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UN Peace Relay: Latest Athletic Event for Peace

NEW YORK, NY--Twenty United Nations staff members ran a 150 mile Peace Relay on July 12-13 in honor of the 1986 International Year of Peace. The event is one in a series of international relays, peace swims, solo runs, and race courses held or established in support of this special year by athletes from groups affiliated with sports guru Sri Chinmoy.

The Peace run left UN headquarters at 6:30 a.m. It relayed a flaming torch in five mile segments up routes 9, 9A, and 9W (along the Hudson River and past West Point), arriving in Albany at 2 p.m. Sunday. There, the athletes officially opened the New York capital city's annual International Festival.

The Relay was co-sponsored by the New York State Office of General Services and Sri Chinmoy. The Peace Meditation at the United Nations. Like all the other sports events, it was held to anchor the presence of Peace in the world consciousness. It seeks to bring peace into the base physical level, the body, utilizing the aspiration found in athletics. "This world has everything but peace," Sri Chinmoy says. "If each person had peace, this world would be different today. Because we don't have peace, we are sometimes no better than animals." When we have even an iota of peace, he says, then we can serve as instruments to bring peace to others.

At the Albany Festival's opening ceremony, long distance runner Joe Michaels, president of Cardiac Runners, received the first annual Sri Chinmoy Self-

Transcendence trophy. The award is given to those members of the public who in their own lives overcome great obstacles to improve and perfect themselves and society. Michaels, a Bayside, New York resident, is 44 years old. He suffered seven heart attacks and had a double-bypass operation, then gradually returned to a fully active life through the benefits of running. He began running increasingly long distances--the farthest so far being 624 miles in a 1,000 mile race--to prove to others "that almost any handicap may be overcome." Through his Cardiac Runner organization he counsels other heart attack victims on the benefits of athletics. In presenting the award, Sri Chinmoy told the athlete, "The brave soul in you is a tremendous source of inspiration to all those who challenge death and all countless obstacles on the way to self-perfection." In honor of these events, Mayor Whelan declared July 13 as Sri Chinmoy Self-Transcendence day in the state capital.

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