

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JANUARY 19, 2016

LOTUS CONTRIBUTES OVER 11,500 STARS TO “ONE MILLION STARS TO END VIOLENCE”

BLOOMINGTON, IN: Launched over Martin Luther King Day Jr Day 2016, Lotus Education & Arts Foundation wrapped up a year-long visual arts project centered around the “One Million Stars to End Violence” project. Through Lotus’s commitment to weave 10,000 stars to contribute to the project, Bloomington is one of only five U.S. cities that is a Star Weave Community for the One Million Stars project.

The final public community star-weaving event took place on Martin Luther King Jr Day at the Mathers Museum. The “Weave-In” was broken down into two sessions during which over a hundred individuals of all ages added 1,118 more stars to Lotus’s star count and helped Lotus surpass its goal with a total of 11,469 stars.

With 176 total Star Weave Communities across the world, One Million Stars has become an international effort led by founder Maryann Talia Pau. After a violent crime that took place near her Melbourne art studio, Pau was inspired by Martin Luther King Junior’s statement: “Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

Pau was in Bloomington during a four-day residency in September for the Lotus World Music & Arts Festival and led several star weaving workshops. At the time of the Festival, Lotus had just over 3,000 stars.

“These beautiful stars are symbols of light, courage and solidarity to end all forms of violence, including violence against women, bullying, and racism,” says Pau. “Every woven star reminds us that we have to MAKE peace and safe spaces and that it doesn’t just happen. Every star is a commitment to resist violence and revenge, to believe in forgiveness and healing.”

Lotus worked with over 70 community partners and 4,000 participants at community events throughout the one-year project. Star weavers as young as six-years old and as far away as Brazil wove stars to contribute to Lotus’s effort. A vast variety of material was used to weave stars, including gift tie ribbon, old maps, junk mail, gift wrap, old Lotus posters, news papers, repurposed cloth from IU Textiles festival installation in 2013, and more. Lotus collected

ribbon remnants trimmed during the star-making process to donate to Materials for the Arts with Monroe County Recycling Center.

"It has been an honor to be part of this global effort with the One Million Stars to End Violence project. The response has been incredible and has truly captivated and involved more people in our community than any other Lotus visual arts project," says Loraine Martin, Lotus Outreach Director and coordinator of Bloomington's One Million Stars project. "This project has taught many valuable lessons to thousands in Bloomington and beyond, that the art of peace begins within each of us. The beauty we can create together with the simple gesture of weaving a star is an act of love and hope for humankind, and a beautiful reminder of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s wisdom to always find strength to love over hate."

The culmination of the One Million Stars to End Violence project will take place in April 2018 at the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia, where the 11,500 stars provided by Lotus will be on display as part of the exhibit of one million stars from around the world. In the interim, over 8000 of the stars woven by the community are on display in City Hall until January 31.

END

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Loraine Martin

Lotus Education & Arts Foundation

Outreach Director

loraine@lotusfest.org

812-336-6659

<http://www.lotusfest.org/stars-launch/>