

2012 Annual Report of the Western New York Peace Center, Inc.

WNY Peace Center's Annual Meeting
Saturday, April 6, 2013
Network of Religious Communities
1272 Delaware Ave
Buffalo NY 14209

Dear Members and Friends,

The WNY Peace Center acts through its task forces. Enclosed are reports of their activity for 2012, as well as a financial summary for FY 2012.

As you can see, there is a lot going on, all supported by your membership and contributions.

Thanks for your continued support.

Peace,

Charley Bowman
Interim Executive Director
WNY Peace Center, Inc.
1272 Delaware Ave
Buffalo NY 14209
716-332-3904

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Finances, as of April 5, 2013:

Buffalo Cooperative Federal Credit Union:

1. Member draft: \$22,452.34
2. Share 1: \$50,929.62
3. Share 2: \$3,000.54
4. Share 3: \$1,500.15

PayPal Account: \$539.09
Total: \$77,882.65

Task Force Monies: LASC: \$12,354.64
Total WNY Peace Center Monies: \$65,528.01

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Major Expenses for 2012:

Rent: about \$500 monthly (excluding: xeroxing at NRC, phone, internet connection)
 Office Manager: Peggy Matteliano: \$400 monthly
 Peaceful Conflict Resolution Consultant: Vicki Ross: \$640 monthly
 Peaceful Conflict Resolution Consultant: Carlanda Wilson: \$640 monthly
 Annual personnel costs: \$20,160
 Annual Rent: ~\$7,200

Other Annual Costs:

Insurance: \$741.59

Gary Krull Associates: \$1,050 (Federal and NY State tax forms...)

Buffalo Niagara Convention Center: \$4,382.75 (our annual dinner)

Other costs:

News Letter Expenses: annual total: \$7,700 or \$6,000

USPS Bulk Mailing: \$1,700 annual

Xeroxing News Letter: \$6,000 (at Kinkos) or \$4,300 (at NRC) annual costs

Number: about 2,000 News Letters, about 3 sheets each, snail mailed 6 times a year.

FY2012 Summary

	January 1, 2012 --->	\$57,346.14	---->	\$5,301.07
2012 Monthly Statements	<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Withdrawals</u>	<u>Grants</u>	LASC
Jan 1 - Jan 31	\$3,768.21	\$5,072.58		
Feb 1 - Feb 28	\$5,116.02	\$663.31		
Mar 1 - Mar 31	\$6,337.00	\$3,128.12		
Apr 1 - Apr 30	\$9,333.08	\$5,381.54		
May 1 - May 31	\$3,941.60	\$3,829.03		
Jun 1 - Jun 30	\$3,842.05	\$4,483.65		
Jul 1 - Jul 31	\$1,611.33	\$5,485.04		
Aug 1 - Aug 31	\$1,539.56	\$3,091.05		
Sept 1 - Sept 31	\$5,778.55	\$3,878.56		
Oct 1 - Oct 31	\$15,451.97	\$8,390.07		
Nov 1 - Nov 30	\$9,713.26	\$5,321.19	\$3,000	Grant:
Dec 1 - Dec 31	<u>\$2,352.40</u>	<u>\$5,214.67</u>		<u>\$5,623.47</u>
December 31, 2012 Totals:	\$68,785.03	\$53,938.81		\$8,855.07

Total Net Gain: \$17,846.22

Net Gain WNYPC: \$8,991.15

Net Gain LASC: \$8,855.07

December 31, 2012 \$80,493.43 (\$80,519.17 on Jan 2013 statement)

Dec 31, 2012 Balance WNYPC: \$66,363.02Balance LASC: \$14,156.14

REPORTS

A. PROPOSED MIDDLE EAST TASK FORCE OF THE WNY PEACE CENTER

DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT (awaiting approval by the Peace Center Board)

The Middle East has in recent years been one of the most volatile and dangerous areas of the globe. At the same time, the movements for democracy (the “Arab Spring”) have also been a source of inspiration. Recent turmoil – grassroots movements and revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, Libya, and other countries – not to mention the on-going instability in Iraq and the conflict between Israel and the occupied regions of Palestine, have kept this region in the headlines.

As an organization dedicated to world peace, we feel that the WNY Peace Center has an obligation to be engaged in this region. This implies an obligation to:

- Educate ourselves and others about the region and the struggles taking place there, as well as their cultures, history and politics. Public awareness and knowledge can create momentum for peace and justice in the region.
- Understand, especially as citizens of the USA, the nature and extent of our own country’s military, economic, and hegemonic involvement in the region.
- Petition our governmental leaders in an effort to improve our relations to the peoples of the region and lessen hardships there.
- Collaborate with other interested organizations to increase our ability to affect change.
- Develop and promote projects that will improve the lives of the people of the region.

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B. LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

by Wayne Alt, Coordinator, www.lascwny.org

After 31 years of working in solidarity with organizations and the people of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Latin American Solidarity Committee continues to support efforts for justice and peace throughout that region. In the 80’s the work was concentrated on the country of Nicaragua and the struggle for democracy during a brutal civil war that also occurred in other Central American countries around the same time.

As those civil wars subsided the LASC program expanded to include solidarity work in most Latin American and Caribbean countries. In the early 90’s the organizing committee decided to include other outreach components to both solidarity organizations and to the people of Latin American /Caribbean countries. Those components included Education (coffeehouses and

special events), Humanitarian aid (dental clinics and caravans), Legislation (making sure to communicate with congress people about specific Latin America /Caribbean issues) and Working with Others (issue and financial support of additional Latin American organizations).

During this past year, we have had an opportunity to hear many people from the Western New York area who have returned from humanitarian aid or study group journeys where much was learned about the culture, customs, religion and politics of specific countries. This year is no different as several presentations are planned on the following topics: projects in El Salvador (Trinity Episcopal), conflict resolution in Belize presented by Audrey Mang), environmental program by Quakers in Bolivia, Havana Medical School, a documentary on the atrocities in Colombia, a barrio Managua Art program conducted by Melanie and Bill Wolski, a report by Canisius College students on their recent trip to Costa Rica and Cuba, and Haiti Sister- Church and community program.

For the first six months in 2013, LASC chose to move our monthly coffeehouses to Daemen College. We kept the same dates (third Monday of the month) at the Wick Student Union Building Lounge Room. Those coffeehouses consisted of a report from the Heifer Project/USA and their extensive work in third world countries including many Latin American countries, a recent report from the Sisters of St. Francis (Stella Niagara) and the work they have been doing with some villages in Chiapas, Mexico. The March coffeehouse was a report from the Global Justice and Ecology Project in Nicaragua.

The LASC fundraiser was organized for the purpose of educating the Western New York community on the plight of farm workers in this area and how we can support legislation that would be helpful to them including immigration policies.

LASC is excited that our speaker at the 32nd Annual Bissonette/Latin American Humanitarian Aid will be Sharon Hostetler, Executive Director of Witness For Peace. During the 80-90's this organization formed passive resistance on the borders of Central American countries that were experiencing civil wars. For the past twenty years they are the leading organization in heading up delegations to many countries in Latin America. Some of their other major concerns is trade policies, human and indigenous rights. The event will be Thursday, April 25 at Daemen College 4380 Main St., Wick Center, 6:30PM, light refreshments and wine will be served. Fair trade merchants will also be available.

Reservations can be made by calling the Peace Center, 716.332-3904 or sending a check to WNY Peace Ctr./LASC, 1272 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209. The cost is \$15 regular and \$30 patron (gives you a membership in LASC). We appreciate all the support that the Fr. A. Joseph Bissonette Foundation has given us.

LASC continues to support dental clinics operated by Dr. Tom Potts, LASC member. Tom recently visited and worked at a clinic in Haiti. LASC participated in the 22nd Friendship Caravan to Cuba collected, packaged and delivered 20 boxes of much needed medical supplies. Although the struggles continue we have seen some vast improvement in many Latin American countries. Some countries have developed trade agreements. One outcome has been stronger labor improvements resulting in a more democratic voting system and fewer human right abuses.

Through the organizing of Ned Cuddy LASC has maintained communication with Western New York congress people through regular visits. For the past six years Bill Jungels journeyed to Chiapas, Mexico to interview families and individuals on their need to attain economic justice. Locally we continue to work on farm workers legislation that will assist in the struggle for economic justice.

LASC is excited to announce that Arianne Walker, a Canisius College student recently had the opportunity to visit Honduras thanks to the contributions of LASC and ROCLA, a Rochester Latin America Solidarity organization.

We continue to work closely with other solidarity organizations throughout the U.S. Our organizing committee consists: of Terry Bisson, Ned Cuddy, Maxine Insera, Bill Jungels, Tom Potts and Carol Sundberg. The task force appreciates all of the work that the Peace Center has done to support our program over the years.

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ANTI-FRACKING TASK FORCE

by Rita Yelda and Frank Gage

To date the Anti-fracking Task Force has had some major and impressive accomplishments. We are having regular open monthly meetings of at least twenty people, and are incorporating members in to teams to help with the campaign to ban fracking in New York State and Erie County. The Task Force now consists of three teams: promotion, lobbying, and media. Some of the teams' accomplishments are as follows:

Promotion team: On February 7th we held a rally at the regional office of the Department of Environmental Conservation on Michigan Ave. where we turned out over one hundred supporters who were calling for a ban on fracking in New York State. Among them was Assemblymembers Sean Ryan and Crystal Peoples-Stokes, who spoke to the crowd on the topic. We also got 25 people at the "Dear Governor Cuomo" film screening at Burning Books on February 21st that we organized. We also did flyering and petition signature collecting at the two St. Patrick's Day Parades and are doing regular flyering and petitioning at the Super Flea Market. Special thanks to Valerie, Frank, Alison on this!

Lobby team: Rita Yelda presented for the Erie County Energy & Environment Committee in January and the lobby team has met with several Erie County legislators to educate them on the issue of fracking and to ask them to support a county ban on fracking and waste. They've been successful so far and have even found a bill sponsor.

Media team: The media team has had some notable accomplishments working with local newspapers in February and March to spread the word about local and state fracking bans. Shelia Bailey had an op-ed published in The Buffalo News, James Burnette had a letter to the editor printed in The Buffalo News, Rita Yelda had a letter to the editor printed in The Buffalo News, Alison Schweichler had a letter to the editor placed in the Lancaster Source, Barbara Frackiewicz had a letter to the editor placed in the Am-Pol Eagle and Artvoice, and Sarah Buckley had a letter to the editor published in the East Aurora Advertiser.

Fracking is a type of natural gas drilling that breaks up shale rock using water, sand and toxic chemicals. In some states, it has caused such serious water contamination that people's tap water actually lights on fire! Many scientists, activists and public health officials are concerned about fracking because of its potential to contaminate water, air and land. Many of the chemicals used in fracking are kept from the public, but some that have been discovered are carcinogenic. Fracking is poised to happen in New York State this year if we don't stop it. What can you do locally to fight fracking? A lot!

The Anti-fracking Task Force has an open community meeting on April 4, 2013 at 7 p.m. at the Network of Religious Communities. Join us at our community meeting, where we'll discuss how to ban fracking in Erie County and ways to contribute to the campaign to ban fracking in New York State. For more information on our next open meeting time after April 4th, please contact Rita at ryelda@fwwatch.org.

There is also an important public hearing in front of the Energy & Environment Committee of the Erie County Legislature at 92 Franklin St, 4th floor, in Buffalo at 8:45 am on Thursday, April 18th. The general public is invited and should prepare a 3 minute long statement to read directly to the legislature on why it's important that dangerous fracking and it's toxic waste be banned from entering Erie County. Please arrive early to sign up to speak. The bill to ban fracking in the County would have to pass through the Energy & Environment Committee before the entire legislature is allowed to vote on it. A majority of the legislature, not just committee members, will be present at this hearing. Whether you decide to speak to the legislature or not, please attend so that we can pack the room and leave an impression. Invite your friends, as well!

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THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC JUSTICE TASK FORCE

by Eric Gallion

The Global Economic Justice Task Force has been coordinating with other local groups concerned with economic rights – such as:

- Fighting for a Fair Economy, a local union and community group forum to develop and coordinate programs to advance workers rights. This group has recently worked hard to increase the NYS minimum wage.
- Citizen Action – which is currently involved with a number of programs to increase funding for the Buffalo public schools, adopt the new improved code of conduct, and support the upcoming school board elections. Also – their efforts to establish fair, publicly – funded elections in NYS.
- The WNY League of Women Voters, which is developing a program on April 25 to discuss League policies and how they relate to what our government should be doing to improve our economy.
- Coalition for Economic Justice (CEJ) – with their efforts to reform the regional IDA's (Industrial Development Agencies), and hold them accountable for actually creating jobs, instead of using taxpayer money to help developers build buildings.

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PRISONERS' RIGHTS TASK FORCE REPORT

by Chuck Culhane

We are fortunate in New York to have no death penalty since 1963, when Eddie Lee Mays, a black man, was electrocuted for a murder. Thirty-three states still retain the death penalty, but a handful of southern states execute a large majority. In June, a contingent of 8 Peace Center members and Occupy Buffalo activists went to Washington to join in the 40th anniversary/celebration of the temporary abolition of the death penalty in 1972.

As part of the annual four-day Fast and Vigil from June 29th to July 3rd, we stood and leafleted in front of the U.S. Supreme Court with abolitionists from around the country. We hope to do that again this year. Although executions have decreased, our president has arrogated the power to execute people through extra-legal methods, such as drones; we all need to recognize the links between these acts of aggressive violence by our government, and oppose them.

Along with steadfast ally and Peace Center member Karima Amin and her organization Prisoners Are People Too, we've started community conversations around an important book by Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. A panel discussion in November 2012 at St. Joseph's, organized by their Justice Committee was very well-attended and was basically a call to the community to address the issues of racial disparities in the context of the government's "war on drugs" and consequent mass incarceration.

We also presented at the downtown library in their Justice Series programs in early January. Professor Alexander was invited to Buffalo but she is booked up for the year. However, a Buffalo contingent is going to meet her in mid-April at Hamilton College. Everyone is affected and pays for the current system which works very well for criminal justice agencies and their huge budgets; but it is destroying generations of young blacks and Hispanics and further crippling poor communities. Her book is a must-read for anyone interested in social justice; not a polemic, but a connecting of the dots with indisputable facts. Organized by PRP2 and Karima, the Peace Center co-sponsored a Family Empowerment Day at St. Brigid-Columba's church on October 6, with excellent workshops and speakers.

We're working on legislation that may decrease the number of people being arrested, imprisoned long-term and stigmatized for life. This involves medical marijuana, restoration of higher education in the prisons, and parole reform. In our work on local jail issues, a two-pronged strategy has been effective: continuing visible demonstrations at the downtown jail, and negotiations via the Erie County Community Corrections Advisory Board which we helped to re-establish. Progress is slow, but there have been some good signs, such as fewer suicides and instances of guard brutality, and efforts to restore programs that were cut before the current sheriff took office.

Contact info: culhane9@gmail.com

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THE RESIST MILITARISM! TASK FORCE

by Russell Brown

We are part of a relatively new organization, No Drones Niagara, a member of the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars. No Drones Niagara includes groups and individuals who oppose the use of drones at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. Although there are no plans to have the Reapers on site, they do plan that soldiers on base will remotely control drones, assassinating and terrorizing people on the other side of the world. Besides the killing, we are also opposed to bringing WNY into a direct war-fighting role. This makes the Niagara Falls base a legitimate target in our illegal wars. Our representatives in DC view the ability to get drones to replace the phasing out of some of the C-130's as a major victory. We need to change this vision.

We have been going to the main gate on Lockport Road with signs and leaflets to share our concerns with the workers at the base and members of the local community. We hope that when they see that the drones will commit war crimes in our name, they too will advocate for legitimate -- not murderous -- jobs in our community. Our own director, Charley Bowman, has put together an alternative plan for a solar array at the base.

As part of No Drones Niagara we participated in the Mardi Gras Parade in Buffalo; but how do we present a drone in a festive parade? Our float showed the drone crashing with people celebrating its symbolic grounding. Signs read, 'No drones at Niagara' and 'Ground a drone, save a life'.

We will be showing a short film and having a speaker, James Ricks from Ithaca, at UB next Saturday evening (April 6th - a few hours after the Peace Center's Annual Meeting). There will be a panel to answer questions. Check with the Peace Center for details.

We will also be protesting at the base for Mother's Day on May 12. Ed Kinane will be the key speaker the night before. Again, check with the Peace Center for details. Contact info: hobadoxa@me.com

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NEW PEACE CENTER TASK FORCE ADDRESSES DEBT & POVERTY IN WNY

by John Washington

The recently founded Economic Empowerment Task Force is focusing on the *economic* aspect of violence. We are in the early stages, working to address debt and its adverse effect on society by educating and empowering people to fight back against oppressive economic policies. We are currently looking at spaces in impoverished communities to meet and expand participation. Last Saturday we hosted a fundraising party for the Rolling Jubilee, a mutual aid project to abolish debts. Our fundraiser raised over \$500, which will abolish around \$10,000 in debt.

Please join us on April 18th, 5:30 PM at the Merriweather Library (1324 Jefferson Avenue); we will hold the first of a series of community discussions on Debt and Debt Resistance. We are also developing a Responsible Banking Act to be passed in Buffalo Common Council, and we will hold meetings this summer to figure out policies that would best benefit the people of Buffalo.

For more information about any of the projects of this Task Force, please email me at johnarchiewashington@gmail.com or visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/593849280625268/>

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PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION REPORT

by Vicki Ross

Summary:

- Schools are eager to partner with us. They are glad to have
 - our PCR services offered to their students
 - our help in aiding students to learn to focus and control themselves.
 - our consulting with the staff on their challenges.
- Coalition-building is going well, including
 - Peace Education Project (largely operating in the schools)
 - Community Peacemakers of Buffalo
- Groups are eager for help in PCR, community-building, and inspiring people to nonviolence
 - Perry Choice Neighborhood project
 - Westside Promise Neighborhood project
 - Rotaries
 - Southtowns Rotaries (a collaboration of six rotaries for a series of peace forums)
 - Batavia/Genesee County Rotary (youth conference)
 - Clarence Rotary (youth summit)
 - Erie County/Buffalo Safe Neighborhoods Initiative Committee
- PeaceJam and Camp Peaceprints continue developing our next generation of peacemakers.
- Stopping the Drones and Ending the Wars is generating increased interest.

Peaceful Conflict Resolution efforts and programs are very much in demand and have gained real traction over the past year. Programs in the schools and with young people generally are particularly on the rise, as are collaborations with like-minded groups and coordinated training opportunities.

As you know, PCR includes communication, cooperation, dealing with our own and other's feelings, problem-solving, de-escalation and relaxation techniques, navigating power differentials, etc. Exercises, activities, games, and discussion provide experiential learning as we work through our own issues and prospects, gaining inspiration and tools for real peace-making. The Peace Education Project (PEP), initiated in 2012 through my work with the Peace Education Fund and Interfaith Peace Network, now includes WNY Peace Center as a key partner. It also includes the Sr. Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence (SKC), the Stop The Violence Coalition (STVC), and Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (ECCPASA) through co-facilitator Jan Burns.

On behalf of PEP, I am on both the Site Based Management Team and the Safe and Civil Schools Committee at Lafayette High School and at the Math, Science, and Technology Preparatory School (MST). I also work with the Peace Club at Lafayette, and Vivian and I run a weekly Peace Education Group for 7th Graders at MST. Their recent conversation with children of the Afghan Peace Volunteers/PeaceJam Afghanistan was a real highlight and will be repeated.

We are also planning two *half-day retreats for the 7th graders on May 1, May 15 and/or 29. Please let me know if you're interested in being part of that.* PCR training for Lafayette and MST students, staff, and parents/community members is planned for late August. They will then co-facilitate PEP groups in the schools.

Vivian Waltz (of the Sr. Karen Center) and I will provide training as well as community building to:

- Community Peacemakers of Buffalo and WNY (for stopping street, gang, and youth violence; police will also receive training alongside the Peacemakers; Carlanda provides publicity and outreach support for this group); and
- the Perry Choice Safe Neighborhood Initiative at the Old First Ward.

I am also assisting in the planning of the West Side Promise Neighborhood project, and am on the Buffalo and Erie Safe Neighborhoods Initiative Committee (appointed by Betty Jean Grant). Since this is Rotary International's year of Peace Through Service, local groups have been very eager for help in peace projects. I have collaborated with the six Southtowns Rotaries to put together forums on Bullying/Abuse/Violence (in which I was a presenter); Faith Traditions – Our Stories and Pathways to Peace; and the upcoming Healing Communities: Investing in Our Youth on April 25, 7pm, at Hilbert College (101 Bogel Hall). The final forum was to be on June 15 – save the date! – and they now have indicated interest in continuing the forums.

An additional Rotary activity: I was on the panel of community leaders at the Clarence Rotary High School Conference, and I gave three PCR workshops at Genesee County Rotary's Youth Conference.

PeaceJam Buffalo continues to be vibrant with two groups: students from various schools meet at St. Mary's School for the Deaf; and an ever-changing group at Compass House, since teens staying there are in transition. Due to your generous support, we are, as you read this, at the PeaceJam New England/Northeast Conference. The teens will meet Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams, who started the successful movement to ban landmines internationally.

For their Global Call to Action/service learning project, the PeaceJammers focused on Breaking the Cycle of Violence, and want to do it by "coming together as one" - gathering for discussion, planning, working, and increasing understanding through increased community. Please join us on June 1, 11 am, at St. Columba-Brigid, 75 Hickory St, Buffalo where we will gather a diverse group for such a gathering. It'll be a win-win for sure.

Camp Peaceprints will also be here before we know it – July 15-25, with an Extra Fun Day on July 26. This year's focus will be on telling our stories. Please register and/or spread the word – the spots do fill up!

Lastly, nonviolence and PCR relate to virtually all of our issues, and certainly to working to stop state and institutional violence respectively, leading to my continued involvement in the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars and our Resist Militarism Task Force, as well as in other local/global efforts as feasible. You'll hear more about those groups in our other reports.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with ideas, for consultation, or to get more involved in PCR.
Peace and All Good, Vicki

Victoria Ross, QCSW, LMSW, MSW, MALD, Peaceful Conflict Resolution Consultant
WNY Peace Center/ Interfaith Peace Network
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PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION COORDINATOR REPORT

by Carlanda Wilson

Greetings,

This has been an exciting and eventful year as a PCR Coordinator for the Peace Center and I expect it to be even greater as 2013 progresses. In this position my goal has been tri-fold to:

- (1) Continue to brand the Western NY Peace Center as a viable resource to the community at large as it relates to peacemaking, mentoring and conflict resolution.
- (2) Establishing the Western NY Peace Center as an collaborative partner to the "Peacemakers of Buffalo" by way of support through marketing and training.
- (3) Researching and identifying possible sources to apply for funding and providing grant writing to solidify funding once identified.

These goals continue to be achieved in various ways and endeavors, along with the teamwork and assistance of Victoria Ross. We have continued to commit our time weekly on Tuesdays to teach youth the principles of peace and conflict resolution at Peacejam. We have a solid group of nine youth, and had the opportunity this year to collaborate with the Boys and Girls Club youth from Buffalo United Charter School which consisted of an additional seven to nine youth, and the adult coordinators.

Victoria Ross has also established a 2nd Peacejam that follows at Compass House and we have hopes of creating Peacejam Buffalo as a local chapter for the national Peacejam organization. The peacejam youth participated in various community events at the Historical Society of Buffalo, Indigenous Celebration at Hallwalls, Stop the Violence Coalition rallies and of course our annual fundraising Spaghetti dinner held at Columba Brigid.

The spaghetti dinner was filled with jamming, delicious food, and the debut of a film entitled "The Corner" by a Buffalo State College student Aitina Fareed. The film was very informative and expounded on our youth's presentation of "Coming Together as One". Everyone designed a dove handed out to them, which at the end was collected to create one master piece of art!! The dinner was a huge success and raised approx. \$400 in funds to help cover expenses related to the

Peacejam Conference trip held in Storrs, Connecticut, which we will be at while you are reading this report and is why we are not in attendance at the annual meeting.

As it relates to our second goal we have established the WNY Peace Center as a source for providing training to the “Peacemakers of Buffalo” which is in the process of receiving a grant of \$100,000 from the City of Buffalo as endorsed by Mayor Byron Brown and will continue to solidify more funding as Voice Buffalo has pursued this as a mission agenda of theirs and we have been in attendance at the planning meetings and part of the process as it unfolds. My personal attribute will be to provide marketing and exposure to the groups involved by way of a website (www.peacemakersofbuffalo.com), quarterly magazine and social media.

Originally, my goal was to create a printed directory and as I researched and established a database of all the organizations involved in peace in some way or another, I realized that many of them not only lacked funding and volunteers but also had none or very little contact information. Even though there may have been an established base of people doing the work under that specific organizations name – the common overall issue was the community at large is not aware of their existence and the work they do is not getting to mainstream media, therefore creating the other issues of lack of support, funding and volunteers. Yet after meeting with each of the organizations and seeing what their needs were and where they lacked, I decided that the magazine would be far more reaching and effective.

The website is currently being developed and will feature the organizations involved as the “Peacemakers” and will provide a square featuring there logo and pertinent information and when clicked will direct user to organizations website if they have one and if not will direct them to the basic landing page providing information on all the “Peacemakers”, it will also provide features for collecting the users information so they can be contacted for volunteering and also be set-up to receive donations. The social media piece will involve facebook, twitter, linkedin and many more as well as local media exposure. Overall this marketing piece is necessary to inform the community at large of what the “Peacemakers” are doing and to aid them in their visibility and capacity building, while at the same time establishing the Western NY Peace Center as a viable brand for building capacity to other peace organizations.

Lastly, we are focused on finding funds to stabilize not just this task of the Western NY Peace Center but funding for the Peace Center in general. We did work and submit a \$25,000 grant to the Community Foundation, however we were denied, yet we will continue to seek and find grants to apply for and I know that we will be successful in solidifying funding of some sort.

It’s been an honor and pleasure working for the Peace Center in this position and would like to thank all those that have supported us in this endeavor, especially the Support Group and the Peace Center board. We continue to seek your support and prayers as we continue to inspire, empower and promote the message of peace and the overall mission of the Western New York Peace Center.

Peace and Love,
Carlanda Meadors-Wilson

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NOTE FROM REV. ROBIN WITT ABOUT FARM WORKERS IN NY STATE:

Rev. Witt needs one person in Senator Kennedy's district and one person in Senator Grisanti's district to help lobby them to pass the much needed farm workers bill. They just need three more senators to sign on, and the bill will pass in the NYS Senate.

If you can help out, please email Rev. Witt at: Rcyrilwitt@aol.com