



Cultivating Justice,
Nonviolence & Well-being

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A nonprofit organization

Store Hours

Monday-Thursday
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Closed Friday-Sunday

Open Saturdays for holiday shopping in November and December

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January-February-March 2014

PEACE CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

Conversation on a train

by Marva Weigelt

As I was returning to Newton from a Christmas visit to my family in Michigan, I ended up sharing a table in the dining car of the Southwest Chief with an elementary school teacher and a Coast Guard engineer from Virginia and a civil engineer from Seattle. I'd venture to guess we were all somewhere in our 50s and of a similar class background.

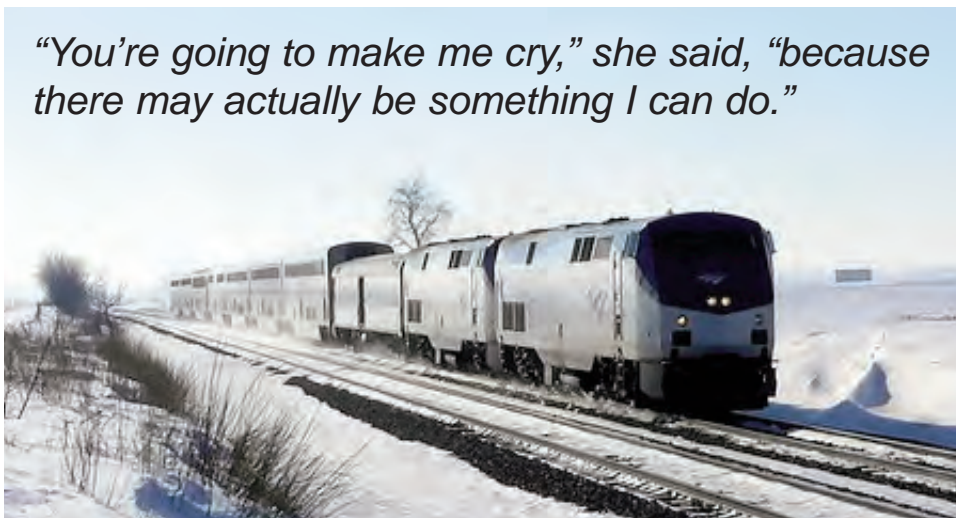
At first I appreciated just listening quietly as the topic turned to the woman's frustrations with her job in elementary education and the specific role that "poor people" played in making her job difficult. A fair number of stereotypes and assumptions were shared on this topic before someone turned and asked me what I did for a living.

I aimed for a gentle delivery of the news that my work primarily involved the very segment of the population that had just been thoroughly marginalized and blamed for its own ills as well as many of those in the educational system. I was interested in keeping open the opportunity to offer a different perspective.

How gratifying it was to begin describing the Circles® model from my firsthand experience as an Ally and to sense in all three of my tablemates a genuine interest. Heads nodded. A number of thoughtful questions were asked. The teacher from Virginia fetched paper and pen from her purse to write down the web address for Circles® USA so she could find out if there were any sites in her state.

Perhaps most encouraging of all was her emotional response. It was easy to see that her earlier stereotyping and dismissal were thin veils for her grief that there was so little hope of making a difference. "You're going to make me cry," she said, "because there may actually be something I can do."

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News Roundup

Holiday gatherings

On Tuesday, December 17, the Circles of Hope community had a holiday gathering with awards, a skit, charades, Christmas caroling with ukuleles and a visit from Santa for the children. There was also a candlelighting ceremony



to symbolize Myrna Krehbiel passing the torch for Circles coordination to Jennifer Rose (see next page).



Since Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve fell on Tuesdays, leaving three weeks between community meetings, several big-hearted volunteers helped to organize a Circles of Hope Holiday Open House on Saturday, December 28, at First United Methodist Church. About a dozen people showed up to play games, eat snacks and share fellowship.

Graduation Ceremony



graduates were: Bryna Buchholz, Dennis Carter, Patti Carter, Michelle Duft, Kimberly Martinez, Becky Ryding, Brad Siemens, and S. Lynn Tardy-Saunders. All eight have committed to the 18-month journey in a Matched Circle!

On Tuesday, January 7, the 8th Circle Leader training class had its graduation ceremony. The graduation address was given by Lynnette Redington, Director of the Harvey County Health Department. The



Recommended Reading

Here are a couple of online articles we recently recommended to Circles of Hope Allies and other volunteers to continue building their understanding of the issues being faced by our Circle Leaders. Perhaps you will find them enlightening too.

The Cognitive Burden of Poverty. *University of Warwick Professor Anandi Mani and several other social scientists suggest poverty, and the ever-present concerns that come with it, places an undue burden on an individual's limited mental resources.*

<http://thepsychreport.com/research-application/featured-research/the-cognitive-burden-of-poverty/>

■ Continued from page 2

How Scarcity Trap Affects our Thinking, Behavior. A Harvard economist finds there are psychological connections between the bad financial planning of many poor people and the poor time management of busy professionals. In both cases, he finds the experience of scarcity causes biases in the mind that exacerbate problems.

<http://www.npr.org/2014/01/02/259082836/how-scarcity-mentaly-affects-our-thinking-behavior>

Stan Bohn reports that he was able to check out the book referred to in the link above from the Newton Public Library – **"Scarcity" by Harvard economist Sendhil Mullainathan** – and found much to shake up his assumptions and give him new ways of perceiving some of these issues.

Embracing change

by Myrna Krehbiel

It was with a heart of gratitude for the gift of being the director of Peace Connections for 14 years and coordinator of Circles of Hope for 5 years that I last November proposed to the Peace Connections Board a change in my role in the new year.

The Board accepted my request to pass on the Circles of Hope responsibilities in 2014. I am delighted with their choice of Jennifer Rose, a Bethel College graduate who will complete a masters degree in social work at Newman University this May. Jennifer is no stranger to Circles. She was involved with child care at the Tuesday evening community meetings while at Bethel and began her social work practicum with Circles of Hope last August.

I am committed to being the Peace Connections Executive Director through June 30, 2014. I am glad Marva Weigelt, part-time administrative associate for the last two years, will be here to provide stability and continuity through the changes in 2014. Wanda Pumphrey and Glenda Reynolds remain in their roles in coaching the regional and local Circles initiatives, working closely with Jennifer Rose.

I am grateful to have partnered with you – givers of time, talent and treasure – to grow Newton Area Peace Center (NAPC) from a quarter-time position when I began in January of 2000 to a full-time leadership role with three additional part-time staff members.

Perhaps my biggest dream as I climbed the steps to NAPC above Druber's Donuts back in 2000 was to create an organizational presence in the community that was equally respected by persons with a military background or a pacifist background and to be a bridge builder between Newton and North Newton, as well as among the faith, business and civic communities. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to model community building through relationships.

None of this would have been possible without the support, patience and generosity of my family, especially my husband Randy, for whom I am especially grateful.



We must always refill and ensure there is a critical mass of leaders and activists committed to nonviolence and racial and economic justice who will keep seeding and building transforming movements.

-- Marian Wright Edelman

Building leadership to reduce poverty

by Steve Richards

Nearly one out of every four Kansas children lives in poverty. Where, you might wonder, do we begin to grapple with such a troubling fact and its rippling effects?



Myrna Krehbiel, Wanda Pumphrey and Steve Richards are among Kansas Circles participants at the Kansas Leadership Center in December. Circles representatives from Wichita, Marion, Salina and Allen County and James Wilson of the Newton Homeless Shelter also attended. Ed O'Malley, KLC President is at lower left.

Nineteen people representing five Circles of Kansas communities have embarked on a first-of-its-kind quest with the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) to do just that: raise challenging questions about reducing childhood poverty.

Some 70 people, including KLC faculty and staff, are part of the expedition, along with partners from Kansas Action for Children (KAC).

Sometimes the best vehicles for a difficult journey are earnest trains of thought and sincere conversation. This is notable as the first time that KLC has focused its attention on a single issue.

Three sessions offer the opportunity to convene people who are passionate about different perspectives on the complex issue of poverty. We gathered at KLC in Wichita in December and early January, and will meet the third time in April.

The time-commitment by so many people excites and exceeds the expectations of both KLC President Ed O'Malley and KAC President Shannon Cotsoradis. Each person is invested in particular aspects of addressing

poverty. As we become acquainted and build trust, we become more open about our hopes and fears.

Remarkable consensus is growing about the definition and nature of poverty. Working groups discussed aspects including: identifying root causes and putting a face on poverty in order to communicate effectively; community organization and empowerment for advocacy; building capacity and collaboration so organizations use resources effectively; psychological and emotional impact of poverty stress. Initial experiments were proposed in each group.

In April, we will report experimental results. Some are also networking individually on particular topics. We expect these exciting conversations to grow, thanks to the unusual resources of KLC and KAC!

Kansas Leadership Center, established in 2007 by the Kansas Health Foundation to address the need for civic leadership in Kansas, helps develop personal skills to make positive change for the common good. Leadership is understood as an activity, not a particular role or position. Anyone can lead, anytime, anywhere. It starts with each of us and must engage others. The objective is to inspire and energize people to face the daunting challenges among us.

Effective leaders develop their competence to diagnose situations, manage self, energize others and intervene skillfully. Participants explore specific skills in each of these areas. What changes are we willing to make in ourselves in order to make progress? Will we muster the courage to listen and reach across differences? Leadership requires experimentation and taking risks. When any of us claim we want something to change, those risks are part of what we ask for.

To learn more about the Kansas Leadership Center: kansasleadershipcenter.org



**KANSAS
LEADERSHIP
CENTER**



Next time you come to Peace Connections, you may notice recent changes and possibly even a little disorder as we undertake some updating projects. Several different requests and needs will be met by these changes.

ADA Restroom. The building's owner, Preferred Builders of Hesston, is constructing a new handicap-accessible restroom at the rear of the building. At the same time, they are working to separate the utilities for Peace Connections and the vacant store to the south, which is for rent.

Private Conference Area. We hope to construct a confer-

ence room in the rear of the building to create much-needed auditory and visual privacy for interviews and meetings as well as for conference calls and webinars. Confidentiality is especially important for Circles-related personal interviews. Volunteers are needed to help contain the cost. Please call if you are willing to donate materials or labor.

Office. The configuration of work and public spaces that has served Peace Connections programming in the past is now being adjusted to keep pace with changing needs, especially for Circles of Hope staff and participants. With all current staff working part-time, we are attempting to balance everyone's needs as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Store. The Peace Connections store will take up less space and carry a more tightly-focused product line. The front of the building has been rearranged so that the south side contains merchandise for sale and the north side offers displays and information about Peace Connections and Circles of Hope. The store and office will regularly be open 10 am – 4 pm, Monday-Thursday and closed Friday-Sunday. During November and December, our busiest sales months by far, the store will be open on Saturdays as well.

We are so grateful to the long-time volunteer store manager, Marlene Smucker, who has placed orders, priced and arranged inventory, rotated seasonal displays, and been on hand to help with special sales events for over a decade. Marlene routinely blesses us at least once a week with her competence, her good ideas and her cheerful presence.

This gift of long-term volunteering, with its continuity, wisdom and perspective, is a pearl of great price. As anyone who has ever volunteered in the store is aware, its greatest value sometimes seems to be to draw people in and arouse their curiosity about what we do. Marlene has been the initiator of many rich conversations and connections over the years and we are thankful for her faithfulness and her gifts as an ambassador for Peace Connections and its initiatives.



Come see
the changes
for yourself!

Peace Connections ANNUAL MEETING AND OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, March 2
2 - 5 pm

Refreshments - Music by Newton Ukulele Tunes Society
Short program at 2:30 pm

WINTER CALENDAR

All events are held at Peace Connections unless otherwise noted

JANUARY

Circles of Hope community meetings are 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 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 five Guiding Coalition teams to meet.)

The Season for Nonviolence begins January 30 and runs through April 4. This is a national 64-day grassroots campaign "dedicated to demonstrating that nonviolence is a powerful way to heal, transform, and empower our lives and our communities." Stop by Peace Connections for a **free poster** and daily suggestions of how to practice nonviolence or visit www.64-days.org

A SEASON FOR NONVIOLENCE



carry the vision

FEBRUARY

Circles of Hope community meetings are held on **Tuesdays**, 6:30 - 8 pm at the First United Methodist Church. See details under January.

Peace Connections Board meeting will be **Feb. 10**, 7 pm. Meetings are open to the public.

Make your Valentine cards at Peace Connections!

Valentine stamps and materials will be out & available **Mon., Feb. 3 - Thu., Feb. 13.** (closed Friday). A small donation for materials is suggested.

MARCH

Circles of Hope community meetings are held on **Tuesdays**, 6:30 - 8 pm at the First United Methodist Church. See details under July.

Peace Connections Board meeting will be **March 10**, 7 pm. Meetings are open to the public.

Peace Connections Annual Meeting will be Sunday, **March 2**, 2:00 - 5:00 pm. The event will be a come and go open house at Peace Connections, 612 N Main, with a short program at 2:30 pm. Refreshments will be served and music provided by Newton Ukulele Tunes Society (NUTS).



Piano available for a song

A Hensel piano made by EG Herrington & Co., New York, is no longer needed at Peace Connections. For a tax-deductible donation, you are welcome to arrange to have it moved to your home! Feel free to come by and check it out.

PEACE CONNECTIONS GIFT SHOP



Valentine's Day Cards.

We are pretty sure you will not find a better deal in town on boxed children's Valentine's cards in a variety ranging from 3D pets and insects to Hello Kitty and Honey-Scented. 30 to 32 cards

and envelopes per box. **\$.50 per box**

Mother Earth pillows. Designed by a nurse and massage therapist, these flax trigger-point neck pillows come in a variety of sizes and fabrics and are available in herbal scent or unscented. We also carry eye pillows and Little Heartbeat pillows to comfort kids. All can be used either warmed in the microwave or cooled in the freezer. **\$18.00 - \$46.00**



We are grateful to the following people for their gifts of time and talent during October, November and December:

- ◆ George Dyck, Arnita Haury, Ruby Moore, Gloria Rediger, Marlene Smucker and Leann Toews for help in the store and office.
- ◆ Assistance with various projects by Leah Mueller and Peyton Wright from Bethel College.
- ◆ Steve Richards and Roger Ratzlaff for their support and coaching for fund development.
- ◆ Glenda Reynolds for taking the lead in planning the successful Circles of Hope Celebrity Server event.
- ◆ Elmo Newman, Marian Stubbs, Susie Wickiser, James Wenger, Deb Zeiner and Jerilyn Ediger for being Circles of Hope ambassadors at the Et Cetera Shop Local Giving Day event.
- ◆ Christy Brenneman for her ongoing volunteer support with managing our financial records.
- ◆ Midland National Bank for the donation of office furniture.
- ◆ Roy Goering for donating two laptop computers.



Board Notes

Since 1997, Shafiq Hasan has been a member of our board of directors, achieving the distinction of retaining a seat on the board longer than any other member in the organization's history.

As Shafiq tells the story, his involvement with the Newton Area Peace Center began in the mid-1990s over a cup of coffee and doughnuts at Druber's with some NAPC supporters who had an office upstairs. He remembers the conversation as centering around the Middle East, and because he is a Muslim with a Middle East background, he paid close attention.

He walked away that day with an overwhelmingly good impression and soon came back to officially affiliate himself with the Peace Center. A couple years later he agreed to serve on the board, hardly imagining how long the association would ultimately last, but knowing that he had a passion for peace.

Given his ethnic and religious background, Shafiq was grateful to find a place that accepted and celebrated diversity, an affiliation that became a special blessing and refuge during the troubled period after 9/11 when life in the U.S. was especially challenging for Muslims. As NAPC evolved into Peace Connections, he remained on the board to help guide the organization, bringing his unique perspective to a truly ecumenical effort.

After attending close to 200 board meetings and special events over the years and bringing his quiet wisdom to decision-making and his outstanding homemade baklava and hummus to the table, he approached Myrna Krehbiel in December and requested a well-earned sabbatical.

The Peace Connections board and staff are grateful to Shafiq for his many years of service, his world view, his gentle spirit and his dedication to promoting peace. He is a reminder that peace begins wherever we may be, including the doughnut shop.

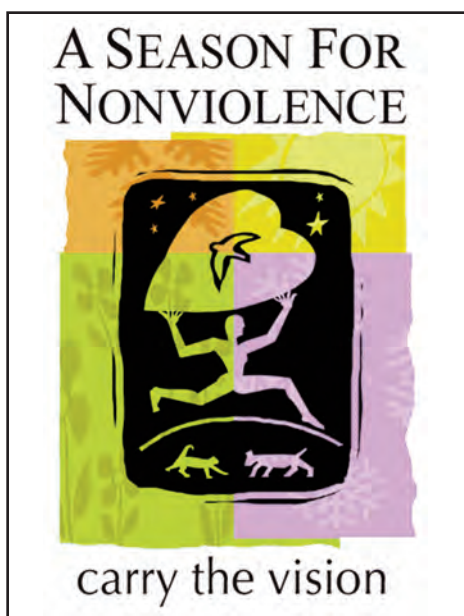


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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

If you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter,
check here () and place in return mail.

Vision: Thriving communities sustained by social justice and compassion.



*The event honors the vision of Gandhi and
Dr. King for an empowered, nonviolent world.*

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.