



## **Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance**

20 Sunnyside Ave, Suite A-268 \_ Mill Valley, CA 94941 \_ 415-381-3372

e-mail: [forgivenessday04@yahoo.com](mailto:forgivenessday04@yahoo.com)

**[www.forgivenessday.org](http://www.forgivenessday.org)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Bob Plath  
415-381-3372

### **8<sup>th</sup> Annual International Forgiveness Day**

Sunday, August 1, 2004

1-5 PM – Free Admission

Falkirk Cultural Center, San Rafael, CA

#### **HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:**

Master of Ceremonies – Michael Pritchard

Awards Ceremonies for Heroes of Forgiveness

*Recipients include:*

Dr. John Gray, Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus

don Miguel Ruiz, The Four Agreements

Champions of Forgiveness Awards

Live Music - Melissa Phillippe - Kali's Angels - East Bay Gospel Choir

Winners of the Youth Forgiveness Essay Contest

### **Men Are From Mars,**

### **But John Gray is a Champion of Forgiveness**

#### ***Forgave the men who killed his Father***

Dr. John Gray, best-selling author of the popular relationship book, Men are from Mars. Women are from Venus is a man who embodies what he preaches. When his father was killed by two ex-convict hitch-hikers in 1985, John endured the devastating event with tremendous grief. Then he decided to use his pain as a challenge to himself. He set out to help those who wronged him. In 1986, he formed a team of teachers and counselors to teach the power of forgiveness to a group of prisoners in San Quentin. It was an experience that brought about release that was overwhelming for the prisoners and for the teachers, including Gray.

#### ***Wins Champion of Forgiveness award***

Since then John Gray has incorporated the message of forgiveness in his work and his books. As a result, he is being honored as a Champion of Forgiveness by the Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance at its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual International Forgiveness Day celebration. The event takes place on Sunday, August 1,

2004 on the grounds of the Falkirk Cultural Center at 1408 Mission Ave. at "E" street in San Rafael, CA. Dr. Gray is being hailed as living example of the forgiveness concept and as a leading proponent of its value to relationships as well as to vital mental health.

### **don Miguel Ruiz of *The Four Agreements* Also Honored as Champion**

Best-selling author, don Miguel Ruiz, who shares the teachings of the Toltec tradition in his books, will also receive the Champion of Forgiveness award for his compelling insights into the power of forgiveness. His books, *The Four Agreements* (1997), a New York Times best seller, *The Mastery of Love* (1999), *The Four Agreements Companion Book* (2000), and *Prayers* (2001), have won acclaim around the world. His most recent book is *The Voice of Knowledge*, coauthored with Janet Mills this year.

### ***Combines wisdom of the Toltecs and western education into powerful tools***

Mr. Ruiz, the son of a curandera (healer) mother and student of a nagual (shaman) grandfather in Mexico, combined his early training in Mexico with a western education as a medical doctor to create a powerful combination that is transforming lives around the world. His books supplement his many training courses which incorporate the act of forgiveness as one of the tools that teach people how to overcome their destructive behaviors and move to higher, more effective levels of consciousness. His work has gained an international following of disciples.

### **Nationally Renowned, Local Talent**

#### **Michael Pritchard is Master of Ceremonies**

MC, Michael Pritchard, is a nationally acclaimed speaker praised by the Wall Street Journal, CNN and Time for his ability to use humor to inspire and educate his audiences on communication skills. He is a big guy with a warm heart who, as one student described him, “truly walks as he talks.” He has been honored with numerous awards including a Doctorate of Humane Letters for a lifetime of work inspiring, motivating and profoundly touching the minds and hearts of thousands of children and people across the country. Other awards include the President’s Volunteer Action Award and the 2002 Marin Community Foundations' Beryl Buck Award for achievement in promoting non-violence.

As a result of his work, Michael Pritchard has been featured on CNN, NBC’s “The Today Show”, “The Tonight Show”, CBS “Sunday Morning” with Charles Kuralt, “Time” magazine and “People” magazine. His seven educational series for PBS and distribution has been seen by millions and focuses on youth guidance in the areas of violence prevention.

## **HEROES OF FORGIVENESS AWARDS**

### **Parents of Brutally Murdered Son Reach Out to Help Prisoners**

#### ***Forgave the man who bludgeoned and stabbed their son***

On September 11, 1997, John and Deborah McDaniel received the shocking news that their 20-year old son, Uriah McDaniel, had been beaten and stabbed to death. A few days later, they learned that the killer was a down-and-out youth with a drug habit and violent tendencies whom their son had befriended and tried to help. John still remembers his son’s natural musical talent. He was able to write songs and play them on the guitar and piano without ever taking a music lesson. John says that Uriah displayed an extraordinary level of kindness and gentleness at a young age. He would sneak homeless people in at night to sleep on the family sofa. He would always buy two slices of pizza. He would eat one and give the other one to a homeless person. So the devastating reality of having one of the people his son helped turn out to be the one who savagely beat and stabbed him to death made it

an even greater tragedy to endure.

John and his wife, Deborah, have chosen not to hang on to the pain and anger of that horror and its damaging effect on their lives. After several months of grief, anger and inner turmoil that almost destroyed their marriage, they wrote and sent a letter of forgiveness to their son's killer. John has since set out on a journey of change. He makes presentations to organizations promoting the need for outreach to prisoners. He conducts a 3-day workshop entitled "Free the Heart a Healing Experience" in prisons for inmates. He does a segment on forgiveness during the workshop and his wife reads their letter to their son's killer. He says, "Man is it ever powerful!" John believes that if you don't forgive you cannot heal. He feels that forgiving his son's killer literally saved his life.

## **Sadistic Parents Inflict Pain and Contempt, But Child Forgives and Becomes Hero to Many**

### ***Outstanding, award-winning professor and author now Hero of Forgiveness***

Dr. Lois Einhorn, a professor of English at New York State University – Binghamton University, has been selected as a Hero of Forgiveness by the Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance. Dr. Einhorn and her younger sister were severely and sadistically abused by their parents throughout their childhood. Despite the horror inflicted upon her, Lois has not only forgiven her parents but has expanded her reach to help countless others learn how to forgive and find peace within themselves.

She has written several books and received numerous prestigious awards for the power and effectiveness of her extraordinary teaching talents. Her well documented ordeal of pain involving sexual, physical and emotional abuse is the subject of her new book, *Child Abuse and Forgiveness: Would YOU Forgive "Nursery Crimes and Scary Tales"?*

### **Live Music and Entertainment**

The grounds of the Falkirk will be filled with live music on Forgiveness Day. Performers include Melissa Phillippe, a lively and inspirational singer/songwriter with four albums to her credit. She is the featured vocalist on Stephen Halpern's DeJa Blues CD and has performed all over the world. Kali's Angels and the East Bay Church of Religious Science Gospel Choir will also perform.

Youth essay contest winners will be on hand to read their winning pieces on the subject of forgiveness.

### **International Forgiveness Day in 8<sup>th</sup> Year**

Robert W. Plath, a Mill Valley attorney, created *Forgiveness Day* in 1996 to honor the power of forgiveness. His dream is to have the first Sunday in August designated as *International Forgiveness Day*, the first internationally sanctioned holiday. His organization, the Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance, strives to promote awareness of the scientific and spiritual benefits of the forgiveness process. The group pays tribute to people who exemplify the power of forgiveness as Heroes of Forgiveness. It also honors those Champions of Forgiveness who dedicate their work to expanding awareness and knowledge about the benefits of forgiveness.

### **Celebration Spreading Around World**

International Forgiveness Day, which originated in Marin County in a Corte Madera park in 1996, is beginning to pop up in other locales around the world. Last year, it was celebrated in Hawaii, Washington State, Oregon, Ghana, Canada and Nigeria as well as Southern California. The organization now has an International Coordinator, Rev. Noel McGinnis, to continue its efforts to reach the entire world.