-old sophomore of White Station High School. Zach spoke honestly about his preconceptions and his expectations of Freeland to

an audience of Diversity Memphis Founders, Board Members as well as FedEx employees and Vice Presidents at the 2008 Diversity Memphis Walks Kick-off Luncheon July 24.

As Zach's three older siblings are Freeland Alumni and his mother, Cindy Sakaan, a Freeland Advisor as well as Diversity Memphis Board Member, Zach was in many ways reared for the role of Freeland delegate.

Zach, half- Syrian/ half-caucasian, Muslim and attends the First Unitarian Church of the River, is entrenched in the ideals of diversity and multi-culturalism. Zach viewed Freeland as "another thing my mom was making me do where I would simply be told things I already knew while everyone around me burst out

in tears", he later added, " I could tell how wrong I was."

Upon making friends with Shahar and Ron, two Israeli scouts who have come to meet the Jewish community here in the U.S., Zach was able to see that 'people are people'. He explained, whether Jewish from Israel, or Muslim from Memphis, "They can still talk about the same issues and laugh at the same things".

"Not only did I learn about other people and cultures, but I also learned a lot about myself", said Zach who said he once thought himself the 'picture of diversity'. "Freeland was able to reveal, unlike anything I had ever experienced, my own arrogance and cynicism."

Americans becoming more and more divided and the world seemingly getting worse and worse have disheartened Zach Sakaan. He thanked Diversity Memphis for making Freeland Youth Camp possible. Zach Sakaan credits Freeland for a renewed sense of hope, a "hope that someday people will be able to look past each others' differences and accept each other for who they are".

# Freeland '08

## Camp photos

Thirty –three delegates of varying ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds gathered for one week in Moscow for Freeland Youth Camp '08. Freeland creates a unique experience for teenagers to learn about their own culture while honoring others. By listening and being open to one another, Freeland delegates learn to create bridges across racial and ethnic divides. The teens build friendships and bonds to last their life span. By reaching the next generation, Diversity Memphis believes in a future of multi-cultural appreciation and religious tolerance.



(above) MIFA joined with Diversity Memphis this year and was acted on their support of diversity by sponsoring a group of delegates. These “MIFA Cool Kids” are eight in all : Ijeoma Ezemba, Siegnethra Gardner, Reginal Johnson Jr., Carolyn McLemore, Jessica Patterson,



(above)Dalton Burns and Ritaje Fitzpatrick



(left) A group of Freelanders show their respect toward their new Israeli friends. Left to right: Carolyn Head, Shahar Cohen, Jessica Patterson, Ameenah Ameen , Ron Glezer, and Claudius Lester.



## Diversity Memphis Walks

Diversity Memphis will take to the streets of downtown Memphis Sunday, September 21 at 1:30p.m. with its message of tolerance and community. Diversity Memphis Walks is an exciting way to experience an array of cultural traditions presented by local residents while joining together to raise much needed funds for Diversity Memphis' efforts.

Registered walkers raise pledges by asking friends, family, co-workers and neighbors to sponsor them as they walk for Diversity Memphis. The pledges along with corporate sponsorships and matching gifts allows kids to participate in leadership programs and funds scholarships for Free-



land Youth Camp. Diversity Memphis would not be as successful without the hard work done by Diversity Memphis Walkers and volunteers.

We are expecting a record turnout this year and look forward to walking beside you! Check out the Diversity Memphis Walks page for more information!

# DIVERSITY Memphis Walks

Diversity Memphis and FedEx Express joined together for the Diversity Memphis Walks kick-off luncheon July 24th at the Doubletree Hotel. Over 95 participants came to exchanged ideas as Jim Foreman, Diversity Memphis Executive Director, and Mike Pigors, FedEx Express Senior Vice President, AGFS, shared of the Diversity Memphis mission and cast a vision for this year's Diversity Memphis Walks.

Diversity Memphis thanks all of the sponsors that are making the Walk toward a better community a reality.

This year's sponsors are: FedEx, Cricket Communications, Memphis Sound.com, Smoothie King (mid-town), Memphis Redbirds, Aramark, Champion Awards, the Memphis Flyer and Eyewitness News.

# DIVERSITY Memphis Awards

## Diversity Memphis Awards of Excellence

The nominations for the 2008 2nd Annual Diversity Memphis Awards of Excellence are in for review. Diversity Memphis has made it a priority to recognize and give honor to those businesses and corporations within the community who are setting an example of excellence in multi-cultural hiring as well as excellence in community involvement. The award winners will be announced on the Diversity Memphis website soon so please be watching! The Award Recipients will be contacted, a reception will be held, media will be contacted and all will be invited to join us in honoring these five outstanding businesses in the near future. Keep a look out for further information!



Diversity Memphis  
Helping Make Memphis Better for Everyone!