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## **PeaceJam Global Call To Action Projects**

### **Allen Neighborhood Center—Great Lakes PeaceJam**

In an attempt to address the issues of food insecurity, poverty, environmental degradation, violence in the community, and lack of community engagement, the Youth Service Corps in the Great Lakes PeaceJam region has created a project called Garden in a Box. Garden in a Box is a modest and experimental attempt to raise the level of self-sufficiency (through residential urban gardening) and nutritional awareness for those in need in their own neighborhood. They also hope to cultivate healthier intergenerational relationships in the community. This group builds manageable 2'x2'x1' raised bed gardens capable of three to four high-yielding vegetable plants (tomatoes, peppers, herbs, etc). These gardens will be maintained by community members and produce will be given away along with other food items to people who have little access to fresh and organic produce. Eventually these gardens will be given away to community members to maintain on their own with bi-monthly follow ups by the PeaceJam group to support and aid in the garden maintenance.

### **Loy Norrix High School—Great Lakes PeaceJam**

Loy Norrix High School has decided to address the issue of the rights of children as well as human security by addressing the basic literacy needs of children in their communities. In their research, Loy Norrix students have found that the literacy rate of children in their communities is low and declining, specifically at one community elementary school that constantly struggles with literacy rates. Loy Norrix PeaceJam students spent five weeks establishing a program that boosted the reading skills of elementary school students at Edison Elementary. At the end of the five week program PeaceJam students held a free book fair to provide books to students who do not have access to literature or other reading materials. The goal of this ongoing project is to help more elementary school students find daily success in school that will help them to build confidence in their academic abilities, and hopefully encourage them to attain higher levels of education as well as break the cycles of poverty and violence.

### **The Dream Team—Great Lakes PeaceJam**

The Dream Team is focused on providing children with their basic right to education and is concerned with the fact that undocumented youth are not able to access education in our country—thus perpetuating cycles of violence and poverty. The main problem this group found was that there are many undocumented youth who do not have access to naturalization for various reasons - whether their parents have been granted citizenship or the youths were illegally kidnapped and trafficked to the United States. These youth have no resources and no access to higher education. The primary goal of this group is to educate the community on the DREAM Act—legislation that, if passed, would provide ways for undocumented youth to obtain college financial aid or join the military. They will also focus on college preparation for students in this situation as well as the preservation of access to higher education for all students.

### **Michigan Works Youth Program- Great Lakes PeaceJam**

The Michigan Works Youth Program has decided to take on the issue of the Spread of Global Disease specifically addressing the rise of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. The youth in this group will plan and host a “get real about sex” youth conference with the support of other community partners and youth. The goals of the youth conference are to re-sensitize youth to the derogatory language used to describe women and the fact that boys are being praised for being promiscuous. They will also have a dimension of the conference that will help parents to understand that their role is important in preventing teen pregnancies and STD’s, and will start some intergenerational dialogue about the issues.

### **Evergreen and Mountain View High School Clubs—North West PeaceJam**

The Evergreen and Mountain View High School Multicultural Clubs worked together to create a daylong symposium devoted to addressing and ending racism in high school for students throughout the Northwest. The two Vancouver schools held the one-day PeaceJam Slam on April 19, 2008 emphasizing the value of becoming allies for one another. In addition to bringing in workshop presenters from area non-profits and the local police department, youth from the Evergreen and Heritage High Schools ran workshops of their own on The Power of Words and Faces of Diversity. The day brought students together in small groups led by high school mentors and a group of student volunteers from Oregon State University. The powerful keynote address came from the area YWCA Young Women of Achievement Award recipients, who set forth a standard for serious reflection and an impetus for action to those attending.

### **Pangea Project PeaceJam—North West PeaceJam**

The Pangea Project is a nine-month leadership development program that empowers low-income high school students to become local community leaders with global perspectives. The program is designed around local and international service-learning, community leadership, social action, human rights, team-building, and global awareness. Each year, a specific social justice issue such as Housing and Homelessness, Environmental Justice or Labor Rights and Fair Trade is selected to serve as the theme, providing the framework to make local and global connections. The goal is to inspire participants to recognize their own capacity to be agents of change by exposing them to inspiring local and international grassroots community leaders. Students meet with and work alongside these empowered change-makers, people who have overcome adversity in their own lives and devoted themselves to organizing others to join them in working on solutions to challenging issues that their communities face.

In Portland, Oregon the students are pairing with the Portland Youth Builders (PYB) on work around homelessness. Sixty Pangea Project students have studied the issue and worked on advocacy for the homeless and policy changes to eradicate the problem. The core group of these students will travel to Ecuador this year to study homelessness and poverty there. Upon their return, the students will create presentations for civic groups, schools and organizations interested in learning more about global issues. As they have in past years, students will create opportunities for action for those who present.

### **Bailey Alternative High School—Heartland PeaceJam**

Bailey Alternative High School has launched their Global Call to Action Project on Breaking the Cycle of Violence. Concerned with the number of youth involved in activities that promote violence (video games, etc) and the rise in aggressive behavior and violence in their communities, Bailey PeaceJammers acted on the problem by promoting a culture of peace in their school community. It was obvious to them that no one was teaching peaceful ways to resolve conflict, or that peace was an option as a way to live. Because their school has a strong literacy focus, the group bought and created books about peace that would be in their school library collection as well as provided to schools in the community. They also expanded their

plan to working with local elementary school students to teach conflict and stress management skills and how to address problems using peaceful leadership skills.

### **Olathe South High School - Heartland PeaceJam**

One in five people in the world today live in poverty. This is 1.3 billion people. The majority of these people are women and children. Olathe South High School believes that poverty is a pervasive problem which needs to be solved before other poverty-related issues can be eradicated. This PeaceJam group has taken the initiative to “Stomp Poverty” by holding a Poverty Awareness Week at their high school, educating their community about the realities of poverty and creating a chain reaction amongst the high school community to get active and make a difference. This event will include a food drive, interactive awareness activities, and a political action letter writing campaign to government officials pressuring them to STOMP POVERTY!

### **John Dewey Learning Academy - Heartland PeaceJam**

To address the issue of Unequal Access to Water, the John Dewey Learning Academy has launched a campaign to educate their community about water conservation as well as the global reality of water scarcity and the impacts of this scarcity on communities. By finding strategic government leaders who deal with water issues, this PeaceJam group will launch a letter writing campaign to highlight the issue of water scarcity and community destabilization that happens as a result. They will also raise funds to place wells in communities with little or no water access. They also will hold a water festival each year to create a consciousness around water conservation in their own community.

### **Fulton High School - Heartland PeaceJam**

The City of Fulton has low participation in their local recycling program. The city’s landfill is scheduled to fill up completely in less than 5 years, and this has PeaceJammers worried. The Fulton High School PeaceJam group has begun a community education campaign aimed at educating the community about this very serious issue and action steps that can be taken to solve the problem. It was discovered that the community members did not know about recycling or take advantage of the recycling programs available to them. By holding a curb-side recycled clothing fashion show (wearing clothes made from old shopping bags, purses made from drink containers, etc), students grabbed the attention of the community and educated them on their local recycling programs. They also built an ongoing relationship with their local government to aid them in building participation in the city’s curb side recycling program.

### **Ponderosa PeaceJam Club -- Rocky Mountain PeaceJam**

Ponderosa’s PeaceJam Club decided to address Environmental Degradation as one of their Global Call to Action projects. Their school did not have a recycling program, and they felt that was where their group could make the greatest impact. PeaceJammers talked to staff and students to see if there was interest in recycling and felt that the response was worth their efforts. Empty boxes were collected from local stores, the copy room, and from deliveries to the school and placed in every classroom and office in the building. They collected the recycling every Monday during our weekly meetings. Through personal contact and constant reminders about the importance of recycling and what could be recycled, this campaign became very successful and the two recycling dumpsters that they had were not adequate to hold what students were collecting. The group contacted the District and was able to have five more recycling dumpsters delivered to the school and they continue to fill all seven on a weekly basis. This has reduced the amount of trash produced by their school by 70%!

The school district asked Ponderosa PeaceJammers to meet with a group of students from Douglas County High School who wanted to start a recycling program. The two groups have come together to form the Douglas County School District Green Coalition and meet once a month to share ideas about recycling and energy management. As other schools in the District establish a recycling program they will be asked to join the Coalition.

Ponderosa's PeaceJammers were asked to promote the District's Energy Management Program at PHS, which was designed as a competition between all participating schools, the grand prize being \$10,000 awarded to the school who saves the most energy. They designed door strips reminding staff and students to turn off lights and computers when not in use, worked closely with the building engineer to de-lamp all areas of the building, and conducted regular energy audits. Their energy savings averaged 13% per month and their school won \$10,000 for reducing energy costs more than any other high school in the District.