



CHANGE STARTS HERE PeaceJam.org

About the Founders of PeaceJam

Dawn Engle and Ivan Suvanjieff

Dawn Engle and Ivan Suvanjieff started PeaceJam on a whim, a prayer and one contact. Today, they have been nominated for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize.

Dawn and Ivan lived in different worlds before they met in Boulder, Colorado. Dawn Engle was a Washington politico who became the youngest female chief of staff in the U.S. Senate working for Wisconsin Republican Robert Kasten. Ivan Suvanjieff was an artist and musician.

Suvanjieff says the idea was sparked by some tough kids who were on a street corner armed with guns. The young men couldn't name the president of the United States but knew all about Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the end of apartheid.

Ivan had a big idea involving kids and Nobel Prize winners. Dawn had met the Dalai Lama, and after much badgering, Ivan convinced her to contact him about this plan. Together they approached the Dalai Lama with their thoughts on pairing youth and Nobel Peace Laureates to work together on projects that could make the world a better place in which to live. He loved the idea and urged them to contact other Nobel Laureates. So they did - by cold calling them. Amazingly, many of them embraced the idea, and PeaceJam became a reality in 1996.

After working together for some time, the couple was married by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of the Nobel Peace Laureates who is now on the board of PeaceJam.

They spend their time traveling the world, encouraging young people through schools and youth groups to identify and initiate projects to benefit local communities. By PeaceJam's 10th anniversary more than 600,000 young people were involved and 1 million local projects were created.

PeaceJam now has 11 Nobel Peace Laureates on its board who have identified 10 core issues on which young people will focus on PeaceJam's Global Call to Action.

Today Dawn and Ivan make their home in Colorado near PeaceJam's headquarters.