



Cultivating Justice,  
Nonviolence & Well-being

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A nonprofit organization

### Store & Office 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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July-August-September 2014

# PEACE CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

## Free Kids' Summer Activity program builds resilience



**Top:** For some kids, the hardest part of Book Bingo is paying attention; for others it is figuring out which book to pick as a prize.

**Right:** Angela Altum, Sue Elder and Cathy Willis make this top-notch summer enrichment program possible for 40 children.

**Bottom:** A visit to the fire station is one of many activities aimed at building awareness, confidence and community connections.



**This Peace Connections initiative is made possible by:**

American Association of University Women, Book ReViews, Citizen's State Bank, Community National Bank & Trust, First Bank, First Presbyterian Church, Midland National Bank, Salem UMC's Redbird Circle, Schowalter Foundation, Shalom Women, USD 373 & numerous individual donors, volunteers and presenters.

# Circles Volunteer Spotlight: Meet the Millenials

Most of us are familiar with “Baby Boomer” as a reference to the generation born between 1946 and 1964, but what do you know about Generation X and the Millenials?

According to a recent article about volunteer recruitment, Boomers want to change the world, Generation X (1965-early 1980s) adults prefer to be in charge and are largely self-reliant, while Millenials (1980s to early 2000s) care deeply about social justice and want to be involved with causes that make a positive difference.

Harvey County native, Leah Mueller, is a notable example of a Millenial in action. Upon assignment to Peace Connections last fall through the Bethel College Service Learning program, Leah jumped in with enthusiasm to support the Community Team at Circles of Hope. Not long after joining the team responsible for all support services associated with the weekly meetings – like setup, cleanup, meals and childcare – Leah’s enthusiasm inspired her cousin Jason to get involved.

Leah has long since met her Service Learning requirement for 60 hours a semester and continues to help through the summer months. She and Jason pitch in on whatever is needed in the kitchen and then head upstairs to continue building relationships with the Circles kids, providing shining role models for children who may have a shortage of good examples in their lives.

One of Leah’s most notable accomplishments – fueled by her own passion for sustainability – was to implement recycling at Circles, a project that required creativity, patience and persistence.

Millenials like Leah and Jason give good reason for hope! We are so grateful for their contributions.



**Giving Cousins: Leah and Jason Mueller**

## We are grateful to the following people for their gifts of time and talent during April, May & June

- ◆ George Dyck, Arnita Haury, Sari Pouch, Kathy Randall, Steve Richards, Marlene Smucker, Sarah Wallace and Joyce Whiteman for their contributions of time and talent in the store and office.
- ◆ Ron Bachman for donating his plumbing services and supplies to the Giving Garden.
- ◆ Christy Brenneman for her ongoing volunteer support with managing our financial records. This summer her 15-year-old daughter Kylie is doing some accounting job-shadowing. The Brennemans also donated some office furniture.
- ◆ Arnita Haury, Marlene Smucker and Leann Toews for organizing Myrna’s retirement reception.
- ◆ Barrick Wilson for playing piano at the reception.
- ◆ Connie Weber for donating Play-Doh for Kids’ Summer Activity.
- ◆ Elaine Banman for donating a bed for a Circle Leader.
- ◆ Jeff Guy at *The Kansan* for great coverage in the last several of months.



# Board & Staff Notes



## Honoring Myrna's legacy

Myrna Krehbiel's retirement reception at Carriage Factory Art Gallery on June 8 was attended by close to a hundred well-wishers.

Myrna is pictured here with two of her three former assistants, Marva Weigelt (left) and Cathy Anderson (right); Amy Schmidt was out of town.

In addition to offering a chance to honor Myrna's leadership legacy, the event also raised just over \$1,300 in donations made to the Kids' Summer Activity initiative in Myrna's honor.

## Staff take mini-retreat

On June 23, Peace Connections staff gathered in North Newton for a half-day retreat. The top priority, according to Marva Weigelt (Communications), was making time to connect as human beings who are in the midst of an important transition process.

"Spending some uninterrupted time together as colleagues is a luxury that we do not often get, and I wanted us to enjoy that," said Weigelt. "I thought of it as a way to synch up our minds and hearts." All four paid staff members are part time and only together in the office for a few hours a week, usually on Tuesdays.

In addition to taking time to share personal stories and appreciations for one another's strengths and qualities, Marva and other staff members – Wanda Pumphrey (Circles Regional Coach), Glenda Reynolds (Circles Coach) and Jennifer Rose (Acting Director) – focused on identifying and seeking clarity on work-related issues, with the purpose of sharing, listening and collecting input to pass on to the board.

Special thanks go to Peace Connections Board president, Jeanette Stucky, who opened her North Newton home for the retreat, prepared inspirational morning snacks and a nourishing lunch, and minded the office.



## Special gratitude

We are so grateful for the many volunteers who give generously of their time to help make the free Summer Food program at USD 373 possible!

So far this summer, about 100 kids showed up for breakfast and about twice as many for lunch, with a **record high of 249 for lunch**. In June the USDA-funded program served a total of 4,932 breakfasts and lunches.

Special thanks to Angela Altum for coordinating the volunteers!

# Giving Garden volunteers dig making a difference

Where can you enjoy time in the great outdoors, engage in purposeful exercise, have fellowship with caring community members, and make a difference in the lives of Harvey County families with low resources?

Volunteer Gerald Greene says the answer is the Giving Garden at 6th and Pine, and he and Scott Eckert of the County Extension Master Gardener program are ready to put you to work!

"We need more volunteers," says Greene, who goes far above and beyond the expectations for Tuesday and Thursday volunteer hours in order to keep the garden running in an orderly fashion. "Some weeks I'm here most days," he admits, "and I could really use some help."

When I caught up with the garden gang on a Thursday morning in late June, it was cloudy and unusually cool. Bill Auman, Karen DeGrazio and Deb Smalley were helping Eckert and Greene with harvesting and cleaning onions and potatoes. Jacque Spangler had already come and gone for the morning. Her task was to pick out the best of the day's produce to prepare for entry in the County Fair competition. Any prize money is invested back into the garden.



From left: Bill Auman, Scott Eckert, Gerald Greene and Karen DeGrazio sort the day's onion harvest.

to help. "We are happy to guide anyone who is willing," says Scott. He'd appreciate a call to let him know you are coming to one of the Tuesday or Thursday morning work times, 316-284-6930.



Gerald Greene and Deb Smalley

So far this season, the gardeners have donated in the neighborhood of 150 pounds of onions and 200 pounds of new potatoes to the local Salvation Army for distribution in food baskets. By the end of the year, the total quantity of donated vegetables has been known to reach as high as 6,000 pounds.

Deb Smalley noted that, thanks to periodic rains, they'd only had to turn the water on once so far this season. The downside, Gerald pointed out, is that tomatoes are not doing so well under these cool and wet conditions. Every year offers a different set of challenges, as all gardeners and farmers understand.

The garden provides a place for local Master Gardeners in training to get in their required 40 hours, but you don't have to be a Master Gardener

*Sitting on the sidelines in our interconnected world is not a sufficient response.*

*--Dillon Burroughs*

# PEACE CONNECTIONS GIFT SHOP

*Unique Gift Options for Thoughtful Givers*

T-Shirts • Jewelry • Candles • Books • Music • Toys • Greeting Cards

## Deep gratitude for 12 extraordinary years of volunteer service

When Marlene Smucker first expressed an interest in helping with what would eventually become the Peace Connections gift shop, it was still just a delicious idea simmering on the back burner at the Newton Area Peace Center (NAPC) office above Druber's Donuts. Myrna Krehbiel had recently been named director and was cooking up lots of ideas. Marlene was fairly new to town and looking for places to plug in. "I wanted to be of service where I was really needed," she says, "doing something in harmony with my values."

Marlene became volunteer store manager in 2002, and by then the NAPC had metamorphosed into Peace Connections and moved to a prime storefront location on Main Street. The philosophy that has always guided her purchasing and merchandising was to find products that either made a statement about peaceful and tolerant beliefs or supported the cultivation of personal and community peace.

Now, after a dozen years of coming in at least once a week to assist customers, check inventory, change seasonal displays and order products, she's ready to lighten her volunteer load a bit. "I feel like it's time to reduce my level of busyness, but it's hard to know where to stop," says Marlene. In addition to her investment in Peace Connections, she also volunteers at Et Cetera, Book ReViews and as Health Coordinator for her church, Shalom Mennonite.

The opportunities she's loved and will miss most about the job are greeting and conversing with store customers and staff. "I enjoyed feeling that the store was helping to support the mission," she says, "and I will really miss being in the middle of the interesting people and ideas here."

Peace Connections staff will miss having Marlene around too! Her thoughtful perspective and wise counsel have been a great blessing over the years. And other family members, especially husband Stan, have pitched in with projects in the store and office.

Marlene and Stan's extended Smucker clan are all in Harvey County, including three sons and their families, which include six grandchildren, all of whom are in college at the same time. At least she knows one place to look for graduation gifts! We wish Marlene many blessings and offer our deep gratitude for her 12 years of service.

Marlene will be "retiring" at the end of July. She has agreed to provide orientation for the new volunteer store manager, Kathy Leininger, who will work in the store on Tuesdays before she goes to Circles of Hope to serve in her other new volunteer position as Childcare Coordinator.



We will miss hearing Marlene giggle as she looks at the catalog to order thought-provoking bumper stickers.

# CALENDAR

**SPECIAL SHOWING: Tuesday, August 26, 6:00 pm. Documentary Film: American Winter.** The community is welcome to a special Circles of Hope showing of this HBO documentary that follows several families as they struggle to get by while facing overwhelming challenges and dwindling resources available to help them, creating a powerful firsthand view of Americans caught in today's financial undertow. **If you'd like to join us for the 5:30 pm meal, please RSVP to 284-0000.** Showing is at First United Methodist Church, 801 N. Main, Newton.

**Circles of Hope** meets every Tuesday at the First United Methodist Church, 801 N. Main, Newton. Meal is 5:30 – 6:15 pm; meeting is 6:30 – 8 pm. *Note that open meetings for visitors are the first and fourth Tuesdays.*

- First Tuesday (Open), Educating ourselves
- Second Tuesday (Reserved), Matched Circles supporting each other
- Third Tuesday (Reserved), Guiding Coalition Teams sustaining Circles of Hope
- Fourth Tuesday (Open), Big View changing our community

**Peace Connections Board of Directors** meets the 2nd Monday of each month at 5:30 pm at the Peace Connections office. Meetings are scheduled for July 21, August 11 and September 8 and are open to the public

## The reciprocity jar

by Marva Weigelt

It started with a simple neighborly impulse on a chilly winter's afternoon. I was getting ready to dash to the grocery store for a few items and stopped to ask my neighbor in the next apartment - a friend I'd made through Circles of Hope - if she needed anything while I was out. I knew she'd been going through a health challenge and often felt weary and depleted.



As it happened, Michelle had just been looking at recipes and lacked only an onion to make a particular dish, so I happily added that to my list. I also spontaneously picked out a dark chocolate mint candy bar and brought that back for her as well.

The next day Michelle called to let me know she had something she wanted to share, a jar of soup made with the onion I had purchased for her. And that's how it started.

That simple pint canning jar – an old-fashioned symbol of abundance and nurturing - went back and forth between our apartments numerous times until the very end of May when Michelle moved out of the building.

The nurturing jar came and went with soups and stews in the colder months, and lilacs and fresh lentil sprouts in the warmer months. In the last weeks before she planned to move, we were in silent and joyous competition to see who would be the last to pass the jar back.

In the final week, Michelle left it at my door filled with Rainbow Mint Tea and a card of thanks. I managed to return the volley on

her last day, offering crunchy veggies to sustain her during moving and a butterfly pin to symbolize the metamorphosis made possible by her courageous response to a terminal diagnosis.

As Dr. Samuel Johnson put it, "As in filling a vessel drop by drop, there is at last a drop which makes it run over; so in a series of kindness there is at last one which makes the heart run over."

# Real Stories of Donations in Action



A young single mom who recently graduated from the Circle Leader training class is blossoming and showing strong leadership skills in the Circles of Hope community. Her two children, ages 6 and 4, benefit from the child care activities, while their mom gets support for completing her goals, two of which she met recently by completing her practicum and certification as a Pharmacy Technician.

*Would you like to be part of a success story like this?*  
**\$30/month pays for one person or couple to complete the Circle Leader training class and set goals for a better future story.**

Kids' Summer Activity is an especially good fit for kids like Megan and Myia who would otherwise not have access to summer learning opportunities. Even more critical, perhaps, is easy access to the free breakfast and lunch program four mornings a week without childcare expenses for their single, working mom.

**Reading with your kids was part of a parenting presentation by K-State Extension at Circles of Hope in April**

The Summer Activity program offers a variety of stimulating activities to encourage academic readiness and healthy lifestyles.

*Do you have a heart for kids?*

**\$60/month allows 9 local children to participate in the Kids' Summer activity program and \$120/month covers the cost of providing child care at Circles of Hope.**

## Phonathon coming in September

During the month of September, Peace Connections' Board members and other volunteers will be calling persons on our mailing list. We want to hear what you appreciate about Peace Connections and how you'd like to support the mission in the coming months. If the call comes at an inopportune time, feel free to ask us to call back. Your pledge towards sustaining the initiatives of Peace Connections will help us continue this life-changing work on your behalf, building "thriving communities sustained by social justice and compassion."



## Are you surprised to be getting this newsletter?

We are amalgamating and updating our records to make sure we reach as many of our donors, supporters and volunteers as possible. Here are some options for you to consider:

**Option #1:** If you received your copy in the mail and would prefer to receive it by email in the future, please email a brief note to [info@peaceconnections.org](mailto:info@peaceconnections.org)

**Option #2:** If you received your copy by mail or email and prefer NOT to receive mailings in the future, please reply to [info@peaceconnections.org](mailto:info@peaceconnections.org), call us at 316-284-0000 or drop us a note at 612 N. Main, Newton, KS 67114.

We want to understand and accommodate your preferences!



612 N. Main  
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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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check here ( ) and place in return mail.

**Vision: Thriving communities sustained by social justice and compassion.**

Our love is  
powerful beyond  
our wildest  
imagination.

-Harold W. Becker

**Peace Connections partners with others to:**

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

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