From Our Director

Each November as I am putting together our Winter newsletter and making space to list all the past year's donors, I am always amazed at the magnitude of our support from so many of you.



A good friend of the SSJ Sister Karen Center sent me a quote

by Gordon Cosby that reminded her of the work that we do to keep the Center financially fit:

"The key problem of stewardship is not how to motivate people to give more, but rather how to help them develop into disciples who, in gratitude, compassion, and justice, are eager to align their money with the needs of God's created order."

Wow! That really touched me—to recognize that the money that you give to the Center is really about discipleship ... compassion ... justice ... and aligning your personal resources to answer the call to practice and spread nonviolence in the world.

A quick Google search yielded a description of alignment in a personal way. It is about clarifying who you are—your values and priorities. When you're in alignment you feel clear and purposeful about your life.

Won't you celebrate with me each and every person named in this newsletter as a seeker of justice responding with compassion to the

needs of the world ... a true disciple of nonviolence! We couldn't be more grateful for YOU, our partners traveling this road, in alignment with this vital mission together.



Vivian Ruth Waltz, Director

SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence 80 Durham Avenue Buffalo, NY 14215 716.893.0808 info@sisterkarencenter.org



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Antionette (Tracy) Craig
Sr. Janet DiPasquale, SSJ
(SSJ Leadership Team liaison)
Bishop Frederick A. Gelsey
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Sr. Kristen Schmitz, SSJ
Marcia Uebbing, SSJ Associate
Billie Webster

In loving memory of James Mang (Member 2007-2021)



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SAVE THE DATE!
Annual Fundraising Event
Sunday, April 24, 2022 at 3 PM

sisterkarencenter.org for more info

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~in honor of the good work that you do

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Introducing ... More New Board Members!

Bishop Frederick A. Gelsey, Sr.



Bishop F.A. Gelsey, Sr. was born in Jacksonville, Florida. While spending 17 years behind prison walls, his life was transformed. After his release in 1986, God led him to start One in Christ Ministries, where he currently pastors a beautiful congregation. Bishop Gelsey ministers to inmates at Erie County Holding Center on Sundays and will return to volunteering at Wende Correctional Facility when pandemic protocols are lifted. He teaches Homicide Education and Prevention through the "Media Madness" program. Bishop Gelsey graduated with his doctorate degree in Christian Psychology from Jacksonville Theological Seminary. He is the Regional Bishop of Global Ministries and Churches Alliance. Bishop Gelsey enjoys running and working out to stay healthy. He loves to travel to Jacksonville, Atlanta and North Carolina to see his family, which includes two children and eight grandchildren. Bishop Gelsey has been happily married to Lydia, his partner in ministry, since 1987.

Billie Webster

Billie Webster comes to the Sister Karen Center board by virtue of his position as a WNY Peacemaker. He has worked with Back to Basics Outreach Ministries coordinating housing for over two decades. He was Community Liaison and then Program Manager for the NYS SNUG (guns spelled backwards) gun violence reduction initiative. Billie knew and loved Sister Karen. Reflecting on their relationship Billie says, "Something about her spirit led me to her. She gave me insight on a lot of things. As a parolee in her program, she convinced me that God forgives me. I used to sit with her at Bissonnette House and she helped me just by talking to her because she loved the Lord so much." Billie is married to his lovely wife Monica and they have three sons. Tragically, a daughter and a son passed away due to gun violence, and this personal experience fuels his passion for working against violence of all kinds. Billie is looking forward to being on the board and helping the community through the Sister Karen Center. In his free time, Billie volunteers at a number of agencies and loves reading about history, politics and science.



Marcia Uebbing



Marcia Uebbing retired from her career at Laboratory Information Systems at Catholic Health just before COVID. She has been blessed with a great deal of time to contemplate what is important in her life. As an Associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Buffalo, she is a member of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee whose recent work on the subject of racism has educated her and opened her mind to much she had taken for granted. She believes that the opportunity to serve on the board of the Sister Karen Center is both a gift and a challenge. She affirms the Center's work because it "lives the promise" of Catholic Social Justice teaching. Marcia enjoys reading and hiking. She loves to spend time with her sisters and her nephew and his new wife. She has a little dog that is a great companion. Marcia is an enthusiastic Bills fan and hopes they go all the way this year!

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR BOARD MEMBERS WHO HAVE RECENTLY COMPLETED THEIR TERM: Judy Major, Bill Marx, Sr. Liz Savage, SSJ, Maureen Satchell, and Kali Williams.

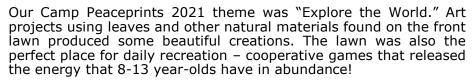
CAMP PEACEPRINTS 2021

"Explore the World"

July 12-23, 2021



In spite of the pandemic, we believe this summer's Camp Peaceprints was the best in our 14-year history! Thanks to the Network of Religious Communities, Camp Peaceprints found its 2021 home at the stately edifice at 1272 Delaware Avenue in Buffalo. Campers came from a variety of eastside and westside Buffalo communities, refugee children from Vive Shelter, and from first-ring suburbs. They represented a multiplicity of races, ethnic groups, and religions.

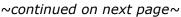


With the help of a giant world map beach ball, the various continents and cultures explored included:



- the Deaf community through ASL/ signing lessons with St. Mary's School for the Deaf
- Antarctica with WNY Youth Climate Council
- South America with the Peruvian Outreach Project
- Diversity and Inclusion with Unite by Night and Daemen College students
- Central America and the Garinagu people with Cynthia Ellis from Belize
- Europe with American Field Service (AFS) student exchange program
- Asia and Middle Eastern cultures with world-traveler Victoria Ross
- Australia's unique animal kingdom and Aboriginal people with camp codirector Vivian Waltz
- West African dancing and drumming with The Slyboots School of Music, Art & Dance

















CAMP PEACEPRINTS 2021 (continued)





Our field trips were planned to extend the learning of our camp theme: exploring the natural world, from rock and soil to plant and animal life, along with looking at time and space: how our world changes and the evidence of worlds that existed before us.

At Reinstein Woods, we started and ended our time with a Gnonyoh, a traditional Haudenosaunee opening and closing Thanksgiving Address. After educating the campers about biodiversity, a naturalist



released dozens of endangered nine-spotted ladybugs into the forest for repopulation and growth. At Penn Dixie Fossil Park and Nature Preserve, the campers explored our local area and discovered that the imprints of brachiopods, crinoids, and trilobites were evidence of an ancient undersea environment that existed 380 million years ago!

Swimming is always a highlight of Camp Peaceprints for our campers and this year was no different! What was different was the variety of places we enjoyed the water: twice in the pool at the Koessler Athletic Center at Canisius College, once at the splash pad at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and once at Woodlawn Beach State Park. Many campers had never been to the beach before and playing in the sand rivaled swimming in Lake Erie for a new adventure!









Amidst the tears and goodbyes of our last day of camp, Audrey Mang arrived to present the 3M (for "Marvelous Mr. Mang") award. The award is in memory of Audrey's husband Jim, one of the founders and dear friends of the Sister Karen Center. The recipient, Dynamic David Clyburn, was the camper who best displayed Jim's virtues of kindness, fairness, cooperation, and teamwork.

For all the learning and fun, we are exceedingly grateful to the Riefler Ministry Enablement Fund of the Network of Religious Communities and the Children's Foundation of Erie County as well as the donors to the Jim and Audrey Mang Camp Peaceprints Scholarship Fund. Volunteers from The Prevention Council of Erie County and the Foster Grandparent Program of Catholic Charities have blessed us year after year.

At Camp Peaceprints 2021, young people were privileged to "Explore the World" -- to honor their differences while experiencing their connections with each other and with nature. We continue to affirm Gandhi's conviction, "If we are to teach real peace in this world ... we shall have to begin with the children."



Speaking of Audrey Mang, we want to express our gratitude for her dedication and skill in editing and proofreading "Alternatives" for many years!



Alternatives to Violence Project News

The mission of the Alternatives to Violence Project is to empower people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation, and trust. Founded in and developed from the real-life experiences of prisoners and others, and building on a spiritual base, AVP encourages every person's innate power to positively transform themselves and the world.



Incarcerated Humanity

This is a message to the youth and young men about gun violence.

I can relate to how it feels to think a gun is necessary because my hood got beef with another hood or because of my impoverish condition by using a gun for a robbery is a quick way to change my money problems.

But these guns are devastating our community. Children are losing their lives, mothers are burying their children, and adolescents, young men are getting locked up at alarming rates for shootings.

I feel dishearten and sadden that we continue to inflict such damage and injury to ourselves and our communities. I, too, impacted our community with gun violence, so I feel a great sense of responsibility to intervene and use my voice and story to try to reduce the gun violence in our communities.

Years ago I made a stupid and wrong decision to commit a robbery [and caused the death of someone]. My intention was not to cause [the] death but my intention was irrelevant because I could not control the damage a bullet was going to cause.

I share my story with you because using a gun can have detrimental consequences. Because I chose to have an illegal gun, I have caused irreparable pain. My actions have took a beloved son from his family who anticipated for their loved one to have a long productive life, I left my children without their father unprotected and exposed to being influence by someone that might persuade them to pick up a gun and alter their lives.

[I may] never be free again and I am missing my family and regretting that I took a life and that I ever picked up a gun.

The most important lesson I want you to learn from my story is that you should never pick up a gun because one mistake can alter your life forever. You only have one life, live it don't risk it.

Humbly,

[An inmate in the AVP Program]

The Alternatives to Violence Project is a series of three workshops. The **Basic** workshop helps individuals develop conflict resolution skills. In the **Advanced** workshop, the underlying causes of violence are explored and participants select the theme of the workshop. The third workshop is a **Training for Facilitators**. Please contact the Sister Karen Center if you are interested in a participating in a workshop.



Working in Coalition ...

One of the four primary goals of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence is to *Build Relationships by Working in Coalition with Community Groups which Promote Nonviolence*. One of these groups is the **Buffalo Community Forum on Youth Gun Violence**. Bishop Frederick Gelsey, new member of the Sister Karen Center Advisory Board, and Director Vivian Waltz are actively involved in the Forum. The Forum will be integral in distributing funds for the antiviolence work allocated through the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP).

Bishop Gelsey, Vivian and the Advisory Board are hard at work advocating for the Youth Homicide Education and Prevention Media Arts Project to receive funds from the ARP. The Project was featured at our "Media Madness" event last April. The goals of the Project are:



- 1) to educate at-risk youth on the brainwashing and programming effects of violence in the media.
- 2) to prevent violence by training youth in conflict resolution using the Alternatives to Violence Project.
- 3) to teach youth how to produce original audio/video media with a positive message.
- 4) to widely distribute the final audio/video creations.

We expect the RFP (Request for Proposal) to be distributed by the Buffalo Common Council in the coming weeks.

Nug Ecneloiv

Sister Diane Smith, CSJ Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Los Angeles Province

No, you have not developed dyslexia. You are looking at gun violence spelled backward. We know that there is an epidemic and legislators are being lobbied to pass gun control laws. However, I would like to suggest another approach, one in which we all have power to make a difference. We are called to be people of wisdom. Our wisdom must be that of God's wisdom not that of the world.

Doctors are amazed and puzzled when a patient recovers from a devastating illness or injury that can only be attributed to prayer. We are dealing with the societal illness of gun violence. If together we pray and send positive energy we can heal the violence that creates death and injury. How can we use the power given us by our creator?

Spend some time each day by sitting in a quiet and peaceful place. Let go of any anxiety or worry about unfinished business. Allow yourself to be filled with peace. Sit quietly breathing in peace and breathing out anything that disrupts or disturbs you. Don't rush your prayer. When you have entered into that sacred space ask the Holy Spirit to surround one person who is angry or vengeful and has a gun with the intent to use it. You will not know who this person is but the Spirit knows. Let God's love and peace flow through you to surround her or him with love and peace. We will never know the outcome or who may have been saved as a result of our prayer. As the song says, 'Let there be peace and let it begin with me.'



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To carry on Sister Karen's vision of a world without violence, the **SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence** is committed to eliminate violence in ourselves, in our society, and in our world. We work to create a nonviolent community in our thinking, our acting, and our relationships.

The SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence is a ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates of Buffalo.