



6833 Stanley Avenue * Berwyn, IL 60402 * 708-749-8888 * www.thepeacecenter.info

October 1, 2010

Dear Members and Friends of the Peace Center,

What do you suppose is the most effective way to reduce violence in our city by 25%? That is the question that keeps us up at night at The Peace Center. It keeps us up because every year in Chicagoland streets, 40 children are killed from violence – that’s three times more than the number of soldiers from the area killed in Iraq during the same timeframe¹. Thousands more are bullied. We know there is a better, more peaceful way to live. That is where we come in, one person at a time.

No, we’re not the police, the government, a new social program to introduce the latest “band aid” program for a spiraling crime rate....we’re just a group of citizens who are making the world a better place from the inside out. We begin by first embodying the change we wish to see in the world, as the great peacemaker Gandhi urged us to do.

Rose Mary stood outside the Peace Center looking scared and lonely one rainy afternoon. She had a black eye and would not look at me when I invited her in. She saw a book in the window about how you can change your thinking and change your life. She was 19, still in high school, and didn’t want to go home just yet. I poured her a cup of hot chocolate, offered her a seat in our circle and listened to her story. She had been bullied at school and chased home many a night. She was in tears how she might stop being a “bully magnet” as she described it. I assured her it was entirely possible and more than that, because hundreds of people have done exactly that using the techniques we teach at The Peace Center. Having exhausted the resources of the school and local authorities to resolve the problem, Rose Mary was ready for a change, a change for experiencing greater peace in her life from the inside out.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said: "Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions." Therein lies the hope of a peaceful vision for ourselves, our communities and those we love. A new idea. A better idea of what is possible. The problem is most people do not want to stretch their minds to make the world a better place. It’s not safe to think about creating peace in the community, let alone talk about it with others, or study it. Like Rose Mary, people are afraid of the world.

A peaceful community is literally a peace-able community. Peace is now principally the work of peacemakers, and community members. It’s not just the police’s job; it’s your job, too. We can increase our peacemaking skills; we can increase our desire to live a life in peace free of chaos and violence. *Our mission at The Peace Center is to offer skills and tools for peaceful living and make the world a better place. We help people become able to live peacefully.*

¹ Pilkington, Ed, Chicago’s Murdered Children, *The Guardian*, August 11, 2009.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the Children of God.” Matthew 5:9

Rose Mary went on to take classes at The Peace Center, volunteer here and became a member. Today, she has a job she loves, is living on her own, is an avid financial supporter of the Center as well. As she later put it, "After I became involved at The Peace Center, I wasn't afraid of the world anymore" . . . and she never returned to that 'original dimension.'

Now marks a new opportunity for YOU to get involved in this mission, and the easiest way to get involved today is to contribute with your financial support. As you have read, your donation indeed does make a difference in many, many lives. Through your act of giving, you are doing something powerful to make the world a better place.

Our community, our center, our work, our ability to offer relevant peace programs won't grow and prosper because of one person, program, or event. It takes a community. It takes you. Please consider sending a donation now to the Center. While we appreciate any donations, no matter the size, we suggest \$50 because it gets you a membership and a copy of *The Peacemaker's Journal*. There are a couple ways you can do this right now:

Online

Click this link to make an online donation through PayPal on our website:

<http://www.thepeacecenter.info/Support-Us.html>

It will only take a minute and it will help all year!

Old School

Write a check and put it in the mail. Give generously because your contribution will indeed make a difference in many, many lives. Use the enclosed form and self-addressed envelope to mail your donation.

The Peace Center
P O Box 98
Berwyn, IL 60402-0098

Make checks payable to The Peace Center. ***All donations are tax deductible.*** Thank you again for your generosity and commitment.

Sincerely,



Margo Ruark
Executive Director

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