

Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative

Staying the Course: Living a Peaceful Life

The weekend of February 4th and 5th provided Valencia faculty and staff an opportunity for self-reflection at the workshop titled *Staying the Course: Living a Peaceful Life* facilitated by Elaine Sullivan and Jane Renfroe. Mrs. Sullivan is a founding director of the *Center for Renewal & Wholeness in Higher Education*, in Dallas, while Mrs. Renfroe is our own professor of English and a trained workshop facilitator. The workshop was held in the serenity of The Cottage at Lake Lily Park in Maitland and was the perfect place for reflection and renewal. Everyone benefited from the yoga and meditation led by Valencia associate faculty Buffy Pilloud. The workshop provided the participants with renewed strength and fervor to continue the endeavor to bring peace to ourselves, our families, and the community.



Top row: Jane Renfroe, Amy Love, Daniel Rubin, Debi Jakubcin, Rachel Allen, Eli Solis, Marilyn Acosta. Bottom: Christine Luong, Kimberly Harvey, Buffy Pilloud, Liz Jusino.

Reflections from workshop participants:

The most significant thing was the bonding and sharing with others. Getting to know and trust co-workers at a deeper level was a privilege.

The most significant aspect was reconnecting with my spiritual journey and making a connection with a group dedicated to Valencia students who are kind spirits.

The group energy and opportunities for sharing were the most significant. The articles and books were insightful. Also, meeting Elaine was a pure joy and I am happy to have experienced her teachings. The fellowship with group members was very meaningful.

The most significant thing was the sense of belonging to a workplace that is addressing the real needs of people. In these times where the world seems a little more uncertain and it feels chaotic, it's good to address the subject of peace in a very practical, concrete manner.



Peace and Justice Initiative Mission:

All People, All Voices, All Matter: Making a difference by intentionally engaging in practices and principles that explore, advocate, and honor the dignity of self, others, and the earth.

Elaine Sullivan returns for an all-day workshop Tuesday August 23rd. If you are interested in participating, please contact the Peace and Justice Office at x2709 or e-mail Rallen39@valenciacollege.edu

Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative

Conflict Transformation Training



Dr. Alma Abdul-Hadi Jadallah, award winning conflict resolution specialist, scholar and practitioner presented six days of workshops in conflict transformation for administrators, faculty and staff. The workshops included a two-day training in Conflict Transformation, a faculty and staff workshop titled “Culture and Conflict: Building Bridges”, a morning training with Student Affairs Supervisors under the leadership of Joyce Romano, a training with East Campus Deans under the leadership of Ruth Prather, and a one-day workshop titled “Tools for Talking: Handling Difficult Conversation at Work”. The trainings aimed to provide the college community tools for handling conflict in a constructive and transformative manner. Over 200 members of the college community have participated in trainings with Dr. Jadallah since her first visit in October of 2010. Participants surveyed indicated a positive response to the trainings and the facilitation given by Jadallah. When asked about future trainings, 40% of respondents indicate a desire for training in difficult conversations, 17% in negotiation, and 13% in mediation. As one participant noted, “this work could help to build an atmosphere of harmony where people come to work together and can be sure they will be respected and valued.”

In addition to her workshop presentations, Dr. Jadallah keynoted at the [Edelman Trust Barometer Symposium](#) hosted jointly by Edelman and Valencia College. After the symposium, Dr. Jadallah, Dr. Shugart, and Matthew J. Harrington, Edelman U.S. President and CEO, met with 40 honors students to discuss the role of trust in their academic and professional lives.



Participants from the two-day Conflict Transformation Training



Matthew J. Harrington, Alma Jadallah and Sandy Shugart at the Edleman Trust Symposium

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Having fun with role-play during the Conflict Transformation Training



Strategic planning for the Peace and Justice Initiative with Alma Jadallah



Sharing ideas with one another.



Conflict Transformation participant reflections:

I personally was engaged throughout the entire workshop. It was very exciting to take advantage of this PD opportunity.

The leader was well connected to both the content of the training and the participants, which was refreshing.

When the facilitator brought her own experience and practical applications into the discussion, the content became real as opposed to theoretical.

I like Alma's teaching style – interactive with a sense of purpose.

Conflict Transformation work at Valencia reduces self-centeredness and draws people closer together in commitment and results.

Look for *Crucial Conversations* workshops, offering skills for handling difficult conversations, this fall through the PJI and the EDGE.

Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative

Mapping Your Neighborhood

your community is your social security

Last semester I introduced a new assignment to my environmental science classes. The mapping your neighborhood assignment goes like this: individually or in small groups map your neighborhood. With your home near the center, include at least 300 home locations. Identify all buildings, street names, schools, businesses, lakes, open-spaces suitable for gardens and all other useful resources.

What will make your neighborhood self-sustainable? Walk your neighborhood. Observe and interact. Look for patterns. Appreciate details.

- *Pay attention to what has heart and meaning for you.*
- *What might be useful for the future? What improves sustainability?*
- *What needs to go? What decreases sustainability?*
- *What resources might you need? What relationships would be helpful?*
- *What changes would you make? What would heal your community?*
- *What structural changes would increase the possibility of more effective collaboration, cooperation and compassion in your neighborhood?*

I then introduced the following scenario. Imagine the Middle East countries have stopped selling oil to the US. Gas prices are now \$35 per gallon. Gas is being hoarded by the very rich. The wait in line for gas is now approximately 8 hours, sometimes longer and the amount you can buy is limited. A nationwide truckers' strike has been in effect for 2 weeks. Most stores are empty and most businesses are closed. People are out of work. Water is being rationed: the water to your home tap comes on for 2 or 3 hours every 4 or 5 days. Hospitals, schools and banks are closed due to economic collapse. Dialing 911 gets a dial tone. Police and fire departments are volunteer now and rarely available when you need them. Mass transportation is very sporadic at best. Your bicycle was stolen yesterday. Your family is hungry.

- *What are you going to do today?*
- *Where are you going to get food, water to water your garden every day, electricity for refrigeration, health care supplies, home repair supplies and advice?*
- *What are your core concerns?*
- *Who are you going to turn to for help?*
- *What resources do you need? Where are you going to get these resources?*
- *When your friend falls and breaks his arm, what are you going to do to help?*
- *Your baby has a fever of 104. Who are you going to turn to?*
- *People are stealing food from your garden during the night. What is your plan?*

As we discussed these, I asked the students to pause, reflect and write briefly what they thought their biggest challenges would be. Most of the answers were very similar:

"The biggest challenge is getting people to work together." ~Ricard L.

"The biggest challenges I see in my neighborhood are coming up with a way to bring everyone together to build community gardens." ~Kelsey W.

"... getting neighbors to chip in and take care of each other." ~Joseph M.

"... making people cooperate with each other." ~Alexis V.

"The biggest challenge is actually getting everyone to work together and put these plans into action to make the neighborhood more sustainable. I know that we have the resources to be successful, we just need cooperation." ~Shayna C.

When I asked how many students have had classes that taught them these skills, only one out of 50 raised her hand. "We learn cooperation in my Peace Studies class," she said. We must learn to be creative together, to work together and to take care of each other. I hope you agree. We have our work cut out for us.

Jim Belcher, Valencia College, 2011

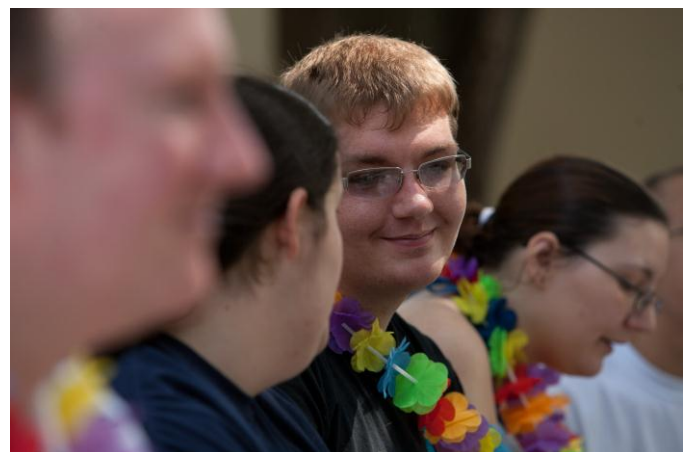
Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative

Service for Peace: *The Spring Fling* at the Coalition for the Homeless

Developing a sense of responsibility and care for others, confidence in one's ability to make a difference in the world, and strengthening our abilities to work with others are all part of the mission of the PJI. Service is one way to achieve these goals. On April 10th over 35 volunteers from Valencia College, in partnership with the Law Firm of Lowndes, Drosdick, Doster, Kantor & Reed came together for our bi-annual service project at the Coalition for the Homeless.

Valencia Clubs represented at the Spring Fling included the Psychology Club, sponsored by Judi Addleston and Jocelyn Morales, the Muslim Student Association and Valencia Future Educators, sponsored by Yasmeen Qadri, the Gay Straight Alliance, sponsored by Liz Jusino, and the H.E.R.O.S., sponsored by Subhas R. Tiwari.

The smiling faces of children brought joy to all. A jump rope game turned into double dutch, with laughter and applause all around. The family portraits captured by our volunteer photographer were a prized take-away for the families and children. Thanks to all for this special day.



Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative



Peace Studies Reaches Three Campuses

Professor Emeritus Penny Villegas founded the Peace Studies course over seven years ago on the East campus. It began as a special topics course and now finds its place in the college curriculum as PAX 1000. Two professors came on board this spring, Paul Chapman and Cass O’Little, to bring Peace Studies to Osceola and West Campuses. The courses were met with high enrollment and excellent evaluations. A group of colleagues are currently collaborating to develop PAX 2000: *Conflict Resolution and Mediation*. We hope to pilot the course in the spring of 2012.

Ahimsa, Or the Way of Nonviolence

A student paper by Jeremy Sharpe
Peace Studies, Spring Semester 2010

The words of Gandhi are powerful and can truly inspire anyone. Nonviolence is definitely the first step towards peace. Gandhi points out that if violence can be learned so can (and should) nonviolence. Gandhi says, “Nonviolence is a power which can be wielded equally by all.” So, no matter who you are you can practice nonviolence. He points out the problem of violence, even when it appears to be doing good, this good is short lived. Nonviolence is not without suffering. But as humans it is our will to preserve life. Gandhi has clear and solid views of cowardice saying, “There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward.” Gandhi like so many others after him had a dream. This is no pipe dream. This is reality. Gandhi has this to say about his dream: “I must continue to argue till I convert opponents or I own defeat. For my mission is to convert every Indian, even Englishmen, and finally the world to nonviolence for regulating mutual relations whether political, economic, social, or religious. If I am accused of being too ambitious, I should plead guilty. If I am told that my dream can never materialize, I would answer, ‘That is possible,’ and go on my way.” Some of us want to live to make this dream a reality. There is a great deal we can learn from the words of Gandhi.

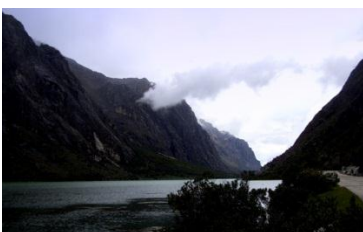
Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative

One Valencia Graduate Takes Her Love of People and Service to Peru



Ana De La Rosa graduated from Valencia in the spring of 2008. While at Valencia she participated in an alternative spring break program with Habitat for Humanity, served as an active member of Amnesty International and completed the Introduction to Peace Studies course. She is currently serving in Peru in the Peace Corps and writes about her experience in an e-mail to her Professor Penny Villegas ...

It has been a little while since I have written and felt like it was time to share. I have managed to keep busy despite not really having started any of my big projects yet. This last week I had the opportunity to go on one of the most amazing and rewarding trips of my life. I live in the northern coast of Peru, where it is hot and poor and most other volunteers live in the Andes and middle of Peru where it is cold and poor. The highest reported number of new HIV and AIDS cases is not only on the coast but in my actual district.



We have five high schools we work with in the area and we train young health promoters to teach their peers about the realities of HIV, AIDS, Dengue, and Malaria. The program has been running successfully on the coast for going on 6 years so the rest of the country is trying to adapt the peer to peer education model. Another volunteer and I had the opportunity to take one health promoter from each school, two teachers and a school principal to Ancash, Peru. It is two bus rides and 22 hours away from us. Before my service two volunteers had brought a group of the kids from Ancash to Tumbes and so now it was our turn to pay them a visit. The trip was covered by PEPFAR- the U.S. President's AIDS fund-since our youth went there with teaching modules, skits and ideas for the new up and coming peer educators in the Sierra. These kids had never left home for more than a day trip to the beach- let alone seen snow. It was wonderful sharing this 7-day experience with them. They got to go to museums and stand at the base of the biggest mountain in Peru.



They did a live television interview talking about the importance of sex education and helped train the kids from Ancash. It was a great exchange of culture and knowledge and I am so lucky to have been a part of it. I have a classroom in Minnesota I am pen-pals with and I cannot wait to send them pictures from this trip. The cultural exchange possibilities go on and on! So I just wanted to take a moment to share this with you. Mucho Amor!

Ana de la Rosa
Valencia 2008

Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative

The Peace and Justice Initiative Takes a Leap Into the International Community!



An active member of the Peace and Justice Initiative and the recipient of the Patricia Havill Whalen Endowed Chair in Social Sciences, Dr. Yasmeen Qadri made a trip in December to the **Mahatma Gandhi University** in Kerala, India where she presented at the International Conference titled *Education for Peace, Social Inclusion and Sustainable Development: Towards a Paradigm Shift*. Qadri believes cross-cultural and inter-faith dialogue contribute significantly to promoting peace and social justice. Her presentation at the conference was titled: *A Vision for the 21st Century: The Role of Muslim-Americans in Promoting Peace and Social Justice*.

Dr. Qadri's presentation received significant attention from the media, being published in local and national newspapers in three languages. In the publication *Vision Siasat*, Qadri was quoted saying, "I take pride in my college and its mission to promote peace and show respect for cultural and religious diversity." She goes on to explain that as a member of the Peace and Justice Initiative she has partnered her peace efforts with Christian, Hindu, and Jewish community leaders to put peace into action. She believes that "America is a country built by diverse cultures and faiths and hence it is the civic duty of every citizen to contribute their share in making their country an embodiment of peace

and social justice" (December 25, 2010). Her model, *Teacher Education for Teaching Peace in the 21st Century* shed light on Valencia College and its Teacher Education program. Her presentation was well received as delegates at the conference expressed interest in adapting the model at their universities and colleges.

After the conference Dr. Qadri visited Hyderabad, India where she presented at nine schools on educational topics such as corporal punishment, motivation, parent-teacher partnership, service learning, and current developments in technology, exceptional education and social justice. Qadri carried the message that social justice is an essential ingredient of a democratic society and as educators it is our responsibility to teach our students, the future leaders of our world, how to promote peace and justice in their lives and in the society at large. The schools in Hyderabad expressed interest in developing partnerships in service learning and cross-cultural experiences with the Valencia College Teacher Preparation Program.

Through the Endowed Chair, and with the support of the PJI, Dr. Qadri's work has opened doors to new opportunities for peace building at the global level. To teach is to touch the future, and Qadri believes that her future teachers can make a difference in the world!



Dr. Qadri presenting a workshop to teachers at Froebels High School, India

Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative

Upcoming Events:

August 23rd: Peace and Justice Retreat: Building and Sustaining a Community of Inclusion

This all day retreat, led by Elaine Sullivan from the [Center for Renewal and Wholeness in Higher Education](#) is open to all Valencia Employees.

September 21st: International Peace Day Celebration, East Campus

In partnership with the [Global Peace Film Festival](#), our day features a film, arts and entertainment. All are welcome!

October 18th-20th: Scholar in Residence, Dr. George Lopez visits us from Notre Dame University's [Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies](#). Dr. Lopez will offer workshops, lectures and curriculum support.

October 29th: Fall Fest, our bi-annual service project at the Coalition for the Homeless

November 2nd and 3rd: [Claude Anshin Thomas](#), author of *At Hell's Gate: A Soldier's Journey from War to Peace* visits the West Campus to work with veterans and support faculty who teach veterans.

November 17th: Multi-Faith Prayer Breakfast

December 8th: *Potlach* Celebration, a Peace Day Give-away in the Native American tradition.

The PJI is proud to partner with Student Development, the Honors College, the Professional Staff Leadership Team, the Wellness Program. Faculty Development, the Valencia Foundation and the Veteran's Initiative in support of programming at the college.

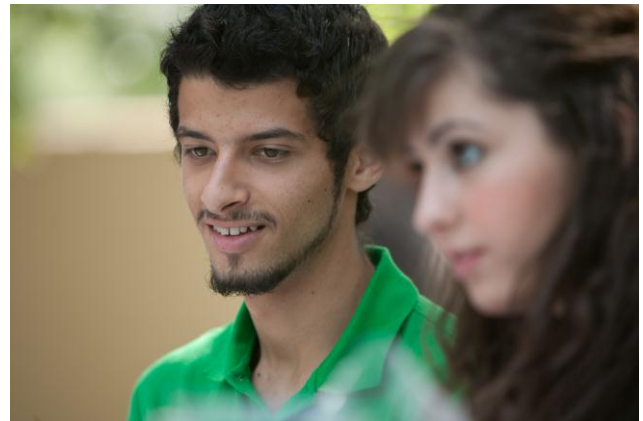
Many thanks to our contributing photographers:
Don Burlinson and Willie J. Allen Jr.

We extend our gratitude to the Valencia Foundation whose private donors partially fund the PJI.

Please visit the Peace and Justice Initiative at
www.valenciacollege.edu/PJI

Café Conversations

Look for *Café Conversations* in the fall on the East Campus focused on "How We Treat Each Other." All students, faculty, staff and administrators are invited to collaborate on the adoption of shared practices for creating a campus culture of respect and nonviolence. Please join us.



A special thanks to Jennifer Brinkley, our Support Staff Specialist, and Marilyn Acosta, our Service Learning Student for 2010-2011. Your commitment and hard work were priceless.

The Peace and Justice Initiative seeks to:

- 1) Create and teach a Peace and Justice Studies curriculum
- 2) Sponsor and collaborate with Student Development on Peace and Justice co-curricular activities
- 3) Foster a connection to Valencia's A.S./Technical programs in the conflict transformation work
- 4) Offer community outreach in Peace and Justice
- 5) Engage in realizing Valencia's Core Competencies, especially Value