



From Our Director

Dear Friends,

Truly the message, the work, and the power of nonviolence is needed more than ever in our world today. Too many eyes focus on violence in the news, but here at the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence we believe that nonviolence will create a future of peace and justice. That was Sister Karen's vision, and in this issue of "Alternatives" we list all of you who have contributed to making her vision a reality in the past year. Each year I struggle to fit all of your names on the page, and that is a wonderful problem to have!

With the cold breezes blowing, I invite you to remember the warmth of July by reading about Camp Peaceprints 2017. The Peace, Justice, and Nonviolence Festival and Walk at Canalside in September also took place under the hot sun! You'll want to catch up on Alternatives to Violence news and read my interview with Peacemaker Murray Holman about the Safe Passage program with the Buffalo Public Schools.

Finally, mark your calendar for our annual event with former U.S. Attorney William Hochul on Sunday, April 15, 2018 at 3 pm at SS. Columba-Brigid Church. Bill will be speaking to us about nonviolence in challenging times. Plan to join us for what promises to be a stimulating and inspiring afternoon!

Holiday blessings of peace,

Vivian

Vivian Ruth Waltz

**SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak
Center for Nonviolence
80 Durham Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14215
716.362.9688
info@sisterkarencenter.org
www.sisterkarencenter.org**

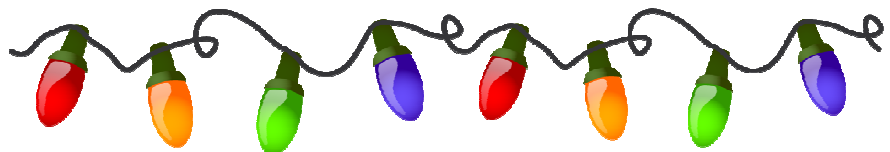


In This Issue

Generous Donors.....	pg. 2-6
April Event.....	pg. 3
Nonviolence Festival.....	pg. 7
Camp Peaceprints	pg. 8-9
AVP News	pg. 10
Peacemakers Safe Passage....	pg 11

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SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, April 15, 2018 at 3 PM

Former U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.

SS. Columba-Brigid Church, Buffalo

**Come hear about issues of justice and injustice facing
our community and nation, and how we are called
to respond with the power of nonviolence!**



Supporting the Sister Karen Center is only a few clicks away!

You can make a secure donation online by going to
www.sisterkarencenter.org and clicking on the PayPal Donate button.

It's fast and easy to increase the impact of nonviolence in the world!

***** Save the Center's resources for the work of nonviolence! *****

**Request our newsletter electronically in an email to
vivian@sisterkarencenter.org.**

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Peace-Justice-Nonviolence Festival and Walk

Joining Together for All Our Brothers, Sisters, Children & Mother Earth



A beautiful hot and sunny day at Canalside on September 16th was the setting for the fourth annual Peace-Justice-Nonviolence Festival and Walk. The Sister Karen Center was one of over 160 sponsoring organizations which comprise the WNY Coalition of Peace, Justice and Nonviolence Advocates. The lively festival was just one of the multitude of ways these groups are hard at work to reduce violence in our community and world.

The day included a special focus on children. Facepainting and mask-making were some of the fun activities. A play based on peace, justice and nonviolence led by the Anne Frank Project of Buffalo State College developed in the morning was presented during the program in the afternoon. Participants included the Lifesavers youth group from Stop the Violence Coalition.



After gathering music, the children presented their short play as part of the opening welcome. A variety of speakers emphasized the interconnectedness of the violence of racism, Islamophobia, poverty, war, gun violence and the destruction of the environment. The Walk of Peace was led by the children along the water on the boardwalk, around past the skating area and on to the lawn near the Commercial Street Bridge for photographs.

Throughout the festival attendees mingled at informational tables staffed by community organizations, including the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence. Vendors offered tasty ethnic food as people enjoyed the sunshine sitting in colorful Adirondack chairs and basking in the breeze off the water.



The annual festival was once again a time to celebrate the healing and hope that our local peace-seeking groups embody. The WNY Coalition of Nonviolence Advocates believes that every person, every group and every religion can embrace its nonviolent roots to mainstream nonviolence and move humanity to a more just and compassionate world.



CAMP PEACEPRINTS 2017

"Peace Networking"

July 17-28, 2017 ~ St. Mary's School for the Deaf



We had a wonderful tenth annual Camp Peaceprints, through 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, was our best yet, with 58 youth altogether, including five under the 8-year camper age limit. As we build the Beloved Community, the needs of the community take precedence. Thus we allowed siblings and refugees with a real need to be included to come on in and be part of the Camp – we are Family!

The campers and youth assistants came from Buffalo and Burma; from Senegal and Sturbridge, MA; Tibet and the Congo (via most of South America); and from Nepal and New Hampshire – the varied backgrounds and experiences, races and ethnicities, ages and stages made it a rewarding time for all. Tears at camp's end were accompanied by campers' saying they can hardly wait to come back again next year!! Some comments from various campers:

- ◇ I love camp ... It is fun! You get to meet lots of other people.
- ◇ On a scale of 1-10, I give it a 10.
- ◇ Camp calms me down!
- ◇ It is a good experience for children and everyone ... (from a Youth Assistant)



Our Interfaith theme was well covered by speakers who shared key faith traditions and life ways:

- ◇ Iris Hill, Haudenosaunee and Lakota, a former camper;
- ◇ Bhante Chipamung, a Hinayana Buddhist Monk;
- ◇ Imam Yahye Omar, a Muslim Imam originally from Somalia;
- ◇ Dr. Sucharita Paul, Hindu from Tonawanda and doctor at ECMC Emergency Room!

The children and youth also learned a tremendous amount from:



- ◇ Jan Burns, art teacher, youth facilitator, and activist (Director of Focus on Consequences program of ECCPASA), who ran our Art program;
- ◇ Dior Lindsey, social worker, Peace Education Taskforce Co-Chair, and WNYPC Board Member;
- ◇ Kareema Morris, facilitator of Bury the Violence;
- ◇ June Licence, Administrator of the Interfaith Peace Network and Riverside Salem UCC;



- ◇ Eve Everette, Assistant Director of Anne Frank Project of Buffalo State College;
- ◇ karima amin, Storyteller and Founder and Co-Chair of Prisoners Are People Too!
- ◇ The adult leaders of the two Young Neighbors In Action youth groups that came from Sturbridge, MA and New Hampshire;
- ◇ The Foster Grandparents from the program of Catholic Charities. *(continued on next page)*

CAMP PEACEPRINTS 2017 (continued)

Through it all, it was fulfilling and fun, with swimming (5 times); field trips (to Grand Island's Riverside-Salem UCC and Beaver Island State Park; as well as visiting – and sharing suggestions with – Mayor Brown; and exploring Tifft Nature Preserve); cooperative games; and peaceful conflict resolutions throughout.

Many thanks to support from:

- ◊ St. Mary's School for the Deaf, host;
- ◊ The Network of Religious Communities and its Riefler Fund;
- ◊ The Peace Education Fund;
- ◊ The Lifesavers, youth group of the Stop The Violence Coalition, and advisors Shantela Woods and Camille Williams;
- ◊ The Joan Droit Camp Peaceprints Fund of Riverside Salem UCC;
- ◊ The Jim and Audrey Mang Camp Peaceprints Scholarship Fund;
- ◊ The Canisius College Athletics Program;
- ◊ The Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates of Buffalo;
- ◊ You reading this – many of whom contributed through memberships at or donations to the Interfaith Peace Network, the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence, and/or the WNY Peace Center.

As in previous years, we got together with children and youth from St. Mary's School for the Deaf, and we all learned some American Sign Language. It is always a high point of Camp – with immediate and strong connections made. So much so that this year, we resolved that we'll explore full program integration next year. It'll probably be our best camp yet!



Alternatives to Violence Project News



The mission of the Alternatives to Violence Project is to empower people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation, and trust. Founded in and developed from the real-life experiences of prisoners and others, and building on a spiritual base, AVP encourages every person's innate power to positively transform themselves and the world.

From AVP Facilitator Bill Marx: **The Alternatives to Violence Project** is a tool of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence that has the potential to respond to the needs of our culture. It is a conflict resolution approach to the needs of prison, community, and schools.

Since our April 29 AVPNY Forum at Wende Correctional Facility, we facilitated an Advanced workshop July 11 – 12; trained six inmates as facilitators August 8 – 9; facilitated a Basic workshop for twenty-two inmates October 6 – 7; and an Advanced workshop for sixteen inmates November 18 – 19. Wende volunteers include Bill Marx, Lynn Rudnicki, and Vivian Waltz.

Working with the Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, we facilitated two Basic community workshops in July and September. There was a total of twenty participants, most seminarians and theology students, but a few others as well. Our thanks go out to Kind Kali Williams, Amazing Audrey Mang, Caring Kathy Castillo, and Blest Bill Marx for facilitating, and to Valuable Vivian Waltz for food and other support. None of this can be achieved without the voluntary response to the gospel challenge of service above self.

Four other Correctional Facilities in Western New York are waiting for friends of Sister Karen Klimczak to offer to help AVP Thrive, not just Survive. Please call and/or email Vivian Waltz to volunteer to do something more. Thank you!



~~~~~



**compass house**  
A new direction for a better life.

Our AVP program at Compass House Resource Center in Buffalo is going strong! Compass House provides safe shelter and services for runaway, homeless and street youth. In addition to Compass House clients, AVP workshops include participants from an Erie County program for supervision and treatment of youth who have become involved in the juvenile justice system. Since our last newsletter we have facilitated a Basic workshop and our first Advanced workshop! Thank you to facilitators Caring Kathy Essek, Kind Kali Williams, and

Valuable Vivian Waltz. We have to maintain flexibility with AVP at Compass House due to the transient lifestyle of the youth we serve. Some participants come and go, but many remain faithful once they get a taste of AVP and how we value their contribution to the workshops.

# Buffalo Peacemakers Safe Passage Program

*An Interview with Murray Holman by Vivian Waltz*



## **What is the Safe Passage Program?**

We go onto nine four-corner intersections outside schools in the City of Buffalo. We maintain peace and make sure kids get Safe Passage onto the Metro bus to get home safely. We make sure kids don't get into a fight. They can talk to us about some issues they might be having. We just build relationships. Tell them about jobs. If they want to have a faith-based relationship, we tell them about that as well.

## **Why is Safe Passage important?**

For example at Delavan and Grider, three years ago that corner was chaos. There was fights every day. Businesses would see fights, old-timers at McDonald's had to hear it. No one basically cared. It was like a zoo out of control. Law enforcement was sending cars there on a regular basis; kids was getting stabbed, shot at. After they leave school other schools would come down to settle the beefs. So we changed that by going on that corner and working for Safe Passage. Building relationships took a long time. Now it is a blessing to see us working. It's a blessing.

## **Who does Safe Passage serve?**

Actually the program serves youth, but we also go into homes and we do interventions, talk to parents and grandmothers. And we serve the schools themselves—Buffalo Public Schools, we are serving them as well. We go into the schools and talk to them about issues they might be having with children. We dig a little bit deeper than say a case worker. These kids come on the corner and tell us stories that their dad or mother won't talk to them or they didn't eat. We hear these things that go on that makes us serve better. And we're evangelists—we go out there and preach the Word. So we're serving God. The word "peacemakers" is from the bible. We're saving the community. Being true to the word "peacemakers."

## **Who supports Safe Passage?**

You! [ha ha] You are a major supporter of the program. There are so many people in the background that we don't see. The Buffalo Police Department supports us and the mayor. Financially the City of Buffalo has given a substantial amount for Safe Passage on top of what they give in their budget to the Peacemakers. We are counting on the Buffalo Public Schools to match the amount that the City gave. Supposedly it's coming, but we haven't seen it yet.

## **How does Safe Passage fit into the Peacemakers mission?**

We didn't go into this thinking we was going to do Safe Passage on these corners doing this type of work, but there was a need for it. First and foremost Peacemakers respond to the needs of the community so here we are. And we got a lot of volunteers that's in this thing and they don't get paid like they should. But this is about giving back. There are more volunteers than there is staff. The fabric of what we are now is the collaboration of organizations. We've been meeting for 5 years every Friday to make sure all our work is in line with the mission statement to mentor and redirect youth into healthy lifestyles.

## **Anything else you'd like to say?**

Well I just would love to see this program grow and go elsewhere across the nation. There have been protesters standing on one side and law enforcement on the other with Peacemakers in the middle. Everyone had a right to do what they was doing. And the City wasn't tore up.

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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 eliminate 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 Sisters of St. Joseph and Associates of Buffalo.***