



When Peace Islands Institute's honorary president, Turkish Muslim scholar Fethullah Gulen, foresaw the importance of interfaith dialog among communities as well as among nations and initiated it in Turkey, it was 1994. It was the same year that he said 'there is no return from democracy' when Muslims were questioned regarding their opinions about democracy. He was successful in his efforts to direct people's attention, time, energy and money into education and dialog. While Gulen, and those inspired by him worked hard for implementing seeds of dialog, understanding and respect in Turkey; the catastrophic attacks of 9/11 took place in the US. The tragic events of 9/11 shifted the focus of interfaith dialog efforts from bringing people together in Turkey to repairing, at the community level, the damaged state of interfaith, interethnic, and inter-cultural relations in the US and in the global arena.

Gulen after 9/11 said, "A true Muslim cannot be a terrorist and a terrorist cannot be a Muslim. A religion that professes, "He who unjustly kills one man kills the whole of humanity," cannot condone senseless killing of thousands. For this reason, no one—and certainly no Muslims - can approve of any terrorist activity. This latest terrorist activity, which is a most bloody and condemnable one, is far more than an attack on the United States of America - it is an assault against world peace as well as universal democratic, humanistic, and religious values. The world should be assured that, although there may always be some who exploit any religion for their interests, Islam does not approve of terrorism in any form". Gulen went further on to declare in an interview in 2004, "Bin Laden is among the persons in this world that I hate most as he has defaced the beautiful face of Islam. He has produced a dirty image. Even if we work on repairing the terrible damage he has caused with all our power, it will take years. We shall speak on every platform everywhere. We shall write books. We shall declare, "This is not Islam". Bin Laden replaced Islamic logic with his own desires and wishes and lives as a monster. The men around him are like that as well. If there are people who think like that, they are also locked into monstrosity. We equivocally condemn their perspective".

Feeling the pain of victims and families of 9/11 and the pain caused as the result of distorted image of Islam, Peace Islands Institute volunteers participated in several 9/11 commemoration programs in New Jersey.

## Dumont High School



The morning of 9/11, 2011 people gathered at the Dumont High School to honor the victims of 9/11. Mr. Oguzhan Senturk, representing Peace Islands Institute, delivered a speech. He reminded us “Love is the essence of life”. He asked people to get to know others so that we could realize once again that there is only one world and we are really on the same boat...

Feyza Teke, a youth leader of the Peace Islands Institute read the translation of the opening chapter of the Qur’an.

Two direct witnesses of the tragedy shared those moments with the audience in tears. Organized under the leadership of Rev. Elaine Wing of United Methodist Church, more than 400 people attended this prayer service and commemoration program.

[Click here](#) to read Mr. Senturk's full speech.



## Allwood Community Church in Clifton



The program started off with Rev. Cari Keith welcoming all who had attended the commemoration. Her welcome was followed by the Dedication of International Peace Pole, which has the prayer 'May peace prevail on earth' written in many languages around it. It was read in some 10 different languages by the people living in Clifton. Mrs. Nuray Sahin, a member of the Peace Islands Institute Women Association read this prayer in Turkish.







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[Click here](#) for a full list of 9/11 Commemoration events in the area.