

The Springboard charity established a local Peace Day Campaign last year to raise awareness of the event throughout the North.

We caught up with Angila Chada, executive director of Springboard, who told us how she came to be involved with the international event.

"I remember the day I decided to be part of Peace Day," said Angila, who is the Northern Ireland director of the United Nations International Day of World Peace Campaign.

"It was a beautiful summer's day and I was walking through the Waterworks in North Belfast and I was thinking about a documentary that had moved me. It was about Jeremy Gilley's quest to have September 21 the fixed date for World Peace Day every year.

"I thought about it and realised how valuable peace is and how this day should be celebrated every year."

Given our recent troubled past, Angila said it was important for this society in particular to observe Peace Day.

"Peace is something that, given our history, we should cherish, mark and celebrate in this community," she said.

"As a society we know better than most that a day of non-violence has unlimited possibilities and, given that experience, we should take a lead in strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations, communities and peoples by commemoration of Peace Day.

"It's about reflecting on our own journey in

CELEBRATING PEACE IN OUR TIME

Brian Kennedy who will headline the International Day of Peace in the Ulster Hall

this society but also about us as a society appreciating what other people in the world who are experiencing conflict are going through. Even if it is just one minute in the day it is important to remember people in conflict," she continued.

"It is a time to look outwards at conflicts around the world and say that we understand and hope that there will be a time when aid and respite can come."

Angila went on to cite the recent Roma crisis as she called for peace in our own community.

"It is not just about conflict in society," she

said. "It is about conflict in the neighbourhoods too.

"Given the recent racist attacks in South Belfast, we realise that some people are still having difficulty living in peace.

"On September 21, we can all come together to celebrate the ideals of peace."

Peace Day is also a time to look inward and apply that ideal of peace to our own lives, she said.

"On a smaller scale, we can also look at conflict in a personal sense. This is a day of peace in every sense and we can transfer that into our personal lives and make peace

the central theme of the day."

Last year Springboard hosted a day-long peace concert in Belfast's Black Box. Angila Chada hopes to build on that success this time around and is encouraging everyone to get involved in any way they can.

"People can sign up to support the increased observance of the day. They can observe it themselves, either privately or publicly. That is they can join the events that have been organised or they can merely light a candle and pray for world peace, it all counts and we would encourage everyone to get involved on some level."