The Peace Center educates and empowers schools and families and enriches communities with proven conflict resolution and social justice programs.

You are Invited to Attend a “Bridges to Peace” Storytelling Tour

Wed., Dec. 4th 3:15 to 4:30 pm
Wed., Dec. 18th 5:45 to 7:00 pm

More dates to be announced soon @thepacecenter.org

Please join us for a Bridges to Peace Storytelling Tour at The Peace Center.

Our “Bridges to Peace” storytelling tours provide an inspiring look at the way we impact schools, families and communities, and transform lives.

Learn about our successes and the lives we touch through bullying prevention, conflict resolution, and social justice programming for youth and adults.

Our Storytelling Tours are Feedback-Raisers, Not Fund-Raisers. We want to know how our stories inspire you!

RSVP at www.thepacecenter.org/bridges-to-peace. For more information, contact Laura Lazar, Director of Relationship Development at (215) 750-7220 or Llazar@thepacecenter.org.

THRIVE is Thriving!

In an effort to enable high school students to thrive in these turbulent times, The Peace Center has launched an exciting new program called THRIVE! THRIVE stands for Trust, Heal, Respect, Inquire, Value and Empathize.

THRIVE is a social/emotional learning program created to give high school students the life skills they will need to flourish in and out of the academic environment.

Like our programs for elementary and middle school students, THRIVE is composed of five lessons delivered over the course of one week. Students participate in hands-on activities and discussions on the subjects of good decision-making, healthy relationships, sexual harassment, managing strong emotions, and diversity. THRIVE gives 10th grade students the rare opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about real life situations they confront each day.

Our pilot program, delivered to Bristol Borough High School last spring, was a huge success. In nearly unanimous agreement, students said the topics covered in THRIVE are valuable for high school students.

This year, four high schools will receive THRIVE, and we plan to expand our reach even further in the 2020/21 academic year. If you enjoy working with high school students and would like to participate in a THRIVE training, or know someone who would, contact Karin Kasdin at kkasdin@thepacecenter.org.

Karin Kasdin, Director, Girls Unlimited & THRIVE

Mighty Voices for Peace

This year, gun violence in Philadelphia is the highest it has been since 2012, and out of every ten victims, one is a teenager. For the month of September, The Peace Center partnered with Mighty Writers—an organization that teaches students to think and write with clarity—to give students both the tools and the platform to address the issue of gun violence, which has impacted each of their lives in deeply personal ways.

Throughout September, The Peace Center delivered lessons to Mighty Writers teens on peacebuilding, violence and changemaking. The lessons, part of our SPEAK program (Students for Peace Empowered to Act with Knowledge), focused on how to create positive peace, what the causes of peace or violence are, what teens envision as their ideal community, and how to build changemaking campaigns.

On September 25th, the teens held an anti-violence summit at Friends Center in Philadelphia to present a packet they wrote about peace and violence in the city, share their own stories about experiences with gun violence, and question local lawmakers on what they are doing to address the issue.

We are so proud of these teens and their mighty voices! They suggest these changes to decrease violence in the city: make guns less accessible and harder to buy; increase mental and emotional health services and make them more affordable; address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); and teach peacemaking skills to children. We look forward to continuing to partner with Mighty Writers to lift up these young leaders!

Kate Whitman, Director of Education Programming
So while much of our current discourse grinds between debate of what kinds of people are the most capable of making decisions on our behalf, and who should have the power to shape the future of our country, we do not always consider the larger scale impact of these decisions. The Peace Center has always been in a state of change while also seeking to evoke a conversation in individuals which would create enduring peace. We have changed from solely working to end nuclear proliferation organizations and from a focus on children and the elderly to serving everyone at all levels of society. We have added programs and schools. We continue to add new programs and staff to meet the growing demands of our constituency.

Seeing the Light Come on in a Young Girl’s Face ...

Stacy McLean, Executive Director

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Who do You Think We Are?
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Welcome Laura Lazar – Director of Relationship Development!

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One Book, One Bucks

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Be sure to join the next One Book, One Bucks discussion of The New Jim Crow, by Michelle Alexander on February 6, 2020 at 7:00pm at The Peace Center, to be led by members of the Greater Trenton Chapter of the Campaign to End the New Jim Crow, as we mark 10 years since its publication.

—Susan Sofranko, Administrative Coordinator

Karins Kasdin, founding director of Girls Unlimited, is a picture of grace, wit, and rock star exuberance, but in fact, while growing up, she was teased as an outcast, left with an invisible imprint lasting well into adulthood. She has shared her story countless times with girls on the cuff of adulthood who grappling with adult-sized problems—family complexities, social pressure, disappointments, confusion when harassed, a yearning for someone to trust, fear of seeking help. Karin wants to help silence the critical societal and self-chatter that sabotage our well being.

As one of over 30 facilitators Karin has trained, I know it’s a privilege to share this program with girls, one circle at a time, striving to create a safe space where girls can share issues and relational concerns that affect them, practicing skills that enable resilience despite life’s inevitable challenges. Each group of girls uniquely learns to develop: self-care, empathy (realizing that everyone has hidden stories), and a code of conduct (collaboratively creating a social contract for our time together), which if applied more widely, can serve them for the rest of their lives.

We know we can’t reach or captivate every girl in just five 1-hour sessions, yet there are so many moments when I recognize my younger self in certain girls, or feel the palpable shift in trust, or see the light come on in a young girl’s face. And, occasionally, we hear a life is saved. One school administrator shared: “After only just a few successive years of Girls Unlimited, the climate and the culture of the school changed for the better!”

Certainly not all girls suffer through middle school, but statistics bear out that influences like inescapable social media, pressures to meet impossible standards, and the pervasive messages of fake “reality tv,” are causing trauma and stress met with unprecedented rates of teen suicide and self-harm. Overwhelmingly, post-program research results, as well as written feedback from our last day together, confirm that the girls have acquired new levels of awareness, confidence, and social skills, all of which empower them to thrive.

At its core, Girls Unlimited is about agency in healthy relationships. I’m astonished by how deeply this work continues to transform me. With each experience, I’m challenged to peel back another layer of understanding the relationships in my life—from parenting to marriage, from professional to personal—and what it means to be a responsive and responsible member of community.

I had long forgotten those beleaguered days of an oftentimes lonely, painful childhood, so in fact, it is often me, as well as the girls, who feels validated—finally, at the tender age of sixty! Girls Unlimited: Where No Girl Stands Alone, became for me, Girls Unlimited: Where the life you save may be your own!

I am so grateful for this wise offering of The Peace Center. I invite you to join our efforts to bring light, joy and hope for a kinder world to our next generation!

—Susan Jasiewicz, Peace Educator

“Peace Bloomed With Knowledge” at our Auction Gala October 20th!

Board Chair Connie Keener and Executive Director Danny L. Thomas welcomed over 200 guests to our lovely Gala held at Spring Mill Manor. Guests enjoyed delicious food, drinks and music, while helping The Peace Center generate 19% of its annual operating budget! The Quakertown Community School District was honored for its diversity and inclusion programming in schools. Barbara Simmons was honored by State Sen. Steve Santarsiero and PA Rep. Perry Warren for her many years as Executive Director of The Peace Center, and Marion Snipes accepted an award on behalf of her late husband, Sam Snipes, for his lifetime efforts toward addressing racial inequality.
The Peace Center has a history of asking hard questions to create positive social change in our society. How do we address the racial inequities that plague our nation, and the rise of overt racism in our schools and universities? There are no easy answers, but our efforts can add to the collective narrative that may help our young people who may feel marginalized. Here are three of those efforts.

**Teen Talk** The Peace Center is partnering with The African American Museum of Bucks County and George School to hold “Teen Talk” for Youth of Color. The event will bring together students from area high schools to discuss the issues they face as students of color in their environment. George School students have faced racism when they walked into neighboring communities. The Peace Center then sought community dialogue with businesses. Without much change occurring thus far, we will focus on the best ways to support our young people through this discussion.

**Seventh Annual MLK Teen Peace and Social Justice Summit** to be held January 19, 2020, from 4 to 7 pm. This event will feature the film “I’m Not Racist, Am I?” followed by an in-depth discussion with its director to process this narrative that may help our young people who want to learn how to navigate a police force. As a victim of police brutality himself, the director’s goal was to seek ways for people of color and the police to listen to each other and then change perceptions, assumptions and actions.

Barbara Simmons, Executive Director Emeritus

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**Steps to Understanding Racial Bias**

1. **Basement:** I don’t know what I don’t know.

2. **Awareness:** I recognize the impact of racial bias.

3. **Understanding:** I place myself in your shoes.

4. **Reflection/Acceptance:** I understand how systemic change needs to take place.

5. **Action:** I am ready or working to change my behavior.

6. **Advocate/Ally:** I understand I need to be part of the solution.

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**From Bystander to Upstander**

Addressing bullying requires a concerted commitment from youth, parents, educators and every member of our community. When delivering our programs in schools and in communities, there is no shortage of stories about youth and adults who have either experienced or witnessed bullying, or other forms of verbal, physical or social aggression. National statistics reveal that 70% of young people have witnessed bullying in their schools, yet only 30% have reported or done something to address it. When discussing the challenges of standing up to bullying with youth and parents, students express that fear may prevent them from speaking up. Research shows however, that 57% of the time, when bystanders intervene, bullying stops within 10 seconds! Responding to bullying is not easy; it requires courage. Upstanders play a pivotal role in combating bullying, whether it is reporting bullying behavior to an adult, telling the aggressor to stop, supporting the target, or encouraging others to stand with them.

Through our Bullying Prevention Resource Center, the Peace Center will continue supporting our families, schools, and members of our community by empowering all to be upstanders in the face of bullying. This year, we are offering empowerment and bullying prevention programs in schools, as well as programs for adults, to address and respond to adult bullying. We launched a new program called EMPOWER this school year which provides students with necessary tools to manage emotions, communicate assertively, and learn strategies to step up for themselves and for others. Join us in our efforts to put an end to bullying by showing the courage to stand up!

Kathia Mondair-Weissman, PhD Director, Bullying Prevention Resource Center

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**How to Survive the Messiness of the Holidays**

Are you dreading holiday gatherings with family members you only see a few times a year because your views are so vastly different? Have you devised an excuse not to go to your sister’s holiday dinner, or are you hosting the big event and trying to find a way to survive it? Many people are feeling this fear, which is real and creates a lot of anxiety. Try these tips to maintain some civility and sanity:

1. **If Hosting, have Ground Rules** everyone agrees to follow: Be Respectful. Don’t Yell or curse. Listen fully before responding, and Be Cautious as children are listening.

2. **Keep Your Opinions about Yourself.** It doesn’t help to tell others you think their feelings are wrong. Opinions and feelings can’t be wrong; only facts can be wrong.

3. **Have Facts to Back Up Your Arguments.** Division occurs because of “alternative facts” vs. “facts.” Your values may no longer match your family member’s values, which can feel devastating, lonely and disempowering. However, others are likely feeling the same which can make civil conversations difficult. We don’t all have the same news source, therefore, we can’t agree on the facts.

4. **You’re Not Going to Change Anyone’s Mind.** Once we understand we’re having a polite debate and we’re not going to sway anyone to “come to the other side,” there is opportunity to have an engaging conversation, and possibly learn something.

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**Image attributed to “Interaction Institute for Social Change – Anjali Maquire”**
Asking Difficult Questions to Create Positive Social Change

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Knowing what is right does not mean much unless you do what is right.” — Theodore Roosevelt

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The Peace Center has hosted lively and educational book discussions around Bucks County, facilitated by The Peace Center Executive Director Emeritus Barbara Simmons, African-American Museum of Bucks County President Linda Salley, Bucks County NAACP President Karen Downer, Bucks County District Attorney Matt Weintraub, and Reverend L. Gail Moore of Macedonia Baptist Church in Newtown.

Be sure to join the next One Book, One Bucks discussion of The New Jim Crow, by Michelle Alexander on February 6, 2020 at 7:00pm at The Peace Center, to be led by members of the Greater Trenton Chapter of the Campaign to End the New Jim Crow, as we mark 10 years since its publication.

Susan Sofranko, Administrative Coordinator

Karin Kasdin, founding director of Girls Unlimited, is a picture of grace, wit, and rock star exuberance, but in fact, while growing up, she was teased as an outcast, left with an invisible imprint lasting well into adulthood. She has shared her story countless times with girls on the cusp of adulthood who grapple with adult-sized problems—family complexities, social pressure, disappointments, confusion when harassed, a yearning for someone to trust, fear of seeking help. Karin wants to help silence the critical societal and self-chatter that sabotage our well being.

As one of over 30 facilitators Karin has trained, I know it’s a privilege to share this program with girls, one circle at a time, striving to create a safe space where girls can share issues and relational concerns that affect them, practicing skills that enable resilience despite life’s inevitable challenges. Each group of girls uniquely learns to develop: self-care, empathy (realizing that everyone has hidden stories), and a code of conduct (collaboratively creating a social contract for our time together), which if applied more widely, can serve them for the rest of their lives.

We know we can’t reach or captivate every girl in just five 1-hour sessions, yet there are so many moments when I recognize my younger self in certain girls, or feel the palpable shift in trust, or see the light come on in a young girl’s face. And, occasionally, we hear a life is saved. One school administrator shared: “After only just a few successive years of Girls Unlimited, the climate and the culture of the school changed for the better!”

Certainly not all girls suffer through middle school, but statistics bear out that influences inescapable social media, pressures to meet impossible standards, and the pervasive messages of fake “reality tv,” are causing trauma and stress met with unprecedented rates of teen suicide and self-harm. Overwhelmingly, post-program research results, as well as the written feedback from our last day together, confirm that the girls have acquired new levels of awareness, confidence, and social skills, all of which empower them to thrive.

At its core, Girls Unlimited is about agency in healthy relationships. I’m astonished by how deeply this work continues to transform me. With each experience, I’m challenged to peel back another layer of understanding the relationships in my life—from parenting to marriage, from professional to personal—and what it means to be a responsive and responsible member of community.

I had long forgotten those beleaguered days of an oftentimes lonely, painful childhood, so in fact, it is often me, as well as the girls, who feels validated—finally, at the tender age of sixty! Girls Unlimited: Where No Girl Stands Alone, became for me, Girls Unlimited: Where the life you save may be your own!

I am so grateful for this wise offering by The Peace Center. I invite you to join our efforts to bring light, joy and hope for a kinder world to our next generation!

Susan Jasiewicz, Peace Educator

“Peace Bloomed With Knowledge” at our Auction Gala October 20th!

Board Chair Connie Keener and Executive Director Danny L. Thomas welcomed over 200 guests to our lovely Gala held at Spring Mill Manor. Guests enjoyed delicious food, drinks and music, while helping The Peace Center generate 19% of its annual operating budget! The Quakertown Community School District was honored for its diversity and inclusion programming in schools. Barbara Simmons was honored by State Sen. Steve Santarsiero and PA Rep. Perry Warren for her many years as Executive Director of The Peace Center, and Marion Snipes accepted an award on behalf of her late husband, Sam Snipes, for his lifetime efforts toward addressing racial inequality.
The Peace Center has always been in a state of change while also seeking to evolve in ways which individuals who would create enduring peace. We have changed from solely working to end nuclear proliferation to building a movement for peace through education, prevention, and advocacy.

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The Peace Center educates and empowers schools and families and enriches communities with proven conflict resolution and social justice programs.

You are Invited to Attend a “Bridges to Peace” Storytelling Tour
Wed., Dec. 4th 3:15 to 4:30 pm
Wed., Dec. 18th 5:45 to 7:00 pm
More dates to be announced soon @ thepeacecenter.org

Please join us for a Bridges to Peace Storytelling Tour at The Peace Center.

Our “Bridges to Peace” storytelling tours provide
an inspiring look at the way we impact schools, families and communities, and transform lives.

Learn about our successes and the lives we touch
through bullying prevention, conflict resolution, and social justice programming for youth and adults.

Our Storytelling Tours are Feedback-raisers, Not Fund-raisers.
We want to know how our stories inspire you!
RSVP at www.thepeacecenter.org/bridges-to-peace. For more information, contact Laura Lazar,
Director of Relationship Development at (215) 750-7220 or llazar@thepeacecenter.org.

THRIVE is Thriving!
In an effort to enable high school students to thrive in these turbulent times, The Peace Center has launched an exciting new program called THRIVE! THRIVE stands for Trust, Heal, Respect, Inquire, Value and Empathize.
THRIVE is a social/emotional learning program created to give high school students the life skills they will need to flourish in and out of the academic environment.
Like our programs for elementary and middle school students, THRIVE is composed of five lessons delivered over the course of one week. Students participate in hands-on activities and discussions on the subjects of good decision-making, healthy relationships, sexual harassment, managing strong emotions, and diversity.
THRIVE gives 10th grade students the rare opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about real life situations they confront each day.
Our pilot program, delivered to Bristol Borough High School last spring, was a huge success. In nearly unanimous agreement, students said the topics covered in THRIVE are valuable for high school students.
This year, four high schools will receive THRIVE, and we plan to expand our reach even further in the 2020/21 academic year. If you enjoy working with high school students and would like to participate in a THRIVE training, or know someone who would, contact Karin Kasdin at kkasdin@thepeacecenter.org.

Karin Kasdin, Director, Girls Unlimited & THRIVE

Mighty Voices for Peace
This year, gun violence in Philadelphia is the highest it has been since 2012, and out of every ten victims, one is a teenager. For the month of September, The Peace Center partnered with Mighty Writers—an organization that teaches students to think and write with clarity—to give students both the tools and the platform to address the issue of gun violence, which has impacted each of their lives in deeply personal ways.
Throughout September, The Peace Center delivered lessons to Mighty Writers teens on peacebuilding, violence and changemaking. The lessons, part of our SPEAK program (Students for Peace Empowered to Act with Knowledge), focused on how to create positive peace, what the causes of peace or violence are, what teens envision as their ideal community, and how to build changemaking campaigns.
On September 25th, the teens held an anti-violence summit at Friends Center in Philadelphia to present a packet they wrote about peace and violence in the city, share their own stories about experiences with gun violence, and question local lawmakers on what they are doing to address the issue.
We are so proud of these teens and their mighty voices! They suggest these changes to decrease violence in the city: make guns less accessible and harder to buy; increase mental and emotional health services and make them more affordable; address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); and teach peace making skills to children. We look forward to continuing to partner with Mighty Writers to lift up these young leaders!

Kate Whitman, Director of Education Programming