

Title: Curriculum of Hope for a Peaceful World: Establishing, understanding and acceptance among cultures through contact and knowledge.

Hello and Godan Dagin
(th)

Thank you for your interest in our committee's work and for inviting me to your wonderful country. This offers me the opportunity to engage you in examining the role that each of us must play in making the world a better place for all. I applaud you for your focus on multiculturalism and for recognizing that refugees fleeing chaos and tyranny will have a lasting impact on us all and it is especially heartening to be here with you, people who are willing to take strong moral and ethical stands openly and loudly. These are turbulent times and it often feels like we are being buffeted by forces we can do little against. Yet here we are focusing our strengths, doing each our own piece to better our world.

As a citizen of a country with a widely diverse population, where almost all of us stem from relatively recent immigrant backgrounds, I have a sense of how difficult it is to maintain a dynamic peaceful accord. Even after 240 years, our democratic attempts are still a work in progress. For the most part, the majority of our people live side by side in daily acceptance of each other, often harmony. Yet constant immigration creates constant friction that requires constant adaptation on everyone's part, both the receiving society and the new immigrant community.

That is seldom easy, especially when it occurs in great surges from the kinds of upheavals we are now experiencing all over our world. The challenges we face stem mostly from doubts, fears, and most importantly, from misconceptions bred out of an ignorance of others. We fear that which we do not know. The antidote, is, as history has shown personal, internal knowledge. We learn about each other through involvement and interaction, both formal and informal, both singularly and in groups. That is the knowledge that we must seek. Education is our choice, the way to break the cycle of distrust, fear and even hatreds that can lead to violence. (PAUSE)

So, right now, I would like to talk about a strategy we might use to overcome some of the stumbling blocks to peace. Initially we need to identify and analyze the seemingly insurmountable societal issues. We can then break them down into smaller issues, the details that make up the larger ones. We continue this process until we arrive at the point where we can grab a hold and take small, manageable concrete steps. Steps that we each

can implement. Each of these smaller actions is important in its own right Each will create it's own circle of peace. Each will combine with those of many others, like ripples in a pond . We will work to move us forward to an appreciation and understanding of people whose culture differs from our own. In short we will discover ways to bring forth tolerance and cooperation and finally,an acceptance of others as positive additions to our societies. We will teach PEACE.

At home now, many of our local secular and religious community organizations working singularly and together are ramping up to prepare the way for another wave of immigrant families. Some of these groups have a history of supporting a small number of families and therefore have experience, but now they must increase their efforts to take care of the larger numbers soon to arrive. They are handling the real details. Here is where the real work gets done, at the community level. They are finding housing, jobs, clothing and food, preparing schools and support systems and making sure that there is an ongoing dedicated personal support for each family to ease the difficult transition to new lives. This last part seems to be essential for success, especially for the first year. None of this is easy. I'm a member of an Interfaith combined group in formation and we're just in the planning stages, figuring out who to talk to,where our resources are, what should we do next. Hard work but necessary if we really want to advance from rhetoric to action.

I hope that while I'm talking, you will consider the following questions and that we will have time at the end to share our thoughts and put forth actionable possibilities. Here are some questions to think about...

What are some of stumbling blocks specific to welcoming people to Iceland?

What practical actions can you suggest that could promote a greater multicultural understanding within your own communities?

And as we each have a personal responsibility in this process,What are you going to do to be part of a global movement for peace through understanding ?

In the final analysis, this last question is the most important.

What little thing am I going to try to do today?

We'll revisit these questions at the end of the session. So now let me tell you about our group:

HISTORY:The Curriculum of Hope for a Peaceful World was formed in 1985 when 6

DKG CT members united to work on Peace

Education. They believed in the critical importance of Peace Education in all its many forms as a vehicle for HOPE in the world. We are now a Standing Committee of AKS/CT. In 1986 we presented a Resolution for Peace to the DKG International Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana where it was adopted.

Our Standing rules read: The committee shall study and promote critical thinking, conflict resolution and cooperative learning skills toward a more peaceful world. Our committee's concepts are broad and our emphasis changes with time, yet we are still focused on our initial three driving principles: celebrating diversity, protecting the environment and promoting peace. Our specific goals include: discussion of peace issues, development of peace programs for children and adults, presentations of workshops and exhibits at DKG Chapter, State, Regional and International Conferences and Conventions, publication and distribution of our Newsletter and the dissemination of peace resources.

Our committee now has 13 members who are still deeply involved in education and actively working to promote our goals. Many of us work as volunteers with the UN, with Heifer International, as authors focusing on peace and oppression and as members of community anti-violence groups focusing on breaking the cycles of discrimination and suspicion that plague us locally and globally. Groups such as ;STEP UP STEP OUT TO END THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE, THE HOCHBERG FUND FOR HOLOCAUST AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION, THE DAUGHTERS OF ABRAHAM (an interfaith book group) and QUIET CORNER REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROJECT. We all wear many hats and lend our hearts and hands where we might be useful, giving time in our local religious, senior care and educational support group.

It is good to be busy.

Since its inception the committee has pursued its principles, through a number of actions to advance the cause of Peace Education. Primarily by presenting workshops and presentations at DKG functions at every level of our organization. Most are serious efforts to pass information and raise awareness but some are a little more light hearted such as **Good News ! There is hope for a Peaceful World** which was well received and drew smiles at an AKS and Northeast Regional Convention. Another major thrust has been holding Global Peace Round Tables at International Conventions. The latest one in July 2014 titled: World Wide Educational Initiatives at Work. 10 countries were represented, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Germany, Mexico, Costa Rica, Canada, Japan and representatives for the U.S Forum. Each speaker had something significant to say. From a line in a song "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me", to cataloging how much is still to do and yet how far we have actually come. There is always more to do. A ways to go but we must recognize what we have accomplished. We let hope drive us and knowledge lead the way. There was a compelling presentation by Marika Heimback

from Germany, about an extra curricular high school project that started small with just 4 students, in response to the Kosovo War and the persecution of the Roma (gypsies) It has continued to be student lead and student centered and has grown exponentially to involve the local university, politicians, the media and other -outside -of -school organizations. The original goal was to inform students about local, national and global issues in order to raise awareness about fascism, racism, neo nazism, persecution of different groups, injustice and inequality. This experience points up to all of us that when you start small and involve people you have no idea how far you can go !! Our Costa Rican representative detailed a project melding art and peace. Students were challenged to prepare artistic representations of what peace meant to them in art class. They then wrote and spoke to and about their project at a school and town wide exhibition. Their dedication and research was evident to all. This project is a local example of the Pieces of Peace project that I will talk about later. We also had a plea from the speaker from England to examine and make a concerted effort to keep our water healthy, not only for ourselves but for all the wildlife with whom we share this earth with. Our committee has a direct line to DKG's UN NGO status as one of our members Ann Grosjean serves on that committee. Our newsletter was distributed to all 400+ attendees at the latest CTAUN at the United Nations in New York City. We have also been keynote speakers at a Model UN Invitational speaking to 130 High Schoolers from 14 participating schools in CT.

We heartily support the 2016-30 UN Sustainable Development Goals. There are 17 goals and each one is essential for improving human and environmental conditions on Earth, our planet, our home. Without our commitment to leave a legacy of a sustainable, breathable, just and peaceful environment future generations will experience a greatly diminished life. The SDGs have just been introduced and most citizens may not know about them, yet Each of our COH members has accepted the challenge give to us by our founder Jeanne Morascini, to step up, talk up and present full information, to mobilize us in pursuit of these goals. We hope you will join us and take up the challenge to advance any of these goals with your own local actions. For more detailed information please take a look at Ann's article in our latest newsletter. (READ THE GOALS)

Let's educate through engagement!

Next I will highlight some of our efforts to do just that!

We have sponsored and organized “Exploring Multiculturalism Through the Arts” where over 400 people created and shared their, art, music, dance, food and cultural objects. It was fun and educational stations brought so many different people together to learn from one another.

We have held a number of “Caring for Our Planet” Fairs all of which were very successful. Hundreds of school age children attended from local schools. Held at a local university's large gym space and entire campus, the participants were able to attend

sessions combining all aspects of our goals, diversity of people, diversity of nature, diversity of actions. Education and action, a connection to each other and a reconnection to our place in the world. Again, we combined Art, Music, Ideas and Play. Getting serious through fun! The participants danced with Native Americans, Irish Step dancers, Israeli Folk dances, Planted seeds, designed posters, made musical instruments, learned and sang songs in many languages as well viewed puppet shows all with an aim at peacefulness and understanding.

We also sponsored some other less ambitious but important projects, involving as many school and organizations as we could gather.

A Peace Pole with "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in 12 languages was dedicated and erected in a prominent park on the grounds of our newly restored and refunctioned Silk and Thread Mills. These mills were a significant driving force for many waves of immigrants to our area throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Fourteen local schools also participated in putting together a large Peace Quilt that was then displayed in the main building of the Mill Complex.

DKG chapters, schools, churches and local town libraries created and continue to make Peace Ribbons to connect together and display in often time traveling exhibits to show our connections and interconnections.

These projects make the pursuit of peace visible and concrete!

This year we are planning a day long presentation by the Golden Rule School (GoldenRuleSchool.com) at one of our local middle grade schools. Presenters will address the issue of Bullying entitled Making Friends and Dealing with Our Enemies through grade level interactive role plays, a large group assembly, teacher discussion sessions and an evening program with parents. Our aim is to impart self actuated strategies to diffuse potentially volatile interactions teaching students personal resiliency

Also there are plans to hold a multiday, year long initiative in conjunction with other groups in our community entitled: Coming Together to Help Heal the World. Activities on those days would include Panel discussions with pre-requested and on the spot questions. Global Luncheon (pot luck participants bring specialty foods), Music and Dance with total group participation, Art in our Communities, displays of children and adult work and art works made at the program, and an Expo of sustainable development concerns, with exhibits and presentations by members of the community.

Of special note is a program called Pieces for Peace (CITYarts.org)

This was a large project that we greatly admire and are in contact with the originator

Tsipi Ben-Haim, to possibly implement ourselves. Over 3000 children in 46 schools from 30 countries on six continents took part. Their charge was to answer the question "What does peace look like to me" Their answer was to be in the form of art in all its forms of expression. The project resulted in large mosaic peace walls in NYC, and Karachi, Pakistan created and built by the children and traveling exhibits that have already visited the U.S, Germany, Egypt, Israel, and Spain. The tour is continuing and more peace walls are being planned. This is a large project based on thought and active production;the best ways of learning, heart,mind and hands. The concepts embodied in this great ongoing project translates all the way down to the kitchen table. Use them at home and in your classrooms. Here are a few responses from the kids " The mosaic was a refreshing experience which makes you proud of yourself, It makes you realize that there is so much you can do for this world" Saba Zamar 16 year old The Lyceum, Karachi, Pakistan

"The best thing about this project is how the entire community was involved in building it. A product of the environment,the CITYarts mosaic will continue to be a symbol of growth,unity and stability in our neighborhoods." Antonia Singleton, Harlem, New York Please take a look at the book. There is hope on every page. This is an ongoing project and you can get involved by joining the Pieces for Peace work right here in Iceland.

Finally maybe the two most lasting and significant things we do is publishing our Newsletter and maintaining the Teachers Guide to a Peaceful Classroom.

We deliver our message through publishing and distributing the COH Newsletter,which has been in continuous publication since 1986. It has more than 1,300 regular readers in 22 countries. It contains sections on resources such as websites, books and programs, opportunities for joining with others and a section called Peacemakers at work, which highlights ongoing work that promotes our goals. I brought a few copies with me of our latest addition. You can find past copies on the AKS website (www.deltakappagamma.org/CT/hopenews.php) and copies are housed at the Alternative Press Archives of the Homer Babbidge Library at the University of Connecticut Library.

We believe that developing global citizens needs to be practiced from early childhood through adulthood. Our classroom learning environments should lead into our daily lives in our families,organizations and communities. To help teachers start this process we developed "A Teacher's Guide to a Peaceful Classroom". We wanted to help teachers create classrooms that are full of activity where students can thrive with a sense of self empowerment and of security and safety. The guide includes sections on starting out right (responsive classrooms model) ,celebrating diversity, solving problems,altruism,human rights, environmental sustainability and world citizenship. Each section has a bibliography and website resources. The internet has just exploded with accounts of successful programs and ideas. Find them and build your own inspirations.

“Children need to feel part of a safe and caring community where they learn to care about one another and are not afraid to take risks to help” (Kohn 1995). In the first section of the guide, there is a list of activities to support that sense of belonging. Also in that section are some ideas for proactive discipline. We often think that teaching our children about diversity is a long and difficult task. However if you follow the directions in the Anti-Defamation League's “ When life hands you a lemon ,peel it”, lesson on page 20 of the guide, it can be as simple as peeling a lemon. Our Solving Problems section gives a rather in depth look at Conflict Resolution aimed at helping students make choices about how they treat others. In Chapter 4 of the guide, Responsible School and World Citizens, we give ideas on how students of the 21st century can find their own place as a part of our shrinking planet. Human Rights are explored in the next section and Protecting our Environment activities fill the last section.

I have brought a hard copy for you to look at and some disks to share. The guide was originally written in 2005 and updated in 2008 with a Golden Gift Stipend. This manual was designed to help us all consider what can be peaceful and positive in our environment and how to incorporate those ideas into our already full day ! We hope you find it as helpful as we do.

There is so much more to talk about...even corporations are getting involved. They at last recognize that peace and prosperity for all is far more profitable for them in the long run. (show P&G ad)

And of special note to you right here is that the Peace Boat's 92nd Global Voyage has a planned stop here in Reykjavik on Oct 11-13. The Peace Boat seeks to create awareness and action based on effecting positive and political change in the world. To learn about how to participate and how to join in on some of the on board activities go the Peaceboat.org and click on voyages. Look for the map and the 92nd voyages itinerary.

Thank you for your attention... Now it's your turn..

We are going to use the the Think, Pair, Share model, as described in our guide.

So please take a minute or 2 to gather you thoughts, then talk to a neighbor or in small groups. Then we can share these thoughts with the larger group. I will scribe on the chart paper.

Web addresses

deltakappagamma.org/CT

goldenruleschool.org

responsiveclassroom.org

CITYarts.org

UN.org/sustainabledevelopment

Peaceboatsus.org and click on voyages

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