

PEACE AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE

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ALL PEOPLE. ALL VOICES. ALL MATTER.

Dialogue vs Debate

"I LEAVE YOU LOVE. Love builds. It is positive and helpful. It is more beneficial than hate. Injuries quickly forgotten quickly pass away. Personally and racially, our enemies must be forgiven. Our aim must be to create a world of fellowship and justice where no man's skin color or religion is held against him. "Love thy neighbor" is a precept which could transform the world if it were universally practiced. It connotes brotherhood and, to me, brotherhood of man is the noblest concept in all human relations. Loving your neighbor means being interracial, interreligious and international."

– From Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune's Last Will and Testament



I think most would agree that 2020 presented unprecedented challenges and unforeseen opportunities. Unfortunately, many continue to see more challenges than ever in the United States and are ready to debate any issue, large or small, making it appear that this country is more divided than ever. Just think of how many families and friendships have been destroyed the past few years because one party takes a position and the other opposes. Sometimes there is major disagreement but little dialogue.

Dialogue is defined as a conversation between two or more people to resolve a problem. One of the reasons I believe the Peace and Justice Institute has become such a valuable community asset is because it promotes peace and justice for all, with dialogue as its central tool. Dialogue is available to students, educators, city and county administrators, community organizations, residents, and leaders throughout Central Florida, and with our new virtual spaces, around the world. Through dialogue, our aim is to nurture an inclusive, equitable, and respectful environment on campus and within our community - one where conflict leads to growth and transformation.

I ask that you join us in ensuring that dialogue happens throughout our communities as we learn to "Love our Neighbors."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Hatcheson, III".

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Peace and Justice Institute, Advisory Council Chair

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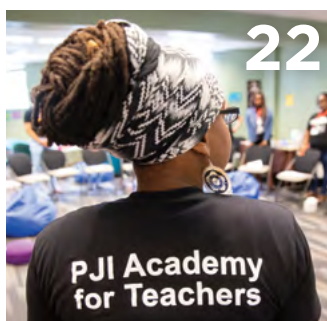
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FEATURES

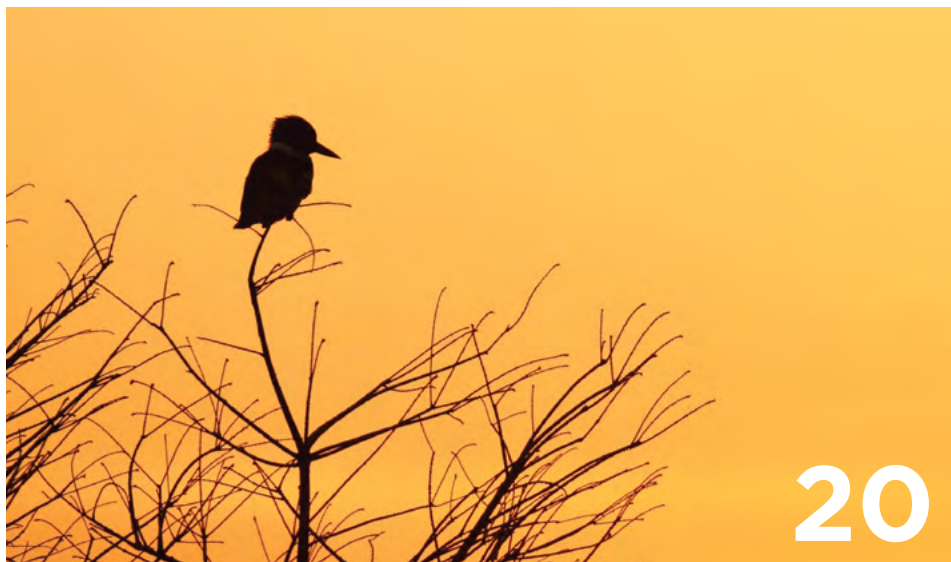
- 10. The Power of Kindness
- 14. Becoming the Adult My Children Deserve: A Year with Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg
- 20. Leader of Peace: A Tribute to Dr. Sandy Shugart
- 22. Teacher Agency Begins with the Heart
- 26. What is a Daily Peace Practice?
- 28. A Conversation with Elizabeth Thompson
- 30. Love Without an Asterisk: A Pastor Comes Out

GLOBALLY SPEAKING

- 6. Measuring Peace for Sustainable Development
- 34. Peace News

LETTERS

- 2. A Letter From The Advisory Council Chair: Dialogue vs Debate
- 4. A Letter From The Director



Courage, Truth, and Love

A Community Faces the Past and Begins to Heal Together



What can happen when a community comes together with courage, truth, and love to face an unspeakable history of violence, pain and trauma? Healing and transformation, a new freedom and a new sense of belonging and togetherness.

Fear and shame often keep individuals from facing the past. It takes great courage to tell the truth about traumas we have perpetrated or that have been inflicted on us. Fear tells us we will break under the weight of the pain and suffering, or we will not be believed or heard. The resilience required to recover from trauma is real, as are the consequences of keeping it buried.

Individual recovery is a microcosm for a city, state or country. Recovery from historic harms perpetrated by Whites on the Black residents of the village of Ocoee in 1920 would take a commitment to truth and an ethos of love. It would require courage to hear the stories of violence, loss, and suffering from descendants of the massacre - realizing that, with impunity at the hands of a deputized group of White men, Black lives were taken, families divided, homes burned. A cruel culture of white supremacy allowed the massacre to be hidden as Black owned properties were sold, the census turned white, and the stories buried for over half a century. The collective perseverance of our community to face its history and honor the 100-year remembrance of the Ocoee Massacre has been awesome and transformative. And it did not happen overnight.

Almost 25 years ago a small group of individuals from the Unitarian Church in Orlando, a group which became the Democracy Forum, heard rumors of the tragic history of Ocoee and began to research the stories that were whispered in the shadows. Black people knew Ocoee was no place to be seen after dark - a sundown town - but now over a half a century later, few knew the origins of the warnings.

As the stories emerged, from descendants, the census, land plots, historians, images, and newspaper articles, fear and defense set in - denial. How could it be true? Surely this was exaggeration and hyperbole. Yet the more people learned, the more real the story became.

Lynching in America was a “missing history,” buried with memories of families, and missing from our textbooks and stories of who we really are as a nation. Yet lynchings, defined as racial killing with impunity, mob rule, white supremacy, and KKK intimidation are the reality of our history - a reality we must continue to face if we are to heal the fabric of our humanity.

In 2015, two decades after Democracy Forum began its work on the Ocoee Massacre, and the same year the Equal Justice Initiative out of Montgomery, Alabama began work on lynching in America, the Alliance for Truth and Justice was formed locally

No individual life, family, or community is without pain and suffering, or perhaps even trauma. Our community has demonstrated the courage to move beyond shame, to tell the truth, and create a possibility for love and unity to emerge.

to further face this “missing history.” Only one lynching was documented in the Ocoee violence, that of Julius “July” Perry who was hung by a rope for attempting to vote. An unknown number of others also lost their lives on November 2, 1920, and the day after.

As the stories of descendants emerged to verify and fill in the gaps of those ill-

fated days in Ocoee, more truth was uncovered. Leaders from Ocoee moved past decades of resistance, opened their hearts, and took the time to learn about and accept their history. Denial is a common human response to unspeakable tragedy. Many still deny the cruelty of white supremacy - and yet until this truth is faced, healing cannot occur.

Slowly but surely the truth began to settle in, for some more easily than others. In 1920 a massacre took place, with a mob of White deputized men killing Black residents from the unincorporated township of Ocoee, destroying a thriving Black community in order to maintain power and control.

And 100 years later, the collective impact of facing the solemn history of Ocoee is truly inspiring.

In our region, a decision was made, one person, family, and community at a time, to face the past and move toward truth and reconciliation. The process has taken years, and will continue for years to come. And yet the foundation of truth that has been laid is solid, and built on the work of hundreds of individuals including journalists, historians, scholars, descendants, artists, citizen activists, and elected officials. An overriding grace has guided the work to nourish and sustain it.

No individual life, family, or community is without pain and suffering, or perhaps even trauma. Our community has demonstrated the courage to move beyond shame, to tell the truth, and create a possibility for love and unity to emerge.

This work continues. A community-wide effort has begun to memorialize the Ocoee Massacre with a monument.

Thank you to every individual for every action you took to move this community toward peace and justice.

Yours,



Rachel C. Allen
Peace and Justice Institute, Director



Measuring Peace *for* Sustainable Development

by Kari Williams

Throughout our short history as a nation, we have demonstrated that we can do extraordinary things. The time for extraordinary is now. The need for meaningful participation to “build forward” is essential to ensure an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future. Yet, the shocks of Covid-19 and subsequent economic crisis have amplified many structural issues like racism, inequality, and an underlying fragility in our democratic institutions and environment.

These challenges are not unique to the United States. They are multidimensional, complex, and can traverse national borders. Thus, we must think globally and act locally to find and enact innovative solutions. This will require new ways of thinking, working, and cooperating at an unprecedented scale.

“Without peace, it will not be possible to achieve the levels of trust, cooperation, and inclusiveness necessary to solve our complex challenges, let alone empower the communities and institutions necessary to address them”

Killelea, 2020

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



But how can we measure peace at the local, national, or international level?

While many scholars and organizations have worked toward peace since the 1960s, the concept of peace has not always been taken seriously. Fortunately, this is changing. The empirical and economic case for why countries and communities should measure and invest in peace continues to grow. Organizations like the Peace and Justice Institute at Valencia College (PJI), the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Rotary International, and the United Nations are shifting the conversation on how peace can be understood, practiced, and measured.

The United Nations (UN), an international organization founded in 1945 which is made up of 193 member countries, works to promote peace, dignity, and equality on a healthy planet. In 2015, as a comprehensive call to action, countries around the world adopted 17 global goals to address our most pressing global challenges. These 17 goals are called the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (UNSDGs) as part of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

One of the unique differences between the UNSDGs from their predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals, was the inclusion of a global goal designed to promote peace. The inclusion of [SDG 16 for Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions](#) resulted in part due to the advocacy of an international coalition which worked to ensure that peace was a prominent goal in the sustainable development agenda. Countries around the world now had a global goal and specific targets to help guide policy and practice to impact peace. In 2015, the UN Security Council and General Assembly reinforced this inclusion of peace by introducing the concept of "[Sustaining Peace](#)" to highlight a comprehensive focus on conflict prevention by understanding the factors that cultivate peace (United Nations, 2015).

Understanding what sustains peace cannot be discovered in the study of violence alone. Furthermore, while all 17 UNSDGs are interrelated and equally significant, if there is no peace, then sustainable development cannot be achieved. For example, we

cannot eliminate poverty if we do not address high levels of violence and conflict. To realize one SDG goal, we must move forward all goals.

As one of the organizations which advocated for SDG16, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), an independent, non-profit think tank, uses [data-driven research](#) to show that peace is a tangible measure of human well-being and development. IEP's research identifies the benefits of

violence reduction and improvements in peacefulness to measure and understand the drivers of sustainable peace. IEP aims to use evidence-based research to demonstrate that peace not only has a moral value, but a financial value as well (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019).

Since 2008, IEP's Positive Peace framework combined with a systems thinking approach, has provided a lens to identify and measure the factors that sustain peace.



“Positive Peace is defined as the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. The eight positive peace pillars are the same factors that create peace and lead to many other positive outcomes such as thriving economies, better inclusion, high levels of resilience, and societies that are more capable of adapting to change. Positive Peace can be described as creating an optimum environment in which human potential can flourish”

Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019

“Positive Peace is an effective predictor of socio-economic resilience for countries and communities because societies that operate with high levels of Positive Peace tend to be more effective in protecting lives and livelihoods, recover more rapidly from crises, and promote the peaceful resolution of grievances”

Editorial, 2020

The aspiration to live in a peaceful, healthy, equitable, and sustainable society is universal. Whether implementing sustainable development policies at the local, national, or international level, operationalizing Positive Peace can help guide our recovery toward sustainable peace.

Kari Williams is a sustainable development consultant and peace practitioner. She works with the Peace and Justice Institute at Valencia College and serves as an Institute for Economics and Peace Ambassador and Rotary Peace Fellow.

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The Power of **KINDNESS**

by Michael Moniz

I want you to think about the last time you experienced kindness. What was that experience of kindness and how did you feel?

It is common that when we think about kindness, we think about an experience when we received kindness and not a time when we were kind to someone else. This is because when you are kind to someone you don't expect anything in return. You simply just choose to be kind. You didn't choose to be kind to get something. You choose to be kind to give to someone else.

One day I was rushing to the mall because I really wanted a cinnamon pretzel. It was pouring rain but I had a huge umbrella and it wasn't a long walk from the parking garage to the store. As I started running, I noticed a woman who was about to cross the street as well. She couldn't get her umbrella to work. I stopped, turned around and walked her to the store. It took a few minutes to help her and I was off to get my cinnamon pretzel. I chose to be kind in that moment.

Being kind to others does not have to be an extreme undertaking. It simply happens in daily choices we make in our lives. Kindness can be smiling at people you see as you walk by. You can be kind by holding

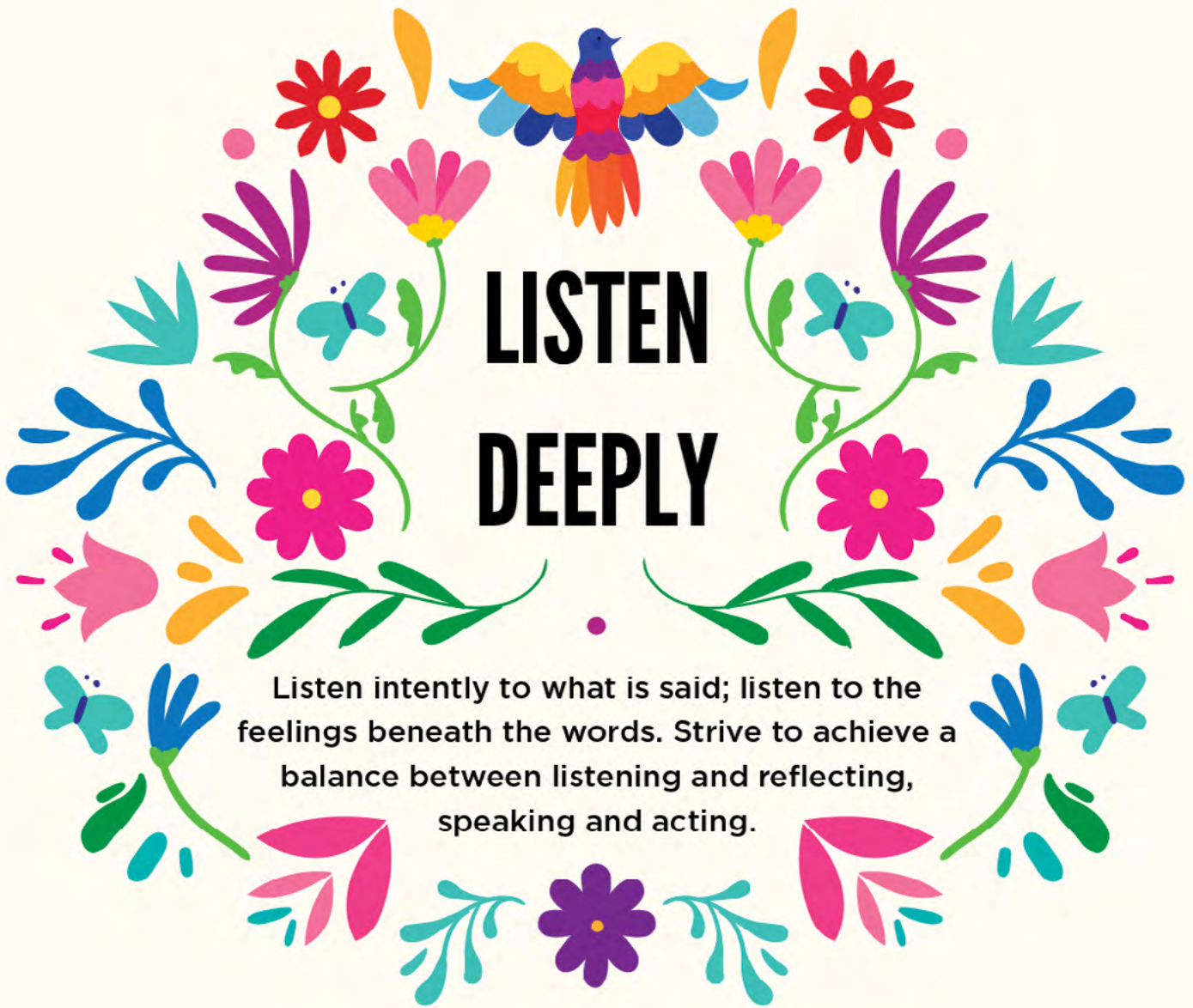
the door for others, taking the time to listen to a friend or not choosing to give that hand gesture in traffic. You can be kind to others by being mindful with your words before you speak, post, tweet or comment. Every day we are given many opportunities to choose to be kind.

One day I was going to the doctor's office to get the results from some medical tests. I was scared, anxious and worried. It started to pour rain and I was struggling with an umbrella that just wouldn't open. I noticed a man with an umbrella run from his car to the door and stop, look at me and run over. He offered to walk me to the door. When we got to the door, I thanked him for helping me. He didn't know how much I needed his kindness in that moment or how much that simple gesture helped me to feel better about my day. He simply just replied, "No problem. I figured you would do the same for me."

I choose to be kind because we are all humans. I choose to be kind because I never know who needs it or whenever I might need it. I choose to be kind because I can. I hope you choose to be kind as well.

Michael Moniz is a Professor of Communication at the UCF/Valencia College Downtown campus. He believes that life is too short to be boring!





LISTEN

DEEPLY

Listen intently to what is said; listen to the feelings beneath the words. Strive to achieve a balance between listening and reflecting, speaking and acting.

Find all of the Principles available for download on our website:

bit.ly/PJIPrinciples

Respect silence

Silence is a rare gift in our busy world. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words. This applies to the speaker, as well - be comfortable leaving your words to resound in the silence, without refining or elaborating on what you have said.

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SUSPEND JUDGMENT

Set aside your judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to the other, and to ourselves, more fully.

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Identify assumptions

Our assumptions are usually invisible to us, yet they undergird our worldview. By identifying our assumptions, we can then set them aside and open our viewpoints to greater possibilities.

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Create a hospitable and accountable community

We all arrive in isolation and need the generosity of friendly welcomes. Bring all of yourself to the work in this community. Welcome others to this place and this work, and presume that you are welcomed as well. Hospitality is the essence of restoring community.

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When things get difficult, turn to wonder

If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, or shutting down in defense, try turning to wonder: "I wonder what brought her to this place?" "I wonder what my reaction teaches me?" "I wonder what he's feeling right now?"

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Practice slowing down

Simply the speed of modern life can cause violent damage to the soul. By intentionally practicing slowing down we strengthen our ability to extend peace to others - and to ourselves.

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ALL VOICES HAVE VALUE

Hold these moments when a person speaks as precious because these are the moments when a person is willing to stand for something, trust the group and offer something they see as valuable.

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Maintain confidentiality

Create a safe space by respecting the confidential nature and content of discussions held in the group. Allow what is said in the group to remain there.

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SPEAK YOUR TRUTH

You are invited to say what is in your heart, trusting that your voice will be heard and your contribution respected. Own your truth by remembering to speak only for yourself. Using the first person "I" rather than "you" or "everyone" clearly communicates the personal nature of your expression.

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Create an advice free zone

Replace advice with curiosity as we work together for peace and justice. Each of us is here to discover our own truths. We are not here to set someone else straight, to "fix" what we perceive as broken in another member of the group.

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PRACTICE ASKING HONEST AND OPEN QUESTIONS

A great question is ambiguous, personal and provokes anxiety.

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Give space for unpopular answers

Answer questions honestly even if the answer seems unpopular. Be present to listen not debate, correct or interpret.

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Becoming the Adult My Children Deserve:

A Year with Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg

by Kelsey Visser

When I imagined raising my two children, I have to admit, there was one phase of their lives I had a hard time envisioning. I would see myself navigating and enjoying each part of their childhood, from infants to toddlers, and then as young children. Then, fear would arise every time I thought about them one day becoming teenagers.

I can hear the word in the kind of dramatic drawn out voice you would hear on the late night news—“TEENAGERS.” I didn’t realize I had bought into the damaging marketing of “the dreaded teenage years.” This phase of parenting seemed like a stressful, high-stakes stretch of time in their lives that I equally would not enjoy and not know how to handle.

Lucky for me (and my children!), I had the chance to hear a different message this year, and it shifted the way I will think about children for the rest of my life.

To provide context, I have to back up a bit to January of 2019. It was at that time when the Peace and Justice Institute was approached by various community leaders and urged to look closely at the important topic of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020), “Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years).”

The research on ACEs originated in a groundbreaking study conducted in 1995 by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente, which focused on three specific kinds of adversity children faced in the home environment—various forms of physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. We now know there are many more realms beyond the household that contribute to ACEs, such

as community factors like structural racism and poverty, and environmental factors connected to our current climate crisis and natural disasters.

The more ACEs an individual has, the higher the risk for chronic disease and decreased life expectancy. “ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

Once people learn about ACEs and understand the long-term impacts, they start asking important questions. How can we prevent ACEs from happening? What can we do to help people who have already experienced ACEs heal? How can we ensure people who have experienced ACEs do not experience further trauma and re-victimization? What can I do (at home, at work, and in my community)?

This is why, when PJI was asked to partner with the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County to convene a conference to raise awareness in Central Florida about ACEs and trauma-informed practices, we solidified our commitment to this work and hosted our first Creating a Resilient Community: From Trauma to Healing Conference, which is now heading into its third year (save the date for the 2021 conference on April 20 & 21!).

Last year, we had the opportunity to book Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg as the 2020 conference keynote speaker. When faced with the last-minute shift from an in-person conference to virtual due to COVID-19, Dr. Ginsburg generously offered to extend the learning beyond the conference by delivering additional workshops as a 3-part Community Resilience Series.

In July, he offered one for parents: Parenting in an Age of Uncertainty, followed in August by one for healthcare workers: Addressing Risk by Building on Strengths, and a final one for



educators in early December: Building on the Strengths of ALL Young People.

Love is about seeing people as they really are. As they deserve to be seen. Not based on a behavior they may be displaying. Not based on what they look like, or how they might be performing. Just as they really are.

Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings, 4th edition

While all of his workshops had a slightly different angle depending on the audience, the main theme was universally relevant and applicable—to share the essentials of cultivating strength-based, trauma-sensitive, resilience-building interactions with young people.

Dr. Ginsburg's presentations were engaging, emotional, and refreshingly real. Workshop participant, Subheen Razzaqui echoed this sentiment along with many others, as she wrote in the chat box: "This is so informative, soul affirming and inspiring!"

Dr. Ginsburg directly addressed the critical issue of racism and the damaging structural forces that exacerbate toxic stress and adverse childhood/community experiences. Additionally, his talks were incredibly relevant in terms of speaking about the

additional trauma young people are experiencing right now with COVID-19 and how to support them while navigating the uncertainty together. In his most recent workshop, he spoke about the common question he receives as a pediatrician... "will things ever be the same?"

When people ask me if things are going to ever be the same, my answer is "I hope not." Because you know what? There are a lot of things that were wrong. And I think they can be better...There's no doubt in my mind that 2020 is going to leave a generational mark on young people. This is going to define them. The question is, how are we going to shape the impact that it leaves similarly on issues around justice and equity? This is a time for an awakening.

Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, Building on the Strengths of ALL Young People, Virtual Community Resilience Series Part 3: December 8, 2020.

When Dr. Ginsburg said he hoped things would not be the same, it really shook up the limited way I had been thinking about the pandemic. I had been viewing it as a kind of

marathon we were all collectively running. A marathon that would have a finish line we could all cross together in order to safely resume “normal” life. Beyond needing to recognize that things will never be the same after COVID-19 for so many reasons, I needed to remember that we, as a society, should not want life to be the same. The pandemic has only exacerbated the problems of inequity and injustice that were already there, problems that were deep in the soil.

Resilience has often been defined as the ability to “bounce back.” Yet, as Luis E. Santiago, Professor and Director of the Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Central Florida brought up recently during a community meeting, “bouncing back is a rather conservative goal.” Do we want to merely bounce back to the status quo? While COVID-19 has been a devastating chapter in our collective history, it can also offer our community, the opportunity to examine where we are, and hopefully, envision the transformation we wish to see.

PJI Director, Rachel Allen speaks often about the direct connection between ACEs, peace, and justice:

As a community, collectively across all sectors of society, we must understand the root causes of ACEs and work together to make every child’s life better.

Rachel Allen, PJI Director

PJI is now the backbone organization of the Creating a Resilient Community Network, which is a multi-sector group of 227 individuals representing 110 different organizations in Central Florida. Our network’s vision is to “collaborate across sectors and communities to transform our region into one of prevention, hope, healing, and resilience for all.”

Beyond the CRC Network and offering workshops, PJI has continued with our virtual book club initiative to encourage a community common read of books related to the topics of ACEs, resilience, trauma, and healing. The PJI Common Read has grown to 222 community members and this year we read Dr. Ginsburg’s *Building Resilience in Children & Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings* and gave away 200 free copies of the book to members of the community.

The repetition of watching Dr. Ginsburg’s workshops, reading his book, and discussing the content with members of the community

through the Common Read helped me internalize the learning and figure out tangible ways to apply it to my own life.

As a mother of two, I am always searching for ways I can further support my children during this time of stress with COVID-19 and into the future as they transition to young adults. Dr. Ginsburg’s vision of a parent being a “lighthouse” for a child will stick with me:

I like to think of myself as a “Lighthouse parent”--a stable force on the shoreline my children can measure themselves against. I see it as my job to look down at the rocks and make sure they do not crash against them. I look into the waves and trust they will eventually learn to ride them on their own. But I will prepare them to do so.

Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings, 4th edition

The heart of Dr. Ginsburg’s work is really about helping parents and caregivers become the adults that children deserve in their lives and the power each ONE of us has to positively impact their future. Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, echoes this point in her book, *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Adversity* when she writes, “The natural antidote to toxic stress is to have a well-regulated caregiver who can buffer the stress response” (Harris, 2018).

We all can play a part in preventing ACEs. We are not just a mom, a dad, a grandparent, or a boys and girls club mentor, we are a lifeline of love, support, protection, and healing for the children in our lives.

There is a real movement happening around this work in Central Florida. Across all sectors, people are not only seeing the connection between trauma, toxic stress, and long-term health consequences, but they are seeking and implementing evidence-based, collaborative, community-wide solutions.

As we move into the 3rd annual Creating a Resilient Community Conference on April 20 & 21, PJI continues our commitment to educate the community about ACEs and trauma informed practices and advance the community’s vision of “transforming our region into one of prevention, hope, healing, and resilience for all.” We hope you will join us.

Ken Ginsburg, MD, MS Ed, FAAP, is author of the AAP book, *Building Resilience in Children and Teens, 4th Edition*. He practices Adolescent Medicine at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and is a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. He directs Health Services at Covenant House Pennsylvania, where he serves Philadelphia's youth enduring homelessness, and is also Founding Director of The Center for Parent and Teen Communication. His AAP multimedia toolkit, "Reaching Teens: Strength-Based, Trauma-Sensitive, Resilience-Building Communication Strategies Rooted in Positive Youth Development," prepares professionals to be the adults young people deserve in their lives.

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WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Attend the virtual **Creating a Resilient Community: From Trauma to Healing Conference on April 20 & 21, 2021**

Learn More: valenciacollege.edu/students/peace-justice-institute/annual-conference/

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Join Here: acesconnection.com/g/aces-central-florida

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A TRIBUTE TO DR. SANDY SHUGART

The PJI extended family honors the legacy of Dr. Sandy Shugart. His two decades of service to Valencia College and the Central Florida community have been a testament to what can blossom when love guides one's work. He has led through the example of reflection, dialogue, kindness, and perspective-taking—the ultimate peace practitioner. We will miss him and wish him well, offering our warm-hearted thanks for his attention to the humanity in all of us.



Peace be with you

You are peace

Walking in front, showing the way, teaching the way

Bold man

Man with careful wisdom

Shared his peace

Defended our peace

Strong and yielding, moving vitally

Showing us how to move forward to find peace

Thinking of those who are vulnerable first, always first

We are all able to walk the peace walk

We can help make justice on our own walks and on our collective walks

His energy helps open doors to peace within and without

Never former, never past, always with us

Peace be with you

Peace leader



Teacher Agency Begins with the Heart

by Dr. Jenni Sanguiliano Lonski

Teachers have the unique opportunity to shape a generation, to instill knowledge and values, and impact the future. Education is often considered to be the great equalizer, where students are taught and assessed on the same curriculum and standards. But what happens when the standards are not enough, or leave out entire groups of people? How do teachers ensure that every student feels that they are valued and important? I began my journey into public education nine years ago as a middle school

world history teacher. As a first-year teacher, I remember sticking to the state standards; after all, I had eight civilizations and 4,000 years of history to cover and the standards were the backbone of the district end of year test. After that year I started to wonder about the information that was not being included in the standards. What voices and histories were absent from the curriculum? How does this affect the students, and what was I, as a teacher, able to do?



After four years in the classroom, and four more years working as a graduate research assistant in gifted education equity research, I decided to devote my UCF PhD dissertation to answering these questions.

I started with looking at previous research into missing voices in the curriculum. In a study of history standards in nine states in 2008, Journell found that only two of the states included Harriet Tubman, and three of the states listed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as the only influence within the Civil Rights standards. One state completely neglected to recognize Dr. King in their US History curriculum. In Florida, Latinx, a person of Latin American origin or descent, individuals make up 26% of the state population, but are only represented in 68 of the 1,186 social science standards for K-12 education (.05% of the standards, Davis, 2018). In Texas there are only six references to Hispanic/Latinx Americans and no mention of Asian Americans or Native Americans as important historical figures in contemporary American History standards (Heilig, Brown, & Brown, 2012). The list went on, and included the absence of voices of people of color in language arts, math, science, and the arts. These standards not only failed to acknowledge the importance and achievements of individuals of color, but created an incomplete view of the diverse world.

After discovering the significant issue of missing voices in curriculum standards, I began to research how the state curriculum influenced the day to day classroom. Unfortunately, the state standards often translate directly to the daily lessons. Like my first year in the classroom, many teachers rely on the standards to determine what happens in the classroom. The Center for Education 2016 survey, for example, indicated that out of the more than 3,000 public school teachers studied, 78% of math teachers and 68% of English/Language Arts teachers reported receiving curriculum directly from their district that complied with state mandates. In Mississippi,

a study of 107 teachers reported that 96% of them felt that student achievement of test scores had the greatest influence on their daily teaching (Volger, 2005). If the information is not on the test or in the standards, it is left out of the classroom.

While identifying issues with the curriculum and state standards is relatively easy, it is far more difficult to address the problem. Research has suggested that students who feel connected to the curriculum had a higher sense of achievement and academic potential, greater feelings of confidence and motivation, and an increase in school and civic engagement (Chun & Dickson, 2011, Hubert 2013, Kahne & Sporte, 2008). Changing the curriculum, however, is not enough. Teachers need to feel capable and empowered to teach such a curriculum and comfortable supplementing the inadequate state standards. When teachers have a high sense of agency, meaning that they feel that they can enact change in their classroom, they feel empowered to supplement the curriculum with information that meets the needs of their students. This suggests that if teacher education focused first on increasing feelings of teacher agency and then on developing an inclusive curriculum, classrooms could become more equitable for all.

Fortunately, there is a program in Central Florida that provides this form of professional development. The Peace and Justice Institute Teachers Academy develops inclusive and socially just pedagogical practices. This innovative professional development for educators, the PJI Teachers Academy, disrupts the traditional approach to teacher development by beginning with the heart of the teacher and an in-depth analysis of personal beliefs, biases, and privilege, before addressing curricular concerns, inclusive and social justice education, and trauma sensitive and restorative practices, including mindfulness.

The final step of my research included interviewing 13 Teachers Academy alumni about their experience with the Academy,

their classrooms, and their professional practice. Nearly every teacher described feeling more confident in supplementing and reimagining their curriculum, rethinking classroom management, and transforming daily lessons to meet the needs of their students. Ms. Adria credited Teachers Academy with changing her classroom and her professional practice, “I know I am a better listener; I have more patience with the students and staff. I just feel like I can ‘deal’ with situations better...I have the tools to do it.”

The teachers also discussed changes to their curriculum. Ms. Stella explained, “I would start 11th grade American literature with John Smith and the settlers coming in, and then after going to Teachers Academy, I realized, no, I have to start with Native Americans. I have to get their voices heard first.” Others, like chorus teacher Ms. Bea, talked about the importance of incorporating student background into the course material:

We talked about some of the big ones that they need to know, Beethoven and Mozart, but especially as we moved into modern music, we talked a lot about those important Black, African American, and Latin American influencers in music so that they could see themselves in it.

Middle school science teacher Mrs. Iman, who spoke multiple languages, would engage her immigrant students in their home language. Dr. Turtle, a high school Spanish teacher, had a map on her wall that highlighted countries where her students were born. These techniques stem from the strategy Windows and Mirrors (Style, 1996) which is discussed during Teachers Academy sessions. The goal of Windows and Mirrors is to ensure that the curriculum provides a window into other cultures and reflects the experience of the students. This ensures

that all students feel that their voices, and the voices of people who look and sound like them, matter. Ms. Supreme explained the impact of this strategy in her classroom:

The most impactful strategy for me was the ‘Windows and Mirrors’ because it helped me to see that even though my students are learning...Just making those connections with my students has made a complete difference between what I saw my students accomplish this year and what they were able to accomplish the previous year. Last year was my first year in world history, I literally felt like I was just talking at them. I was talking at them and they were writing down notes. But this year it felt like they were actually able to make some connections, and they were able to express themselves a lot more because they felt more connected to the content.

This changed the classroom dynamic as each teacher noted that their classrooms grew to resemble a family more than a group of disconnected students. Their students were more engaged, had higher rates of participation in class activities, and an overall improved relationship with their peers and teachers. Finally, the Academy reminded them why they were in the classroom and reignited their passion for teaching and working with students.

Dr. Jenni Sanguiliano Lonski is a former middle school teacher and has worked to combine her research with practical classroom experience. She has presented at multiple conferences, and has research interests in education equity, teacher professional development, gifted education, and social reproduction theory in education.

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What is a
**DAILY PEACE
PRACTICE?**

by Paul Chapman & Aida Diaz

What do you do on a daily basis that nurtures the better parts of your humanity? Stop for a moment and think about it. See if you can describe something you do regularly that strengthens your most cherished values. It can be something you do for your own well-being, as well as for others. It is something you can do by yourself or with others. The most common peace practice is gratitude - taking a few moments every day to express thanks for the most essential parts of life. Acting compassionately towards others or drinking enough water every day can be your practice. A daily peace practice is all about

the choice(s) you make in the moment. Put aside thoughts of perfection and instead bring in those elements that cultivate and refine your practice. Be consistent but remember to forgive yourself when you fall short. Allow for patience and pay attention to any changes that arise from your practice. Finally, find your own unique ways to build and maintain a daily peace practice. We can all be the change by doing the work.

Paul Chapman is Professor of Humanities and Peace Studies at Valencia College. He also serves as a PJI Campus Coordinator on the Winter Park Campus.

How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these.



George Washington Carver

When we learned that the campus would be “closed” because of the COVID-19 pandemic and everything would be online, I felt fortunate and grateful not to have to put our students and ourselves in danger of this pandemic. In the beginning, I was busy with classes and students and then summer came—the time when everything slows down and we have an opportunity to re-energize.

I created rituals that helped me as the days became longer, but more intense with racial unrest, economic stress, and a raging pandemic. As a woman of faith, there was no question my days were filled with prayer, and still are, not just for my immediate family but also for those suffering from loss and all of the uncertainties in our nation.

The beginning of my day changed from rushing to and from places to a slower pace. I would fix my breakfast and sit outside and listen, really listen to my surroundings. I watched as the birds flew to the feeder and saw how they interacted. I listened to the sound of the lawnmowers around the neighborhood,

the banging of hammers on the neighbor’s roof, thankful that the workers still had a job. It was a time of slowing down, hearing my thoughts, and listening.

In the beginning, this was hard, and I felt guilty for “wasting” time. My mind told me I should have been busy with something. I soon realized how I appreciated the time to be with my thoughts, the quiet time that others talked about that I had previously not made space for in my day. In doing so, I have become more at peace with myself and more sensitive to listening to others.

Now, every time I read the second Principle, inviting me to “listen deeply,” and to “listen intently to what is being said,” I wonder if I’m living up to the challenge. I acknowledge what others often say, that listening deeply is hard to do, and I honor that I am still a work in progress.

Aida Diaz is a Professor of Spanish and World Languages at Valencia College. She also serves as a PJI Campus Coordinator on the West Campus.



A Conversation with
**Elizabeth
Thompson**

Elizabeth R. Thompson is the former executive director of the Wells' Built Museum of African American History and Culture in Orlando. In her new role, she is the Director of Community Engagement at the Downtown Campus of Valencia College, located in the historic Parramore Community. We asked Elizabeth a few questions about herself and her new role at the college...

Tell us about your family's deep commitment to preserving the history of the black community in Central Florida?

My mother once told me, “no one lives any place for free.” I took that literally and figuratively. We pay our “rent” through service to our community. When my parents moved to Orlando in the 70’s they made it their intention to be valuable contributors to the Orlando community, specifically the African American community.

A large part of serving the community in which we live is honoring the contributions and history of the community and community contributors that have come before. There are so many people who have contributed to the foundation of Orlando and it is important that we know about their work and how their works have paved a way for opportunities that we enjoy today. As it pertains to African Americans specifically these are often names that are not widely known or celebrated, and my family has always made it a point to celebrate the luminaries who have helped shape the community we enjoy.

Can you tell us a story about your childhood that led you into this work?

I am proud to say that I am the product of the public school system. As a native of Orlando, my elementary, middle and high school education all took place at Orange County public schools. In that time, African American history was not a large part of the curriculum. It was a priority of my parents and family to supplement the history education of myself and my siblings with regards to African American history.

I am very fortunate that, within my home, I was exposed to books, films, documentaries that bring forward African American history. I am passionate about being able to bring forward those same educational opportunities to those who live, work and visit our area. Knowledge is for everyone and information about our past can help inform decisions we make about our future.

What is something that you know because of your positioning in Parramore that you wish more of us knew?

I wish more people understood the rich, communal history of the Parramore area. Parramore at its foundation was a thriving, healthy, connected community. I wish everyone had more information about the people, business and events that helped make Parramore the heart of the black community that it once was.

I personally believe the strongest asset Parramore brings to Valencia College Downtown are the residents of the area. The Parramore community is made up of passionate, invested, creative, wonderful people who offer invaluable contributions to the Downtown Campus.

What is positive about this new campus in the Parramore/Downtown district?

The Downtown Campus brings so many resources that can benefit the Parramore community specifically. When you think about institutions of higher education, many people automatically think of degree programs, but Valencia College Downtown also brings the opportunity for job training, skills training, certification courses, continuing education courses, personal and professional development courses and a great deal of other learning opportunities. Through some of the programs offered at the Downtown Campus, there is increased opportunity to positively impact job placement, higher wages, and increased choices for the residents of the area.

You bring a great deal of knowledge about the Parramore community to your new position. How do you see that will serve you?

The Parramore Heritage area is undergoing a great deal of change. It is important, as we move forward with development and expansion, that we understand and acknowledge the history and current circumstances of the Parramore community. This information can help Valencia College make the decisions that bring the most positive impact to the residents and stakeholders of the area.

One way to learn more about the rich heritage of the Parramore Community is to visit the Wells’Built Museum of African American History and Culture located at 511 W. South St., Orlando, FL 3280.





LOVE WITHOUT AN ASTERISK

A PASTOR COMES OUT

by Josh Bell

God is love.¹ I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not know this phrase. Raised in a practicing Christian family, God's love was a concept that I learned about from an early age. I learned that there were three primary words in Greek that we translated as love. Phileo was sibling love or friendship. Eros was romantic or erotic love. Agape was unconditional love. God's love was always described as unconditional.

This love meant a great deal to me as I was growing up. It anchored me in several difficult periods of my childhood and teenage years including experiences of childhood trauma, grief, and depression. I do not know where I would be if I had not learned very early that God loved me. I am grateful for my family and the extended family of my local church that taught

me about this love, and as an adult, I can also see the ways that the teaching I received was incomplete.

As I grew beyond a child's understanding of my religious context, I learned about an ongoing conflict within my denomination, The United Methodist Church. That conflict was whether or not to allow gay people to be ordained and to get married in our denomination. In my local community, the consensus was that to allow gay marriage and ordination would be disobedient to the teachings of the Bible.

This conflict within my denomination intersected with my own identity. I have always experienced attraction to my own gender even before I had the words to describe it. I have

¹ John 4:8b

I began to learn what it meant to truly love myself unconditionally, and I began to navigate life as an openly gay man.

always been gay, and from an early age I learned that being gay was wrong. No one taught me this with malicious intent. They passed along to me the concept of God that they had received, a concept which elevated God's "righteousness" and "holiness" far above God's love.

I learned that in practice "God is love" included an invisible asterisk corresponding to limitations and exclusions. God's love was not actually unconditional. God loved us all as "sinners" but "hated our sin." I learned that homosexuality was an "abomination." People tried to distinguish between God's love for people and God's hatred for sin, but in practice there was no distinction. I received the message that being gay was sinful in and of itself.

I learned to accept God's love for the portion of myself that I understood to be lovable. Simultaneously, I learned to hate my attraction to men, because I believed God hated it too.

As a teenager desperate to reconcile my faith with my sexuality, I learned about the concept of "conversion therapy" and Christian groups that claimed to provide "healing" and "wholeness" for people like me who "struggled with same sex attraction." Although I did not enter formal therapy until I was an adult, this toxic framework became the structure for my self-understanding.

I sought "healing" in one form or another for my sexual orientation for almost 20 years. It is difficult to overstate how harmful this process was for me and the people I care about. Internally, there was a constant, devastating conflict as I sought to excise a part of myself through desperate prayers, conversion therapy, books, and accountability groups.

In college, I was very involved with my campus ministry, and I surrounded myself with people who thought like I did. Although I knew a gay man who was a leader in the local church I attended, I viewed him through my conversion therapy lens. In hindsight, I can see that I was an arrogant young man. As I pursued a calling into ordained ministry in the United

Methodist Church, I deliberately chose a conservative seminary that would affirm my conversion therapy mindset. My inner conflict was incredibly strong, but I reassured and comforted myself by avoiding people who thought differently than I did.

However, I was not successful in avoiding everyone. Even as I pastored in a conservative church after seminary, I encountered LGBTQ+ people who chose to live openly and still attend church. In hindsight, I see the courage that it took to show up each week, often with their partners, in an environment where they were "welcomed" but not affirmed as their full selves. As their pastor, I extended grace and welcome to them, but I retained my own beliefs about myself. The more I witnessed their full, healthy, normal lives, the more my own framework for understanding myself began to be shaken.

Parents of LGBTQ+ children also attended the churches I served, and often came to me to process their own experiences of reconciling their faith with loving their children. In all of these interactions with parents, I told them, "You cannot change your child. You can only love them as they are." Extending this truth to them also echoed in my own life. Each time I had one of these conversations, the conflict within myself grew. How could I believe this truth for someone else and not believe it for myself as well?

One retired couple came to me after leaving their lifelong church because their adult gay son was not welcome there. They met with me to determine whether or not I would be a safe person for them and their son. Their confidence about God's love for their son and their willingness to challenge me to be more openly affirming made a powerful impression on me.

LGBTQ+ people and allies kept showing up in the religious bubble that I had constructed for myself. Each of these interactions challenged me, because I so often saw in them a deeper expression of unconditional love than I was taught was possible for someone "living in sin." I believe each person helped me to take a few more steps on my journey.

A major milestone in my journey toward self acceptance occurred in the aftermath of a horrible act of hatred.

On the Sunday morning of June 12, 2016, I preached three services while details were still emerging about the Pulse tragedy. I offered our church and my help for funerals, and I invited greater compassion from church folks for the LGBTQ+ community.

The community and worldwide response to the Pulse tragedy showed me more of what unconditional love looked like. I saw

Every person is loved by God exactly as we are. There are no exceptions. God loves without an asterisk.

it in the lines at the blood donation centers. I saw it in the mounds of flowers. I saw it in grief-stricken faces at candlelight vigils. I heard it in the ringing of bells and the songs of choirs. In the aftermath of this horrible act of hatred, the LGBTQ+ community and allies showed the world what love looks like.

One year later, on June 12, 2017, I opened our church worship space for candle-lighting and prayer in the evening. I sat with a first responder who had been one of the first through the wall. I talked with someone who had lost employees. I lit candles, I cried, and then I went home to bed.

At 2:00 am, I was ripped awake by a sudden, intense pain in my leg. I had never experienced that pain before, and I have not experienced it since then. I looked at the clock and realized that my friends from St. Luke's United Methodist Church were at Pulse holding "prayerful presence" with the congregation from Joy Metropolitan Community Church.

I got down on the floor and said to God, "If you want me to go all the way down there at 2 am, you're going to need to make that really clear." At exactly that moment, my friend Rev. Jad Denmark from St. Luke's texted me, "Are you here?" I responded, "I'm on my way."

When I arrived at Pulse, Jad gave me a gray stole with rainbows on it [pictured]. In that moment, it made me very uncomfortable because of my internal struggle, but I wore it and stepped into the outpouring of grief and love that night.

The many milestones in my journey eventually led to a breakdown in 2018. I had to reckon with my own truth and speak it out loud to myself and others. I had to navigate the extensive personal and professional repercussions of coming out, including a choice to step out of ministry. I began to learn what it meant to truly love myself unconditionally, and I began to navigate life as an openly gay man. I found welcoming places to work at the Community Hope Center in Kissimmee and at the Peace and Justice Institute at Valencia College.

The gray stole is now one of my most prized possessions. It is a reminder to me of the beauty that can come in the aftermath of extreme pain and tragedy. It reminds me that light and hope are

never extinguished, and that part of my reason for living is to care for hurting people and to help build a community where everyone is safe to be themselves.

In October 2020, I began serving as Executive Director of One Orlando Alliance. The seed that became One Orlando Alliance was planted just days after Pulse to help many wonderful organizations communicate and coordinate care for our deeply harmed community. The Alliance was formed out of love for our LGBTQ+ community, and it is that same love that drives our work today to make Central Florida a place where LGBTQ+ people can belong and thrive.

I am very aware that many people do not identify with my religious tradition or have any religious affiliation. I honor that. I believe everyone finds their own mental, emotional, spiritual, and/or relational space that feels like home. I have found mine in the person and teachings of Jesus. I also know that people who claim to follow Jesus have been some of the most influential creators and enforcers of homophobia and transphobia, white supremacy and racism, misogyny, ableism, and other abusive power structures.

The invisible asterisk has been used to dehumanize and harm incalculable numbers of people. At the same time, the asterisk has been used to consolidate and preserve power for the thin slice of humanity to which I belonged prior to coming out. I still carry considerable privilege, even as a gay man, that can all be traced back to the asterisk.

I do not defend the Christian community for the harm we have done throughout the centuries. Instead, I invite people within my own faith tradition to reflect on this harm. To acknowledge it. To own it. To do better.

I know that God loves me as a gay man, and my relationship with God is now so much more whole than it ever was before. I am one part of the beautiful spectrum of diversity that we all collectively embody. God's love is not confined or limited to small segments of humanity. God's love does not exclude. Every person is loved by God exactly as we are. There are no exceptions. God loves without an asterisk.

In all of the possible ways that you might understand yourself and your identity, and in whatever mental, emotional, spiritual, and/or relational space feels like home to you, I hope and pray that you experience truly unconditional love.

Josh Bell is the Executive Director of One Orlando Alliance. For more information visit www.OneOrlandoAlliance.org.

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PEACE NEWS



Baltimore Museum of Art Will Collect Works Exclusively by Women in 2020

The BMA has pledged that every work of art acquired for its permanent collection next year will be created by a woman. This rule will apply to pieces obtained through both purchases and donations. “This [is] how you raise awareness and shift the identity of an institution,” he tells McCauley. “You don’t just purchase one painting by a female artist of color and hang it on the wall next to a painting by Mark Rothko. To rectify centuries of imbalance, you have to do something radical.”

Source: Smithsonian Magazine



Nemonte Nenquimo: The indigenous leader named ‘environmental hero’

An indigenous leader from the Ecuadorean Amazon is one of the winners of the Goldman environmental prize, which recognises grassroots activism. Nemonte Nenquimo was chosen for her success in protecting 500,000 acres of rainforest from oil extraction. She and fellow members of the Waorani indigenous group took the Ecuadorean government to court over its plans to put their territory up for sale. Their 2019 legal victory set a legal precedent for indigenous rights. ‘Our rainforest is not for sale’ For Nemonte Nenquimo, protecting the environment was less a choice than a legacy she decided she had to carry on. “The Waorani people have always been protectors, they have defended their territory and their culture for thousands of years,” she tells the BBC.

Source: BBC



Civil Rights Law Protects Gay and Transgender Workers, Supreme Court Rules

The Supreme Court ruled that a landmark civil rights law protects gay and transgender workers from workplace discrimination, handing the movement for L.G.B.T. equality, a long-sought and unexpected victory. The vastly consequential decision thus extended workplace protections to millions of people across the nation.

Source: New York Times

CELEBRATING PEACE NEWS LOCALLY, NATIONALLY, AND INTERNATIONALLY.

What Started as a Joking Bake-Off Between Dads Lead to 15,000 Cookies Being Delivered to Essential Workers

After being furloughed from his associate coaching job at a local liberal arts college due to the coronavirus pandemic, McKenzie set himself a goal of learning a new skill each week. Up first—cookie baking. When McKenzie proudly posted of his success to Facebook, middle school English teacher Uhrich commended his pal's efforts, but said he was sure he could do better. Thus, the cookie gauntlet was thrown and the bake-off was on. Uhrich and McKenzie made the rounds, dropping off the remaining cookie batches to essential workers in the Huntington area. The recipients couldn't have been more pleased.

Source: [Good News Network](#)



The Last Straw? China Tries to Trash Single Use Plastic

By the end of this year, nonbiodegradable plastic bags will be largely banned from major cities, and single-use straws will be prohibited in restaurants across the country, Beijing's top economic-planning office and its Environment Ministry said on Sunday. The ban will extend to all cities and towns by 2022 and to markets selling fresh produce by 2025.

Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#)



Social Justice Game Changers

As part of the Orlando Magic and Coach Clifford's continuing efforts toward social justice reform, he created the Social Justice Game Changer program to honor local leaders who have made a difference in the realm of social justice. Some of the 2021 Social Justice Game Changer Honorees include Tanisha Nunn Gary, Sherry Paramore, Rich Black, Rachel Allen, Russell Drake, Desmond Meade, Pastor Derrick McCrae, Dr. Randy Nelson, Dick J. Batchelor, Justin Kinsey, and Senator Randolph Bracy.

Source: [NBA](#)



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