

From Our Director

"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."

Midsummer is the time when farmers near and far are harvesting the fruits (and vegetables!) of their labor - planting done months and even years ago. Audrey Hepburn reminds us that there is an element of faith in gardening. In the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, "... we hope for what we do not see."

Sister Karen was an avid gardener. Now virtually all of the work we do in her name is unseen. We're not baking pastries or constructing bridges. Still we hope for something much more meaningful and enduring (certainly more lasting than a cream cheese danish!).

As we emerge from the pandemic, we find that violence is epidemic in our city, as it is in most urban areas. At such a time as this, our mission to create a nonviolent community can seem hopeless.

For 14 years, we've been tending Sister Karen's garden of peacemaking. Camp Peaceprints for children, Alternatives to Violence Project workshops in prison and in the community, our annual event and the inspiration it brings, peace and justice advocacy with our coalition groups ... these are propagating nonviolence today in people and places we can only imagine, in ways we can't see.

The good news is that we live in hope around here. We believe in tomorrow!

Continually cultivating,

Vivian

Vivian Ruth Waltz



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Our Advisory Board

Sr. Michele Beiter, SSJ
Antionette (Tracy) Craig
Barbara Diebold, SSJ Associate
Sr. Janet DiPasquale, SSJ
(SSJ Leadership Team liaison)
Marilyn Peterson
Maureen Satchell, SSJ Associate
Sr. Elizabeth Savage, SSJ
Sr. Kristen Schmitz, SSJ

In memory of James Mang
(Member 2007-2021)



A Life Dedicated to Nonviolence



It is with great sorrow that we report the passing of James Mang, Associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Buffalo, and our Board Member Emeritus. Jim served the Sister Karen Center faithfully the entire 14 years of our existence.

Jim shared a close friendship with Sister Karen Klimczak and participated in her ministry of peacemaking and justice-seeking for many years. Following Sister Karen's murder in 2006, the Sisters of St. Joseph wanted to develop a center in her name devoted to nonviolence. Jim became the guiding light that made the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence a reality.

When Jim and his wife Audrey agreed to be interim directors, no work was beyond their willingness to serve. Along with other volunteers, Jim cleaned and painted and decorated the space at 80 Durham Avenue that houses the Center. Jim coordinated the installation of all the technology needed in a modern office.

After the official opening of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence on February 3, 2007, Jim got busy with the financial and administrative tasks essential to the successful launch of a new nonprofit organization. Having served as longtime director of the Western New York Peace Center, his expertise and training was invaluable when Vivian Waltz began as director later that year.



Audrey and Jim at the Center's opening



Sr. Michele Beiter, SSJ
presents Mang
Scholarship plaque

Since passing the director baton, Jim continued on the advisory board until late in 2019, at which time he was given the honorific Board Member Emeritus. In April 2017, at the Sister Karen Center's 10-year anniversary celebration, Jim and his wife were honored with the inauguration of the Jim and Audrey Mang Camp Peaceprints Scholarship Fund. Since that time, scholarships have enabled children who otherwise might be in dangerous places during the summer to be in a safe and fun space where they learn how to live nonviolently. In Jim's memory this summer, and every year hereafter, a Camp Peaceprints camper will be given the "3M" award - short for "Marvelous Mr. Mang" - for best exemplifying the qualities of kindness, fairness, cooperation, and teamwork.

Over the years, Jim's loving spirit and sage wisdom was a gentle force that ensured that the essence of Sister Karen's life and ministry of nonviolence was at the heart of the work of the Center. In her reflection on Jim's life in the Sisters of St. Joseph's *Presence* magazine, Audrey writes:

Jim's favorite scripture was the Beatitudes, and people most often connected him to the one about being a peacemaker. This quote from Neil Douglas-Klotz invites us to a different choice: Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the consistent in heart: those whose passion is electrified by deep, abiding purpose; those whose lives radiate from a core of love; they shall see God everywhere."

And Jim did see God everywhere and, as much as humanly possible, in everyone.

May we all strive to see the world and everyone in it through Jim's eyes. His vision made the SSJ Sister Karen Center for Nonviolence the gift of peace, hope, and love it is to so many today.



*Jim's life "radiated
from a core of love."*



Jim Mang Memorial Donors

Totaling \$5,875 ~ What a blessing!

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<i>Barbara Lillis</i>	

ANNUAL APRIL EVENT



*Center Director Vivian Ruth Waltz,
Larry Kennedy King and
Bishop Frederick A. Gelsey, Sr.*

"Why are things so broken?" sang a voice in a video prayer that was part of the April 18th event of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence commemorating the 15th anniversary of Sister Karen's journey to God. Coming direct from the Center via Zoom and Facebook Live, "Media Madness: Providing Youth Alternatives to Violence" featured Bishop Frederick A. Gelsey, Sr., who shared his belief that homicide is a learned behavior influenced by violent music, television, movies, and video games. In response, Buffalo music and rap artist Larry Kennedy King presented his vision for preventing youth violence through teaching the studio production of audio/visual media with a positive uplifting message.

After a welcome and introductions of our board members and the presenters, Sister Karen Center director Vivian Ruth Waltz dedicated the event to the memory of Jim Mang, a founder and longtime board member (see article in this newsletter). An opening video prayer created especially for online events was followed by the recognition of the 15th anniversary of Sister Karen's death. Vivian noted that it hardly seems possible for those whose lives she touched while she was alive and affirmed, "We give thanks to God that her spirit of life and love remains a powerful source of inspiration for so many of us personally, as well as for the Center that bears her name."

Vivian shared highlights of past two years, celebrating the continuing work of the Center even under conditions of the pandemic. Camp Peaceprints 2020 on Zoom and a socially-distanced youth Alternatives to Violence Project workshop were successful programs. We helped secure funding that purchased tens of thousands of dollars of food and supplies that the Buffalo Peacemakers distributed to families in need. Although all volunteer programs are suspended at Wende Correctional Facility, our work in coalition with Buffalo groups focusing on issues of mass incarceration bore fruit in the passage of New York State legislation that positively affects the lives of our inside AVP facilitators there.

A poll was launched in which Zoom participants submitted their opinions on what influences youth. The results: 76% friends and peers, 43% television, 38% video games and 38% songs and rap. (Respondents could choose more than one answer.) Interestingly, no one answered movies! One takeaway is that whatever influences youth, it is being reinforced by their friends and peers.

Next came the prerecorded part of the program. (We regret the technology glitch that resulted in the audio and video not being synchronized, but we have made a smooth recording of the entire event available on our Facebook page.) After introducing Bishop Gelsey, Vivian read an excerpt from a November 2012 *Buffalo News* article titled "Pastor forgives his son's killer."

Frederick A. Gelsey, Jr., was murdered on December 28, 2011. Bishop Gelsey began to share his story and the excruciating pain his son's death caused him and his family. At the time of the killer's trial, Bishop Gelsey had been ministering to inmates in prisons for over two decades. He told us, "I tell the men and women behind bars that God loves them and God will forgive them. I had to decide whether I really mean what I say."

Like Sister Karen's assurance of forgiveness for her killer in a "Dear Brother" letter she wrote many years before her death, Bishop Gelsey did forgive the man who murdered his son. Yet the question why this had to happen and what the killer's motivation could have been haunted him. God spoke to him in the night saying, "They don't understand what they're doing. You need to educate them."

~ continued on next page ~

~Annual Event continued from previous page ~

Thus was born the Homicide Education Project. Bishop Gelsey referred to scientific studies that show a connection between violent video games, television programs, music and movies and an increase in violent tendencies in the youth who play, listen, and watch them. He maintains that they are being educated unknowingly to commit homicide. His mission is to educate youth on the effects of what they are taking in, and the consequences of acting on this altered mindset.

A new initiative of the Center whose aim is to counteract negative media influences was introduced during the event. *The Youth Homicide Education and Prevention Media Arts Project*. The **education** component is the Media Madness Project (formerly the Homicide Education Project). Through eight class sessions, Bishop Gelsey will educate youth on the dangerous influence of media including brainwashing, programming, the mind of a murderer, consequences in the criminal justice system, anger, forgiveness, unforgiveness, and the value of life.

The **prevention** component will be a two-day Alternatives to Violence Project workshop. AVP is a training program which enables participants to deal with potentially violent situations in new and creative ways. The youth will have the opportunity to continue basic AVP training with advanced workshops.

Vivian explained that the central beliefs of AVP include that there is good in everyone, that conflict does not need to move into violence and harm but instead can become a tool for both personal and social change, and that we all have the potential for resolving conflicts peacefully and can learn skills to help us. The Sister Karen Center will provide facilitators and coordinate the workshops.

The **media arts** component of the Project will be a new Hip Hop/Mumble Rap Production undertaking. This will be the real carrot to get the youth to go through the education classes and prevention workshops. Vivian introduced Larry Kennedy King, a Buffalo music and rap artist, who shared how he will teach youth to produce music, rap, and poems with a positive, uplifting message to counteract homicidal media influences.

Now in his late 20s, Larry has been a church musician since he was 16 years old. He taught himself to play the piano and organ. Larry told us that, "God has blessed my hands. God has given me gifts to produce, to write and to sing that I want to pass along to youth in Buffalo and all around Western New York and hopefully all over the country! I am so excited about this project!"

We then had the pleasure of listening to a hip-hop song that Larry recorded titled "Dream." Vivian chose the song because Larry refers to the Dream of Martin Luther King, Jr., that everyone, regardless of their differences, will have a chance to live and thrive.

After Larry's song, we moved into a live Question and Answer time which focused on ways that participants could support the project. Monetary contributions are always welcome, as well as prayer support, and possibly signatures on a petition or other actions such as advocating for the project at area schools. When ready to launch, we will be looking for youth to participate.

After a closing prayer was offered by Bishop Gelsey, and though we were in our separate spaces, we joined in singing the Peaceprints song as we do at the close of our event every year.

Thanks to our many faithful sponsors, the event netted the Center over \$11,000!



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We are so grateful!



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Media Madness Showing at Sisters of St. Joseph Residence



*Intro by Sr. Janet DiPasquale
with Vivian Waltz*

April 28, 2021



*Listening to "Dream"
by Larry Kennedy King*



Attentive Sisters



Send a Kid to Camp Peaceprints!

This summer marks the fourteenth annual Camp Peaceprints brought to you by the Interfaith Peace Network, the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence, and the WNY Peace Center. The camp, for youth ages 8 to 13, provides exposure to a diverse community while exploring communication, social justice issues, and peaceful conflict resolution.

The theme of Camp Peaceprints 2021 is "Explore the World." Activities will include each of the seven continents, as well as the oceans and atmosphere/space, and then put it all together. In addition to our field trips, we'll share customs and culture, languages and arts, and peoples and their stories. Mother Earth and the creatures we live here with, geography and science, will enrich our appreciation of people and the planet, and what we need to do for sustainable lifestyles that work together for the common good.

We are receiving many requests for camp scholarships. To contribute to the Jim and Audrey Mang Camp Peaceprints Scholarship Fund, mail a check made payable to Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, with "Camp Peaceprints scholarship" in the memo line, to 80 Durham Avenue, Buffalo, 14215. You can also go online to sisterkarencenter.org and click on the PayPal Donate button and designate the scholarship fund in the special instructions. The cost of Camp Peaceprints is \$100 per family for one week of camp, \$200 for both weeks of camp, but any amount will be gratefully received!



Introducing ... Our New Board Members!

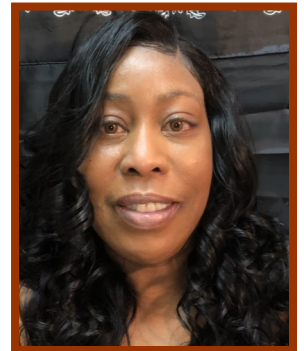
Sister Kristen Schmitz, SSJ



Sister Kristen was a teacher for most of her life. After graduating from Mount St. Joseph Teachers' College, she taught elementary school for 10 years. She then moved into physical education at Mount St. Joseph Academy and Holy Angels Academy where she was a gym teacher for over 30 years. She was Athletic Director at those schools and coached many sports teams. Subsequent to her teaching career Sister Kristen moved into human services. She was House Manager at TRY (Teaching and Restoring Youth) where she worked with teenage girls. Her most recent job was Director of South Buffalo Community Table, a soup kitchen. Sister Kristen has chosen to serve on our board "to honor Sister Karen and to help where I'm needed." Already we need her at Camp Peaceprints where she has volunteered to be our recreation director! Sister Kristen enjoys reading and piecing together jigsaw puzzles in her spare time.

Antionette (Tracy) Craig

Tracy has always had a heart for youth and helping them to be all that they can be. The oldest of 15 children, she has been a caretaker, guide, and counselor most of her life. After graduating from high school, Tracy joined the U.S. Navy where she learned discipline and respect for the differences that make people unique. Upon her return from the Navy, Tracy began studying International Business/Management at Canisius College. She spent a year in China as part of an immersion experience and her second language is Mandarin! Once she received her degree, she set out to serve the community of Buffalo. She has mentored young people for decades. In 2019 she ran for Lovejoy's Council Member. Her love of youth has culminated in her co-founding of the YO! New York Youth Opportunity Program. Its goal is to equip youth with the required tools and resources to live a productive and prosperous life. Tracy says, "Youth are our future and it is important to mold and guide and show them the good qualities that build character." Tracy loves to cook and she works out at the gym every morning. In talking about her family she says, "My loving husband completes me." (Her husband is AVP facilitator and former Sister Karen Center board member Kali Williams.)



Barbara Diebold



Barbara is an Associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph. She is a retired elementary school teacher and librarian from the Buffalo Public Schools. She herself was educated by the Sisters of St. Joseph through elementary, middle, and high school and credits them with instilling in her a passion for social justice. Barb completed the process of becoming an Associate a few years before Sister Karen died. She remembers clearly how Sister Karen made a profound impression on her during a workshop. She accepted the invitation to be on our board because she wants to carry on Sister Karen's work of peace and justice. Barbara enjoys needlework, reading, and practicing yoga.

Alternatives to Violence Project News

Wende Correctional Facility



If all goes well, volunteer programs at New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (NYSDOCCS) facilities will be resuming soon! We have scheduled a Basic workshop in September and an Advanced workshop in November at Wende. Learning Lynn Rudnicki and Valuable Vivian Waltz are looking forward to reconnecting with “our guys” on the inside. We haven’t seen them since February 2020!

We are fortunate to be in touch with inmates at Wende through Jubilant Jo Clayson who serves as the Volunteer Correspondent for AVP New York. As such she communicates with people who are incarcerated regarding AVP business and she writes letters of reasonable assurance for those who have taken AVP and are up for parole. Following is an excerpt from an email to Jo from one of our inside AVP facilitators at Wende.

If I had to explain what AVP is all about I would start with Love because that is what is shared through so many hearts and souls around the world. Then I would share what Transforming Power did for me and how it works in each and every one of us every day! So continue to Love and share how and when you can.*

*One of the key concepts of all AVP workshops is “Transforming Power.” This is an inner spiritual power that we all have and that can help us discover nonviolent solutions.



AVP at YO! New York



This past spring, the Sister Karen Center provided a Basic AVP workshop at YO! New York, the Youth Opportunity Center in Depew, co-founded by our new Board member Tracy Craig. Thanks go out to facilitators Kind Kali Williams and Valuable Vivian Waltz! The workshop was part of their youth development program for young people ages 13-18 designed to assist youth in attaining their personal life goals, while teaching them critical life skills. We look forward to providing another workshop when school resumes in September.



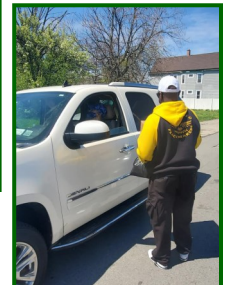
Fall Workshop at TRY

A Level I Basic AVP workshop is scheduled for September at **TRY (Teaching and Restoring Youth)** on Brinkman Avenue in Buffalo. The TRY residence is a place for young women to find hope. TRY’s mission is to enable young women who have suffered from abuse, violence and victimization to rebuild their lives through supportive companionship, counseling, education and the development of independent living skills. We know that AVP will provide residents with conflict resolution skills that will be a vital tool in their success at TRY and empower them to lead nonviolent lives as their future unfolds.



Buffalo Peacemakers Still Feeding the Community!

Sister Karen Center Director Vivian Ruth Waltz wrote a grant proposal that secured \$82,000 from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation for food and pandemic supplies for distribution by the Buffalo Peacemakers to families in need. From the Peacemakers Facebook page: "Still feeding the community. Started March 2020 ... will finish ... when God says so."



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## We've Lost Another Founding Board Member



Sister Philip Marie Cirincione, SSJ, a teacher and pastoral associate who devoted her ministry to social justice, died June 10 in the Sisters of St. Joseph Residence in Clarence. She was 91. Sister Philip Marie was on the Sister Karen Center Advisory Board when they began the search for a permanent director shortly after the Center opened in 2007. She served many years on the board during which she made fruitful connections between the Center and the many hard-working and compassionate people she knew in the Buffalo community. We miss her already.

~~~~~

Gifts in memory of Gary Maloney

We are so grateful to the family of Gary Maloney, particularly his wife Leann, for designating donations in memory of Gary to support the Sister Karen Center. Leann is Sister Karen's niece.

Gifts totaling \$950 ~ What a blessing!

Robin M. Baudette
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 Norb and Melissa Frey
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3 WAYS TO GIVE

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IN OURSELVES, IN OUR SOCIETY, AND IN OUR WORLD.





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80 Durham Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14215

Two years ago, our annual event speaker Sister Anita Baird, DHM, ended her presentation by testifying to the eternal legacy of Sister Karen's life and ministry. "This woman is now among the saints of glory, this woman is praising God day and night and is interceding for us and for this world, watching over us, loving us, praying for us, challenging us, encouraging us to continue to move forward, to fight the good fight, to keep our hands on the plow and not look back. We have been called; we have been chosen to leave Peaceprints wherever we go!"



**Give in honor of
someone special**



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our work!**



**Last Will and
Testament**

Working in Coalition ...

One of the four primary goals of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence is to *Build Relationships by Working in Coalition with Community Groups which Promote Nonviolence*. We're proud of our relationships with our community and regional partners, including WNY Peace Center, Interfaith Peace Network, The Prevention Council of Erie County, WNY Peacemakers, VOICE-Buffalo, Free the People and many more!



This newsletter we feature the ***Transformative In-Prison Workgroup (TPW)***. Over the past year, the Inside Coalition, a group of 15 New York community-based organizations including Alternatives to Violence Project (our primary training program at the Sister Karen Center), Restoration Through the Arts, Rising Hope, Defy Ventures, and Network Support Services has been meeting to form a learning community to support one another's organizations and navigate program challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This community has now evolved to form TPW - New York. The New York chapter shares the original California TPW's mission to ensure that all incarcerated people in New York have access to meaningful, high-quality programs, and to accelerate the impact of recent sentencing reforms toward our North Star goal of decarceration.

In-Prison program providers face common challenges including isolation, burn-out, resource scarcity, barriers to facility access, and lack of representation in decision-making meetings. Individuals who have been incarcerated and families affected by incarceration face similar challenges, which create barriers to fully engaging in and leading these programs.

Together, we know we can break isolation, share ideas, and build political power to have statewide influence. Some of the lofty goals of the California TPW guiding TPW-NY are to:

- Increase access to transformative and healing in-prison programs
- Increase access for individuals who have been incarcerated to return to prisons to provide programs
- Increase sustainable funding for in-prison programs
- Create a learning community to share ideas, best practices, and workshop challenges
- Generate a new humanizing public narrative about the importance of in-prison programs
- Conduct collective research on the benefits of in-prison programs

Please pray for the Sister Karen Center's affiliation with this new group through our housing the Niagara Frontier Council of the Alternatives to Violence Project, and our shared commitment to changing lives through restoration and healing.

AVP Training Available

Conflict and violence exist.

It's time to learn for ourselves and to teach others
to reduce and resolve conflict, to learn and use skills with confidence,
and to create safer and stronger families, workplaces and communities.

***Call or email the Sister Karen Center to talk about a workshop for
your community group, church, workplace, or friends and family!***

Sisters of St. Joseph
Sister Karen Klimczak
Center for Nonviolence
80 Durham Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14215

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Our Mission Statement

To carry on Sister Karen's vision
of a world without violence, the
SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence
is committed to eliminating violence in ourselves,
in our society, and in our world.
We work to create a nonviolent community
in our thinking, our acting, and our relationships.

***The SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence
is a ministry of the Congregation of the
Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates of Buffalo, New York.***