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## Larger than life peace advocates Human Rights Education Institute exhibit will be unveiled Thursday

Maureen Dolan; Staff writer

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COEUR d'ALENE — The phrase "larger than life" takes on a whole new meaning at the **HumanRights Education** Institute this week when its newest exhibit, "Peace Advocates," is unveiled Thursday. Featuring 12-foot-high, floor-to-ceiling graphic paintings of the faces of 14 people who have protected **human rights** by promoting peace, artist and educator Rachel Dolezal used the inner exposed brick walls of the institute's Mullan Avenue building as her canvas.

"This exhibit is raw. It's bold and it's also packed with information," Dolezal said. "The larger something is, the more real it is to us."

The 7 p.m. exhibit opening includes a free public reception featuring Dolezal who will discuss the art she created and "the breadth of peace activism, from the preservation of indigenous culture to the prevention of nuclear war."

Icons Mahatma Gandhi and Cesar Chavez are joined by 12 lesser known peace advocates like New York Congresswoman and civil **rights** champion Bella Abzug; Carly Zalenski, an Ohio teen who at age 12 spearheaded a campaign that raised enough funds to build a school in rural Vietnam; and Ghanian diplomat and former United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan — all monumentalized in epic scale on the institute's walls by Dolezal.

Brushed on with high-gloss paint, the images shine as if still wet.

"I want that kind of freshness. That's where inspiration meets action," Dolezal said.

Accompanying text tells the story of each activist profiled.

Dolezal focused on providing a spectrum of issues and different types of advocacy when she chose which figures to profile.

"A lot of them are individuals you don't hear about in the textbooks or in the media," Dolezal said.

Most people are aware of current **human rights** issues, but not always about what's gone on in the past or in other places, Dolezal said.

She said this exhibit celebrates those people who were "on the front lines, making sacrifices."

"This is my way of advocating — through **education**," Dolezal said.

An instructor at North Idaho College and Eastern Washington University, Dolezal is the curator for the HREI.

The concept for a gallery of peace promoters was brought to the institute and Dolezal by Richard Terry, a local man active with Diakonia, an area interfaith peace group.

Terry, inspired by a book he read — "Architects for Peace," a photo essay by photographer Michael Collopy — created a smaller-scaled educational presentation by mounting some of the photos and essays from the book on tri-fold displays.

Terry's presentation will be on display at the Coeur d'Alene Public Library Sept. 21. "That's the International Day of Peace," Terry said. "The idea is that there would be no warfare, no conflict throughout the world on that day."

At 81, Terry, a World War II veteran, said he has "lived through some of these episodes."

He believes it's important to seek peaceful ways to resolve conflict in the world and to celebrate those who do that here in Kootenai County and around the globe.

"There are techniques that can be used to dampen conflict and hatred in the world," Terry said. "If we can reach the young people and show them, here is a way of service. You can really make your life something if you want to and that's working for the betterment of humanity."

The HREI exhibit will be on display throughout September and October.

SHAWN GUST/Press

Rachel Dolezal is flanked by 12-foot portraits of Mahatma Ghandi, and Aung San Suu Kyi Friday at the **Human Rights Education** Institute in Coeur d'Alene. The murals are part of an exhibit, "Peace Advocates," that will open Thursday at 7 p.m.

**Infobox**

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