Connect with Compassion
A World Café Conversation
Old City Council Chambers
Atlanta City Hall
January 28, 2017

Hosted by
Urban Explorers of Atlanta
Compassionate Atlanta
Emory Tibet Partnership
City of Atlanta Department of Sustainability

Background

On February 3, 2014 the City Council of Atlanta unanimously passed a resolution designating Atlanta as a "compassionate city" under the International Campaign for Compassionate Cities. Mayor Kasim Reed approved that resolution on February 12, 2014. All of this was made possible through the efforts of a local organization called, Compassionate Atlanta. While this was a wonderful accomplishment for our city, the truth is that most Atlanta residents (and visitors for that matter) are unaware that this occurred. We would like to change that but we need your help!

Mission

Help Atlanta become known as “The World’s Most Compassionate City.”

“A compassionate city is an uncomfortable city! A city that is uncomfortable when anyone is homeless or hungry. Uncomfortable if every child isn’t loved and given rich opportunities to grow and thrive. Uncomfortable when, as a community, we don’t treat our neighbors as we would wish to be treated.”
~ Karen Armstrong, TED Prize Winner and Founder, Charter for Compassion

Today’s Objectives

1. Create greater awareness about the benefits of cultivating compassion in our personal lives and in our community.

2. Create an environment where we can have a meaningful conversation with like-hearted individuals.

3. Make new friends and establish new collaboration partnerships.

4. Empower and encourage everyone in this room to host their own compassion conversations.

5. Encourage everyone to help Atlanta become known as “The World’s Most Compassionate City.”
Connect with Compassion
A World Café Conversation
Old City Council Chambers
Atlanta City Hall
January 28, 2017

Program

9:00 - 9:10, Welcome & Program Objectives
Steve Saenz, Founder of Urban Explorers of Atlanta

9:10 - 9:35, Building a More Resilient Atlanta: Community Input on Atlanta’s Priorities in the Face of Shocks and Stressors
Yeou-Rong Jih, City of Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Sustainability, Special Projects

9:35 - 10:00, Compassion: Establishing A Shared Understanding
Carol Beck, Assistant Director, Programs at Emory-Tibet Partnership

10:00 - 10:15, How Atlanta Became A Compassionate City
Bob Thompson, Compassionate Atlanta

10:15 - 10:30, World Café: How to Get the Most from Today’s Program
Rob Johnson, Former VP of Community Services at Atlanta Community Food Bank

10:30 - 11:00, Table Conversation #1
- What inspired me to come today?
- What ideas do I have for applying the Charter for Compassion in my life and business?

11:00 - 11:30, Table Conversation #2
- What have I done in the way of community service in the past year?
- What ideas do I have on how to make ATL a more compassionate city?

11:30 - 12:00, Table Conversation #3
- What can I see myself doing to make ATL a more compassionate city in 2017?
- What will I need in the way of resources to accomplish those things?

12:00 - 12:30, Group Conversation
- Table captains share what they recorded at their tables
- All guests are invited to share their feelings and thoughts about the meeting
The Charter for Compassion

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the center of our world and put another there, and to honor the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others—even our enemies—is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women to restore compassion to the center of morality and religion ~ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate ~ to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures ~ to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity ~ to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings—even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous, and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological, and religious boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

Affirming the Charter for Compassion

There is no cost to affirm the Charter. Your signature is a public commitment to the principles expressed in this historic document. But we hope that you will also commit to supporting the work of the Charter for Compassion International by contributing according to your ability: become a member of the Charter for Compassion, work as a volunteer, initiate or join a compassionate community initiative, and/or financially support the work of the Charter.
Compassion Action Plan (sample)

1. Let more people know that Atlanta has been designated as a compassionate city.

2. Sign the Charter for Compassion and encourage your friends to do the same.

3. Encourage any business owners you know to become Charter Partners.

4. Host a series of compassion conversations to create awareness about the benefits of compassion and compassionate action.

5. Empower your friends, family members, co-workers and neighbors to host their own compassion conversations.

6. Encourage everyone you know to take compassionate action. We will lead by example.

7. Encourage any leaders you know in the corporate, education and government sectors to get behind this effort.

8. Encourage business owners and corporate executives to institutionalize compassion-based initiatives within their organizations.

9. Collaborate with other organizations* that are working in this space to optimize effectiveness. These include Compassionate Atlanta, Charter for Compassion International and Emory-Tibet Partnership.

10. Track and celebrate our progress as we begin to move toward our goal of making Atlanta “The World’s Most Compassionate City.”
~ Conversation #1 ~

What inspired me to come today?

________________________________________________________________________________

What ideas do I have for applying the Charter for Compassion in my life? In (at) my place of business?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

~ Conversation #2 ~

What have I done in the way of community service during the past year?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________
What ideas do I have on how to make ATL a more compassionate city?

~ Conversation #3 ~

What can I see myself doing to make ATL a more compassionate city in 2017?

What will I need in the way of resources to accomplish those things?