

Interfaith Garden Sprouts New Life at Windermere House in Seattle, Washington

Scott Dolfay
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A beloved West Coast property of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and his wife Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founders of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA and affectionately known as True Parents, has a new interfaith garden and beautified grounds after a summerlong makeover by volunteers.

A small team of local Unificationists spruced up Windermere, a charming turn-of-the-century estate in Seattle that was acquired by Rev. Moon in 1974.



"We wanted to make the garden interfaith and representative of the cross-cultural unity in the Unification movement," said Scott Dolfay, who organized the property cleanup and redesign. "We put up Tibetan prayer flags and installed a Jewish mezuzah on the right gate post. We also included some elements from

Hinduism and plan to integrate Islam, Sikh, Christianity, Bahai, and other faiths as well."

Donating labor and materials, Dolfay began working alongside fellow laborer Youngsoo Divine in mid May. Months later, visitors are now welcomed into the tranquil space featuring raised soil beds, an assorted vegetable garden, new fencing, cedar posts, and a wooden gate enclosing the peaceful retreat.



"Our previous vegetable garden really needed some tender love," said Dolfay. Donations from community members soon got the project off the ground, also replacing a sewage pump and adding a composting tumbler.

Built in 1907, Windermere house located on the estate is a landmark building ordinarily eligible for significant restoration grants. But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, community members pooled their own funds -- similarly as before when early American and French missionaries raised the initial funds to purchase the property, despite a neighborhood legal attempt to prevent religious use of the building shortly after.

In the 1980s, Japanese missionaries then raised a million dollars and supplied numerous volunteer hours to aid the preservation of Windermere, where Rev. Moon and Dr. Moon occasionally stayed while visiting Seattle through 2005, according to FFWPU-USA Northwest Regional Director Rev. Larry Krishnek.

Later, Windermere house, a Spanish Revival style building not commonly found in the Northwest, attracted more than 2,000 neighbors, organizations, and countless volunteers who celebrated its centennial in 2007.

"The Windermere estate holds a lot of history," said Dolfay. "And the property and house still stand in glory because of international and local community efforts to preserve it."

The Windermere carriage house was lost in a fire in 2007. Dolfay said he will apply for a restoration grant for the property next year.