

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2007

Reverend Vern Barnet, DMn  
PO Box 45414  
Kansas City, Missouri 64171

Dear Reverend Barnet, Scholars and Students of the Interfaith Academies:

I am very proud that Kansas City is the location of your first, pilot program, June 13-27, in cooperation with Harvard University's Pluralism Project, Religions for Peace-USA at the United Nations Plaza, the Saint Paul School of Theology, and the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council. Religious liberty is a central value in our nation, and respect for religious diversity is a beautiful element of design sewn into America's legal and social fabric.

I understand your program combines classroom sessions with practical exposure to people already involved in interfaith activity. As a life-long citizen of the Show-Me state, I am sure you will enjoy touring Kansas City and am glad you will have an opportunity to meet people here who will show you why Kansas City has been repeatedly recognized nationally for its development of practices which bring folks from all faiths together. As you are aware, CBS-TV featured the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council's work in its national coverage of the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in its "Open Hearts Open Minds" 30-minute special. The National Catholic Reporter did a full-page story on the Interfaith Passport developed from the Council's work, and Kansas City has been selected as the site for the 2009 international conference of the North America Interfaith Network.

My own personal faith makes it important for me to recognize the faith of others. Your efforts to understand the religions of America are needed to strengthen our communities and our nation.

Please accept my warm welcome to Missouri, and my best wishes for a successful study.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill  
United States Senator