

# Michigan Peace Team

## Michigan Peace Team

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## Fall Newsletter Theme: Children & Peace



By Nancy Ayotte, IHM

Stretch your imagination. What is the highest vision of peace in our world?

- Social Harmony
- Love
- Justice
- The pursuit of knowledge
- Cooperation of individuals and groups for the betterment of humanity in health, technology, and economics
- Respect and dignity given to all of creation
- Care for the environment
- Equal distribution of goods

Yes, an inspiring list and it could go on and on. What is more, it is an active list. No passive waiting here.

Now, take an unblinking look at our world and society.

(You fill in the blanks)

We live in troubled times. Peace does not exist. Much of our culture around us involves violence and aggressive role models. War seems inevitable. We can't

take the future for granted. We need to sound the alarm again and again. We need to dig deep in search for answers.

I invite you now to imagine yourself looking at (or even holding) a newborn child. Can you even allow that child to be yourself at the beginning of your life?

- Here is the potential for the awesome list we began with.
- Here in our arms is every gift for enduring peace.
- Here is the power to unlock a new humanity as the basis for building a new world.

The question burns. How do we become who we are? How does our world become what it is meant to be? The answer lies in great part with the child in your arms. The answer lies in the manner that the child will be guided to true freedom to realize his or her potential and then to construct a truly free and social harmony in our world. In short: peace.

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## VISION OF PEACE *continued*

I propose in this short article that we look to a woman who developed an educational method that followed from her vision of peace.

### **Maria Montessori (1870-1952)**

In 1886 she became the first woman to graduate in medicine from the University of Rome. When, as a doctor, she became involved in the treatment of physically and mentally abnormal children, she worked with them with absolute self-dedication. Later, she worked with



normal children of pre-school age. She opened the first *Casa dei Bambini* (House of Children) in Rome in 1907. Unsuspected truths were revealed in her observation of the psychological manifestations of these children. Personality characteristics which before were hidden and repressed by traditional educational

methods of the times, opened for her a new theory of education. She saw that the child is a spiritual embryo, endowed with mysterious sensitivities that guide him/her, with creative energies. She observed that the child is capable of developing and giving tangible proof of the possibility of a better humanity. In her words:

"We have seen children totally change as they acquire a love for things and as their sense of order, discipline, and self-control develops within them as a manifestation of their total freedom. We have seen them labor steadily, drawing on their own energies and developing them as they work." (Montessori, Maria. *Education and Peace*. 1949. Trans. Helen R. Lane. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1972)

In the 1930's the threat and fear of war weighed heavily upon her. Her profound concern did not stem from the political problem but the human problem.

Just as her experience with children inspired her to uncover the laws of human development, so now the threat of war caused her to search passionately for new human truths. Taking as a point of departure her firm conviction that the child must be our teacher and her ideas regarding the free, harmonious, and balanced development of the individual human being, she moved on to consider the problems of human and social development and began a crusade in the name of education: **"Establishing a lasting peace is the work of education: all politics can do is keep us out of war."**

Dr. Montessori was a pioneer in her conviction that individual formation was the foundation for peace. She saw the stabilization of motivation and engagement as a catalyst and our greatest hope for social change. She never visualized peace as merely the "cessation of war" and explains, "Inherent in the very meaning of the word peace is the positive notion of constructive social reform... The fact that we mistakenly call the permanent triumph of the aims of war 'peace' causes us to fail to recognize the way to salvation, the path that could lead us to peace." Peace, she said, is not a "partial truce between separate nations, but a permanent way of life for all humankind"

A later expansion of her thought resulted from her work with younger children from birth to three and the crystallization of "cosmic education," which now, in contrast to the focus on the individual, culminates in her belief in the idea of human solidarity as a basis of the evolution of civilization-past, present, and future. She explains the interconnectedness of humans in the need to transform, to progress, and to create more comfortable conditions of life for all people. We guide children "to reflect upon the social value of work and of the ideal of work done for others, so that the common effort shall enrich the life of all."

The child is both a hope and a promise. If we guard and tend and uphold the child as our most precious treasure, we will be working for the greatness of humanity. And we will be guided toward that light that we sum up in a single word: peace.

## TEACHING "FRIENDLY SKILLS"

By Mary B. Carry

As violence is learned, so too can its alternatives be learned. For a decade or so, I worked with elementary school teachers and support staff, using eight one-hour sessions to train them and provide materials to enable them to train their students in Creative Conflict Resolution. This experience demonstrated that if the entire school worked on developing these Friendly Skills, it made an incredible difference in the number of fights and bullying incidents among the young people.

In the schools where the training had taken place, the teachers, at the beginning of the school year, posted Rules for Fighting Fair, along with a process for the resolution of conflict. In explaining and teaching this material, they stressed the fact that in their classroom and in the entire school, everyone is a friend. The teachers helped the students get to know and like each other, building cooperation, friendship and trust.

Songs and games helped the children to affirm themselves and others. The students were encouraged not to use putdown words. If one was heard, the student who had used the putdown had to give two putups to the other person. The teachers worked on empathy skills, helping students understand and experience the feelings of others. In one case, a student was so afraid of sharing his feelings that he hid under his desk. By the end of the year, he was sharing openly.

There were discussions, work sheets, exercises and songs on how to handle anger, identify anger triggers, and deal with the anger of others.



To strike the first blow is to admit that we have run out of ideas. Teachers and students engaged in role plays and developed strategies to solve problems. One second grade class used two paper plates stapled together with a "1" on one side and a "2" on the other. One day, a substitute teacher re-

layed an incredible incident. Two students were rushing to the water fountain. One asked, "Who goes first?" They ran back to their classroom, got the "Turn Tosser" and flipped to see who got to drink first.

Older students learned the art of successful negotiation, a skill that will significantly affect their future. They came to realize that maintaining good relationships is more important than meeting one's immediate needs. They role played and practiced active listening to discern interests, needs, feelings and common goals. By following the Conflict Resolution Process, they learned to negotiate resolutions to conflicts and experience a dynamic that can stay with them for a lifetime.

When every student is equipped with the tools and procedures for resolving conflict, the entire school is changed from a place of bullying and fighting to a place of peace, friendliness and cooperation.

The year before the Teacher Training there were 35 such fights, the following year only one (the initiator was a boy who had transferred from another school.) Parents noticed a difference in their children. A parent told of being in a disagreement with her husband at the dinner table when one of her children asked, "Do you need me to mediate?"



When the entire faculty of a school decides to teach and model the skills of kindness, affirmation and consideration of others, and gives the students tools to solve their problems in a peaceful, positive and creative way, students attitudes and behavior change, making them more valuable members of society.

*Mary Carry is the Co-director of the Peace and National Priorities Center of Oakland County*



## FEED OUR CHILDREN *continued*

become saddled with debt and enter a job market with a high unemployment rate, I am quite concerned that the costs of war and militarism are not quite as transparent as they may appear on the surface, even in America.

While hundreds of billions of dollars are spent yearly developing more sophisticated ways to kill and spy on people, the teachers to whom we entrust our children's education are asked to accept a barely livable wage. As we spend more money to repair and update our nuclear arsenal the pillars of the public school system crack and crumble away a little more each year.

More money is exhausted as we supplement and aid the militaries of other countries such as Israel, while we fail to aid our college students in paying for their education without the burden of excruciating debt. We spare no expense to ensure our military has the highest level of technology in existence at their disposal while the technology we need to move us beyond petroleum and coal, ensuring a green and livable planet for our kids in the future crawls forward at a snail's pace. So the children suffer in the occupied lands of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine, where the bombs and bullets provided by our tax dollars cloud their futures with uncertainty. And the children suffer in the homeland of the occupiers and warmongers whose futures were stolen from them to pay for bombs and bullets.



*Please help us Making a tax deductible donation to Michigan Peace Team feeds two birds with one hand by taking money out of the U.S. war coffers and giving it to people who do the work of promoting peace and non-violence internationally and domestically.*

### Key Sources: Military Spending vs. Human Needs

<http://www.fcml.org/issues/topic>

<http://www.warresisters.org/pages/piechart.htm>

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/a-just-foreign-policy/just-the-facts-foreign-aid-vs.-military->



After completing our MPT domestic peace team work at the June 25<sup>th</sup> USSF Rally in Detroit, Dad, a MPT peace team member, and his daughter Elizabeth, reach out in peace to the mounted police on patrol.

## MPT PEACE TEAM UPDATE

Reducing violence and creating safe space for children is a major goal of MPT's peace team work.

MPT is internationally recognized for its valuable nonviolent intervention work in zones of violence both here in the United States and abroad. Since 1993, MPT international Peace Teams served in Bosnia, Chiapas, Haiti, the West Bank, Gaza, Ciudad Juarez and with the First Nation in Canada

Presently MPT has a near permanent peace team presence in the West Bank. Our 2010 Fall Team will be protecting Palestinian families against settler attack during the olive harvest. Since 2003 MPT has been sending one or more peace teams to the Gaza Strip each year. In addition there is a MPT Peace Team currently serving in Juarez, Mexico, regarded as one of the most dangerous cities in the world.

In addition, MPT sends many domestic peace teams to zones of violence in the United States. For example during May and June 2010 MPT sponsored eight domestic peace teams.

# CHILDREN, WAR, PEACE TEAMS, IMPERATIVE TO END WAR

By Elizabeth Walters, IHM



One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is to raise them in a culture of peace. We don't have to be biological parents to give this gift. We all have children in our lives through our extended families, neighborhoods, friends, and the youth groups at our places of worship. Likewise, as members of the human family we are related to every child on Earth.

We love our children; we want the very best for them; we're willing to risk life and limb to keep them from harm's way. For the mentally healthy, this instinct is basic and natural. However, in today's culture of violence, protection and care of children is challenging. This article offers a glimpse into one form of violence - the impact of war on children.

## Children and War

War violates every human right of a child. Children are deliberately targeted. High percentages are killed or maimed. Their communities are devastated. They are coerced into becoming soldiers and forced to do unspeakable actions. They are imprisoned. They are sexually abused. Moreover, war disrupts children's education, denies them access to health services, increases poverty, malnutrition, disease, renders families homeless, and separates families. Statistics in this regard are appalling. Here's a glimpse:

- From 1985 to 1995 over 2 million children were killed in armed conflict; 6 million children were made homeless; 12 million were injured or disabled; and there were at least 300,000 child soldiers operating in 30 different conflicts around the planet.<sup>1</sup>

- In the decade that followed, based on calculations from 33 armed conflict regions in the world, it's estimated that more than one billion children under the age of 18, lived in countries or territories affected by armed conflict-that's one sixth of the world's population. Of these, 300 million were under the age of five. More than 90 per cent of all casualties of armed conflict were civilians - half of them children.<sup>2</sup>

Changes in the nature of war results in an even more horrific impact on children, and on civilians generally. Since the 1990s it's not only nation-states warring against other nation-states; it's also governments against armed groups or armed groups against armed groups. In this "new" kind of warfare, warring parties seek to bring the battle more immediately, more systematically, and more massively into the core of the civilian population, and directly into the lives of millions of children.<sup>3</sup>

## Some Transformative Possibilities

While the height, depth, width and breath of war's brutality on children is horrifying, globally there are also indicators of renewed commitment to the protection and care of children. One is the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, a document that outlines universal standards for the care, treatment, and protection of all individuals below age 18. Significantly this is the most widely endorsed human rights treaty in history, currently ratified by 193 countries.<sup>4</sup>

The Convention offers a vision of a world in which all children survive and develop, and are protected, respected, and encouraged to participate in decisions that affect them. It promotes a world of peace, tolerance, equity, respect for human rights, and shared responsibility. It makes the protection and care of children legally binding under international law. It influences national legislation: during the past twenty-one years more than 70 countries have incorporated children's codes into national legislation based on the Convention's provisions.<sup>5</sup>

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## CHILDREN AND WAR ... continued

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are other indicators. Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration by United Nations Member States in 2000, these MDGs have become a universal framework for reducing poverty and promoting development. Six of the eight goals include specific commitments to promote child human rights; the remainder addresses problems of the communities around them.

An additional indicator is the groundswell of collective action on behalf of children's human rights and well being. These actions are generating enormous energy in the direction of transformation.

### Children and Michigan Peace Team

Michigan Peace Team (MPT) is a tiny expression of that groundswell. MPT peace team members dedicate our lives in the work of nonviolent intervention and violence reduction. For the sake of children, their safety, their future, we respond with courage and love in the face of violence. Children and their families are our reason for acting and risking. They are our hope for a better world.<sup>6</sup>

When Michigan Peace Team is invited by local groups, (either domestic or international) to send peace teams, members trained violence reduction work are sent. There are critical elements to this work. Nonviolence is the grounding; teamwork is the key. Skills sharing and experience sharing promote mutuality and partnerships between peace teams and local groups. Working together we use the tools of nonviolence. Four of our major tools used are peaceful presence, inter-positioning, monitoring/documentation of human rights abuse, and protective accompaniment. Peace team work gives local groups the space needed to carry out their own important human rights and social justice work; children benefit the most because they are safer, more secure, and happier.

### Imperative to End War and Violence

As good works continue, the ultimate imperative is to end war and violence and activate peace. As long war and violence are present on the planet, we will never have peace, and our children will always be in danger.

Ending war and violence means transformation from a culture of war to a culture of peace, tolerance, and nonviolence, where people learn to live together in harmony. While not easily achievable, this imperative is doable. War and violence are not an inevitable part of the human condition. Most importantly, in the light of the suffering of the war-affected children of the world, this imperative is a must.

### End Notes

1. *Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Impact of armed conflict on children*. 26 August 1996, pp. 1-38 [http://www.unicef.org/graca/a51-306\\_en.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/graca/a51-306_en.pdf)
2. *Children and Conflict in a Changing World, Section 3 The Consequences for Children*. August 2007. p. 19, [http://www.un.org/children/conflict/documents/machel/mr2\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/children/conflict/documents/machel/mr2_en.pdf)
3. Ibid, "Section 2: The Changing Nature of Conflict." pp 8-9
4. Rights of the Child Convention Signatories by Countries. [http://www.nationmaster.com/red/graph/peo\\_rig\\_of\\_the\\_chi\\_con\\_sig-people-rights-child-convention-signatories&b\\_printable=1](http://www.nationmaster.com/red/graph/peo_rig_of_the_chi_con_sig-people-rights-child-convention-signatories&b_printable=1)
5. Convention on the Rights of the Child." <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>
6. Michigan Peace Team, 2010, <http://www.michiganpeaceteam.org>

### Other Resources:

Human Security Report Project, Human Security Report 2005: War and peace in the 21st century and Human Security Brief 2006, School for International Studies at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, [www.hsrgroup.org](http://www.hsrgroup.org).

International Committee of the Red Cross, 'International Humanitarian Law and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflict', ICRC document 30IC/07/8.4, prepared for the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Geneva, 26-30 November 2007. [http://www.redcross.int/EN/mag/magazine2003\\_3/4-9.html](http://www.redcross.int/EN/mag/magazine2003_3/4-9.html)

The State of the World's Children, 2005, UNICEF. "Childhood Under Threat" <http://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/conflict.html>. The State of the World's Children published in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 are also valuable



## DANCE DOWN WINDING ROAD By Lydia Wylie-Kellermann



Photo by Annette Thomas, For children everywhere ...

*For all children,  
May you know your strength,  
Honor your anger,  
Nurture your hearts,  
And teach us the way of peace.*

Once upon a time, in fact, not very long ago, but very far away, there was a village named Saara.

Saara was a beautiful place to live. There were great old olive trees. In the fall, they would produce so many olives you wouldn't know what to do with them all. Gardens were everywhere, growing the food that the villagers needed. Not only were there lots of people living there, but animals too. Most beloved were the donkeys and the goats.

And right in the center of the town was the mosque where they would gather as a community to pray, especially on Fridays which was their holy day.

If you ever went to visit the village of Saara, there is one place that you would be sure to visit. And that is the Winding Road. If you started on it from the middle of town, it would take you past the Mosque, alongside the cemetery where all their ancestors were buried, along the stone wall, up the hill, and right out of town.

The children loved to play on it, but you would also

have to take this Winding Road anytime you were leaving in order to visit uncles and aunts or if you needed something out of town. It was beautiful this Winding Road. One day you really must see it.

In Saara, there were lots and lots of children. Children just like you. They grew up together and loved to play with one another. They would climb to the very tops of the olive trees. They made sling shots and would see who could fling stones the farthest. They would have races down the Winding Road. They loved each other very much.

But, sadly, life in Saara was not always peaceful. There had been war in their country of Palestine for a long time. Adults from Palestine and Israel were fighting over who owned the land. And in order to gain power and control many people were dying and suffering all the time.

The children that lived in Saara could tell how difficult this was for their parents. Their parents would come home from work really tired after waiting in long lines at checkpoints. They would be frustrated because they were told they could not visit their most holy sites. Many parents had lost jobs and it became harder and harder to provide enough food and clothing for the children. Some kids had even heard stories about bulldozers coming into neighboring villages and tearing down houses. Sometimes they would even see soldiers with guns driving through town.

But for the most part, the children continued to be children. They would laugh, learn, dance, sing, and play with one another.

One day something happened. Something big. You remember the Winding Road? The one that was so beautiful and the children loved to play on? Well one day a bunch of the Israeli soldiers came to the village and dumped a huge pile of dirt on the road! It was so much dirt that you could not drive a car over it. You would need several people to help you climb over it. The soldiers had placed a mountain in the middle of Winding Road!

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## DANCE continued

The children were furious! For they could no longer race to the end of the road. They could not visit their aunts and uncles. This was the road they had played on their whole lives and now it was blocked off.

The parents were angry too, of course. It made it harder to get to work and cut them off from all the other villages. But the parents were also very tired, because they had been struggling against these soldiers for so many years.

But the children were not ready to give up! They decided to get together and hold a meeting. So they ran around and gathered all the children in Saara. They sat down in their favorite spot on Winding Road and began to talk. Some kids were very angry! "Why would they do this to us?" "It's just mean to put that dirt on Winding Road." Other kids were very sad. "Why are we hurting one another?" "Why can't we share the land? Love one another?" They knew how beautiful Winding Road was and they wanted everyone to be able to share it!

Then the little girl spoke up and said, "So, what do we do?" No one said anything for a minute. This was a difficult question because sometimes it felt like they had little power because they were only children.

"No," a young boy said. "We have so much power as children because we still have energy. Our parents are tired. But we can still imagine what Winding Road would be like if we all shared it. We want the soldiers to be able to play with us on this road as friends. We have to be creative."

Everyone seemed to get excited by this and started imagining what could be done. "Let's have a march." "Yes," said another, "We can walk all the way down and climb up the mountain of dirt!" "Yes, let's take shovels and begin doffing away the dirt. Little by little." The children's excitement was growing.

But then a voice said, "What if the soldiers come?" Everyone was silent. No one had thought of that. They knew the soldiers would come and that they would not

be very nice. They had heard lots of stories about the soldiers getting violent.

One of the older boys said, "If I see a soldier, I will be so angry! Angry because they have hurt Winding Road! I will be so angry, I will want to hit them!"

Then the youngest girl stood up and walked right up to the older boys and said "No, we cannot hurt them. I am so tired of people getting hurt. It doesn't solve anything. The soldiers are people too. We are going there because we are tired of people hurting one another and hurting Winding Road."



The older boy knelt down and said, "Thank you. Sometimes when I get angry, I forget. It's so easy to forget. Change will only come if we love people. If we stand up and say 'no when there is something wrong.' As our parents taught us, we are to be nonviolent with one another. Thank you for reminding me."

Another child spoke up and said, "Maybe, to make sure that we are in a loving spirit when we march down Winding Road, we should do this on Friday after we pray together."

They all agreed this was a good idea. They would meet back at the Mosque on Friday with everyone they knew to march down Winding Road.

Friday arrived. Every single child in Saara showed up to the Mosque that day. There were also some parents and a few people from all over the world who didn't want people to hurt one another. All together there were more than 200 people!

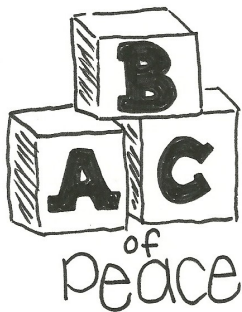
They all took time to say prayers and then they grabbed signs and shovels and began to walk down their beloved Winding Road. While they walked, they chanted about their hopes for love and nonviolence.

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## A, B, C OF PEACE By Sheri Wander, President of Michigan Peace Team

For me, one of the important things to remember when working with children is that lessons are in every interaction. "It takes a village" as the saying goes, and although I have no children of my own, I have been blessed to serve the role of that "extra adult," to help care for and teach (and be cared for and taught) by several children.

As a former preschool teacher I tried to model "mediation" when children in my class had an argument with one another. Although this was in no way a "formal mediation," our simple "A, B, C's of problem solving"



contained most of the elements I use when serving as a mediator.

After agreeing to discuss the conflict at hand, we would, (A) "identify the issues involved" by asking each child what happened. We would then move on to, (B) "generating options and alternatives, brainstorming some things to fix it. Next, (C) we would "agree on a mutually acceptable

solution" by choosing a good way to fix the problem. Finally, we would (D) do it!

Walking over to intervene in an argument on the playground one afternoon I was pleasantly surprised to find "Fei Fei" (4 years old at the time) leading his two friends through the process. "What is wrong? She is crying," he simply asked and upon hearing that one child had grabbed the much coveted red sand bucket away from the other, Fei Fei helped his friends think about the feelings and actions involved, create a list of ways to make it "fair," and ultimately resolve the issue without "teacher interference."

It was an exciting moment as a teacher and I took a moment to remember that life lessons are learned beyond the traditional classroom. The world is our classroom and life is one lesson after another.

At 11 and 9 years old, Melissa and Evelyn have been part of my life for about 10 years and I am constantly amazed by the things they pick up. Evelyn, full of life and energy, sometimes found it challenging to focus on

what I was saying and fully listen when she was much younger. To get her to make eye contact with me when the seriousness of the situation required it, I would sometimes tell her "look at my nose." Now that she is older a simple reminder that I need her to pay attention is all it usually takes. Yet, somehow - this lesson stuck. It was not that long ago that she was telling me about something that had happened to her at school.

Multi-tasking over dinner or homework I was not using my best active listening skills. "Sheri, this is important, I need you to look at my nose for a minute," she stated simply. This was not a "planned lesson" -- yet in that moment Evelyn was making her needs known in a calm and respectful way - one of the very lessons of most any nonviolence training.

Melissa, a hard working student who often asks me about my travels for the work I do with MPT, showed me her religion homework last spring. She was studying the Beatitudes and was asked to write a brief description or a picture to illustrate each one. I was both humbled and proud to find a drawing of myself to illustrate "blessed are the peacemakers." It also gave me pause for thought: What lessons have I passed along in my stories? Have those lessons been consistent with the way she has seen me behave in the world? Have I been true to my beliefs in what I have passed on?

I find myself touching the Handala pendant that I wear around my neck. It's an image of a child and a symbol of the last refugee forced from his homeland of Palestine. Handala has become a symbol of Palestinian solidarity particularly the right of return. I believe this is important, and reason enough to wear the symbol. For me, he serves an additional reminder "the children are watching" our actions are a lesson; the world we are creating is a lesson. Does the world they are seeing us create, look like the one we want them to live in? Are we assuring they have a role in its creation?

## A Fire in My Soul By Annette Thomas



Jebalyia Refugee Camp, Gaza

A little boy I would never meet, yet will never forget, introduced me to peace work in the Middle East. While visiting friends in Amman, Jordan in the summer of 2003, I spent my afternoons reading while they were at work. In one of the newspapers published in English, I found a photograph of an eight-year-old boy who had been shot by an Israeli soldier as he left his tent in Gaza for a piece of candy. The photo showed him at his funeral, surrounded by over 20 young boys who had come to kiss him good-bye. That image lit a fire in my soul that to this day has not been extinguished - he could have been my son.

When my friends returned from work, I could barely speak as I waved the picture in front of them. I needed to go there, I explained, to find the family of this little boy. How could something so devastating be allowed to happen? Then I was confronted with the horrible truth that this was not an isolated incident, but an inconceivable reality. Children were wounded, maimed, and killed at alarming rates and the world was turning a blind eye. I needed to learn the truth, but taking me to Gaza would pose a challenge because of the roadblocks and checkpoints we would encounter, made even more difficult for us to maneuver because my friends were Palestinian.

I booked a flight sixth months later and arrived in Amman armed with twenty 70-pound boxes of infant formula, clothing and basic necessities. These care

items were delivered to Ramallah by a relief organization. We then began the first leg of our journey.

We were delayed at the Gaza border because of an Israeli gunship attack, the aftermath of which was visible in the distance, but would finally be allowed to pass. As we drove through Gaza City and entered the refugee camps, we were shocked by the living conditions, which were brutal, but the people were kind and welcoming. Little children would run up to us and shake my hand, introducing themselves in broken English. Seeing my camera, they knew I had come to capture images and tell their story. School children with backpacks scurried through the streets, laughing and joking and running after our car, flashing smiles and peace signs. They could have been any children in any country but they were oppressed youngsters in a volatile area, which had become the biggest open-air prison in the world.

As heartbreaking as their situation is, I was astounded by the peace I felt while I was there. It was difficult to determine which children belonged in which households because they seemed to interact so well with everyone.

In Palestine, the children are considered their national treasure and they go to great lengths to make sure they are well educated and cared for. They are treated lovingly and with respect and those shows of affection seem to be gladly reciprocated by the children.



It is incredible how opening a newspaper can change 's life. The little boy in Gaza impacted mine in ways he would never learn, but he will remain alive in my heart and his legacy will continue to live on as long as I do.

## CHILDREN AND PEACE - REALLY ... By Barbara B. Nolin

Becoming a mother at age thirty was one of life's highlights. That little bundle of humanity was so welcome. Then reality set in. This babe is a full-time job. Days and nights are seldom peaceful. Profound and purposeful, YES! But peaceful? Hardly!

By age thirty-six I was welcoming my fourth child. Yes - welcoming! With two boys and two girls challenging my every thought and move, I was becoming much wiser.

But when did the peace come? When 8:00 PM found those small ones all in bed, the house became *my* house, thoughts became *my* thoughts, and I knew down deep that creating a world at home

which recognized their feelings,

which stimulated their thinking, and

which taught them coping skills

was creating a solid ground for them to build a life on. Peace? Together we discovered

How much better peace is than conflict,

How much better working together is than working against each other,

How much better harmony is than discord.

It wasn't easy, but it was worth everything.

In spite of Time magazine's July issue which presented the idea that one child families are just fine, it seems to me we learn more directly if we are linked with a brother or a sister. Relationships are key ...

For instance these children:

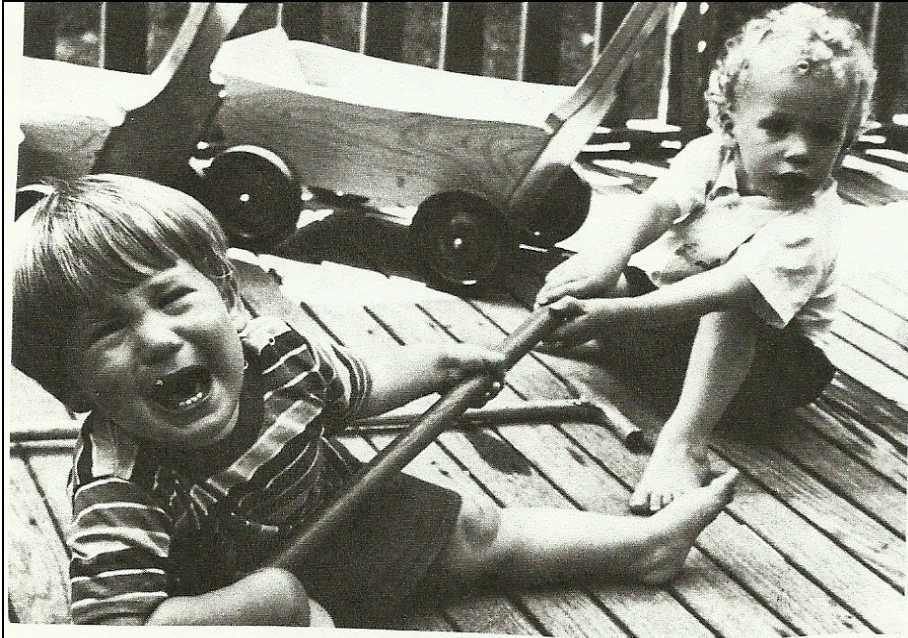
His work is more interesting  
because she is watching him  
work.



Picture provided by author of this article  
Credit: *Children in Community*  
Photo Editor: Mareus Mommsen, 1974  
The Plough Publishing House, Rifton, NY

## CHILDREN AND PEACE *continued*

On the other hand of course, is the distress when things aren't going as we want them to.



It's mine!"

No, it's mine!

His or hers?

Working through the ownership of this debated object will help them grow.

Picture provided by author of this article  
Credit: *Children in Community*  
Photo Editor: Mareus Mommsen, 1974  
The Plough Publishing House, Rifton, NY

... Isn't this a picture of two countries claiming the same territory?

... Or perhaps we could color one red and one blue.

What this picture calls for is a mother, a father, or a grandparent [or a nonviolent intervener] on their way to help them figure this out.

THIS is why parenting [and nonviolent intervention] is such a huge responsibility. Just 'laying down the law' might bring quiet, but it won't bring peace.

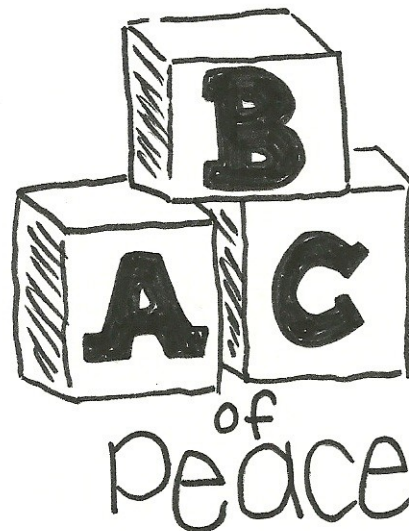
This brings me back to my conviction that peace is something we **make**.

Any parent knows that.

Our children must learn that.

Our world must work at that.

Family brings us great joy and a longing for peace!



## THIS SONG Timothy Price

This song  
 Is sung, by marchers, in beat  
 To drum,  
 This song,  
 Is sung, by runners, whose feet  
 Are flung  
 We travel with illusion of space and some version of  
 time  
 We sing of fusion to face an emersion in tide  
 Let the rhythm flow as we go  
 Let the gift be given and know  
 That each as it comes  
 Is perfect in the sun and rain  
 The mighty river flows  
 Onward consciousness goes  
 This song  
 Is sung, from the depths  
 Of our heart  
 This song,  
 Is sung, from end to the new start  
 This song  
 Is sung, by young and by old  
 This song  
 Is sung, By those beginning and those done  
 This song  
 Is sung, by those on Earth and in Heaven  
 This song  
 Is sung, by hawks and by doves  
 Sing loud  
 Paint bright  
 Chant strong  
 Grow tall  
 Live long  
 Carry on  
 Dance light

## DANCE continued from page 9

When they reached the mound, they climbed way to the top, and those with shovels began to dig in order to remove some of the dirt. Then they saw a soldiers' truck round the curve. Then another. And another. Until there were eight trucks filled with soldiers who then got out and began climbing the hills around them. They carried big guns.

All of the sudden, the soldiers started to shoot tear gas out of their guns. Tear gas made smoke everywhere and all the children began to cough. Then the soldiers made really loud noises with their guns in order to scare the children. The kids and began to run as fast as they could. When they got to the end of Winding Road, they were panting from running so fast and talking about what had happened. "I wish I wasn't afraid of them." "We don't want to hurt anyone!" "We just want to show the soldiers that Winding Road is good, for playing games and dancing."

At that moment they decided to go back to the mound even though the soldiers were still there. They went back to the hill, and then something wonderful happened. Four of the boys appeared in beautiful, colorful costumes. In order to show that Winding Road was for fun and celebration, they had decided to perform a dance! Even as their hearts were beating and their knees were shaking, the four began to dance right in front of the soldiers. All the other children began to sing and clap their hands. It was so beautiful. I wish you could have been there. Yes, they thought, this is what beautiful Winding Road was meant for. Not for hatred or meanness, but for joy and friendship. As the boys danced, even the soldiers had to smile.

Today, the mound is still on Winding Road. Every Friday, the children meet for prayer and begin their walk in the hope that one day people will stop fighting and instead we will all play and laugh with one another.

The song and dance continues and if you ever happen to be passing through Saara, you are always welcome to join them. **And if you every find a mound in your road, don't hurt one another, join in the dance instead!**

**MPT Vision**

To pursue peace through active nonviolence in places of conflict

MPT seeks a peaceful, just, sustainable Earth Community grounded in nonviolence and respect for the sacred interconnectedness of all life

**MPT Mission**

- Provide training in active nonviolence designed for the specific needs of participants.
- Recruit and mentor individuals seeking experience with violence reduction teams.
- Place violence reduction teams in domestic and international conflicts.
- Educate the public to the vision and practice of nonviolence.

**WITH GRATITUDE ....**

Dear Friends,

We are grateful for your continued support of Michigan Peace Team. Your commitment, your involvement, your gifts of time, energy, talents, and your financial contributions deeply appreciated.

We are most grateful!

Your MPT Community

**CARING FOR EARTH**

Our new newsprint format enables us to better respect the Earth and living things...

Special thanks to Shopping Guide in Mason, Michigan for making this newsprint format possible!

If you would prefer to receive your quarterly MPT newsletter via email please send MPT your email address.

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**Regarding MPT newsletter artwork**

Nancy Ayotte, IHM creates the artwork for MPT Newsletters. Her creations are a pure gift to MPT and to our readers. This gift is yours to freely use in other peace work.

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The Michigan Peace Team in partnership with Palestine Cultural Office invites you to

## **LIVING JUSTICE: Celebrating the Life & Work of Edward Said & Rachel Corrie**

**With special honored guests Grace Said, sister of Dr. Edward Said,  
and Cindy & Craig Corrie, parents of Rachel**

**Friday, November 5, 2010  
6 pm–9 pm**

**Auction opens at 5 pm • Dinner 6:30 pm • Program 7:30 pm**

The celebration will include a spectacular Middle Eastern dinner, silent auction, talks by our guests, and presentations of the Edward Said Lifetime Award to his sister, Grace, and the Rachel Corrie Peacemaker Award to the people of Bil'in, Palestine. The evening will conclude with Palestinian music and dabke dancing.

### **Greenfield Manor, Banquet Hall**

4770 Greenfield, Dearborn, MI 48126

Price: \$50 per person; \$500 table of ten; \$35 student



**Warren David**, Founder and Publisher of *Arab Detroit* and CEO David Communications.

#### **Event Emcees:**



**Siham Awada Jaafar**, Host and Producer WDHT TV "Community Connection" and "Off the Cuff."



### **A word about Edward and Rachel ...**

Distinguished scholar-activist **Edward Said** was born on November 1, 1935 in Jerusalem, and died September 25, 2003 in New York City. Dr. Said was tireless in promoting justice for the Palestinian people and is remembered for his humanity, integrity and vision. A Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, Dr. Said was one of the most important literary critics of the late 20th century. For many years, he was the most prominent spokesperson for the Palestinian cause in the United States. Dr. Said wrote ten books, including *Orientalism*, his best-known work.

American peace activist **Rachel Corrie** lived her 23 years to the fullest. Hailing from Olympia, WA, Rachel's life exemplified peace, justice, creativity, and the belief that another world is possible. While undertaking nonviolent direct action to protect the home of a Palestinian family from demolition on March 16, 2003, Rachel was crushed by an Israeli bulldozer in Gaza. Since then, an enormous amount of solidarity activities have been carried out in Rachel's name around the world, more than 30 songs written by various musicians are dedicated to her life and work, and poems, artwork, and theater continue to celebrate her vision and mission. Her spirit lives on and continues to inspire us.

**To reserve your seat:** Mail check payable to Michigan Peace Team to Mary Ann Ford, Registration Chairperson, 24071 Oneida, Oak Park, MI 48237 (If you have a person or group that you would like to sit with, please indicate). Pay via credit card at [mptsigevent.blogspot.com](http://mptsigevent.blogspot.com). • **To donate auction items:** Call the Auction Committee at 586-242-4250.

**For more information** visit [mptsigevent.blogspot.com/](http://mptsigevent.blogspot.com/) or contact: Liz Walters phone: 517-231-7403, email: [elizabethwalters.mpt@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethwalters.mpt@gmail.com); Kim Redigan, phone: 313 520-7465; Mary Ann Ford, phone: 248 548-7077

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