

From Our Director

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, *"This is the unusual thing about nonviolence--nobody is defeated, everybody shares in the victory."*



In this issue of *Alternatives*, we celebrate the victory that you, the loyal supporters of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence, share together with us every day.

We are privileged to recognize all of you who have given of your financial resources throughout the past year to partner with the Sisters of St. Joseph in spreading the ministry of nonviolence in our community. Your generosity is a testament to the truth of Sister Karen's words, "Nonviolence Begins with Me!"



Children, youth, prisoners and peacemakers have all been touched by your bounty. In this season of thanksgiving and joy, may you be richly blessed as you have blessed others!

Gratefully yours,

Vivian

Vivian Ruth Waltz



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in memory of my dear parents
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Bennett High School Students Support Nonviolence

The SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence was the recipient of a \$200 donation from students at Bennett High School on June 14th. This donation came after 10 Bennett students were arrested for assaulting and robbing an elderly man in Shoshone Park. After the high school was the target of much online vitriol, some students took it personally. They decided to sell black ribbons at the school for \$2.00 each with the total collected given for the work of nonviolence through the Sister Karen Center.

"We're showing people that not all students are like that," Chronicle McLain, 16, said of the students accused of the Shoshone Park assault. "We're not all deficient like that. We don't all make poor decisions."



Chronicle, who just finished his junior year at Bennett, helped organize the fundraiser with classmates Rachel Bish and Eric Thompson. Anyone who bought a ribbon could wear jeans to school instead of the school's uniform. On June 10th, students remained silent in the hallways between classes as a way to show a commitment to nonviolence.

Wearing shirts that read, "Bennett students believe in peace," students presented a \$200 check to the Sister Karen Center's director Vivian Waltz. The money will help support the Center's work for peaceful conflict resolution in Buffalo schools.

Vivian found it unfortunate that others have associated the actions of a few Bennett students with the entire school. But, she said, "It's work like these students are doing that helps to dispel those kinds of myths."

A Poem dedicated to the Men in an Alternatives to Violence Project Workshop at Wende Correctional Facility

By Joyous Joyce McAndrew



*What a pleasure it has been
To share the company of these men
Men of Integrity....Men of Peace
Men of Courage....Who will not cease
To Seek the Truth and Expect the Best
To Respect Oneself and Care for the Rest.*

*Friends and Allies with listening ear
Sharing with others values so dear.
Filled with emotion, thought and plan
Learning to trust and believing "WE CAN"
Build a community of love and concern
We commit to change and to learn.
With patience and persistence we shall strive
To help others become fully alive.*

*I have grown to admire and delight
In "transforming power" both day and night.
So as we continue with nonviolence
Let's celebrate each person's MAGNIFICENCE!*

CAMP PEACEPRINTS 2013

Telling Our Stories of Peace

By Victoria Ross



"If we are to have peace, we will have to begin with the children." After our sixth annual Camp Peaceprints, the inspiration of Gandhi's statement seems truer than ever.

The theme of Camp Peaceprints 2013 was "Telling Our Stories of Peace." Fifty-five children and youth explored stories of nonviolence throughout history as well as our own stories of being peacemakers. We enjoyed guest presenters each day who encouraged us with their stories through the variety of gifts and knowledge they shared with us.

Kind Karima Amin and Bettering Baba Eng used story-telling – imaginary and personal – to build awareness of doing the best with what you have, understanding the consequences of our actions, appreciating our differences and building trust.

Friendly Fred Rieber had campers explore symbolic lessons of faith, working on relationships, and perseverance through preparing clay and making pottery. We got our hands dirty!

Dynamic Danielle Johnson gave a powerful workshop on poetry, during which we listened to her own passionate spoken word, as well as created our own poems in small groups. Dashing David Delano of Taoist Tai Chi Society, told children his story of how Tai Chi helped him heal and recover his ability to walk after an accident while he was in the U.S. military. He then led us through tai chi movements.

Amazing April Walker of Friendship Baptist Church led a workshop on liturgical and praise dancing. It was moving in every way. She even had the youth choreographing certain parts and using group formations. Noble Neal Mack and Altruistic Alexis explored humor with the campers, as well as music and rap for an inspirational treat.

Fabulous Fatou-Carol Sylla led us in African dance, giving all real inspiration with our refrain – Afunga Alafiyah, Ashe, Ashe – loosely translated as "Welcome. Blessings. Amen, Amen," saluting and appreciating the life force in all.

Respectful Rebecca Roepke told her story as an indigenous woman, and shared native music, dance, and stories with us. The youth took turns sharing their stories, using sound and movement—drumming, music, dance, and spoken word—to tell of their heritage, history, hopes, and dreams.

The visual arts were another means for story-telling. Besides the wonders of the Burchfield Penny Art Center with docents linking the art to the artists' telling their stories of peace, Gentle Jan Burns led campers through a wonderful art station in which they made signs and murals with messages of peace, justice, and compassion; crafts that represented beauty in the creation, including the Eye of God; and paper mache bones that were used in a special installation on Niagara Square.



CAMP PEACEPRINTS 2013 (continued)



The bones were inspired by the Million Bones Project, reminding people of the scourge of genocide. Our project included remembering people who died through violence of all kinds. We were happy that YNN covered our installation of the bones on the square with chanting and drumming. We laid the bones in a peace sign with the power of thoughtful intention.

Another highlight was the trip to the History Museum. The early years in Buffalo were explored both through indigenous and settler eyes. Immigrants and refugees lives in Buffalo were also considered. We enjoyed, too, the Japanese Garden given by our sister city Kanazawa.

Our downtown field trip also included a tour of the remarkable Central Public Library with its many stories of peace, and great support to the community, and a walk to the Vietnam Veterans' memorial, where Fantastic Frank told of his experience in the military during that conflict, and cautioned youth about believing military myths circulated by recruiters and others.

Our annual visit to Mayor Brown which included his being the first to sign our "I Will Not Kill" pledge, as well as answering the many questions put by the campers, largely focused on how he would help stop violence in our neighborhoods.



Yet another means for telling our stories of peace was provided by Awesome Aitina Fareed with her grant-supplied iPads. She led the youth in exploring the use of technology to tell our stories through graphic arts.

Last but not least was our daily program of exploring peaceful conflict resolution and alternatives to violence, building community and compassion, building trust and having fun. Every conflict was peacefully resolved – even served as an opportunity to practice our PCR skills! In the park, in our home space – we

played, cooperated, communicated, learned and – dare one say – loved. We built a small version of the Beloved Community.

Many thanks to the Network of Religious Communities' Riefler Fund, the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence, the Interfaith Peace Network, the WNY Peace Center, Ellen and Dave Moomaw, St. Margaret's Church, and all who participated to make it all possible. One parent said, "I could see [my child's] personality flourish and blossom during the camp, something that I [have] rarely seen before." May the ripples continue



Niagara Frontier Council Brings Alternatives to Violence Project to Philadelphia Schools



When the school year begins, it's a time fraught with social stress for most students. Most kids just want to do what they can to feel comfortable and settled. For school administrators, the key is to establish an environment that feels safe for all.

Tacony Academy and First Philadelphia Preparatory Charter high schools chose to invest the first four days of school in September to have AVP Philadelphia, with the help of 75 volunteer facilitators from as far away as California and the Virgin Islands, conduct 27 Basic Workshops for 450 ninth- to twelfth-grade students.

Two of our volunteers, Tino Bellanca and Bill Marx, facilitated a workshop for an appreciative group of ninth-graders. The goal of one of the students was to be more confident and she shared at the conclusion that she was achieving that goal. Another appreciated the multi-generational aspect of the experience.

Following this experience and in conjunction with the newly adopted Code of Conduct in the Buffalo Public Schools, which focuses on conflict resolution and restorative justice, Tino and Bill have begun planning on ways to enlarge the Alternative to Violence Project work in Buffalo schools. For this to happen, we will need more AVP facilitators! Check with the Sister Karen Center or go to the website for information on upcoming workshops.



Facilitator Bill Marx

St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute AVP Workshop

In July, for the fourth year in a row, a Level I Basic Alternatives to Violence Project workshop was held with young men from St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute. Thirty-seven freshmen spent two-and-a-half days of their summer vacation exploring the causes of violence, the roots of nonviolence and how to resolve conflict in a positive way. We appreciate the dedicated efforts of volunteer facilitators Tino Bellanca, Sarah Haykel, Audrey Mang, Bill Marx and SJCI student facilitators Patrick Galvin and Mike Dell'Isola.



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.

Buffalo Peacemakers Hit the Streets, Begin Nonviolence Training



After a press conference by Mayor Byron Brown, the Buffalo Peacemakers Gang Intervention and Outreach Program officially began their street work on August 12th. Buffalo Peacemakers bring together six existing peacemaking groups—Back to Basics Outreach Ministries, Buffalo United Front, F.A.T.H.E.R.S., MAD DADS, No More Tears and Stop the Violence Coalition—to intervene in potentially violent situations with youth in or at risk of joining gangs. The Peacemakers also work with family and friends who have lost a loved one to violence as well as protect the community at public events.

The annual budget of approximately \$300,000 was raised for the first year of the program. The John R. Oishei Foundation has committed \$200,000; the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, \$100,000; and the City of Buffalo, \$200,000. The extra money will fund the program in future years.

Director of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence Vivian Waltz sits on the Advisory Board of the Buffalo Peacemakers as well as the training subcommittee. In collaboration with the Western New York Peace Center and the Interfaith Peace Network, the Sister Karen Center began nonviolence training based on the Alternatives to Violence Project with the Peacemakers in October. Vivian served as a facilitator for the 15-hour workshop along with BaBa Eng and Victoria Ross. An additional two workshops are planned which will yield new facilitators to expand the training to at-risk youth.

Supervising Peacemaker Pastor James Giles enthusiastically reports, "This was an awesome course for the Peacemakers. It gets at the rudiments of resolving conflict, both within and between individuals and groups." We look forward to the next session!



SAVE THE DATE!
Sunday, April 13, 2014
7 pm, location TBA
"The Nonviolent Life"

A Talk and Book-Signing with Activist, Author
 and Nobel Peace Prize Nominee John Dear

*Come learn how we can become people of nonviolence
 and help the world become more nonviolent!*

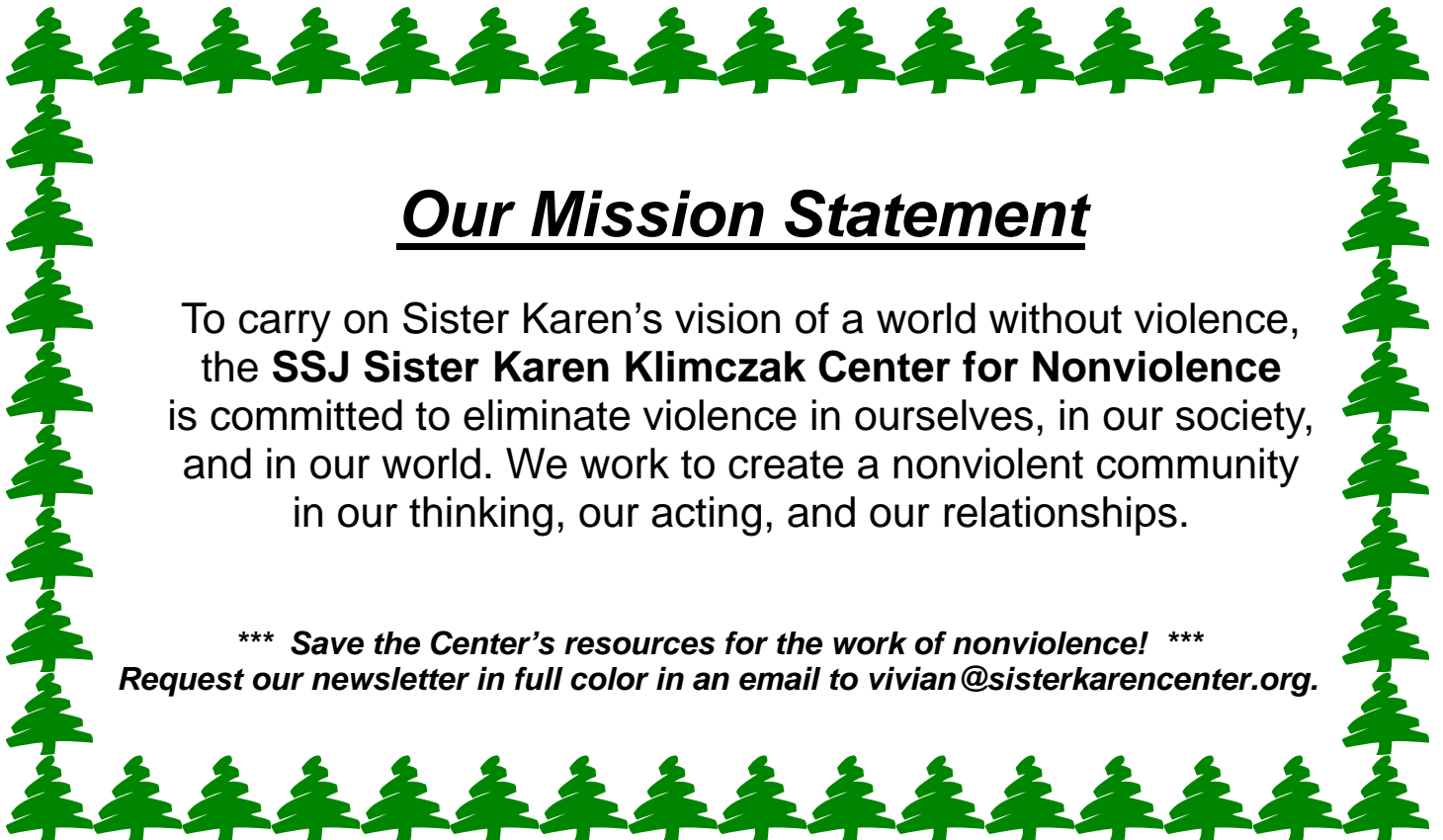


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Our Mission Statement

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.

*** *Save the Center's resources for the work of nonviolence!* ***
Request our newsletter in full color in an email to vivian@sisterkarencenter.org.