

## **1.2. The Interfaith Ceremony**

written by David Spence

Interfaith Working Group: David Spence (chair), Deborah Simpson, Marie Noonan, Seis^lom, Joyce Lydiard, Lucia Hogeven, Mavis Jemeleita, Terre Flower and others who consulted with the Group from time to time.

The Interfaith Working Group provided two opportunities to acknowledge the important place of religious traditions and spiritual ways on the agenda for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The first opportunity was the Centre for Spiritual Kinship. It was a private space for people to use for prayer, meditation, stillness, and quiet conversation. It was located in the building on the Summit site. The second opportunity was through an Interfaith Ceremony, held at the Urban Native Indian Education Society's Centre. The purpose of this Ceremony was twofold: one, to bridge spiritual beliefs, values, and practices with social responsibility; and two, to equip participants with hope and to renew their energy to do the work.

When people arrived at the Ceremony they were greeted by a fire burning in the centre of the room and received a gift of a stone. The Ceremony began with an invitation to place the stone around the edge of the fireplace. Then, representatives from Aboriginal Spirituality, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism, Wicca, Zoroastrianism, and Unitarianism offered music, ritual, prayers, and dance from their traditions. At the end of the Ceremony, people were encouraged to choose a stone to take as they left the Ceremony. They were told that the stone held the spirit of the Ceremony and the energy of the fire. As people return to their homes, the spirit and the energy they held in their hands would go with them.

## **1.3 Billets/Homestays**

written by Gerry Killganan

The registration form informed participants that there would be a limited number of opportunities to be accommodated in private homes during their stay in Vancouver. More than 60 persons requested this type of accommodation.

Requests for places to stay were sent out through participating and supportive NGOs and other organizations. The best response came from teachers in the area. Many responses came from persons living in the suburbs. These were rejected because of the difficulty of travelling to and from the Summit site. We were unable to accommodate all requests, so priority was given to persons coming from developing APEC member countries. We were able to assign 26 persons to host families prior to their arriving in Vancouver. Some requests were received very late, making responses to them difficult. Of the original 26, only 13 arrived at the homes of their assigned hosts. Some had let us know they were not coming and some had not.

Five people requested accommodation after arriving. We were able to place them. One person changed her mind after accommodation was found for her and another did not check back to use the accommodation arranged for him. One person was asked to leave the