

PAST EVENTS

Conversation on Peace
January 27-30, 2013



Valencia College was grateful to host Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba, Nigerian Educator and Peacebuilder to speak to students, faculty, and staff members during our *Conversation on Peace*. Ivorgba serves as the [Executive Director of New Era Educational and Charitable Support Foundation](#) and is featured in the film Project Happiness. A special thank you to the Patricia Havill Whalen Endowed Chair, the Study Abroad and Global Experiences ([SAGE](#)) Office, and Randy Taran and Brian Rusch for making all of this possible.

Valencia students reflect on Ivorgba's talks...

What is the most valuable thing you learned today?

"Human equality is possible through the right (nonviolent) approach on education."

"There are people out in the world that see the light in humanity and are striving to illuminate the dark."

"Even though people's skin color may be different, the color of our heart is always the same."

"I can make a difference."

"I have learned another man's story of success and about his challenges in Nigeria. He has given me a new perspective on what it means to be happy."

"I learned to take a step back. When times get rough, know that I am not alone and tomorrow is another day."

"Money doesn't equal happiness."

What aspect of this workshop might you incorporate into your life?

"A reminder that we are global citizens in a world that is inter-connected intellectually, spiritually and emotionally, and we must be mindful of ways to support one another."

"The courage that Emmanuel had has inspired me to spread wisdom of peace."

"There is more to life than meets the eye. You can never give up. The best has yet to come."

"Underneath our skin, we look the same. Our hearts beat as one and we are unified."

"There's more to life than what meets the eye and that we, as Americans, have it extremely good compared to other countries; we should definitely have lighter hearts."

"I have more appreciation for my education and what I am given in my life and from my country."

"More can be accomplished through love than violence."

"To focus on, not only educational and physical aspects of my life, but the spiritual aspect as well."



The Valencia community, through the prayer flag project, raised \$950.00 for Ivorgba's Charitable Foundation.

Reflections on My Time at Valencia

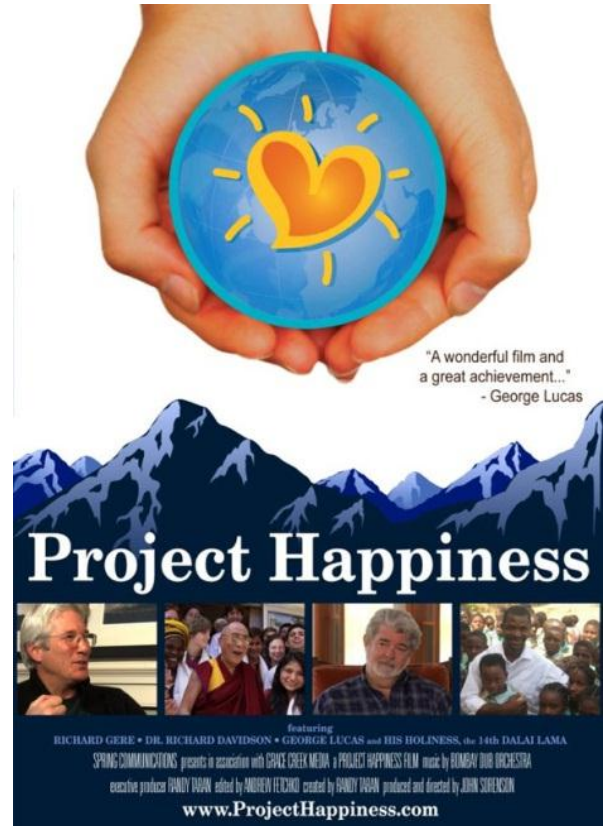
By Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba
Nigerian Educator and Peacebuilder



Krystal Pherai, Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba, and Jessica Borda

In early 2013, I was invited by Rachel Allen, Professor of Humanities and Coordinator of [Valencia's Peace and Justice Initiative](#), to participate in the college's 4-day *Conversation on Peace*. During the visit, I had the honor and privilege of engaging and speaking with faculty and students at three of Valencia College's campuses in Orlando, Florida. At the East Campus, I joined the College professors and students in the Opening Festivities for the [Conversation on Peace](#) and then had the privilege to address the Introduction to Peace Studies and Humanities Classes in the afternoon, where I shared experiences of educational issues, challenges and peace efforts in Nigeria. At the East Campus, I also interacted with the History of Genocide class and shared some thoughts on "The Potential for Genocidal Acts in Nigeria."

On Wednesday, January 30th, I visited classes and spoke with students at the Osceola Campus in the morning, and was featured, along with Randy Taran, Founder and Executive Director of [Project Happiness](#) and Nina Streich, Director of the [Global Peace Film Festival](#), on Front Porch Radio at WPRK in the afternoon. Thursday, January 31st, I spent the whole day at the West Campus, where I interacted and shared experiences with Peace Studies, Political Science and Journalism students and participated in a Question and Answer Session with Randy Taran, following the screening of the film, *Project Happiness*.



*Project Happiness, the documentary
Ivorgba is featured in*

I also had the privilege of visiting the Kennedy Space Center at Merritt Island on Tuesday, January 29th, 2013.

Valencia College is a place where everyone is a learner, and where learning is encouraged and appreciated – a place where the cultivation of wisdom and reflection is encouraged. In today's world, where competition for limited resources is becoming increasingly unbearable and yet unstoppable, education is not all about academics; there is something beyond. Young people today grow up in a society that demands expertise in everything. Learning from textbooks alone is no longer adequate for their overall development. Co-curricular programs and activities are needed to develop talents, skills and social competencies for responsible participation in the global society. Socialization is another great advantage of such programs. Through these, students get to connect others who share their interests, make new friendships and learn new skills.



Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba and Professor Eli Solis

Valencia College's Peace and Justice Initiative, committed to nurturing "an inclusive, caring and respectful environment on campus and within the community- one where conflict leads to growth and transformation" provides students the great opportunity for 21st century education that will develop their capacities and creative talents and facilitate their growth as human beings and responsive global citizens in aesthetic and/or applied pursuits. Through this initiative, which seeks to demonstrate care and provide opportunities for individual contribution, success, recognition and enjoyment, Valencia graduates will no doubt, be literate, numerate and well-educated with capacities and confidence to make positive contributions to society.



Valencia welcomes Ivorgba

I was so completely overwhelmed by the level of leadership, preparation, organization and teamwork exhibited during my visit. Everyone played a part – staff and students together. The staff led by example and the students, inspired by this example, exhibited so much commitment to learning by getting involved. The involvement of young people in the experience was for

me, particularly inspiring. This not only breaks down barriers and helps develop new and positive relationships between the young students and adult staff; it also facilitates the positive process of personal development, builds confidence and self-esteem, fosters leadership and problem solving skills, etc. It would be an understatement to say that I experienced hospitality, love, support, and kindness in their purest forms. Right from arrival at Orlando International Airport, Rachel and her family exposed me to the very first doses of exceptional Valencia hospitality, humility, simplicity and pure spirit. Lucy Morse Roberts and her family, not only made me feel at home, they gave me a home. Campus Presidents came out to welcome and host me. Professors Paul Chapman and Subhas Tiwari Rampersaud were so majestic in humility; sometimes driving from campus to campus and making me feel like a king I was not.



Valencia students, faculty, staff, and community partners gather for a night to hear Ivorgba speak

I returned home to Nigeria to meet my family and students, fulfilled and sincerely grateful for the privilege to be invited to visit Valencia College, an academic institution so culturally diverse – diversity which has become a source of strength and success, clearly reflected in the Peace and Justice Initiative's [Principles for How We Treat Each Other](#). I found an institution that honors and respects diversity, a community that is fearless and willing to expose students to learning by doing together outside the conventional classroom experience, a place where everyone is committed to stepping forward and making a positive difference. I found a school that is proud of its traditions, high expectations, and which has created an inviting atmosphere, in terms of the quality of the accessible resources, excellent staff, good organization, etc, which makes it a good place to learn and grow.

Images from the *Conversation on Peace*

Over 1500 students, faculty and staff participated in these college-wide events, including workshops, national and international speakers, reading circles of Louise Diamond's *The Peace Book: 108 Ways to Create a More Peaceful World*, and a free screening of *Project Happiness*, in partnership with the [Global Peace Film Festival](#). Workshops included *Think Globally, Act Locally, Can Hollywood Build Peace?*, *The Power of Forgiveness*, *Service as Peace Activism*, and *Self-Leadership and Peacebuilding*.



The Humanities Speaker Series hosted John Prendergast, human rights activist and best-selling author to speak during our Conversation on Peace week



Valencia students playing New Games on the campus lawn



Valencia dancers enjoying a game of "hug tag"



The Peace Book by Louise Diamond



Prayer Flags, decorated by the Valencia community



Laura Firtel and her Americorp Volunteer



Students enjoying the Conversation on Peace festivities



Valencia Dancers having fun during the festivities



Enjoying the day



Professor Nichole Jackson led a workshop, titled The Question of Peace



Lessons From the Labyrinth

By D. Buffy Pilloud
Associate Professor of Yoga and Meditation

Labyrinth...such a complicated and mysterious word for such a simple and intuitive tool for healing, self-study, meditation, enhancing creativity, problem solving and celebration. At heart, we all long for simplicity in our overly complicated, busy lives. The labyrinth is the perfect tool to help fill that need because of its very simplicity.

The labyrinth, an ancient symbol and meditation tool, can be found in most cultures and spiritual traditions. Symbolically, it is a metaphor for the journey of life and spirit. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has no dead ends, you can't get lost and you don't have to think or use logic to walk a labyrinth. Within the shelter of the labyrinth, we can simply trust that the path leads us to where we need to be.

During Valencia College's 2013 *Conversation on Peace*, students, staff and faculty had the opportunity to physically walk a choice of two labyrinths or to use a finger labyrinth to see what lessons the labyrinth would reveal for them. Based on participant's written feedback, I believe the lessons of the labyrinth speak for themselves.

"So many things go through my head and heart as I walk a labyrinth—from the meandering path that I seem to be taking in my own life, to reflections on my journey toward my loved ones who have died."

"I noticed that I was feeling energy and sensations and emotions. I kept my focus on strength and healing to help me through some variables in my life right now. I will use the finger labyrinth daily."

"I was able to reflect very intensely...to think and reflect on whatever came to mind first and what has been bothering me."

"While walking the labyrinth, I noticed that I wanted to laugh. It relaxed me."

"My mind went completely to peace and allowed thoughts to flow more clearly."

"I was very tense walking into it, and as I was walking back out, I felt free and this huge weight lifted off of me. It was an amazing experience."



"I noticed my playful side really came out."

"I noticed that I focused almost all of my thoughts and energy on my friends who have died. It was a sort of remembrance and I felt a connection with them for most of the time."

"I noticed how powerful this made me feel. I am in control of my life and the way I want to live it in order to make me happy."

"Through the journey, I thought about the paths of life and which direction I was following. What I learned was how spiritual this experience was."

"I noticed that I felt a deeper sense of meaning in my life. I feel just a little less lost now and feel a sense of peace."

"I felt like I was having a conversation with God. I felt like I was talking to him about what his purpose for me was. I felt like I had a spiritual awakening."



“I thought about how many different ways I can become a brighter light and then I thought about the sun and how much energy it gives out and how I can become that type of light. The labyrinth was the light at the end of my hard tunnel...”

“While I normally can’t concentrate on one single thing, I was able to acknowledge just the relationship I had with my little sister.”

“I noticed the turns where some took me by surprise where I was unprepared and others I had my footsteps mapped out. This is to just like life. I also noticed that sometimes you take the pace of another, like in a relationship.”

My wish is that everyone could experience the mindfulness, insight, and peace that come from walking the labyrinth. Namaste



Professor and PJI Coordinator, Rachel Allen enjoying the outdoor labyrinth



**Valencia Earth Studies Association (VESA) Brings
Dr. Michael Mann to East Campus**

By Austin Welsch
Valencia A. A. Student



Dr. Mann, physicist, climatologist, and director of the Earth System Science Center at Pennsylvania State University

On the 17th of January, Dr. Michael E. Mann gave a presentation at the Performing Arts Center located on East Campus. Mann is a climatologist at Penn State University and a contributor to the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. Mann shared with the student body that despite scientific evidence of global warming, both his research and that of his colleges, have been targeted and discredited by several sources in an attempt to convince the general public that global warming is a hoax. The information Mann presented paints a very different picture, global warming is occurring and until action is taken to reduce its causes our thermometers will only continue to climb higher.

To begin to understand how we play a role in global warming it is important to understand the nature of our planet. The Earth has a natural process of heating and cooling over thousands of years. The Earth also has a natural process of burying gases from coal and oil. Throughout history, these gases were often released into the atmosphere during events such as volcanic eruptions and earth quakes. These gasses are completely normal when released at the natural rate.

The issue arises when you look at how heavily dependent we have become globally. The rate we surface and burn these resources far exceeds the natural rate creating an imbalance of gasses in our atmosphere. Mann stated "we are burning more coal and oil in just 100 years than what it took the Earth one million years to burry." At this rate it is impossible for the environment to adapt. The abundant amount of gasses in the atmosphere create a "greenhouse effect" causing the Earth to keep more heat from the sun than it naturally would. Mann explained that this creates a "hockey stick" climate change. What he means by this is that examining the worlds temperature over the past several centuries you have normal temperature variables, for the most part temperatures average out, but in the last century temperatures are climbing at an incredibly high rate. On a line graph this looks similar to the shape of a hockey stick. Mann also stated that it is scientifically proven that at this rate there will be an estimated 3 - 5 degree Celsius rise in global temperature by the end of this century. These temperatures will be doubled in the Arctic.

Surprisingly, this is rather old news. A scientist named Hansen predicted these increases in temperature due to fossil fuel burning in 1988 and attempted to warn people about the devastating effects this will have on the planet. Hansen's research was quickly "silenced" and the concept of global warming remained alien to the general population until recent works of Mann and like scientists. Despite the scientific evidence they are providing the majority of society still believes global warming is a myth, and this wide-spread disbelief is not a coincidence.

Fuel consumption is backed by some of the biggest companies in the world. The profits they make on a yearly basis is unimaginable. Mann states "these are businesses reaching past trillions annually." Personally, I have always believed that when you follow the "money trail" everything begins to make sense. Mann stated these businesses have an endless source of wealth which they do not want to let go of, therefor many of them lobby our politicians. For example, Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe (R) publicly claimed climate change as a hoax, although he later admitted to knowing this was

false. Mann joked that ironically Oklahoma has become the hottest state in the U.S. More significant, politician Frank Luntz (R) paid advertisers to create ads that would convince the public global warming is a fraud and claimed it is not an issue that needs to be addressed. Mann pointed out both of these politicians have been known to receive money from lobbyist in favor of a large fuel industry. This process where businesses use politicians to knowingly misleading the public is the same that the tobacco industry used just a few years ago claiming scientific evidence that proves smoking is harmful is completely false.

In 2006, congressman Joe Burton (R) tried to illegally gain access to all of Mann's research and threatened Mann to halt his research. Interestingly, when following the money trail Burton was a recipient of over a million dollars that year from fossil fuel companies. The same thing was attempted by Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli (R) who also received large sums of money from fossil fuel companies. Both took Mann and other scientists to court when they refused to turn over their research, neither winning the cases.

Despite the large percentage of politicians lobbied by the fossil fuel industry there are politicians who see global warming as a threat and accept the science behind it. Both Sherwood Boehlert (R) and John McCain (R) publicly ridiculed Burton and Cuccinelli for their ignorance, manipulations, and unlawful acts against Mann. Another politician who has been a large advocate in informing the public is John Kerry (D), Secretary of the State.

By the end of Mann's presentation it was clear global warming is occurring and if not prevented will be damaging to our planet. Mann ended by stating methods that could be used to help reduce the amount of harmful gasses in our atmosphere but also made it clear that "there are no quick magic bullets to fixing years of damage we have done." Although, if we begin burning clean fuel we would actively be reducing the effect of global warming for our kids futures and slowly setting the planets balance back in place. We have several technologies available for cleaner fuel such as solar and

wind powered generators, hybrid systems, electric public transportation and hydro fuel for personal automobiles.

Ultimately, Mann explains our biggest issue is that of ethics. What kind of world do we want to leave behind us for those to come? It is up to our generation to educate ourselves and search for truth, and then to take action to make a difference.

I personally realized that growing up I had written global warming off as a myth. At the time I was too young to be able to do my own research effectively but more importantly I felt that even if it is happening there is nothing I can do to change the situation. Since I've grown older I have come to understand the dangers of this kind of thinking. As Mann quoted in the conclusion of his presentation, "all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing," - Edmund Burke.

To learn more about Valencia's Earth Science Association (VESA), contact the club sponsor, Professor Jim Adamski at Jadamski1@valenciacollege.edu



[Valencia Earth Science Association \(VESA\)](#) has the mission to promote an active, unified community through discovery and adventure with the education of nature. VESA encourages all people to become active contributors in the conservation and salvation of the Earth's natural resources.

Moving In, Moving Out: Using the Movement Model to Reflect on our Work for Peace and Justice

By Carol J. Millenson

Manager, Continuing Education and Clinical Compliance, Divisions of Allied Health and Nursing



Workshop Participants Pictured: Jim Belcher, Tom Birol, Debra Green, Carol Millenson, Lynn Paredes-Manfredi, Elaine Sullivan, Debi Jakubcin, Mary O'Connor, Sue Brown, Linda Goddard, Jenny Charriez, Rachel Allen and Eli Solis. Not pictured: Rich Gair, Christine Luong, Cass O'Little, and Kara O'Neal.

Scholars...monks...leaders...seekers...creators...poets and artists! Tucked away on Lake Lily in Maitland, a diverse group of faculty, staff and community members joined together on February 15th and 16th to continue the conversation about Peace and Justice. This annual event, coordinated by Rachel Allen was facilitated by Elaine Sullivan, nationally acclaimed facilitator and speaker from the [Center for Renewal and Wholeness in Higher Education](#). Elaine has consistently supported and provided guidance from the beginnings of Valencia's Peace and Justice Initiative. Her spirit and skill among us was genuine, profound, and moving.

Intensive and intentional dialogue and reflection was based on Parker Palmer's newest book titled, *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit*. Clearly, each participant entered this experience with differing expectations and left with deeply personal insight and resolve. I can only share some of my "take aways."

This was my first Peace and Justice workshop/retreat and I own the fact that I am, "in my old age," in a reflective time and contemplating the next phase of my life. As I have entered my senior years, I have given a great deal of thought to how I will shape these years around my life meaning and mission. This retreat provided a forum in which I could find expression and feedback while listening deeply to the thoughts and spirit of my colleagues.

Among the many meaningful writings on which we reflected was the pivotal **Five Habits of the Heart** (Parker Palmer, 2010). With each of these habits, I choose to share a personal reflection for this time in my life.

1. **An understanding that we are all in this together:** for me, a continuing sense of purpose. While we are alone in some sense, this diminishes the loneliness that might otherwise result from retirement, change in function, and other transitions
2. **An appreciation of the value of "otherness":** deeply listening to those who are both peripheral and intimate in my life...what can I learn, how can I reach in, how can I expand my understanding of others, how can I grow my world beyond my own view?
3. **An ability to hold tension in life-giving ways:** life is fraught with contradictions, frustrations, challenges, and hurt. Will I consistently choose to hold these in a heart-opening way that may take me toward something new? Will I find ways to "re-invent myself" and find meaning and inner congruence in the face of everything life may throw my way?
4. **A sense of personal voice and agency:** speaking my truth while remaining very aware that it is my truth and it cannot be imposed on or discount the truth of

others. I profoundly believe that each of us has a story and it is worthy of sharing. My story can serve as an instrument of positive influence...and it will continue to be written as I move through my next developmental phase of life.

5. **A capacity to create community:** our individualism and “doing it our way” has great merit, but only to a point. In its extreme, we have created a society in which we are often very separated by our lack of intentional community building. We are disconnected and people are left alone to face the challenges of life. I have always been a helper and a resource and I see the years ahead as an opportunity to strengthen that commitment.

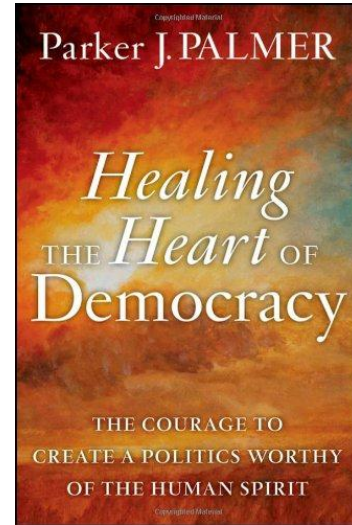
In summary, our retreat yielded new friends, new thoughts and deep insights, and new commitment to the principles that speak to **how we treat each other**. And I discovered an author whose poetic expression resonated with me on so many levels. From Judy Brown in The Art and Spirit of Leadership, I borrow these words to frame my conclusion:

“...The story that is ours
to live completely
is a mystery to us—because we’re busy telling
ourselves stories
that no longer fit—
until we wake one day
and see life with our newly opened eyes
full of surprise.”

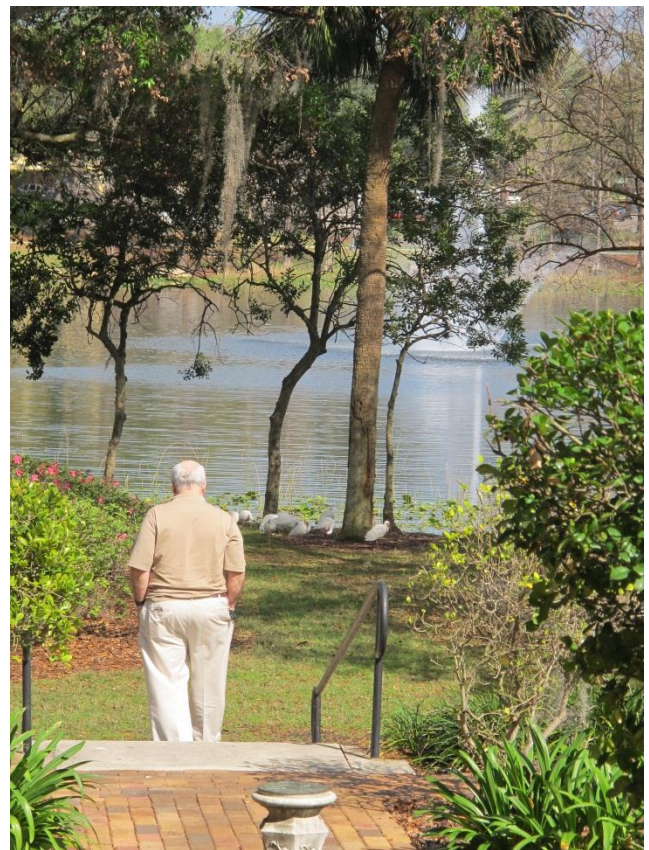
This article first appeared in the [Valencia Grove](#).



Workshop participants engaging in dialogue



Faculty and staff came together for a two-day workshop titled, *Moving In, Moving Out: Using the Movement Model to Reflect on our Work for Peace and Justice* based [Parker J. Palmer's](#) *Healing the Heart of Democracy*. The workshop was led by nationally recognized facilitator Elaine Sullivan who comes to us from the [Center for Renewal and Wholeness in Higher](#)



Professor Rich Gair reflecting

Justice for Farmworkers

The Peace and Justice Ambassadors March for Rights, Respect, and Fair Food

By Drew Dietrich
 Valencia A.A. Student and
 Peace and Justice Ambassador

The goal was clear and the messages were eminent; “New day,” “Justice,” and “Respect.” Hundreds of people joined together to march, chant and hold signs to support a goal of paying a penny more paid per pound of tomatoes. People from different states including California, New York, and all across Florida united for the last stretch of the two week, two hundred mile march organized by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). The Peace and Justice Ambassadors of Valencia joined the march.



Rachel Allen, Yazan Saleh, Jake Galvin, Cristina Garcia, Drew Dietrich, Krystal Pherai, Doris Hopkins, Taylor Sheffield, and Stephanie Arredondo

poverty and unfair working conditions. Many companies, such as Taco Bell, McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, Chipotle, Trader Joe's, and Whole Foods have already signed the penny more per pound agreement and are working with the CIW to eliminate farm labor exploitation in Florida's tomato fields. The CIW wanted Publix to be the next company to get on board.

At the Publix headquarters, supporters heard stories, both of challenges and successes for the farmworkers. The leaders of the CIW talked about the progress they've made such as more equal treatment of all workers and more regulation around poisonous pesticides used in farming. As the speeches ended, the last message presented was a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. that read, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards **justice**.”

For more information about the Coalition for Immokalee Workers, visit <http://www.ciw-online.org/>.

For more images from the March for Rights, Respect, and Fair Food, visit www.jjtiziou.net.



Doris Hopkins, PJI Ambassador
 © Jacques-Jean Tiziou / www.jjtiziou.net

Protestors met at the Southgate Publix Supermarket in Lakeland, then marched three miles to the Harden Publix, and finally three more miles to the Publix headquarters. Banners and flags were distributed to marchers to show their support. Chants in Spanish and English such as, “ONE, we are the people. TWO, a little bit louder. THREE, we want justice, FOR farmworkers!” and “Publix, escucha, estamos en la lucha!” meaning “Publix, listen, we are in the fight!” were heard nearly every minute of the march.

The CIW's other objectives for this march were to highlight the progress made in the past thirteen years with the Fair Foods Program and to stress that more hard work is needed before these farmworkers are free from





Krystal Pherai, PJI Staff Assistant

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Cristina Garcia, PJI Ambassador

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Jake Galvin, UCF Student

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Yazan Saleh, PJI Ambassador

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Peace and Justice Initiative Hosts Trip to Local Buddhist Sanctuary

By Andrew Johnson
Valencia A.A. Student and
Valencia Voice Journalist



ORLANDO — From the “water drop tea house” to the “lotus garden,” the [Guang Ming Temple](#) has it all in its authenticity.

Whilst the gilded sunset overtook Friday’s cloudless sky, temple staff and volunteers eagerly finished their preparations for the night of cultural enlightenment that was about to begin.

After warm greetings from the temple’s network of staff and devoted volunteers, students with the Peace and Justice Initiative filled the aisles of the main shrine for their first glimpses into the traditions of humanistic Buddhism.

Led by the temple’s director, who “worked in a university for 16 years before becoming a monastic,” students learned that “the temple was finished by volunteers in 2007” and has offered its services to the local community since 1992.

As the lights dimmed and the rhythmic voice of the temple’s director led attendees into their first meditation, Buddhism permeated the room. With the principles of education and cultural enlightenment guiding the evening, it soon became apparent that the temple guests were in for an experience.

Shortly after the meditation, students headed to the “water drop tea house” to participate in a traditional Buddhist tea ceremony, including samples of traditionally prepared black and green tea.

After completing this stop in the communal tea house, students headed to the “lotus garden” for their first look at a traditional “zen” garden, which provides the temple’s participants a place of peace in which to meditate and connect with nature.

Eventually students made their way to the memorial complex. Featuring a large Mahayana Buddha shrine, the memorial complex provides local Buddhists with a place to lay the remains of their loved ones, with the hope that the guidance of the Mahayana Buddha will lead them to a peaceful rebirth in the next life.

Despite its’ ominous atmosphere, the memorial complex allowed students to gain a greater understanding of the life and death of a traditional Buddhist before heading upstairs for their first attempts at calligraphy.

Calligraphy, and ancient Chinese art form, serves as the medium for Venerable Master Hsing Yun’s wisdom to be spread throughout the 200 branches of the Fo Guang Shan monastery in Taiwan.



Valencia staff joined the evening at the Buddhist Temple



Events such as the Night at Guang Ming Temple directly reinforce their goals of partnering with the community to promote nonviolent conflict resolution and creating relationships between diverse groups of people in the local community.

After learning of the temples free tai chi, calligraphy and introductory Buddhism classes, local Valencia student Drew Dietrich said “I would absolutely come back.”

If you too would like to participate in the free services offered by the Guang Ming Temple, or simply get involved with the Peace and Justice Initiative, visit www.orlandobuddhism.org for more information or <http://valenciacollege.edu/PJI/> to find out more about the Peace and Justice Initiative.

This article first appeared in the [Valencia Voice](mailto:ajohnson@valenciavoice.com). ajohnson@valenciavoice.com, April 2, 2013

Laughter spread throughout the room as students attempted to recreate the ancient art form, ultimately resulting in less skilled, but entertaining, recreations. Shortly thereafter everyone headed upstairs for a brief summary of the creation of Buddhism before joining the temple’s young adult division for a vegetarian dinner. When asked about their experiences, Valencia student Jordan Pugsley said “Coming here was very enlightening,” directly reflecting the evening’s main goal of cultural enlightenment. With the cultural atmosphere of Valencia continually growing in its diversity, the Peace and Justice Initiative is committed to “making a difference by intentionally engaging in practices and principles that explore, advocate, and honor the dignity of self, others, and the earth.”



Valencia students were very excited to visit the Temple



Rachel Allen enjoying the Temple tour



Humanities students attend the Temple event

Peace Breakfast: A Multifaith Gathering



The bi-annual Peace Breakfast was unique this spring, with riveting stories and poems shared by Professor Emeritus, Penny Villegas, Professor Linda Goddard, and Professor Eli Solis. The Peace Breakfast is a reflective time for sharing diverse religious and

spiritual beliefs, with the aim of seeking common ground and unity among us.



Penny Villegas sharing Native American stories



Students engaged in the stories and poems

PEACE STUDIES CURRICULUM

New Course Offering for Fall 2013

The Psychology of Peace is a new course offering in our growing Peace Studies curriculum. Join Drs. Judi Addelston and Diana Ciesko

The Psychology of Peace

PSY 2930 CRN 16488

Tues/Thurs 11:30-12:45



What causes conflict?

Why do some groups hate each other?

How can individuals and groups work towards peace?


Join this innovative class to learn the answers to these and other pressing questions about the causes of and solutions to conflict on interpersonal and intergroup levels.

Professors: Judi Addelston, PhD. and Diana Ciesko, PhD.

PAX 1000: Introduction to Peace Studies

Introduction to Peace Studies: PAX 1000 is offered on

PEACE STUDIES



Study the great men and women of peace, learn the practices of nonviolence and become a more conscious and peaceful member of our world.

Register for PAX 1000

Fall Semester:			
East Campus:	M/W	2:30-3:45 PM	Professor Eli Solis
West Campus:	T/R	10:00-11:15 AM	Professor Cass O'Little
Osceola Campus:	M/W	10:30-11:45 AM	Professor Paul Chapman

three campuses this fall. Introduction to Peace Studies is a study of peace in its philosophical, religious, literary, historical and other cultural contexts. The course includes investigation into the causes of violence on the global and

personal levels, and an emphasis on the interdisciplinary study of peace and the peace movement in historical and contemporary views. Application of conflict resolution, nonviolence, and other practices necessary to become more powerful and peaceful members of our world are also taught in the course.

GET HAPPY: Positive Psychology Shows Us the Way

By Dr. Linda Freeman
Professor of Psychology



- 93,381 about DEPRESSION
- 4,247 about HAPPINESS
- 23,790 about FEAR
- 933 about COURAGE
- 242,134 about SICKNESS
- 38,349 about PREVENTION

With such an emphasis on human weakness and damage, Positive Psychology reminds science of its forgotten mission: “To amplify strengths, in addition to repairing weaknesses.” Positive Psychology provides a “how to guide” for increasing the happiness quotient by telling us what research suggests cultivates long-lasting positive emotions and the obstacles that block it. For example, through rigorous scientific efforts, Martin Seligman identified a 5-point path to happiness that is not dependent on fickle fortunes or chance events. According to Seligman, people seem happiest when they have:

- **Positive emotions** – Feeling good
- **Engagement** – Being completely absorbed in activities
- **Relationships** – Being authentically connected to others
- **Meaning** – Purposeful existence
- **Achievement** – A sense of accomplishment of success

Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar teaches Harvard University’s most popular course: a course on Positive Psychology; that is, he taught his students how to be happy. The course called PSY 1504 – Positive Psychology, was described as follows:

“The course focuses on the psychological aspects of a fulfilling and flourishing life. Topics include happiness, self-esteem, empathy, friendship, love, achievement, creativity, music, spirituality, and humor.”

Would you have signed up for this course? I know I would have. Others thought so too. At Harvard University, 855 students enrolled in Positive Psychology in ONE semester. This phenomenon is part of a surging trend in education suggesting a well-balanced curriculum not only teaches students critical thinking, but also *unconditional caring* and *positive human functioning*. The new discipline of Positive Psychology emerged as a movement in psychology whose sole purpose is to research and teach techniques that foster a positive, adaptive, creative, and emotionally fulfilling life. Valencia College is part of this growing trend in offering a course in “Positive Psychology” with the promise to teach our students about the “science of happiness.”

What is Positive Psychology? Positive Psychology is a relatively new discipline that has undertaken the challenge of expanding the scientific community’s idea of happiness. For decades, traditional psychology has studied distress, anxiety, depression, and other mental conditions. Consider the number of articles written between 1887 and 2003 on topics addressing negative versus positive states:

Why is Happiness So Hard to Achieve? If we know what cultivates happiness, then why do many of us find happiness to be so elusive? Simply put, this may be because we were never “taught how” to be happy. Bare in mind, one of our basic human rights, as written into the Declaration of Independence states we should *be free to pursue happiness*. Nevertheless, it doesn’t tell us “how” to do that. Long-lasting happiness becomes even harder to attain when we consider many of the myths we have about what makes us happy. Many believe achieving something such as; a career, family, money, or fame will provide us with enduring happiness. Positive Psychology tells us that these things rarely work. Take into account what has been learned in recent years about happiness - none of which was mentioned in any of the courses I took decades ago.

- Rich people are not appreciably happier than middle class folks
- Money makes an ever-diminishing contribution to well-being, but money can buy happiness if it is spent on other people

- Another myth, “If I could have a family, then I would be happy.” In sampling people’s moods throughout the day, most people are not happier when they are taking care of their children than when they are doing other things
- Lottery winners are no happier than lottery losers, one year after winning the lottery
- People who spend their time and money on doing things together, whether it be taking a vacation or going on an all-day outing to the local zoo, report higher levels of happiness than those who buy a bigger house, a more expensive car, or more stuff

Is True Happiness Possible? Positive Psychology tells us that we can become happier. As with any meaningful goal, it just takes commitment and effort. Not only can we become happier, it gets easier over time. Researchers in the field of Positive Psychology have already laid the groundwork for increasing and sustaining happiness. If their research is right, then we have discovered the means by which we can achieve happiness. Now, all we have to do is - learn.

Positive Psychology (PSY 2930) will be offered on EAST campus in the FALL of 2013 with Professor Linda Freeman, PhD.

To watch a video featuring the Positive Psychology Spring campus event [click here](#).

Valencia College’s Peace and Justice Initiative Promotes Skill Building and Interdisciplinary Approaches

By David J. Smith, MS, JD
Educational Consultant and
Peacebuilding Trainer



Valencia College in Orlando, Florida launched its Peace and Justice Initiative (PJI) in 2008. PJI focuses on developing a peace studies curriculum, sponsoring co-curricular

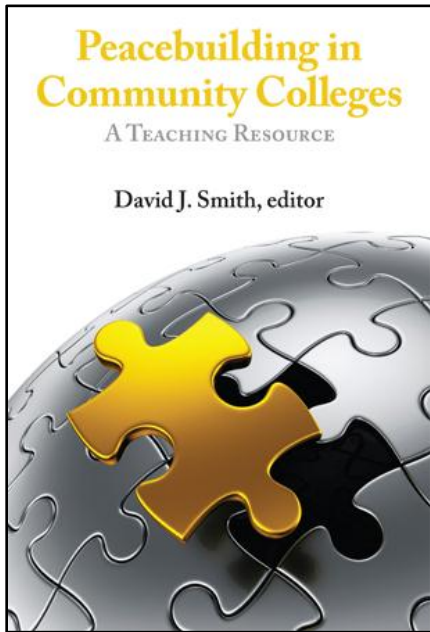
activities, offers community outreach, and engages in advancing core Valencia competencies.

One objective is “fostering a connection to Valencia’s technical programs.” For the most part, peace studies has been positioned as a social science and humanities approach to learning. However, in community colleges where large numbers of students are engaged in vocational and career education, peace studies and the related concept of conflict transformation can be applied to improved career and professional outcomes for students. An example is VC’s recently launched course *Peace, Conflict and the Police*. The course is being offered in the spring 2013. The course description indicates that in the course “students will learn the meaning of peace and investigate... the theories that underlie peace studies. In addition, students will investigate causes of war and violence....Students will investigate the police role in nonviolence movements and learn about occupational and organizational factors that influence police behavior.” An important “applied” component is the requirement that students devise “an alternative framework for the police that emphasize peacekeeping strategies rather than coercive means.”

Through this course, Valencia is taking a leadership role in demonstrating that conflict transformation and peacebuilding approaches in order to have broad based societal impact must be integrated in career fields. In addition to criminal justice, a range of other fields are examining peacebuilding including nursing, paralegal (where course work can exist in conflict resolution and mediation), and homeland security (where course work in international law can be present)

Valencia has focused heavily on building skills for peacebuilding in its student population. Its initial course Introduction to Peace Studies includes strong peace-skill development. Overall, PJI has worked collaboratively among a large group of interdisciplinary faculty. The program has also hosted guest presenters and trainers including Michael Nagler, George Lopez, and Alma Abdul Hadi-Jadallah.

This article first appeared in David J. Smith’s [blog](#).



David J. Smith is the editor of [Peacebuilding in Community Colleges: A Teaching Resource](#) which will be published by USIP Press in June 2013. Valencia's Peace and Justice Initiative is featured in the appendix. Smith will be speaking at Valencia College August 23rd and 24th.

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Bringing the Principles Home: A Student Perspective

By Jon-Michael Birt
Valencia A. A. Student

Sometimes it can be hard sharing a house or apartment with other people. With so many different views and opinions, finding common ground and creating a cohesive environment can be very difficult. I am going to share with you the story of my success in hopes of helping others find the benefits of communal living or at least take some pressure off of a stressful situation.

I moved to Orlando in August of last year to start my first semester at Valencia. I moved into a house with five other roommates only knowing one of them for a brief time. While we shared some interests and values, there were a few issues that started to come up, quickly creating a negative environment.

The dishes were out of control on a daily basis. We were starting an organic garden and even though everyone was excited about having healthy, cheap food, getting people to help in the construction and maintenance was difficult. We had an issue with unsolicited advice, creating hostility, and conflicting personalities and values creating abrasive and negative behaviors. Egos flared and insecurities arose among us.

Now that you know all the issues we were facing, I can tell you how we were able transform our living environment by using the Peace and Justice Initiative's *Principles for How We Treat Each Other*.

One day in my peace studies class the instructor told us about a new way of looking at competition. The idea was looking at competition as a way to strive together instead of against each other. This resonated with me on many different levels and pinpointed where the negative issues were coming from in the house. Then the



instructor handed us a pamphlet that read the *Principles for How We Treat Each Other*. As we began to go through the principles in class, it occurred to me how much better our living environment would be if we started using them in our house.

The timing was perfect. We had talked about a house meeting to address issues affecting the house. We began the meeting by each of us reading one principle and then telling how we thought it would help the house if we were to put it into

action. Almost immediately I noticed a stronger sense of community among us. There was a noticeable improvement in communication and comfort in expressing views. We began to talk about the dishes without pointing fingers or blaming. We initiated a plan

of having days assigned to people for dish duty. A plan was made for garden construction and people started asking what they could do to help instead of trying to avoid participation. Other issues in the house slowly started to be resolved.

Over time and more meetings we learned to be more accepting of differences and became more open to each other about the things that bothered us. We confronted the negative effect competition was having on our house and discussed this new ways of using competition to help each other succeed. Not only did we squash the negative, ego driven competition, we actually created a unique opportunity to learn and share our different abilities in order to help each other be successful.

We still face challenges every day, but with all that we learned by incorporating the *Principles for How We Treat Each Other* into our home, and using our collective ideas and skills, we have a much more positive living environment. I like to think of how much easier it would be to deal with all of the social issues we face in our world if people realized that the world is this house. We can overcome obstacles like hunger and unnecessary suffering and anything else that comes our way if we could release the negative use of competition and start striving together.

For classroom sets of the [Principles for How We Treat Each Other](#), please contact the PJI office or find them online. Please let us know other creative ways that you are embedding the Principles into your personal and professional life.

Posters of the *Principles for How We Treat Each Other* are available for free to faculty and staff for classrooms, faculty, campus and division offices, and common spaces on campuses. Please contact the Peace and Justice Office to acquire posters.

The Principles for How We Treat Each Other

Our Practice of Respect and Nonviolence

- 1. 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
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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.
- 4. Practice asking honest and open questions.** A great question is ambiguous, personal and provokes anxiety.
- 5. Give space for unpopular answers.** Answer questions honestly even if the answer seems unpopular. Be present to listen not debate, correct or interpret.
- 6. 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.
- 7. 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.
- 8. 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.
- 9. 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.
- 10. 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?”
- 11. 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 non-violence to others—and to ourselves.
- 12. 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 he or she sees as valuable.
- 13. 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.

Prepared by the Peace and Justice Initiative with considerable help from the works of Peter Block, Parker Palmer, the Dialogue Group and the Center for Renewal and Wholeness in Higher Education

THE PEACE AND JUSTICE AMBASSADORS

Peace Ambassador Program Kicks Off with Retreat



By Krystal Pherai, PJI staff assistant and
Linnette Bonilla, PJI intern

It was Margaret Mead who asserted, “Never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has,” and the Peace and Justice Initiative’s (PJI) new core group of student volunteers, known as the Peace and Justice Ambassadors, is doing just that.

On Saturday, February 9, 2013, thirteen students and four faculty/staff members gathered at Valencia’s Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) for the Peace and Justice Ambassadors’ first retreat. The day was centered on three major themes: bonding, exploration, and formation.

Activities began with each participant choosing a partner. The pair would then ask questions about one another that would later be shared with the whole group. During this time, the room was filled with laughter and smiles. After introductions, groups of three were formed to create posters that represented each of the PJI [Principles for How We Treat Each Other](#), a practice of respect and nonviolence. A shared perspective of what the principles meant was drawn, shared, and then displayed on the walls.



Following the principles project was the “Me Bag” activity. Attendees were asked to bring three items from home: one symbolizing their culture, one revealing their connection to Valencia, and one representing what peace and justice means to them.

After lunch, the ambassadors read a Hopi Indian story on teamwork before gathering outside for a team building activity, with the goal of working together to bring a metal pole to the ground using only their fingertips (see photo above). Although this activity may seem simple, each individual was required to work cohesively to reach the goal.



The group then met back inside to create visual depictions of peace and justice. While several different perspectives were shared during this activity, each piece of art carried common themes: unity, community, respect, and equality.

At the end of the day, participants were asked to individually reflect upon the day and write a letter to themselves, which will be mailed back to them at the end of the year as a reminder of the effect the retreat had on their life. For the finale, the participants had dinner at Olympia, a Greek restaurant, where they relaxed, enjoyed each other's company, and discussed ideas for the future of the Peace and Justice Ambassadors.

Since its formation in 2007, the Peace and Justice Initiative has been heavily supported by faculty and staff at Valencia. The PJI is now happy to say that it is also supported by determined, dedicated, peaceful students.

Check out the Peace and Justice Initiative on [Facebook](#) to view more images from the Peace and Justice Ambassador retreat.

The Peace Ambassadors is a partnership between the Peace and Justice Initiative and the office of diversity and inclusion. A special thanks to Linda Freeman, professor of psychology, Eli Solis, professor of foreign language and peace studies, and Rachel Luce-Hitt, coordinator for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, for offering their support and guidance in the development of the Peace Ambassadors program. For more information, contact peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu.

This article first appeared in the [Valencia Grove](#).

Conflict Minerals Petition on Earth Day

Conflict Minerals, including gold and tin are found in electronics we use every day. Armed groups make millions each year trading these minerals for weapons. The Congo is one of the worst conflict zones affected by conflict minerals.

During the East Campus Earth Day celebration on April 11th, the Peace and Justice Ambassadors educated Valencia students, faculty, and staff on conflict minerals, urging them to sign a petition challenging one leading corporation to use conflict free minerals in their products. The petition, which received over 70 signatures, will be sent to Apple, Inc.

To learn more, view [Conflict Minerals 101](#), featuring John Prendergast of the [ENOUGHproject](#).



Taylor Sheffield and Stephanie Arredondo, Peace and Justice Ambassadors educating students on conflict minerals



SERVICE

The Value of the Spring Fling

By Krystal Pherai
Peace and Justice Staff Assistant

Who would've thought that at twenty two years old I would find myself in, not just one, but two hula hoop contests with children less than half my age? Moreover, who would've thought that those hula hoop contests

would take the place as the highlight of my weekend? On Saturday, March 30, 2013 the Peace and Justice Initiative, along with the Gay-Straight Alliance, Muslim Student Association, Valencia Volunteers, the Psychology Club, Valencia's Positive Psychology class, Valencia's Peace Studies class, and members of the Seneff Honors College—all of which are Valencia College clubs or organizations—plus many

more volunteers hosted a Spring Fling for the children and families at the Coalition for the Homeless. The Spring Fling consisted of fun activities including face painting, musical chairs, watching a play, creating super-hero capes, and my favorite—as I mentioned—hula hoop contests. The kid inside of me couldn't help but come bursting out to play once I saw each activity station!

Although it was such a great site to watch the children from the Coalition run around laughing in fun, one of my favorite parts of the Spring Fling was to observe how the parents of the children reacted to the day. Instead of walking their kids to an activity station and waiting for them to finish pasting stickers all over construction paper, or to finish eating their cherry-flavored snow cones, so many of the parents got involved too. In fact, at one point during the Spring Fling two parents ran over to me in excitement wondering where they could snag a pair of flower headbands, preferably in purple. Similarly, as her daughters were waiting in line to get their faces painted, a woman who wore the biggest smile I had ever seen asked me, "Can I get my face painted too?!" Until seeing these parents become incredibly enthusiastic to, not only watch their children have fun jumping in a

bounce house, but also to create their own bunny paper bag puppets, plant "dream seeds," or to even participate in hula-hoop contests (yes, I was in a contest with a mother from the Coalition—and yes, she gave me a run for my money) I didn't realize exactly whose lives this Spring Fling was impacting. Before that moment, I had always assumed that the parents were appreciative, but we were really just impacting their children's lives by providing them with a fun time; boy, was I wrong, and happy to be wrong.

Of course, helping the children positively impacted my life as well, but once I saw the lives of the parents being affected, that impact grew greater and greater. It was just so nice to see everyone have a fun, worrisome day. I never would have thought that I would leave the Spring Fling having the image of the Coalition parents' smiles, laughs, and painted faces in my mind, along with their children, but actually, that is an image that pops right into my head—with the hula hoop contests of course! Furthermore, those images—Coalition children and parents participating in activities together, having fun and not worrying about anything, illustrate to me that this service project is a success and something that the Peace and Justice Initiative should continue in the future.



The Positive Psychology Class planting "dream seeds"





Valencia Advisor Liz Jusino



Professor Solis' Peace Studies class put together a play



Valencia students in superhero capes, creating the word "LOVE"



West Campus H.E.R.O.S. members shared snow cones



Professor Eli Solis enjoying the Spring Fling



The Psychology Club face painting

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE

Colleagues Travel to Notre Dame University



Congratulations to our Valencia colleagues Anna Saintil, Eli Solis, Cass O’Little, Karen Marie Borglum, Debra Jacobs and A.J. Quackenbush chosen to attend *Teaching Peace in the 21st Century: 5th Annual Summer Institute for Faculty* at Notre Dame this June. [Read More...](#)

JULY

9th and 10th, 1:00 PM, East 5-112
Our Peace Heroes: Stories of Hope and Transformation, with Penny Villegas

AUGUST

David J. Smith, Educational Consultant and Peacebuilding Trainer, and former peace educator at the [United States Institute of Peace](#), will be visiting Valencia August 23rd and 24th to speak about his new book, *Peacebuilding in Community Colleges: A Teaching Resource*, in which the Peace and Justice Initiative is featured in the appendix. Smith will also host a workshop with Valencia faculty members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**PJI Advisory Council
April 2013**



Thank you to our Advisory Council for offering support and expertise.

Want to follow the Peace and Justice Initiative more closely?

“Like” us on Facebook to get updates on news and announcements, events, pictures, and interesting information about our 13 Principles for How We Treat Each Other!



www.facebook.com/valenciapeaceandjustice

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the success of the Peace and Justice Initiative.

The Initiative would like to send a special thanks to Student Development, the Patricia Havill Whalen Endowed Chair, and private donors who contribute through the Valencia Foundation.



If you are interested in making a donation to the Peace and Justice Initiative, please contact the Valencia Foundation at <http://www.valencia.org/>.