



*Cultivating Justice,
Nonviolence & Well-being*

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A nonprofit organization

Store Hours

Monday-Thursday
10 a.m.-5 p.m.
closed Fridays
Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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July-August-September 2010

PEACE CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

“They forgot that we are seeds.”

Those words were spoken last spring by a Mayan farmer in Chiapas, Mexico. The words are the second half of an equation. The first half? "They tried to bury us."

They tried to bury us, but they forgot that we are seeds.

His is the voice of oppressed people everywhere. In the seed there is a flower. His words are not far from Jesus' words about a seed needing to die before it can produce life. And when it does spring to life, stand back! There's a resurrection coming.

The Mayan community setting, out of which that farmer spoke, has come back to life through oppression, dislocation, death. My short time with the refugees of Acteal (summer 2000, with Christian Peacemaker Teams) showed me an example of the death and resurrection of those seeds. A small congregation calling themselves "The Bees"--because bees are persistent!--had chosen non-violence. Based on their reading of Jesus' words, they decided that officially they would rather die than kill.



I expected the mourning (forty people murdered by paramilitaries), the spare simplicity (leaving the comforts of their homes), the intense worship (just to stay sane). What I did not expect was joy. One evening we danced until midnight after making one last trip down the hill to the crypt to light the candles. The seeds were sprouting.

Ten years on, the news coming out of Mexico is changing. Indigenous people are less frequently displaced by the paramilitary. And I trust that "The Bees," the folks I met, are now back in their home community. From them I received the gift of international contact, the insight of another Christian congregation, a base for comparing my own faith community.

What burdens me in this moment is that we peace people in North America tend to divide from each other. Our various expressions of peacemaking tragically put us at odds with each other. Perhaps it's because we have not had to suffer, like--for example--the oppressed people of Chiapas. No one has tried to--figuratively or literally--bury us. We have not been put to the test. Are we, in fact, seeds? If buried, would we begin to grow?

I'm persuaded that we will be tested. I'm persuaded that at such a time we peacemakers will find common ground, and show the world the way of nonviolence.

Third of four columns for Peace Connections by Muriel T. Stackley.
Muriel was director of the Newton Area Peace Center from 1992-1995.

Circles Update

During the past few months a new Getting Ahead class has been meeting weekly. Greg Meyers and Denise Rhoades are facilitating the class. Current Circle Leaders continue meeting every Tuesday evening for a meal and input. Education sessions have focused on "No-fault Friendships" based on Non-violent Communication. BIG View community meetings have continued to tackle housing (landlord and tenant) issues and populating the Resource Team. A number of new Allies have been trained who will match up with the GA students when they graduate.

At the end of April, Scott Miller was in Kansas to meet with McPherson county. During his time here, he met with our Circles staff and volunteers and interested agencies in Wichita regarding Circles in Kansas. Plans are in process to see how coordination can best work.

Presentations were recently given to Newton Medical Center and Health Ministries regarding the Getting Ahead class and the recruitment of participants. Several luncheons with community leaders regarding Circles have given us useful feedback.

Wanda Pumphrey, Circles staff, and Jerica Henshaw, Circle Leader attended the KS East United Methodist conference on "Eradicating Poverty" in early June. They spoke on their experiences with Circles.

We are excited about the development of a case statement and supporting full-color informational brochures that are being developed with the help of Marika Jones, of Strategic Advancement Partners, and Teresa Kunze. Our hope is that having the information available in this format will help recruit Allies and Circle Leaders, continue to educate the community about the Circles Initiative, and aid in fund development.

Ways to be involved:

- ◆ Provide food for a simple meal for Tuesday evening meetings.
- ◆ Provide childcare on Tuesday nights.
- ◆ Learn more about becoming an Ally.
- ◆ Make a contribution towards expenses.

Please contact us if you are interested in learning more about becoming involved!

Looking Ahead... Poverty Simulation will be held on Sunday, Nov. 14, 2010, at Faith Mennonite Church in Newton. The community is invited to participate.

We are grateful to the following people for their gift of time during April, May and June, 2010:

- ◆ Marlene Smucker, Corinne Kehrberg, Jeanette Stucky, Stan Bohn, Leann Toews, Bev/Henry Baumgartner, Cay Siebert, and George Dyck for help on Saturdays and other times when Myrna was out of the office
- ◆ Marilyn Helburg and John McGee for hosting the downtown Newton Art & Music event and to Rachel Epp Buller and Don Kehrberg for providing art and music
- ◆ Arnita Haury for continued work at Peace Connections on Monday afternoons and for hosting an informational luncheon for our 2009 supporting churches/organizations
- ◆ Center for Community Support and Research (CCSR) for training for the board through our grant
- ◆ Joel Ewy for his work on updating our computers system through our CCSR grant
- ◆ Those who have provided food for meals for the Circles Initiative Tuesday evening gatherings and the informational luncheons for community members
- ◆ Sue Elder and Angela Altum for distributing information about the Kids Summer Food Program at Kid Fest



Peace Connections welcomes new board members

Peace Connections is pleased to welcome Marjean Harris and Jeanette Stucky, both of Newton, to the Board of Directors. We appreciate their willingness to serve in this way. Their comments on joining the Peace Connections board follow:

Marjean Harris:

My first interaction with Peace Connections was around the Iraq War. I am interested in learning more about the organization and its mission and functioning, as well as, in seeing how personal peace connects to political issues.



I enjoy gardening (and reading and fantasizing about gardening in the winter months), walking long distances, baking breads, sewing, and time with my family and friends.

Jeanette Stucky:

As a recent newcomer to the Newton area and having been retired for only a few years, I have been interested in finding meaningful options in volunteering. I want to use my skills as a retired teacher and as a concerned citizen. The mission of Peace Connections includes caring for all people. My understanding of poverty has been broadened through the completion of the Ally training. As a nation we too often give a "hand-out" without a relationship. I want to help build hope with a person or family by sharing new possibilities, encouraging goal-setting, and celebrating achievement.



Welcome Jeanette and Marjean!

Board Notes

Two board resignations were received in June, one from Don & Corinne Kehrberg, who have shared a board position, and another from Bill Mason. We are grateful to the Kehrbergs for the many gifts and ongoing support they have given to this organization over the past several years (Jan. 05-June 10). Among these gifts, Corinne's time in covering the store one Saturday a month has been especially appreciated. We will miss having their witness for peace at Peace Connections and in our community. In addition, we thank Bill Mason for his time on the board (June 09-10). Although he is disappointed that his time commitments other places no longer make him available for the board, he assures Peace Connections of his ongoing support and will continue serving as a consultant in the area of Fund Development. Our thanks to Don, Corinne, and Bill for their efforts for peace.

Giving Garden

It's growing season at the community garden project at 6th & Pine. sweet corn, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, watermelon, cucumbers, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes and Prairie Star Annuals trials/demos have all been planted. The project is overseen by Harvey County Master Gardeners. Contact Scott Eckert at the Harvey County Extension office to volunteer. Call 284-6930 for more information.



...in the face of human suffering, silence always helps those who cause the suffering, never the victim.

--Carol Rittner

Summer Food & Activities Program

Approximately 1200 free breakfasts and 1800 free lunches, including one record high day of 280 lunches, were served during the first two weeks of the **Kids Summer Food & Activities Program**. The program, in its 5th year, began June 7 and runs through July 23 and is being held at Sunset Elementary. It is open to any children/youth ages 1-18; the age was expanded to include one year-olds this year. Complimentary meals for adult caregivers are being utilized this year; three scholarships are available for breakfast and five for lunch each day. Busing from other elementary schools and the Rec Center is offered.



Summer Food & Activities Program 2010

Fun learning and fitness activities are held on Monday-Thursday between meals as part of the free Activity Program, with 40 enrolled. (Although we would like to offer this to more children, space constraints due to Summer School/Latchkey limit this program.) Coordinators report having a good group of kids. Activities also include special presentations by a variety of community organizations for the children throughout the summer (listed below); we thank these groups and individuals for sharing their time and expertise.

Another benefit of this summer program is the jobs that it provides for a number of people. Returning again this year to give leadership to the program are Sue Elder, site and activity coordinator for the program, and Angela Altum, volunteer coordinator, as well as, Mandy Zinn, USD 373 food service coordinator, and her staff. New this year

is Sherry Olson, activity assistant. Over 30 volunteers from the community, including a group of students from Youthville, have signed up to share their time helping with supervision and set-up/clean-up for mealtime. We are grateful to all of these individuals for their commitment to our community's children this summer and their contribution to the ongoing success of this endeavor.

Peace Connections appreciates the organizations, businesses, churches and individuals from the community who have supported the Summer Food & Activities Program through their financial gifts. We especially recognize USD 373 for their partnership in this endeavor and are very pleased to be able to offer this important program to support children and families through the summer months.

Donations to the 2010 Program were made by:

\$2000

Book Reviews

\$1,000-\$1,999

Women's Community Fund

Greater Newton Community Foundation – Kids FUNd

\$500-999

Midland National Bank

\$100-499

Citizen's State Bank

First Bank

Permanent Endowment Fund of First Presbyterian Church

South Breeze Elementary PTO

Chisholm Middle School

Carol Kirchmer

Food & Funding for Cooking Staff

USDA

Facilities & Busing

USD #373

Presentations by Community Groups for the Activity Program:

Kevin Stubbs – Caring Hands Humane Society

Susan Lammers and Amie Busenitz – Harvey County Extension Office (Food Groups)

Jeff Davis – Newton Police Department (Bike Safety and Police Dog Demo)

Vicki Scheuermann Newton Pool (Water Safety Program)

Newton Fire Station # 1 (Fire Safety program and visit fire station)

Dr. Shane Tonn – Newton Animal Hospital (Pet Care)

Bethel College Performing Arts Dancers

Bonnie Krehbiel (Soft Pretzels)

Carrie Tiemeyer (Bug Lady)

Cathy Edwards & Laura Salmeron (Around the World Journeys)

BOOK & GIFT SHOP

New CD by Sara Thomsen and friends – Three Altos, One Voice.

Inspired by the Three Graces from Greek & Roman mythology who brought joy and goodwill, Three Altos hopes to inspire you to connect deeply with another, with your own unique vision of a world whole and at peace. **\$17**



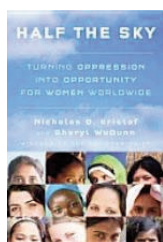
ate call to arms against the oppression of women around the globe. **\$15.95**

IIINK Cartridge Sales Added



Peace Connections will soon be the location for you to purchase remanufactured ink cartridges for your printer! We are beginning a partnership with Victor Peterson of IIINK (formerly in the Cedar Village shopping center in S. Newton) to be a retail outlet for their products. Peace Connections will also

be a location to recycle your used cartridges. After a trial period, we will also add refilled cartridges as an option. We are excited about offering these new products in the Gift Shop, especially as it fits with the desire to reduce, recycle, and reuse as we take care of our Earth.



Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. Through inspiring stories of extraordinary women, the authors show that the most effective way to fight global poverty is to unleash the potential of women. A passion-

SUMMER CALENDAR

JULY

Circles community meetings are being held on **Tuesdays**, 6:30 -8 pm at the First United Methodist Church. The first Tuesday of each month features an educational topic, and the fourth Tuesday is the Big View meeting, which explores and works on barriers that keep people right here in Harvey County from having enough resources. (The second Tuesday is reserved for Ally and Circle Leader meetings and the third Tuesday is reserved for the Guiding Coalition meeting.)

Peace Connections Board meeting will be **July 1**, 7 pm. Meetings are open to the public.



AUGUST

Circles community meetings will be held on **Tuesdays**, 6:30-8 pm at the First United Methodist Church. See info. under July.

Peace Connections Board meeting will be **August 5**, 7 pm. Meetings are open to the public.

SEPTEMBER

Circles community meetings will be held on **Tuesdays**, 6:30-8 pm at the First United Methodist Church. See info. under July.

Peace Connections Board meeting will be **September 2**, 7 pm. Meetings are open to the public.

Free/Low-cost Summer Activities Guide

Peace Connections again compiled and published a listing of Free/Low-cost Activities in the area this summer, including a number of Bible school programs. This was sent via email to a number of organizations. We hope this is a useful resource for children and families!

Note from a board member

In the early morning of May 31st, the Israeli navy intercepted a flotilla of six ships loaded with medicine, food, building material and other forms of humanitarian aid for the besieged Gaza Strip. Israeli naval commandos raided the flotilla while it was in international water, 70 miles off shore, and more than 50 miles outside of Israel's territorial water. The Israelis killed at least 10 civilians, injured 60, and kidnapped more than 600 others, including a Nobel peace icon and also Hedy Epstein, an 85-year old Holocaust survivor.



They were on board an aid ship called the Rachel Corrie, named after a heroic American Peace activist and CPT member who was bulldozed to death in Gaza by Israeli soldiers in 2003. It was an act of international terrorism, pure and simple. There can be no valid claims of self-defense on the part of the Israeli commandos who attacked the flotilla full of peace activists in international water. Fifteen international reporters were prevented from filing their stories by a nation that claims to be the beacon of democracy in the Middle East.

Israel claims the humanitarian aid is an invitation to national suicide. How could that be more absurd? Israel has over 200 nuclear bombs, is the strongest regional military power, and receives \$3.5 billion in military aid every year. Israel also receives this same amount in economic aid from our tax money every year. Israel claims that all they want is to search the cargo for weapons. Why, then, has Israel had a total blockade enforced upon Gaza's 1.6 million Palestinians for the past four years? During that time, Israel could have arranged for an international inspection of all humanitarian aid into Gaza. Does Israel want to prevent food and medicine from reaching the Palestinians as collective punishment? The sewage and water purification systems were destroyed by Israel two years ago. The children of Gaza, which comprise 65% of the population, are dying from disease and malnutrition.

Palestinians have been under occupation by Israel for the past 60 years. There is no such thing as morally acceptable occupation. As the oppressed resist, they will become more violent in their desperation. In turn, the occupiers will show their true colors as oppressors. The Israeli writer Amos Oz wrote in last week's New York Times that Israel has been fixated on military force ever since the Six-Day War in 1967. He excoriates the prevailing Israeli view that the Palestinian problem can be crushed instead of solved. That is the essence of the problem and the solution: end the crushing occupation and begin to solve the problem by providing the Palestinians, as well as the Jews, with a viable homeland.

I am a Palestinian who has experienced and watched the suffering of my people through their occupation. In 1948, my family had to flee our house because of the Jewish onslaught in Palestine. The Israelis shot and wounded my father and killed one of my cousins when they tried to retrieve food and clothing from our home. Another cousin was killed coming home from school. During the Six-Day-War in 1967, other cousins were burned by napalm, trying to flee through the Jordan River. Today, most Palestinians live in refugee camps, endure the occupation in the West Bank, or subsist in the "prison" of Gaza. My dream is that someday there will be peace and justice for all the people in the Middle East, especially the Palestinians.

By Shafiq Hasan, PC board member

Did You Know?

Our director, Myrna Krehbiel, was the recipient of the Newton Kansan's Woman of the Year award. Nominated by Arnita Haury, previous PC board president, with support from the PC Board of Directors and staff, Myrna was selected in the area of children and families for her ongoing work in the Newton community. "As the director of Peace Connections, Myrna has been a tireless force in not only her main focus through her organization, but in dealing with the issue of poverty and hopelessness in the greater Newton community," Dr. John Morton wrote in a Woman of the Year support letter.



Margaret Goering, Arnita Haury, Myrna Krehbiel, Amy Schmidt

A word from our Director...

“Stepping out of my comfort zone” is what being involved in Peace Connections, as well as Circles™, means for many of us.

Muriel and Shafiq have shared from their hearts experiences of being touched by pain and suffering. With open minds, hearts, and hands, each of us can be a seed and participate in resurrections.

Newton Area Peace Center and Peace Connections combined have survived for 27 years because those of you who receive this newsletter have chosen to invest your time, talents, and/or treasures in the vision and mission of Peace Connections.

At this exciting time in Peace Connections' history, as we grow this new Circles™ initiative, we are experiencing the challenges of busy schedules, an aging participant base, and the ongoing need for steady financial resources.

You have and you can continue to make a difference. In order for Peace Connections and Circles™ to thrive, change continues to be important. I believe more of us are being called “out of our comfort zone,” called to “step up.” The question is: are we listening and willing to take action? What time? talent? treasure? are you being called to share to help in creating the community and world you want for our children and grandchildren? It won't always be easy – but it is possible!

“I am leaving you with a gift: PEACE of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't fragile like the peace the world gives, so don't be troubled or afraid.” --John 14:27



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New opportunities to help at PC



Do you twitter? Have a Facebook or MySpace page? Maybe you blog. We are interested in having a presence in **social media** – we would welcome someone who enjoys doing this to help us out!

We recently were able to purchase **Giftworks software** through a grant from the CCSR. We are in need of someone who would be willing to share time and expertise in helping us get this up and going!



Do you hear your phone ringing?



Peace Connections' Board members will be calling everyone on our newsletter mailing list in September to review what Peace Connections has been doing and ask for your support of this organization financially. If the call comes at an inopportune time, feel free to ask us to call back. Efforts like the Getting Ahead classes for low income persons, the Kid's Summer Food and Activities program, the Circles Initiative are making a difference in our community. Your pledge towards the Peace Connections operating budget will help us continue our good work in the months ahead!



612 N. Main
Newton, Kansas 67114-2230

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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check here () and place in return mail.

Vision: Thriving communities sustained by social justice and compassion.

If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed. If in terms of ten years, plant trees. If in terms of 100 years, teach the people.

--Confucius

Mission:

Peace Connections partners with others to:

- ▶ **build resources within families and communities**
- ▶ **teach and practice nonviolence**
- ▶ **nurture personal and spiritual well-being**

This newsletter is published four times per year by Peace Connections, an ecumenical non-profit.

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The Board of Directors meets monthly at 612 N. Main, Newton, KS. Meetings are open to the public.