



Partners in Restorative Initiatives

talking piece

June 2016

Greetings to our Restorative Community,

Warmer weather is finally here! We know many of our readers are gearing up for summer vacation, family trips and relaxation. But Partners in Restorative Initiatives is getting ready for an exciting, busy season!

Check out our summer training schedule on page 2. Peacebuilding starts with **you**, so join us on the journey to revolutionize how we build relationships, repair harm and address wrongdoing.

We look forward to seeing you this summer!

Your Restorative Team



June Quote

In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems, for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same. -Albert Einstein

PiRI Vision

We envision a community in which restorative principles and values are known, respected and utilized to build relationships, repair harm, and strengthen communities.

PiRI Mission

Partners in Restorative Initiatives works to implement restorative practices in schools, communities and the justice system through advocacy, education, training and facilitation.

Mindfulness and the Restorative Process is the Foundation for a Self-Care Workshop

By Betty Reinhart, Certified Trainer

Jan Cook, an experienced Meditation teacher and Embodied Mindfulness Educator, and Partners in Restorative Initiatives' Educational Committee members, Jeanne Carlivati and Betty Reinhart, completed a series of three after-school, self-care workshops at a local high school. The 20-plus teachers found the workshops invaluable, and many quickly began to use the new skills in their jobs and beyond. During the workshop, participants recognized and built upon their strengths and tapped into ways to achieve balance in order to make space for themselves and perform at their best, particularly in challenging and stressful situations. Several participants asked for additional opportunities to improve and sustain their new skills.

As a result of this enthusiastic response, five PiRI Educational Committee members and Jan Cook are planning an all-day, Self-Care Workshop that will be open to the public. Using the Peace Circle process for discussion, connection and support, participants will learn self-care techniques such as mindfulness breathing, gentle yoga, Qi Gong and relaxation. The goal is to offer a nourishing, fun, experiential and relaxing day.

This all-day workshop is tentatively planned for early August. More information and a firm date will be available by the end of June, so keep an eye on our website training schedule!

Summer Trainings!

Partners in Restorative Initiatives often trains school counselors, psychologists, teachers and administrators of local school districts, but we want to bring this transformational training to YOU!

We are happy to announce four trainings taking place this spring and summer that are open to the public. We need at least 10 people to attend each session, so if you are interested, contact a friend, a colleague, a family member or even your neighbor to attend with you!

All trainings take place at 111 Hillside Avenue, Rochester, NY. The cost of \$100 per day to attend includes breakfast, lunch and all materials.

For more information and to register, visit our website at www.pirirochester.org and click **Training** or contact us at 585-473-0970 or office@pirirochester.org.

ACADEMIC CIRCLE TRAINING

Our three-hour Academic Circles workshop is designed for teachers who want to use circles in the classroom as a tool for instruction and discussion. Two different sessions are offered. Cost is \$50 for a 1/2 day session.

FRIDAY, JULY 15, 2016
8:30–11:30 a.m.
OR
12:30–3:30 p.m.

INTRODUCTION TO PEACE CIRCLE TRAINING

Our 1-Day Peace Circle Training is an introduction to facilitating Peace Circles which provides the basic information needed to begin implementing the Peace Circle process.

The peacemaking circle can be used in neighborhood agencies, after-school and recreation programs, schools, churches or anywhere people come together.

The Introduction to Peace Circle Training takes place:

THURSDAY JULY 14, 2016
8:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

THREE DAY PEACE CIRCLE TRAINING

Three Day Peace Circle Training involves learning how to facilitate Peace Circles through extensive experiential learning. Participants gain in-depth knowledge of the elements (history and structure) of the circle process and the variety of purposes for which circles can be used. Participants will practice what they have learned by planning and facilitating a circle.

Peace Circles are an effective process to :

- Resolve conflicts
- Build community
- Create understanding
- Celebrate achievements
- Address bullying
- Repair a wrong
- Provide support

They Three-Day Peace Circle training takes place:

MONDAY, JULY 18–WEDNESDAY, JULY 20
8:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY CONFERENCE TRAINING

A **Community Conference** is a voluntary process that brings together victims, offenders and community members affected by a particular event. During the conference, people can take responsibility for past actions and make direct reparations to those who have been affected. Each person has the opportunity to tell his or her story and hear those of others in a safe and supportive environment, leading to greater understanding for everyone.

Who Should Attend?

Social Workers
School Administrators, Counselors & Teachers
Criminal Justice Professionals
Anyone interested in learning alternatives for conflict management

The 2-Day Community Conference Training takes place:

MONDAY, JULY 25 AND TUESDAY, JULY 26
8:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Community Task Force Update

By Kathy Sweetland, Board President

The Community Task Force on School Climate continued its work in April with the presentation of the revised Code of Conduct to the Rochester City School District. The Code was reviewed by the District's legal department to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and then sent to the Board of Education for their consideration and approval. Members of the Task Force voiced their concerns at the April Board of Education meeting about a request, which was granted at the last minute, to make a change to some of the language in the Code. The school district has now entered the planning phase of how the Code will be rolled out in September 2016.

Three proposals were also presented to the District which focused on Engaging Student Voice, Engaging Parent Voice, and using Professional Development to instruct district staff on anti-racism and implicit bias. Youth organizers from Teen Empowerment developed a program using focus groups made up of City School District students during May and June to ensure that students' voices are heard. A series of meetings with parents and teachers has been scheduled to encourage parents and teachers to work more closely together at their children's respective schools. At the invitation of the School District, Dr. Joy DeGruy, author of *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, provided four days of professional development on the Relationship Model of Educational Intervention in mid-May to members of the Board of Education, the Interim Superintendent and her cabinet leadership team, department heads, Task Force members, and community members.

The Task Force is committed to improving school climate and to reducing the frequency of suspensions, expulsions, and arrests of students of color and students of color with disabilities. The continued implementation of restorative practices in more City Schools along with each of these efforts will make it possible to accomplish this mission and improve school climate throughout the district. Necessary supports for teachers and administrators, such as Help Zones, will round out the picture.

Remaking Re-Entry

Earlier this spring, two Partners in Restorative Initiatives board members participated in a dialogue sponsored by the M. K. Gandhi Institute. The dialogue included Monroe County community members, representatives from several area non-profits, faith communities and universities, Monroe County Public Safety employees and several inmates from the Groveland Correctional Facility. Shannon Richmond, Associate Director, and Arun Gandhi, Founder, of the M.K. Gandhi Institute and grandson of Mohandas K. Gandhi, facilitated the event.

The dialogue centered on safety and support, and included discussions about hopes, fears, and uncertainties around re-entry after prison (many of the men who participated are scheduled to be released this summer). The sharing took place in a large group as well as in groups of three to allow for more intimate conversation and discourse. The Groveland men expressed their appreciation for all the levels of participation and the fact that those participating attended voluntarily. They seemed particularly impacted by the presence of a police officer and probation officer and expressed how meaningful it was to have an opportunity to speak and share with them on a human level. They also shared the hope they felt from having local university students in attendance. The students represented the future and ignited a belief that the current views surrounding mass incarceration and the treatment of individuals with criminal records can be transformed.

The group shared ideas about making communities safe, increasing opportunities for those returning to our community, and altering judgments and pre-existing views about those involved in the criminal justice system. Here at Partners in Restorative Initiatives, we work every day to build relationships, repair harm and address wrongdoing. This dialogue is just one way to show our support to those working hard to change their lives and change the conversation around reentry.

Our Calendar

Looking forward...

- June 11 Restorative Practices Training for RCSD Parents
- June 17 Restorative Practices Training for World of Inquiry School 8th Graders
- June 27-28 Two-Day Peace Circle Training RCSD Administrative Staff—Session 1
- June 29-30 Two-Day Peace Circle Training RCSD Administrative Staff—Session 2
- July 14 Intro to Peace Circle Training School—Open to the Public
- July 15 Academic Circle Training—Open to the Public
- July 18–20 Three-Day Peace Circle Training—Open to the Public
- July 25-26 Community Conference Training—Open to the Public
- July 27–29 Three Day Peace Circle Training School #3
- August 4 1-Day Mindfulness & Self-Care Training East High Staff
- August 19 Introduction to Peace Circle Training East High New Staff
- August 23-25 Three Day Peace Circle Training School #5
- August 26 One Day Mindfulness/Restorative Training East High Staff
- August 29-31 Three Day Peace Circle Training School #5

For more information and to register, visit our website at www.pirochester.org and click Training or contact us at 585-473-0970 or office@pirochester.org.

Take Action

You can support Partners in Restorative Initiatives in working toward a restorative community with your donation. Please see our website to donate via Pay Pal, or send directly to our address, or contribute through United Way.



LIVE UNITED 

PiRI Initiatives Designation
Number 2486

Comments from 7th Grade Circle Participants

~My brother and I haven't been fighting as much and that means we don't get into trouble.

~When I heard everyone had a chance to speak I didn't realize you could actually speak your mind without being interrupted.

talking piece

is the monthly newsletter of Partners in Restorative Initiatives. A talking piece is used in Peace Circles to create a space for each person to speak and for others to listen.

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