OPENING REMARKS

AN EDUCATION ON PEACE

IT’S NOT EVERY DAY HIS HOLINESS THE 14TH Dalai Lama comes to town. But when he does, it’s refreshing for the soul to hear his message of peace, compassion, tolerance, and the oneness of humanity. Along with his enduring words, what seems to endear him most to people is his unguarded laughter that inevitably brings smiles to others.

During his appearances on campus at the “Common Ground for Peace” forum, which featured panel discussions and the One World Concert in the Carrier Dome, the Dalai Lama shared the humor and wisdom of a man who, spiritually, intellectually, and physically, takes the good with the bad, emphasizing the importance of working toward inner peace and the idea of us all being one family. It’s a simple yet powerful concept that the spiritual leader of Tibet shares wherever he goes in his global travels, one that he believes starts with individuals and spreads to families, communities, nations, the world.

“Respect others as a human being; they also need happy life,” he said. “Others’ happiness is one’s happiness. Others’ suffering is also one’s own suffering.”

And, as he noted while calling on the generation of young people and today’s students, there was plenty of violence and suffering in the 20th century, and it’s time to be hopeful and move on here in the 21st century through dialogue and non-violent means. “Peace must come through our actions,” he said.

Clearly, as the panelists who shared the stage with him during the Common Ground discussions agreed, true peace requires much more than the absence of war. There must be social justice and democracy, as well as education, a crucial component of those two ideals. As much as we debate our approach to education in this country, at least many of us realize its value, its ability to subdue ignorance—which fuels so much intolerance and violence—and to transform lives.

Looking through this issue, you’ll see how the success of The Campaign for Syracuse University has elevated the University’s ability to improve people’s lives—on campus, in the community, and around the world. Education opens new avenues for so many people, and each step forward can make a difference.

Education is a timeless process and, when combined with acceptance and compassion for others, let’s hope that one day it will lead us to that peaceful place where the Dalai Lama and so much of the world want to be.