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TRUST



Updates from the Network



Update from CEASE West

Our CEASE West group continues to meet at our favorite spot – “Awful Annie’s” restaurant in Auburn, California. Our most recent focus is organizing our first-ever CEASE retreat on the West Coast. Susan Hopkins is offering her home and cabin in Nevada County, California for this historic event. Our annual task of writing, printing, and mailing the CEASE Fall News Packet turned out to be especially fun as we traveled to Susan Hopkins’ lovely cabin in the Sierra Buttes to assemble, fold, and insert the 1,000 copies.

Several of our members participated in the CAEYC conference this year. CEASE members helped set up the ever vital and dynamic Center for Social Change and staff the Peace Focus Area. CEASE West member and chair of the Center, Cindy Santa-Cruz, presented the workshop “Non-Violence Work.” Chris Lamm presented “Lessons Learned: The Journey on Becoming an Anti-Bias Educator” at the Center. In the larger conference venue, CEASE members Sharon Davisson and Wilma Gold presented “Competent and Peaceable Children: How Peace Education Enhances Social/Emotional Development.” Marilyn Shelton and other CEASE members presented “Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Ethical Dilemmas.” All the workshops were met with much enthusiasm. It felt to me as though there is a shift in consciousness and that many more early childhood educator professionals are becoming aware of the absolute necessity of addressing peace and social justice issues in the early years.

Sharon Davisson, CEASE West



Members of CEASE West

Help!

Here is an action piece for those of us who seek important changes in public policies. There is a Bill in Congress that would establish a cabinet level U.S. Department of Peace, (House Bill H.R. 808). A U.S. Department of Peace will give those with peacebuilding expertise an institutional platform. It will create and implement plans for peace education as a template for ALL pursuits of knowledge within formal educational settings. It will help develop curricula to educate students in grades K-12 to resolve conflict peacefully.

Imagine K-12 core school curriculum emphasizing “preemptive education” and integrating peer mediation and conflict management and prevention education.

A Department of Peace could establish a Peace Academy where students learn peaceful conflict resolution skills and, after graduation, serve in peace-related postings here at home or abroad.

“It is time that we become as sophisticated at waging peace as we have become at waging war.” —Marriane Williamson

For more information and to see how you can help, please go to www.thepeacealliance.org.

Sunny Wallick, Redlands, CA

**“The care of human life and happiness,
and not their destruction, is the first and
only object of good government.”**

Thomas Jefferson

Editorial

The other day, my five year old son Tristan and I were taking a walk when I noticed it was time to meet my older son at the bus stop. I tried to encourage Tristan to move a little faster by starting to run and saying, "I'm going to beat you!" Instead, Tristan held out his hand to me saying, "Let's hold hands and run together". I took my beautiful boy's hand in mine. "You are right! This is a much better way!"

Can you imagine what a world this would be if more people held hands and ran together rather than always trying to beat the person next to them? Sometimes I wonder if I am doing my boys an injustice because I encourage the development of empathy for others. Yes, I get wonderful stories like the one above, but there are also lots of other stories that are not so sweet. There is the story of my nine year old son Talon missing out on the donut holes because the faster, more aggressive kids beat him to the snack table. There is the story of the school principal who asked me if I would consider waiting another year before sending my five and half year old to kindergarten because he "doesn't have the skills [i.e., the alphabet memorized or the penmanship] the other children entering kindergarten have." Will my children always be finishing last because at home we emphasize taking care of one another? Will they always go hungry because they do not push their way to the front of the line?

These questions haunted me until I realized that my children may miss out on a few donuts and have sloppy handwriting, but they are developing far greater skills. They are becoming a safety net that catches those of us who are not as strong.

There was a time this past year when my son Talon and his friend were being chased around their school playground by two kids who were smacking their fists together in a threatening manner. One day after his friend expressed how nervous he was about going out for recess, Talon went up to the two bullies and said, "This has got to stop right now!" Sure enough, they haven't bothered either of the boys again. When he felt the need to protect his friend, he found the strength to speak out against bullying.

One afternoon when I was picking up Tristan from his child care center, a teacher told me about a Mom who said she felt so good leaving her child at the center that morning because of Tristan. Apparently, as the Mom was saying goodbye to her daughter, Tristan came up, put his arm around the daughter and told her, "It's okay. Your Mommy will be back. Do you want to come in and play?" Tristan then brought the daughter inside the center to play. He has learned how to comfort and care for a friend, and this skill will serve him throughout his life.

Instilling cooperative and caring attitudes in young children will produce adults for whom war and violence are not the immediate response to challenge. There are

Beyond Belief: A Film About Reconciliation

I have recently viewed the film *Beyond Belief* directed by Beth Murphy and Principle Films. It is the story of two ordinary upper middle class Mothers from the well-to-do suburbs of Wellesley and Needham in Massachusetts. This documentary is about Susan Retik and Patti Quigley whose husbands were murdered in the planes that were crashed into the world Trade Center twin towers. They were both pregnant at the time.

Instead of calling for revenge, these two women worked to form a new organization called "Beyond the 11th" to help assist Afghanistan widows of the war. This documentary follows these two in their quest to heal this tragic part of the war.

There are approximately 50,000 widows in Kabul alone who live in the worst poverty. They have an average of 5 children and live on \$16 a month. Retik and Quigley's effort seems quite naïve, but that is what makes it so powerful. These two women moved beyond hate, fear, and hopelessness. The film shows them riding bikes from ground zero in New York to the Boston Common to raise a million dollars to help set up a chicken coop for the Afghan widows. It follows them as they speak to police officers in one community about why they are choosing not to retaliate or support retaliation against their husbands' deaths. Retik and Quigley go to Kabul to view their progress and meet with these women. The visit shows clearly the economic difference between them and the Afghan widows; however, the emotional suffering is so similar.

At the screening in Boston, I found myself weeping throughout; luckily, I had my hooded sweatshirt on and used the hood to preserve my manly exterior! One of the camera persons was there to introduce the film to the audience. He updated us on the two subjects of the film. They both continue to do their work with the widows, but one has moved out of the daily life of being a widow and has moved; the other woman keeps the organization active.

See this film if you have a chance. It is now out on DVD. For more information about the film, please contact Beyond the 11th, P.O. Box 457, Needham, MA 02494, 781-235-2229 (www.beyondthe11th.org).

Craig Simpson, Somerville, MA

many individuals who could take lessons from my boys. Perhaps if more people held hands and ran together, we would create a world that is rich in caring and tolerance.

Heidi Smith, South Burlington, VT

Letting Go of the Spoon to Make Bread

When I started my career as an early childhood educator, I imagined that cooking would be a rich resource for curriculum. The possibilities for reading, measuring, tasting, smelling, experimenting, and sharing seemed endless. Yet when I tried to work through a recipe in a hands-on way, I didn't know how to let children take charge. My repeated and awkward attempts over time helped me understand that when it comes to cooking, the spoon in the teacher's hand yields all the power. Somehow I had to find a way to let go because I believed, and still do, that the intent of teaching is to engage in learning WITH children.

I've been making bread for fourteen years on a weekly basis with children at the Center where I teach. When I finally let go of the spoon so many years ago, I made the decision to set out portioned ingredients and tools, much like I would do for a painting activity. I also decided that I was ready to trust that the children would use their instincts and reasoning to explore the textures, combinations, and possibilities of bread making as competent partners in learning. Additionally, I developed the following personal mantra that has supported my teaching intent to engage in learning with children all these years: "As long as a child comes to the table to explore, we will make bread."

Thursday Bread is purposeful work that begins in the earliest hours with often our youngest children who are enticed by the textures of the cool, soft flour, grainy salt, and sugar, water, and earthy smell of yeast. The Thursday ritual has also proven itself a reliable choice for those who find its welcome helpful when parting with a parent for the day. Children who have grown up making bread with me weave in and out testing their skills and inspiring others to construct something meaningful. "Look! I made a wall," says one child pressing the flour flat and upwards with both hands. "I'm making a fence," responds another inspired by the idea. Volcanoes, igloos, moons, castles, and roads are constructed and mixed into the rising dough. Diverse mini-dramas that spring from the children's imaginations connect and reach conclusions as the bakers pull and pound and drum their songs before the long rest.

Bread making sets a special rhythm for the community. We expect to feel the flour under our feet and enjoy a warm buttered roll at lunch. When activity ideas clash, as they will from time to time, and children are asked to

choose between bread and something else, so far they choose bread. This leads me to understand how much we count on bread, are nourished by its warmth and goodness, and deeply value the methods of our own unique making with this simple recipe:

- 2 Tbs Yeast
- 4 Tbs Sugar
- 2 Tbs Salt
- 2 Pitchers of Water (32oz)

A large coffee can full of flour with more to build walls and pack perfectly formed cup-sized mounds of flour that spill to the floor and pile in our laps and cover our feet while we pull and pound and knead and stretch ourselves through the day.

While the resting dough rises, we sweep the floor and wash the table, sharing responsibility for our happy mess. Sometimes we invent games like driving matchbox cars through emergency snowstorms and then we go do other stuff. When it's time, those who want to convene again brainstorm the shape of our noon-time meal, usually honoring unique play ideas or events of the day: clock bread, crocodile bread, baby bread, guitar bread, magic wand bread, spider bread, belly button bread, myself bread, glasses bread, camera bread, hockey stick bread, flower bread, baseball bread (just to name a few). The smell of warm bread baking wafts through the center throughout the morning. During lunch children eagerly munch on the bread that they created as they discuss their morning activities.

My hope is that this reflection encourages you to be adventurous. Cooking with children can be a rich resource for curriculum, and the possibilities are endless. All you have to do is "Let go of the spoon!"

Liz Rogers, South Burlington, VT



Super Happy Super Hero



I used to be the kind of teacher who didn't allow superhero play in my preschool classroom. I couldn't see the positive value of children taking on the various personae and character traits of characters who for the most part were media inspired and driven. I viewed this play as lacking in value. Thanks in part to having read many of Diane Levin's books and having heard her speak on these kinds of issues over the years, my attitude made several subtle shifts. I recognize that by banning the play, I am cutting off an important way for children to express themselves around issues of power and aggression. I take away a tool for them to explore powerful vs. powerless, good vs. evil, and all the other dichotomies that go with this kind of play. Now instead of banning the play, I observe and try to figure out how to add dimension to what the children are bringing forward. One day, we had a ten minute discussion in the middle of the play over the question of whether "bad guys" like pizza.

What has happened as a result of these kinds of discussions is an evolution in the play I never ever would have anticipated. This year, we have been investigating the concept of identity. Children did a self portrait project and described their hopes and dreams along with what it is that makes them special. Photos of the children were laminated and mounted on Popsicle sticks, giving them "friend puppets" to play with. I will always remember one child carrying around the picture puppet of her best friend who was out sick that day. She read her stories in the library corner, they had a tea party in the play kitchen, and spent some time in the sandbox together too. The children began making paper superheroes of themselves, or asking teachers to help create them. These were tiny paper doll like figures that appeared at about the time I had started a second portrait project asking the children to draw themselves as a superhero with an explanation of their super power and something they are really good at. As part of

the project, many children actually chose for their super-power the very thing they claimed they were good at. One child said he was good at swimming and drew himself as a "super swimmer." One child said she was good at building and gave herself the power of "super builder" and drew herself standing next to an enormous block tower.

The way the character of play has changed around superheroes in my preschool classroom is evident from the following story. One day, I observed four boys playing in the sandbox; each of them has some type of figure. One had one of the paper "supers," one had a plastic figure from home, one had a doll house figure, and the fourth had a block play figure. They were playing their own variety of superhero play, and it went like this with the children speaking to each other through the animation of their figures:

Leo waved his figure around and said: "Hey look at me, I'm happy guy. I'm gonna make you happy."

Charles: "No don't do it! You can't make me happy! I don't want to be happy! Don't make me happy!"

Tyler: "That's O.K. You can make me happy."

Leo waves his figure again gesturing toward Tyler: "Wammo-Bammo! You're happy!"

Tyler (huge smile on his face): "I'm happy."

Charles: "Oh all right. Go ahead. You can make me happy."

Roger: "Hey! Don't forget me; I wanna be happy too!"

Ten years ago, I never would have thought that superhero play could have such a "happy" ending!

Robin Ploof, Burlington, VT

When an Activist Decides to Take On Leadership



I have been a peace activist and a CEASE activist for many years. When I decided to take on activism within the National Association for the Education of Young Children network, however, I found myself in the middle of the early childhood children's network. This network has made all the difference to my overall work in creating a new world.

My peace quest started in the 1970s, and I have been a part of the War Resisters League for many years. I also started teaching young children in the 1970s; I dropped out a few times but more or less stayed with it for over 30 years. I started with CEASE in the mid-1980s and was attracted to the organization's commitment to peace and to young children. Peggy Schirmer, Nancy Carlsson-Paige, and Diane Levin have all been a great influence on me. I also enjoyed being part of the NAEYC for all these years. I actually served as the President of the Albuquerque AEYC for several years.

I moved to Boston, finished graduate school at Wheelock College, and taught full-time in preschool and infant toddler classrooms. It was hard working full time and maintaining my peace activism. CEASE, however, provides an opportunity to work with people to remain an activist and still work in early childhood programs.

When I decided to serve on the board of the Boston AEYC and eventually served as President, I felt I put myself in the middle of the early childhood movement and worked openly for bettering the lives of young children. The Boston AEYC is one of the largest local/city affiliates of NAEYC network. We have a board of 17 people. This board has members that are key players in the early childhood education community in the Boston area. Since being on the board, I have made it a priority to represent a diverse cross-section of professionals in the early childhood community. These professionals work in the Boston area's rich ethnic and racial community and serve family childcare, the public and private sectors, and our academic centers.

As the President of Boston AEYC, I tried hard to build a supportive community among this diverse group of professionals. I started with the board and emphasized consensus-building around key early childhood education

issues. I worked to bring the board members together by encouraging the continued respectful discussions among board members. One simple yet effective way I helped bring the board together was to implement the practice of preparing meals to share with each other at board meetings. By sharing meals with each other, the board members had the opportunity to share family and cultural values; this opportunity would have been missed if the board just ordered pizza to eat at its meetings. I always tried to spend time with each individual board member listening to their concerns and their opinions. As President, I always insisted that we board members regularly appreciate one another.

During my presidency, I shared with my fellow Boston AEYC members my world view of early childhood education, nonviolence, and anti-militarism. I brought war resister and children's author Vera Williams and CEASE activists Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane Levin to speak at our lecture series. Some keynote speakers at our Babies and Toddler annual conference included progressive activists David Elkind, Alice Honig, and Diane Trister Dodge. Our last lecture series was on "Caring in Early Childhood"; it was a reminder to many that caring cannot be left out in early education. I presented workshops on biting and sleep as a part of caring. I also pushed public policy to the forefront with the Boston AEYC board and went to Washington, D.C. to lobby with NAEYC.

I tried to get the Boston AEYC board to adopt CEASE's statement against the war and to stop Laura Bush from keynoting at the NAEYC conference. Both resolutions failed, but mercifully, my fear of such resolutions splitting the board was unfounded. Instead, the proposed resolutions stimulated lots of good discussions among Boston AEYC board members.

Activists can bring their views and values to the world in myriad ways. One of the most effective ways is to take on leadership roles in organizations that share the activist's views and values. CEASE consists of a great network of activists who provide energy, information, and hope to those working with young children. There are other groups as well. Don't give up. The world needs us!

Carly Simpson, Somerville, MA

A Resource about Islam and the Muslims

American Public Media Programs has a weekly radio program and a website entitled “Speaking of Faith”. Krista Tippett is the host of the radio program. “Speaking of Faith with Krista Tippett is public radio’s conversation about religion, meaning, ethics, and ideas.” The website includes an annotated guide with audio, recommended reading, and music for each program. Two of the radio programs are “The Spirit of Islam” and “A New Voice for Islam”, which first aired on March 6, 2008. Both radio programs are also available on the website archives. These resources are unbelievably important for those of us who feel that we don’t know enough about the Muslims and Islam and want to create common ground. See www.speakingoffaith.publicradio.org.

Alice Wadden, Watertown, MA

Statement of purpose

This revised Statement of Purpose was adopted at the CEASE Annual Meeting November 21, 1996.

CEASE is a network of parents, teachers and other concerned individuals who are dedicated to creating a safe world for our children. We seek to end the violence that permeates our society to an ever increasing degree and to remove the root causes of this violence by advocating for peace, justice and economic opportunity.

We are committed to:

- Raising public awareness about both the origins of violence and the disastrous effects violence and injustice have upon children, families and communities.
- Eliminating the acceptance of violence which is created by mass media conditioning.
- Ensuring the abolition of nuclear weaponry, and other weapons of mass destruction, and an end to the proliferation of conventional weapons.
- Putting a stop to the dangerous degradation of our natural environment by supporting the development and use of reusable, non-polluting resources that protect the health and safety of future generations.

Central to the solution of these problems is the redirection of national priorities and funding from the military and corporate interests to human services and environmental preservation.

We work towards these goals through the following activities:

- Providing a supportive network for teachers and parents who share our concerns.
- Educating the early childhood community through the publication of **CEASE NEWS**, creating periodical informational fliers, giving workshops and developing peace education materials.
- Advocating for a government that is committed to improving and expanding quality child care and child development programs.
- **Fostering a society that focuses on the well being of young children and their families through all our work.**

YES, I WANT TO JOIN THE CEASE NETWORK

Date _____

- Enclosed is my \$10 subscription. new subscription renewal
- Enclosed is my \$5 student subscription. Here is an additional gift to help defray expenses.
- Enclosed is a gift membership for:

Name _____ Phone number () _____

Address _____

_____ e-mail _____

Place of work _____ position _____

NAEYC Member How did you learn about CEASE? _____

For tax deductible contributions over \$50 make check payable to Survival Education Fund

Return to CEASE, c/o Lucy Stroock, 55 Frost Street, Cambridge, MA 02140

E-mail: info@peaceeducators.org

Book Reviews

One Green Apple

by Eve Bunting (Clarion 2007; for ages four and up)

This book is beautifully illustrated by Ted Levin and is the winner of the inaugural Arab American National Book Award for children's literature. Here is Farah, a recent Muslim immigrant to America, on her second day in school in a new country. She speaks no English. She is on a class field trip to an apple orchard feeling alone, different, wearing jeans, but also wearing a dupatta, a traditional headscarf. It is a journey of change for all of these children as they spend a day together making cider. I love the setting – outside.

Oh, how our children need to be “out-of-doors.”

Sunny Wallick, Redlands, CA

The Librarian of Basra :A True Story from Iraq

by Jeanette Winter (Harcourt 2004; for early elementary and up)

War is coming to Iraq. A woman, Alia Muhammed Baker, is the librarian in Basra. The governor refuses to help her save the books. Every night, she moves books into her own home. The bombing starts. She must do something fast. She organizes her friends to move the books over a seven foot wall to a restaurant. Nine days later, the library is bombed. Afterward, Alia determines that the restaurant is unsafe so they move the books into homes. This is a true hero's story.

Sunny Wallick, Redlands, CA



Caged Birds of Phnom Penh

by Frederick Lipp



As a school, we were studying Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. As a part of this project, I read the **Caged Birds of Phnom Penh**, by Frederick Lipp and illustrated by Ronald Himler, to every class (k-6) during our Peace Day unit.

This is book of hope, perseverance, and overcoming injustice. A young Cambodian girl, Ary, living with her family on the streets of the capital city of Phnom Penh, saves all of her money from selling flowers to buy a bird. A traditional custom of Cambodia is to set a caged bird free with a wish you would want to come true. After talking with her grandfather, she chooses to make a wish for her poor family's future. She is acutely observant of the world around her and shows optimism.

The subtle illustrations are created with watercolors over gouache.

Karen Kosko, Cambridge, MA

Please feel free to copy this newsletter and any other materials you receive from CEASE and distribute them to colleagues, parents, students..... Help us to reach out!

**Let people know about our website
www.peaceeducators.org**

CEASE welcomes contributions to the newsletter. Please write us about your work for a peaceful and safe world for children. Send us resource information you value. We will publish as space allows.

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