

Choose Peace Project

► Call for Support: Beloved Community Summer Jobs Program

The summer is the most difficult time of year for young people at the Institute. You can help at-risk youth this summer by giving them a meaningful experience: host a young person at your job site for seven weeks. Don't have a job to offer to a youth? You can also make a contribution towards a youth stipend or the other needs that we have during the summer months. Here are just some of our summer youth needs:

\$10 provides lunch for one summer jobs participant.

\$55 gives a Beloved Community Summer Jobs Program youth a one-month RIPTA bus pass to get to and from work.

\$185 pays a one-week stipend for one Beloved Community Summer Jobs youth or one Community Leader.

\$2,500 pays a Beloved Community Summer Jobs Program youth's stipend for the entire summer.

For more information about the Beloved Community Summer Jobs Program and how you can help, please contact **Heather Gaydos, Director of Youth Programs** at (401) 785-2320 or heather@nonviolenceinstitute.org.

HELPING TO CREATE AN OASIS OF PEACE AT HIGHLANDER CHARTER SCHOOL

The Highlander Charter School has teamed up with the Institute to teach elementary school students nonviolence skills through the Choose Peace Project.

The Choose Peace Project – an eight-week program – has been working with elementary schools for about four years, according to Alyssa Metthe, assistant director of training. With a recent increase in staffing, partnering with schools has become a priority for the Institute. In addition to Highlander, the Institute has worked with Jenks Middle

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Institute Lead Trainer Patricia Taubin listens in as Highland Charter School fifth graders play the telephone game. The activity is only one of the tools used to teach children nonviolence methods.



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▶ VOLUNTEER PROFILE: BROCK LEIENDECKER

From time to time, *Straight Talk* will feature one of our volunteers. In this issue, we talk with Brock Leiendecker, a senior at Providence College. Brock was one of five job coaches who supervised high-risk teens – ages 14-18 – in the Beloved Community Summer Jobs Program. His work involved supervising about 16 youth employees and visiting their job sites that included two libraries, Roger Williams Park, the Police Activity League and City Arts.



Straight Talk: *What was your motivation for volunteering at the Institute?*

Brock: I've been involved in community service since my junior year in high school. As part of a high school group project, I witnessed first-hand Third World poverty in Peru and Ecuador. And later, I helped build houses in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. All of these experiences led me to make community service a big part of my life.

Straight Talk: *How did you learn about the Institute?*

Brock: One of my professors – Keith Morton – is a board member and he talked about the Institute in class. When I saw a posting on the bulletin board, I decided to volunteer.

Straight Talk: *What have you learned through your volunteer experience?*

Brock: These are not bad kids. They are products of their environment, and organizations like the Institute demonstrate that they can change and be successful. To prove my point, one of the kids had a real hard time during the training week, but when he got on the job, he was the first one to show up in the morning and the last to leave at the end of the day. He often worked through lunch. His supervisor wanted to hire him full time.

Straight Talk: *Now that the summer program has ended, what are your future plans?*

Brock: I plan to continue volunteering at the Institute. I believe that kids need positive role models to show that that education and job security are achievable goals. Just being present shows a kid you actually care. And for many of these kids, it is the one thing that is lacking in their lives.

Since speaking with Straight Talk, Brock has continued to be involved as a volunteer. This month, he signed up for the Institute's two-day core training, which teaches community members about Dr. King's principles of nonviolence.



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THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY & PRACTICE OF NONVIOLENCE

9 Central Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02907 | Tel: (401) 785-2320

Fax: (401) 270-5490 | www.nonviolenceinstitute.org

Choose Peace Project

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School in Pawtucket, Woonsocket High School, Roger Williams Middle School and William D'Abate Elementary School, both in Providence.

Building upon the six steps and six principles of nonviolence, children in grades 3-8 are introduced to peaceful methods for handling situations they experience in everyday life. Using role playing, team building and critical thinking, trainers engage the children in activities

“It’s all about changing the culture of the school and building the beloved community.”

that demonstrate ways to avoid potential violent situations.

Highlander Charter School, founded on peace principles, was the perfect place for an in-school and after-school pilot nonviolence training program, according to Dana Borrelli, director of the after school expanded learning program.

“The principles of nonviolence fits within the school’s mission,” Dana said. “And the Institute has been awesome in adjusting and making the program work for elementary school-age children. They have tailored the program to suit each age group with hands-on activities and healthy competition. The kids have learned some great skills in nonviolence.”

Institute lead trainer Patricia Taubin introduced the children’s game of Telephone to Michaela Wnuk’s fifth



Michaela Wnuk’s (back, left) fifth grade class learn nonviolence methods through hands-on activities and healthy competition from ISPN Lead Trainer Patricia Taubin (front, left) and Institute AmeriCorps VISTA Tempestt Burrell (standing, right).

grade class. The children passed a message from one another, demonstrating how easily information can be corrupted and the harmful effects of misunderstandings.

Later, Patricia and Institute AmeriCorps VISTA Tempestt Burrell will teach different lessons to sixth graders, but with the same underlying messages of clear communication and mutual respect.

But the Choose Peace Project isn’t just for kids, stressed Alyssa.

“It’s all about changing the culture of the school and building the beloved community. We try to get everyone on board, including the staff, administrators and parents.”

Parents were introduced to the Choose Peace Project and the Institute in an informal gathering at Highlander recently. The event was so successful that the Institute’s trainers were asked to return.

The National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (www.ncccev.org) reports that “rates of school violence tend to mirror those of the general population. Typically, community violence in inner cities is more prevalent than in rural areas....”

Dana would agree:

“Even though we are our own oasis of peace, we are surrounded by violence. We are benefitting from this connection with the Institute. We know we are on their radar and that they are looking out for us.”

▶ ISPN WELCOMES NINE NEW STREET WORKERS

The Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence welcomes nine new Streetworkers. In August, the Institute added the new outreach workers who provide advocacy and mentoring, and act as a positive presence in the streets and in the lives of gang-involved or at-risk youth. They build relationships, gather information and mediate conflicts to prevent violence. They respond to stabbings, shootings and homicides.

This brings our Streetworker team up to 16, our largest team ever! Help us welcome our new Streetworkers:

Alfred Amoury	Juan Carter	Adrien Hazard
Shawndell Burney	Rasheed Goode	Leah Rich
Craig Bustillo	Joel Guzman	Kyisha Threats



► **Outstanding Nonprofit Organization**

Staff members celebrate receipt of the Outstanding Philanthropic Service Organization of 2009 Award at National Philanthropy Day before approximately 680 guests at the R.I. Convention Center. The Association of Fundraising Professionals, R.I. Chapter sponsored the luncheon on November 24, 2009.

► **WHAT YOUR GIFT CAN DO**

- **\$25** provides personal care items for a juvenile reentering the community from the R.I. Training School or one care package for a hospitalized victim of violence.
- **\$50** provides a hot meal for the family of a homicide victim.
- **\$60** pays a Streetworker's cell phone bill for one month. A cell phone is a life-line for youth in crisis.
- **\$75** buys food and paper goods for one recreation night.
- **\$100** pays for the equipment and apparel needs of a Streetworker for one year (shirts, ID badge, backpack, cell phone etc.)
- **\$250** allows one person to become a certified nonviolence trainer.
- **\$2,500** provides a youth with an after-school job at the Institute.
- **\$5,000** provides one semester (11 weeks) of nonviolence curriculum in schools for 100 students.

- Toiletary items for males ages 14 and over
- Gently used and new clothing for males ages 14 and over
- Round meeting table
- End table
- Computer equipment
- Printer

WISH LIST

MISSION: The Institute for The Study & Practice of Nonviolence teaches by word and example the principles and practices of nonviolence, and fosters a community that addresses potentially violent situations with nonviolent solutions.

THE INSTITUTE
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