



PEACE AND JUSTICE INITIATIVE

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1

All People. All Voices. All Matter.

VALENCIACOLLEGE

peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu
www.valenciacollege.edu/pji



COMMUNITY COMMITMENT TO CULTURE OF PEACE

By Patricia Ambinder
Peace and Justice Initiative, Advisory Council Chair

The artistry of the process of building a culture of peace is very vibrant through the Peace and Justice Initiative at Valencia College. The PJI recognizes that every individual has the potential to make a unique contribution to peace and justice shaped by their life experiences, understanding, and imagination.

From its foundational, Principles of How We Treat Other, to the peace curriculum and pedagogy; conversations on social issues; workshops; films and events during Global Peace Week; trainings; guest speakers; service learning opportunities; and continuing education, the PJI provides the tools for anyone to become a leader of socially inclusive excellence and innovation in their circle of influence and far beyond.

Valencia College values its partnership with the community in meeting student's needs and college goals and fosters the involvement of the College in meeting the community's needs and goals. The Valencia College Peace and Justice Initiative Advisory Council—comprised of Valencia faculty/staff and community leaders involved in government; religious affiliation; nonprofits; business; law enforcement; law; volunteerism; primary, secondary and higher education; and the arts—unites the strengths of both these objectives.

The Council offers members the opportunity to network with one another, and with students, faculty and staff at PJI events and programs, and foster new partnerships and collaborations.

Council members experience peace and justice practitioners and scholars from the field and explore many justice issues in a variety of academic settings on different campuses, and communal forums along with the students. For us seasoned community activists, student optimism and their passion for wanting to change the world for the better are invigorating.

This academic year, the Council had two business meetings. The fall meeting in September, 2014 was hosted at **Second Harvest Food Bank** by Council member Greg Higgerson, who spoke about the programs and services guided by the mission: to create hope and nourish lives through a powerful hunger relief network, while multiplying the generosity of a caring community, and vision: inspiring and engaging our community to end hunger. At the conclusion of the business meeting, members were invited to tour the facility.

In January, 2015 Council members were welcomed by member Aminah Hamidullah at her nonprofit **Knowledge For Living, Inc.** in Parramore. Members learned about the history of Parramore from Valencia Faculty member Bonnie Oliver and about redlining: the practice of marking a red line on a map to delineate an area where banks would not invest, generally because its residents were people of color or poor. Members Dr. Stacey Johnson, Allie Braswell, and Patricia Newton, spoke about their personal connection to Parramore and its promise with the establishment of the Creative Village; and Aminah's commitment to "educational and training programs that empower at risk youth, women and families to develop skills that will bring them closer to economic self-sufficiency."

In the fall of 2015, the Council meeting will be hosted at the **Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida** by member, Pam Kancher.

In addition to the meetings, Council members attend strategy sessions, provide service learning opportunities for students, and offer consultation to the PJI Coordinator and Council Chair. They are dedicated advisors, and ambassadors of the PJI mission.

The musician and activist, Bono says that "idealism detached from action is just a dream. But idealism allied with pragmatism, with rolling up your sleeves and making the world bend a bit is very exciting. It's very real. It's very strong."

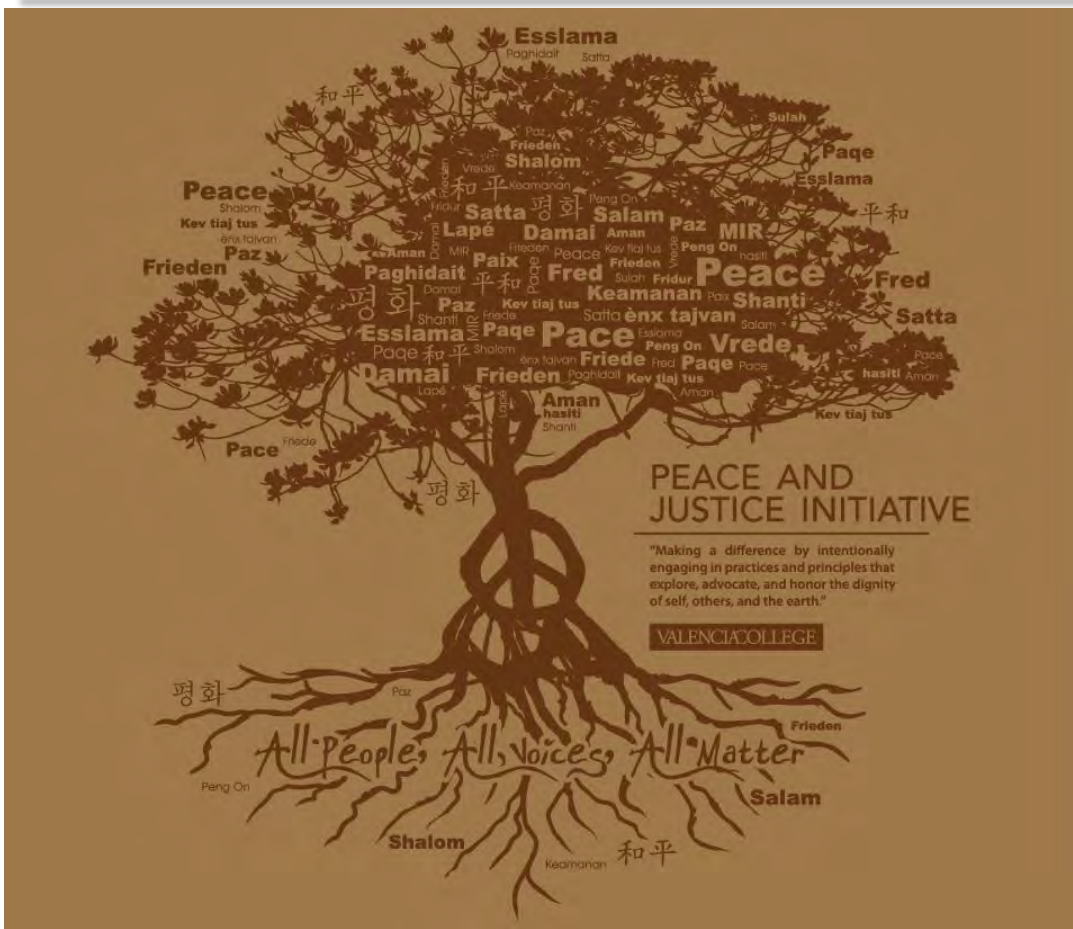
Under the remarkable leadership of Rachel Allen and given Valencia College's commitment to the PJI and community engagement, there are so many possibilities ahead to "bend the world a bit."

I am honored to serve as the Council Chair.

The Peace and Justice Initiative's Advisory Council members:

Patricia Ambinder, Council Chair

Rachel Allen
Susan Arkin
John Bersia
Allie Braswell
Sue Brown
Paul Chapman
Anna V. Eskamani
Ann Farrell
Sue Foreman
Bryan Fulwider
Aminah Hamidullah
Greg Higgerson
Stacey Johnson
Liz Jusino
Pam Kancher
Lauri Lott
James McDonald
Greg Meier
Cindy Moon
Muhammad Musri
Patricia Newton
LaFontaine E. Oliver
Krystal Pherai
Marli Porth
Paul Rooney
M.C. Santana
Resham Shirsat
Nina Striech
David Sutton
Andrew Thomas
Subhas Tiwari
Penny Villegas
Bickley Wilson



VALENCIA COLLEGE

Peace and Justice Initiative

[EMAIL](#)

[WEBSITE](#)

[FACEBOOK](#)

We extend a special thanks to all of our contributing writers.

Newsletter Editors:
Rachel Allen
Krystal Pherai

Cover and Back Page Design:
Ozelle Sabado

Featured Photographer:
[Willie J. Allen Jr.](#)

PJI 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.

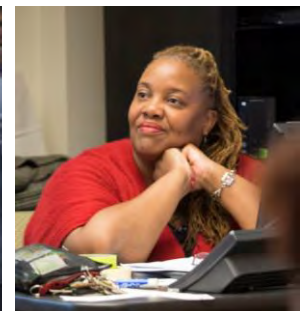
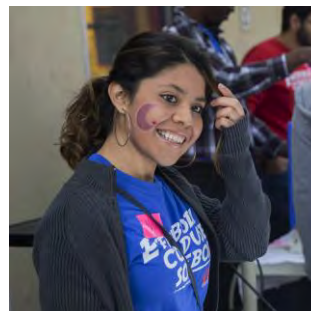


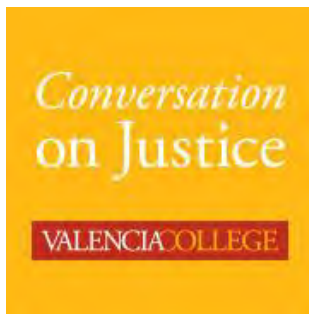
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Featured Events.....	3	Peace and Justice Studies Curriculum.....	22
Interfaith Understanding.....	12	Principles for How We Treat Each Other.....	26
Going Global.....	13	Peace and the Arts.....	28
Service and Civic Engagement.....	15	Faculty and Staff Focus.....	30
Peace and Justice Ambassadors.....	18	Announcements.....	33



EVENTS

Conversation on Justice East Campus Reflection



This semester, the annual Conversation on Justice expanded to reach the 5 Valencia College campuses! Covering many of today's hot-button issues - ranging from violence, immigration and economic inequality to food insecurity, race and sexual orientation - each

event, through the power of transformative stories, facilitated discussions, award-winning films, art projects and more, delved into critical conversations whose goal was to promote a culture of peace and understanding and mend the fabric of our humanity. Up to 2000 students, faculty, staff, and administrators across Valencia College experienced the Conversation on Justice, which opened with a beautiful ceremony at [Mead Gardens](#) led by friends of the Initiative, Iron Eagle and Two White Feathers.

To view the schedule of events for the January 2015 *Conversation on Justice*, [click here](#).



Exploring LGBTQI issues

By Rebecca Nash
Peace and Justice Ambassador
2015 Valencia Alumni Association
Mary S. Collier Distinguished Graduate

In the last week of January, the Peace and Justice Initiative hosted our annual Conversation on Justice, a week-long event designed to explore various justice issues our communities face. The week was divided into topics, each day with a different theme. The topics consisted of Gender, Silenced Histories, Sexual Orientation, and Race. Events were held all day, pertaining to one of the four topics, with a concluding ceremony on the fifth day.

As a student witnessing the Conversation on Justice, I must admit I was astounded. There was a certain rawness to everything that was spoken about, an honesty that is rare to find on a college campus, let alone in the world. Students and faculty were able to come together and speak about social justice issues that affect everyone, discussing not only the issue itself, but what could be done to change it. In the midst of such serious conversations and workshops, relief was provided through meditation, storytelling, and peaceful music led by friend of the Initiative and Apache Medicine Man, Iron Eagle. All of these events truly highlighted the aim of the Peace and Justice Initiative: to promote a culture of peace and understanding and to mend the fabric of our humanity.

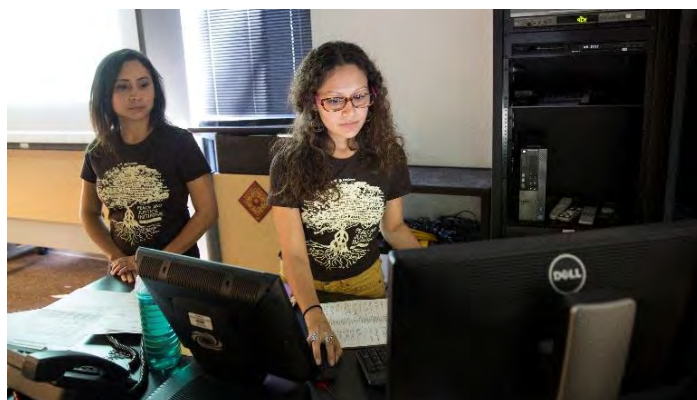
Beginning with the day of Gender, participants were asked to confront their ideas of gender and its effect in society. We were given a Native American perspective on gender and its constructs. Following that, Conversation Circles were held, including various local community

organizations, to facilitate an open discussion on the topic. We were also able to hear from Dr. Adrienne Trier-Bieniek, Professor of Sociology about of the effects of radical masculinity and it's link to violence.



Iron Eagle and Two White Feathers leading a workshop

One of the most unique events, in my opinion, was a workshop on gender stereotypes in the media, facilitated by two Valencia Alumni, Krystal Pherai and Linnette Bonilla. This stood out in my opinion because it was led by two young women who were peers to most of their audience. Student-led workshops were a repeated facet of the Conversation on Justice and they seemed to connect especially well with the audience on a personal level, as well as encouraged the facilitators in their academic endeavors and leadership capabilities.



Linnette Bonilla and Krystal Pherai during their workshop

The next day was entitled "Silenced Histories" and focused on the justice topics that have been forcibly silenced for various reasons. As the day fell on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, naturally several events centered on this topic. We heard from Mitch Bloomer of the [Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida](#) on the lesser-known history of Auschwitz, as well as watched a documentary on the debated "Soap Myth." A workshop on Japanese

Internment Camps led by Valencia professor Aby Boumarate exposed this silent piece of American history.



Mitch Bloomer of the Holocaust Center

I would be remiss if I did not mention my own workshop on the American silencing of Africa. Throughout the entirety of my Valencia career, this experience had one of the most profound influences on my growth as a scholar. Being able to stand in front of my peers, mentors, and faculty to speak about a subject I have devoted my life to is an experience that was only possible through the Peace and Justice Initiative. This is where I believe the strength of the Initiative lies: in its empowerment of its students.



Rebecca with her mentor in genocide studies, Dr. Michael Savage, before her presentation on the silencing of Africa

To continue on, following this day we examined Sexual Orientation. We got to participate in a workshop examining the issues facing the transgender community and how to be an effective ally. Additionally, we had a special presentation about LGBT in the Humanities for which we received excellent feedback. We also had some wonderful conversations regarding sexual orientation and expression with several groups from the Orlando area.



Equality Florida visited Valencia during Sexual Orientation day

The last day of study focused on Race. This seemed to be one of the more tense days, as it is a subject that everyone has an opinion about. Also, race relations have been widely publicized due to the frequent police murders of young black men. This day allowed for a large amount of discussion between faculty and students, forcing them to confront unearned privileges. We had workshops facilitated by the [Dream Defenders](#), Professor Hank Van Putten, Dr. Bonnie Oliver, and Dr. Yasmeen Qadri, that explored the issue further, delving into the reasons race relations are what they are today.



Professor Hank Van Putten led a student panel discussion on race relations

The Conversation on Justice, hosted by the Peace and Justice Initiative, allowed for the expression and discussion of various social justice issues in a safe environment. It was a moving experience to be a part of, as each participant opened up and shared their story, making the experience much more enlightening and personal. It is for this reason that the Peace and Justice Initiative received a Student Government Association award for the Best Program of the Year, because not only did it provide scholarly opportunities for all involved, it facilitated a culture of peace and nonviolence in our community.

Moments from the Conversation on Justice



Apache Medicine Man Iron Eagle drums at the opening ceremony at Mead Gardens



Iron Eagle leading the group through Mead Gardens while playing beautiful, healing Native American music for the Conversation on Justice opening ceremony



Listening deeply



Rachel Luce-Hitt, Coordinator of Inclusive Excellence



Professor Nicole Valentino talking with students



Students learning about [Valencia Future Educators \(VFE\)](#)



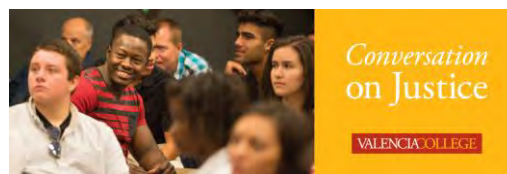
Carol Davis from the [League of Women Voters](#)



Sharing personal story as part of the transformation process



Professor Linda Goddard voices her truth





Closing ceremony with Iron Eagle and Two White Feathers



PJI Coordinator, Rachel Allen enjoying the closing ceremony



Ambassador Wymise Clerzeau relaxing during the ceremony

Water Has Its Own Memory

By Cate McGowan
Professor of English



Apache medicine man drum head

Today, I sit in a classroom with a Chiricahua Apache medicine man. The man introduces himself as Iron Eagle. He tells us to sit in a circle. According to him, everything is a circle, linked. He jabs his short finger at his hand-held drum: “These four sections on my round drum represent my beliefs. All connected.”



Iron Eagle, Chiricahua Apache medicine man

His face is a weathered surface; there are etched gullies for cheeks that mark the path of years. He holds up his drum, pointing to the four painted sections on the instrument’s skin. They are divided by a cross; each section is its own color. Yellow, red, black, white. Fire, water, earth, air. North, south, east, west.

Iron Eagle explains fire and sun and sky and his tribe’s animal totems, how we are one family.

My mind wanders to my own totems. When Iron Eagle makes his way to the water section on his drum’s wheel, I start thinking about the ponds and lakes I’ve visited and paddled across.

He says, “Water has its own memory.”



Yes, yes. I think how water seeks its own level; it's Pascal's principle, whereby pressure is uniformly transmitted throughout a liquid. The pressure at the surface of the water is air. Gravity, the weight of the water, force, pressure; scientific laws I vaguely recall.



Iron Eagle and Two White Feathers lead the closing ceremony

My mind drifts as I keep a half-ear on Iron Eagle's ideas of how we are connected to the earth and air. I think of water in tubes and plumbing. It pushes through pipes back up to a surface level. And then I remember that experiment we did when I was a kid: there were four disparate vertical tubes connected to one another, yet the water rose identically in all of them.

I travel deeper into my memories. I see my father's tools in the carport, the levels he used to ensure straight installation of the shelves or paintings he hung. Those levels were long metallic sticks with glass insert tubes scoring the middle, bubbling with a green liquid, a meniscus visible between the black indicator lines. Once that meniscus centered, the object a levels were placed upon was "true" as my father said. That sounded better than "right" to me. There is truth in the term "true."

"We are all composed of water," Iron Eagle reminds us. I am more than half water; I seek my own level.

The world is full of metaphors. No, the world is a metaphor. This is all a dream.

I wonder at my meandering mind. Water knows where to go. We encounter it in different stages of its being, but those encounters are so brief compared to water's full journey. It flows down into the earth. If I go to the tap and turn it on, I only see a snippet of the water's existence. It travels through pipes, over hundreds of miles; it reaches my home when I need it. It streams through PEX pipes above my head in the attic, down into the kitchen faucet; it's a steady stream that I can filter between my fingers.

The miracle of water swirls around and down the drain and disappears back to the ground. It is here for only that one moment. Its history and future are vast, but its moment of now is so miniscule. That is the moment I use it, need it. It has come to me.

Iron Eagle commences to pound his drum. He asks us to close our eyes. He pounds out a heartbeat. *Bum-ba-bum, bum-ba-bum*. The sound flashes inside my closed eyelids, thrumming to my own heartbeat.

My daydreams grow thick now, and I can taste sweet rain. My tongue's a divining rod for precipitation, a weather measure. I sense two crows flapping down onto a limb of the only tree outside. The limbs knock, knock, knock. The crows cawk with the rhythm of the drum. *Ba-bum, ba bum bum*.

I see the earth though my eyes are closed. In my mind's eye, I watch a bud bubble out from Iron Eagle's chest; I reach out to touch him. He opens his hand like a blossom, and his light tumbles, tating patterns like lace onto my palm. The bud blossoms and spills over our circle of people; it weaves itself into the threads of our flesh. I think I hear someone whisper a secret, so I turn my head.

Iron Eagle sings. "Light. Our hearts." My eyes are still latched shut. I do not unhinge my eyes.

Behind my lids, I watch a puddle of water trickle deep into the soil of the college, filling it, down deeper through the concrete foundations. Now a large torrent wraps around two buxom plateaus, gushing below clay mountains; the water streams through the sacredness of animal and plant remains, of humans who have been dead for



thousands of years; it torrents past phantoms of decayed, forgotten scribes, farther down into deep musky, seminal soil, then into and through bedrock. The water courses into the earth's molten core, cooling it, steaming, and then, as it reaches this end, the water transforms into a mist, then twists and turns around. The vapor rises swiftly and comes back to us. It winds around and around all of us, wrapping us in a white net of oneness. We are one.

The world is a metaphor. This is all a dream. Now Iron Eagle begins to play his flute, a furtive song that brings me back to the circle.

This article first appeared in [Jigs: A Blog](#), Professor Cate McGowan's personal blog.

CONVERSATIONS ON RACE



Conversations on Race and Privilege began in the fall of 2014 across all campuses and within the community in response to national events and the emerging crisis around race relations in the United States. Acknowledging that we are not past racism, but are socialized to pretend to be colorblind, these conversations aim to create a safe space for authentic dialogue about our experiences of privilege, race and racism to increase understanding and work toward positive change. Hundreds of students, faculty, staff and community members have participated in these conversations to date – and the work continues.

American Denial: Facing Race Relations February 23, 2015

By Rudy Darden
Professor of English

As a Valencia employee, my day to day activities put me in direct contact with students. For those of us not in direct contact with students, we often work closely with others who are not of the same racial, cultural, gender or ability group as ourselves. Because of this close engagement with students and peers from diverse groups, Valencia, through the Peace and Justice Initiative (PJI), works diligently to create environments where we can discuss our personal attitudes and behaviors toward diverse people groups. An example of Valencia’s intentionality in this effort is evident through the series known as Conversations on Race.

Before the civil unrest seen in Baltimore as a result of the death of Freddie Gray and the shooting of Walter Scott by a South Carolina police officer, Valencia College through the PJI, discussed the future implications and consequences of not having an honest, open, and transparent conversation on race. Conversations on Race

These initial conversations highlighted and forewarned the public about the types of unspoken racial and cultural disparities present in American society.

On February 23rd, Valencia’s West Campus held a movie night and discussion event for students, staff, and the community as an extension to the Conversations on Race series. The special premier of the documentary, [American Denial](#) was made possible through the partnership between Valencia College and the [Global Peace and Film Festival](#). The discussion was led by 104.5 radio personality DJ D-Strong and me. Former Valencia Journalism Professor, Ken Carpenter and Valencia West Campus Writing Center director, Michael Winter participated in the panel discussion.



RUDY DARDEN
Discussion Leader

COMMUNITY CINEMA
FREE FILM SCREENINGS

American Denial
The truth is deeper than black

DJ D-STRONG

A film by Llewellyn Smith, Christine Hertler-Sommers, and Kelly Thomson
In the wake of recent events that have sparked a national dialogue on race dynamics, *American Denial* explores the impact of unspoken issues around race and class, using Barack Obama's 2008 inauguration as a case study.

For more information on this Community Cinema preview screening starting in February, visit [pji.org/valencia-american-denial](#) or contact PJI at 408 West Colonial Drive, Valencia, FL 34787, Monday, February 23, at 9:00.

VALENCIA COLLEGE

FREE SCREENING!
Monday, Feb. 23, 6-8:30 p.m.
West Campus, HSB 105

Sponsor Support from Sam's Club
7010 West Colonial Drive

GLOBAL PEACE FILM FESTIVAL

The theme of the movie focused on unconscious biases that all people possess, which govern much of their actions, thoughts, and ideas about entire people groups. Nearly 180 people attended the event and once the movie concluded, the panel shared their experiences of addressing some of their unconscious biases. Students, faculty and community members also shared their feedback of the documentary in peer groups, utilizing a common strategy within PJI known as serial testimony.



Professor Rudy Darden engaging the audience

After the event, attendees highlighted the need for continued discussions on campus, not knowing that there would be critical events in the near future that would speak to the very same unconscious biases discussed that night. The Conversations on Race series offers participants opportunities to make sense of the discourse and rhetoric often polarized by the media in a structured manner. The content discussed in the series also is most effective when all people groups are represented. Please make a point to attend the next Conversations on Race series event. If you would like to be a part of facilitating or developing the structure and content for a future discussion, please contact Rachel Allen or Krystal Pherai at peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu.

Privilege and Race Workshop at UCF March 5, 2015

Members of the Initiative were invited to facilitate a Conversations on Race and Privilege at the [University of Central Florida](http://www.ucf.edu) by Director of the [Center for Law and Policy](http://www.ucf.edu), Cindy Schmidt. The workshop was held in partnership with Associate Professor of the School of Social Work, Olga Molina's class.



Workshop facilitators with Professor Molina's students

PJI Presents Workshops at 10th Annual Mayor Buddy Dyer's Neighborhood and Community Summit March 21, 2015



Mollie McLaughlin, Hank Van Putten, Mayor Buddy Dyer, Rachel Allen and Melissa Sierra

Professors Mollie McLaughlin (speech) and Melissa Sierra (sociology) facilitated a lively and engaging conversation among the 25 participants at the [Mayor's Neighborhood and Community Summit](http://www.valenciacollege.edu) on March 21, 2015. During their workshop titled, "All People. All Voices. All Matter: Principles for Respect and Nonviolence," there was vibrant energy in the room when reading aloud and discussing the Principles for How We Treat Each Other. A palpable excitement was felt when participants shared the principle they found most valuable and pondered aloud how these principles and practices could be instructive in their lives.



Mollie, who uses the Principles in her communication courses at the College noted, "The Principles give us a different way to speak and listen and a capacity to grow in our ability to engage in positive conflict."

While discussing the natural human conflict that we all face in our daily lives, not only at work and in our neighborhoods, but in our homes as well, participants shared how challenging it can be to practice these principles — especially the skill of asking an open, honest question. They agreed that making these practices an everyday part of our lives is important.

Melissa began working with the Peace and Justice Initiative this year and is new to workshop facilitation. Had you seen her in action, you would imagine that she was a veteran facilitator with participants laughing and reflecting deeply on how they engage in conflict.

Tabitha Newton, from the City of Orlando’s Office of Community Affairs and Human Resources, had a positive response to using the Principles for conflict engagement saying, “Conflict is a frown for me — but these Principles turn the frown to a smile.”

Later that same day at the Conversations on Race workshop led by Hank Van Putten, professor, student life skills, and Rachel Allen, we invited participants to discuss the topic of race and how it affects each of us in our daily lives as we consider action steps to help us move forward together toward more equitable communities. The workshop strengthens interpersonal relationships through the sharing of personal stories and experiences and developing trust and sensitivity among people who might otherwise not interact with one another.



Recognizing that unconscious bias can be overcome by cross-cultural communication, Conversations on Race creates safe spaces for authentic dialogue about our experiences of race and the impact of racism, examining cultural and systematic structures to increase understanding and positive change within our community.

Community members, using the [Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity \(SEED\)](#) strategy of serial testimony, shared stories with one another about observing a racial injustice, being the victim of a racial injustice and what each would like to see as the next conversation piece in this ongoing discourse in the community.

Participants expressed that they had been inspired “to keep the conversation going” after the workshop which they found to be “intriguing,” “hopeful,” “informational” and “profound.”

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

Conversations on Race Allow Participants to Speak Up and Out May 27, 2015



Orlando Police Officers, Valencia students and community members participate in the conversation

Principles for How We Treat Each Other: Building a community of respect and nonviolence served as the foundation and framework for Peace and Justice Initiative’s (PJI) Conversations on Race held on Wednesday, May 27, 2015, at East Campus.

PJI members Rachel Allen, professor of humanities and PJI coordinator; Hank Van Putten, professor, student life skills; Mollie McLaughlin, professor of speech; and Melissa Sierra, professor of sociology, served as facilitators as they convened Valencia faculty, staff and students along with members of the Orlando Police Department, City of Orlando, League of Women Voters and the city’s Interfaith Council to discuss topics of race and [unearned privilege](#).

Allie Braswell, PJI Advisory Council Member, charged attendees to “loosen the guard and engage in true dialogue.”



Participants learn a powerful lesson about privilege

There were two ground rules for the three-hour session: the dialogue was to be a conversation, not a confrontation, and it was important to consider the cultural

INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING

Peace Breakfast: An Interfaith Gathering March 23, 2015

narrative that in the U.S., everyone has equal opportunities and that success is achieved through hard work and talent. Nevertheless, an exercise served to demonstrate that not all opportunity and access is truly equal and sharing and hearing peoples' stories is essential.

"We believe that the story is transformational," said Rachel, "and there is the scholarship on the shelf and the scholarship of the self. PJI creates safe spaces to explore the scholarship of the self," as she explained the ways that our lives and our stories can shift the consciousness for others.



Rachel Allen discusses the process with the group

True to form, the transparency of the shared stories was riveting.

After a "privilege quotient exercise," which served to ease barriers, each of the 14 table groups of four participants, shared serial testimonies and cross-talk, strategies that provide each person an opportunity to say his or her feelings, thoughts, reflections, and then ask questions in timed sequences.

As the conversation drew to a close, several participants shared that they were encouraged to speak up and out and wanted to continue to educate themselves and others on this very salient topic.

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

CONVERSATIONS ON RACE



Members of the Initiative with our Peace Breakfast guests

Valencia College Professor Emeritus of Peace Studies, Penny Villegas led our Peace Breakfast: An Interfaith Gathering with our invited guests, Reverend Kathy Schmitz of the [First Unitarian Church of Orlando](#) and Sally Hassanali, Board Member of the [United Muslim Foundation](#). The Peace Breakfast is held bi-annually to foster positive interfaith dialogue, celebrate and promote religious and cultural diversity, and to slow down and pause for fellowship, prayer and meditation.

Two students reflected on the breakfast:

I attended this event because we had gone to one of the other PJI events and I felt really positive afterwards. This one was no different. It also didn't hurt that there was breakfast. There were a couple of moments I left with; one was Penny. I really was drawn to her soul and energy. It was very warm and inviting; very positive. She is one of those people who make you feel better for just being in their presence. Also, I somehow ended up dancing.

I find myself struggling with finding my inner peace. I've been to a number of workshops provided by the PJI and I knew that this one would benefit me just like the rest have. One memorable thing I was able to take away was that we have to stop sometimes and just find our peace before trying to find peace with others.

GOING GLOBAL

Sister School with Kenya Institute



When Rachel Allen met Ruth Nalyanya at [Eastern Mennonite University's Summer Peacebuilding Institute](#) in May of 2014, she could not have known that this encounter would lead to a developing partnership with a sister institute in Kenya, the [Rift Valley Technical Training Institute \(RVTTI\)](#) in the city of Eldoret. Upon hearing about the work of the PJI at Valencia College, Ruth expressed a desire to create the PJI at her Institute and took it upon herself to get the work started.

Ruth returned to RVTTI, met with campus leaders, garnered their support, and began the work. The vision for RVTTI began with a Peace Choir and incorporation of the Principles for How We Treat Each Other into the emerging peace club and student affairs activities.

choir and impacted the elections of student leadership at the institute, for the first time seeing representation from multiple tribes at the school versus representation solely from the majority group. She has encouraged personal growth in her students through the Principles for How We Treat Each Other, as well.

When the tragedy of the terrorist attack in Kenya occurred at Garissa University College in the town of Garissa in April, Professor Nalyanya was called to lead as a peace builder among her community and the nation, as members of her community were directly impacted by the loss of young people at the University. Professor Nalyanya is a beacon of light for her school and for her community and the PJI is proud to partner with her and RVTTI.



Professor Ruth Nalyanya offers an opening prayer during the graduation ceremony.



The RVTTI Peace Choir entertains guests during the graduation ceremony

As we face issues of racial divisions leading to violence in the U.S., according to Professor Ruth Nalyanya, the need in Kenya is for strengthened communication between the 42 diverse tribal groups represented at the school. Developing the Culture of Peace and teaching skillful conflict engagement are critical to the Institute's success.

In one year, guided by her wisdom, leadership and communication expertise, Professor Nalyanya, her students and colleagues established a peace club and

Over the last year, Rachel and Ruth have conversed via online channels and shared visions for peace work at their institutions. Although Kenya is far away in terms of distance, in spirit and work, RVTTI is a close sister and companion on our journey toward the Culture of Peace.



PJI and Saint Margaret Mary Church to Host Second Conference in Haiti August 2015



Fun during the 2014 Peace Conference in Jacmel, Haiti

This August 2015, members of the PJI, Rachel Allen, Willie Allen, Paul Chapman, and Eli Solis will travel to Jacmel, Haiti to host the second annual Peace Conference at the Jacmel Diocese. The conference, which holds the theme of "With Whom Will I Make Peace?" is a partnership with [St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church](#) and their leaders Sister Rosemary Finnegan and Ken Firling.



Whisley and Ken Firling discuss the Peace Conference

The focus of the conference is nonviolence and conflict transformation, working to make peace within oneself and among others.

As a result of last summer's conference, a peace commission made up of representatives from the region has been meeting throughout the year to organize and create structures for peacebuilding. Our goal is to support a sustainable program for peace education for the children and citizens of the region.



Konferans Lapé Jacmel 2015 Ak ki moun mwen pral fè lapè?



2015 Peace Conference logo, designed by Whitley Charles

Valencia Initiative for Microloans Bowls for Bank in Haiti April 18, 2015



The PJI began a partnership with [St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church](#) (SMM) in Winter Park to support their peace education program in Haiti. Strengthening this partnership between Valencia and SMM, the [Valencia Initiative for Microloans](#) (VIM), under the leadership of Dr. Edie Gaythwaite, made a commitment to support SMM's economic program and organized the *Bowling for Haiti* event to raise money for a community bank in [Haiti](#). The project is envisioned to give Valencia students an opportunity to make a direct economic impact on the lives of our Haitian neighbors and gain hands on knowledge and experience of the power of micro lending to change economic structures. Visit [Kiva](#) to join [Team Valencia](#) and make a donation.

SERVICE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Keep Guns Off Campus Rally March 6, 2015



During the height of HB 4005 / SB 176, legislation which would allow anyone with a concealed carry license to bring a gun anywhere on a college campus, Krystal Pherai, Staff Assistant of the Peace and Justice Initiative was invited to share a statement on behalf of the Initiative at a "Rally to Keep Guns Off

Campus" at the [University of Central Florida](#). Krystal voiced, "Our [the PJI] work is to teach nonviolence and skillful means of addressing the natural and inherent conflict that arises between humans...We believe that allowing people on campus with loaded handguns has the potential to escalate violent situations, create confusion among trained law-enforcement personnel, and increase the potential for accidental shootings and loss of life."

The rally was organized by the [UCF College Democrats](#) and featured statements of opposition toward the bills from several campus and community partners. After much work was done from campuses across Florida and the League of Women Voters, it was announced that the bills were not passed.

Pictured above: Krystal Pherai speaking on behalf of the PJI at the rally with fellow UCF students

Parade and Concert for Fair Food with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers March 21, 2015

By Christopher Cuevas
Assistive Tech Specialist, Student Disability Services
Co-Coordinator, Peace and Justice Ambassadors

This spring I was fortunate to participate in my first march with the [Coalition of Immokalee Workers \(CIW\)](#) as we [The Fair Food Nation] took to the streets of St. Petersburg, Florida as we rallied together to call on two of the largest food industry companies to join the [Fair Food Program](#), Publix and Wendy's. The Fair Food Program (FFP) calls on is [Participating Buyers](#) to make a commitment to pay a Fair Food Premium on top of the regular price they pay for tomatoes, this amounts to only one penny (\$0.01) more per pound of tomatoes

purchased. The FFP also calls on its Participating Buyers to suspend purchases from growers who fail to comply with the [Code of Conduct](#), which creates incentives for Participating Growers to abide by fair labor practices. As a result this additional penny per pound provides farmworkers with a higher wage, improved working conditions, opportunities to further their education, and the ability to report potential violations of the Code of Conduct with strict consequences against those who retaliate against workers who file reports.

This event brought together countless Fair Food activists from across the state of Florida and from across the entire country as we shared a common goal of addressing the violation of human rights in the fields. Joined by Krystal Pherai, Peace and Justice Initiative Staff Assistant and Co-Coordinator of the Peace and Justice Ambassadors, and two UCF Journalism students Sara Ashley and Jake Galvin, the four of us drove to St. Petersburg as we embarked on what would become a life changing experience.



Krystal Pherai, Sara Ashley, Jacob Galvin, and Chris Cuevas

Upon our arrival we were greeted by members of the CIW, the [Student Farmworkers Alliance \(SFA\)](#), and a variety of organizations that shared our dedication and commitment to this very important cause. There, in the heart of Downtown St. Pete our 3-mile journey began, as members from each of the participating organizations marched together to convey the message of the Fair Food Nation to the people of the city. Spirits ran high throughout the day as we made our way to Vinoy Park and the Concert for Fair Food.

The Concert for Fair Food, a first for the CIW, was set to begin and included a lineup of acts that brought a much needed second wind to many of the activists that were spent due to the harsh Southwest Florida weather. Son Solidario, a Latin rock group credited for being the soundtrack to the Fair Food movement, was first on the bill. They were followed by the CIW theater presentation's dramatization of the changes taking place thanks to the Fair Food Program in farms while also bringing attention

to the abuses still present on farms outside of the Program. The third act to grace the stage was Ruby Velle and the Soulphonics, whose earthy old-school '50s and '60s-style R&B moved an entire crowd and set the pace for the remainder of the evening.



Photo courtesy of ciw-online.org

Members of the Alliance for Fair Food and the Student Farmworkers Alliance took to the stage to launch a *national student boycott of Wendy's* citing [Wendy's recent decision to abandon the Florida tomato industry entirely and turn its back on the human rights advances under the Fair Food Program](#). With the boycott formally announced it was time to shift gears and bring to the stage the second headliner of the day La Santa Cecilia, a Grammy Award winning Latin group popular for infusing Pan-American rhythms from cumbia, bossa nova, rhumba, bolero, and tango and marrying them to rock, soul, R&B, ska, jazz, and klezmer. The group, who have made the fight for fair immigration policies the cornerstone of their music, were able to form an instant bond with the crowd as members of the audience began flooding the areas surrounding the stage, dancing away to the lively music performed by the Latin stars.

Though Publix and Wendy's have still refused to join the Fair Food Program I am confident that we were able to make a lasting impact on the people of St. Petersburg, FL and will continue to inspire thousands of individuals to call on these businesses to join the Fair Food Nation and remedy the violations of human rights on farms.

This year, the CIW has continued to spread its message nationwide earning the organization mass acclaim for the documentary film [Food Chains](#), which won the 2015 James Beard Award for Documentary Film, as well as earning accolades for their courageous anti-slavery efforts such as the 2015 Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts Combatting Modern-Day Slavery.



The Annual Spring Fling March 28, 2015



Bi-annually, the PJI partners with classes and clubs across Valencia College to host a party for the families in residence at the [Coalition for the Homeless](#). The goals of service are to positively impact another human being's life, to be exposed to societal inadequacies, to

become empowered to improve those inadequacies, to encounter cross-cultural experiences, to take on skills of responsibility and caring for others, and to gain self-confidence in the process of giving. This spring, a record number of 122 volunteers gathered to host the party! Valencia participants included the Gay Straight Alliance, HERO Club, Muslim Ambassadors of Peace, Peace and Justice Ambassadors, Phi Beta Lambda, Phi Theta Kappa, Seneff Honors College students, Valencia Future Educators, and Rachel Allen's *Intro to Humanities* classes.



Volunteers having fun with jump rope

**Sidewalk Chalk and Fish Face Paint:
What's Love Got To Do With It?**



By Annie Lottman
Journalism Student, UCF

“Love is an action. It’s NOT the emotional mush that you see in Hollywood movies. If you’re married or have made a commitment to someone, you know that it’s very possible to wake up and not even really like them sometimes.”

At the Coalition for the Homeless’ Spring Fling this morning, those words stayed with me. Not because it was major news, but because of the people I was surrounded by in the sunlit front yard of the Coalition. I may only be 20 years old and haven’t experienced love in the way Hollywood portrays it, but I know, without a doubt that I have loved and been loved today.



Valencia student Destiny Rawlins enjoying hula hooping

Love was drawing masterpieces with chalk on the sidewalk with a little boy who I’d just met and letting him wipe his messy hands on my pants. Love was scooping him up when he went down the slide over and over again.

Being loved was letting another volunteer practice face painting on me and ending up with a funny comic book-looking fish on my left cheek (which I received numerous compliments for, by the way). Being loved was another volunteer’s excitement to teach me how to do origami, one of her favorite hobbies. Love was tickling a 5-month old’s toes, hearing him giggle as he sat nestled in his stroller watching the hula hoop competition with big eyes. Love was meeting a new friend and listening to her as she opened up about her life’s ups and downs.



Fun with arts and crafts

That’s what needs to be part of our Peace and Justice Initiative: the decision to love. I know it may come across as cheesy but it’s still true. It can be very easy to love people who look just like you, and think the same way you do. It takes some spark for someone to love another person who is completely different than them. In conversation with a member of Valencia’s PJI, he said, “You have to have the right people. People who care.” Again, love is an active choice and one that we need to keep on the forefront of our minds as we lay the foundation for UCF’s chapter of the Peace and Justice Initiative.

This article first appeared in the [Millennials Writing for Social Change Blog](#).



Phi Theta Kappa President, Jarrett Fletcher playing with a “Pinwheel for Peace” he created at the Spring Fling

Professor Emeritus Works to Regain Voting Rights of Nonviolent Felons

PEACE AND JUSTICE AMBASSADORS



Yazan Saleh, Penny Villegas, Krystal Pherai, and Wymise Clerzeau Say Yes to Second Chances!

The Peace and Justice Ambassadors give back to the Valencia community and greater Orlando community by assisting the Peace and Justice Initiative with events, projects and activities. The mission of the Peace and Justice Ambassadors is *to cultivate student empowerment through activism and outreach that promotes nonviolence, compassion, and dignity for all creatures of the earth, while upholding and embodying the core principles of the Peace and Justice Initiative.*

Penny Villegas, founder of Peace Studies at Valencia College educated the Peace and Justice Ambassadors on [Florida's Voters Restoration Amendment](#), which aims to restore full voting rights to nonviolent felons, in accord with Americans' belief in second chances—that people should be able to earn forgiveness by completing the terms of their sentence. Florida is one of three states in the country that does not restore voting rights. The Peace and Justice Ambassadors are now trained to collect petitions and engage in the process of repairing a social injustice in our community and Penny Villegas has been collecting petitions at the East Campus.

Peace and Justice Ambassador, Becca Nash reflected on the amendment process, sharing, *"It felt very empowering to take a stand on such a hot-button issue such as this, and be able to reach out to the greater community to accomplish our goal of getting petitions signed...This experience enhanced my idea of being an active citizen in the world of politics, allowing me the opportunity to experience lobbying for a cause I believe in. It also enhanced my sense of responsibility when dealing with civil issues."*

PJI Intern and Ambassador Reflects

By Terrance Coakley
Valencia Graduate 2014
PJI Intern and Ambassador



I believe in the Golden Rule that says "do to others as you would have them do to you." I also believe in the old fashioned "take a chance and see where it takes you" method. I will admit, I'm not always the most open person, but I am always the most honest. All of

these attributes are the reasons as to why I joined the Peace and Justice Initiative.

It's been two years since Rachel Allen approached me in a humanities class that I was just taking because of the Gordon Rule requirements. I will never forget that it was during the Trayvon Martin trial and Professor Allen bravely held an open class discussion on a sensitive topic; a sensitive but necessary topic to discuss with the youth of my generation. After class she approached me and asked if I would I go to a Conflict Analysis Exercise about community relations and the police. I arrived underdressed and underprepared but the conversation is what kept me in the room the entire day. I felt like I belonged and contributed to the topic at hand and I'm still in the Peace and Justice Initiative two years later.





Terrance at the Conflict Analysis Exercise: Bridging the Gap: The Police and the Black Community held in 2013

I've held it dear to my heart that I could somehow change the miserable condition of the world through the PJI. Before joining the Initiative, I heard the phrase "everything happens for a reason" so much that I started to not believe it, only because it was not "happening" for me. But right now I sit in an office with two of the most intelligent and informative people that I never imagined I would work with on a professional level. What's "happening" right now may not have been in the *life goals game plan* but it was surely a game changer for me, and probably for the better in the fact that "everything does happen for a reason."

One of my favorite events I have been fortunate enough to be invited to is the ever so popular Fall Fest/Spring Fling at the [Coalition for the Homeless](#), in which every semester has been an opportunity to connect with the less fortunate children and give back and I'm so happy to spend time to do so.



Terrance and Krystal Pherai promoting the 2015 Conversation on Justice during Resource Fair at East Campus

Another personal favorite is the Conversation on Justice that's held every spring semester. It has a more serious undertone than that of the Coalition service projects, but

is very informative to those who don't know about the topics at hand, such as the LGBT community, Japanese internment camps, white privilege, etc., These are topics that need to be discussed in order to raise better students who will go into society and be your police officers, accountants, nurses, doctors, and teachers.

One of my favorite bible verses is:

"The path of the righteous man is beset on all sides by the iniquities of the selfish and the tyranny of evil men. Blessed is he who, in the name of charity and good will, shepherds the weak through the valley of darkness, for he is truly his brother's keeper and the finder of lost children..." -Ezekiel 25:17

The above quote defines why I took this internship, it was to learn and grow as a person because I am my brother's keeper and I will try my best no matter what color or creed to lead anyone through the valley of darkness into the light, not only during the internship but for the rest of my life.

To future Peace and Justice Ambassadors who I may or may not meet, I say, have patience. It all doesn't happen in the snap of a finger; little do you know or think, but you are the finder of lost children in this work.

To the Peace and Justice Initiative, I say thank you for awakening in me the fact that I do want to change the world for me and others alike. Thank you to Rachel Allen and Krystal Pherai for everything you've done and taught me. Thank you to all of the past Peace and Justice members who came before me and those who helped me become a better person.

I want to say a special thank you to Ms. Eli Solis because without you I don't know if I would have hung around for so long; your love is a gift and your kindness an art.



And a special note to myself and anyone: you will define who you are, no one else will. The air in your lungs is not a mistake; your creativity will never be in remission. You can do much more than that, never define your limits, and always defy the negatives that you come across. Stay blessed, one love.

Pictured above: Yazan Saleh, Stephanie Arredondo, Eli Solis, Heather Walker, and Terrance Coakley

**Earth Day Trash Talk
April 9, 2015**



The East Campus Earth Day event, coordinated by the [Valencia Earth Studies Association \(VESA\)](#), inspired the Peace and Justice Ambassadors to bring out our “Conversation Pool” to talk trash! Students were invited to sit in the pool to discuss and answer questions written on

colorful balloons related to littering and the earth. Earth Day is April 22nd of every year.



Terrance Coakley facilitating the student discussion on littering



Peace and Justice Ambassador Mingli You helps students answer questions including, “What do you do when you see someone litter?” and “Do you feel a personal responsibility to keep the campus clean?”

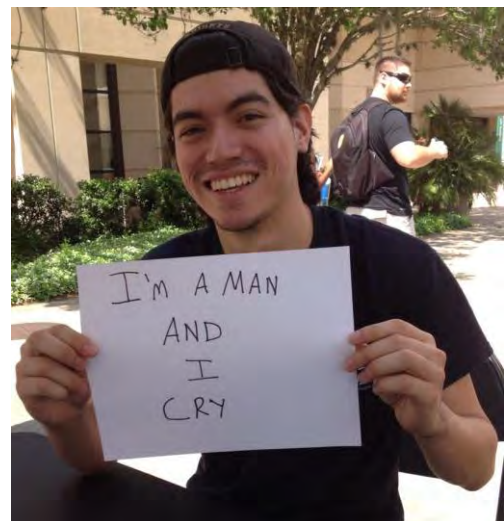
**LGBT Awareness Day
April 14, 2015**



The Peace and Justice Ambassadors participated in the [Valencia East Gay-Straight Alliance's](#) LGBT Awareness Day by encouraging the Valencia community to defy stereotypes of all kinds. The goal of the activity was to connect with one another by revealing that each of us, no

matter our sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or ability, experience negative stereotypes, but together, we can turn them into positive messages.

Thank you to the East Campus Film Club for helping with the activity and to Ryan Wiley for photographing.



Peace and Justice Ambassador Alex Vazquez's sign reads, “I’m a man and I cry” in an effort to break down the stereotype that says men should not be sensitive.



One student exclaims, “I am straight and I support the LGBT community!” while another celebrates, “I’m 45 and an Honor College Student as well as an Honors Society Officer.”

PJI Ambassador Named 2015 Mary Smedley Collier Distinguished Graduate



East Campus student Rebecca Nash has been named the 2015 Valencia Alumni Association Mary S. Collier Distinguished Graduate. Rebecca says that Valencia has facilitated her growth as a scholar and as a person by encouraging her to pursue her passions.

Namely, Rebecca has been focused on a capstone research project entitled, “Out of Africa: Between the Rwandan Genocide and Conflict in the Congo,” for the past year that examines the in-depth the social, cultural and political factors that led to genocide and spread into the Congo.

Her experience has also expanded to leading discussions for the Peace and Justice Initiative, and she also served as a moderator for a panel discussion for the Student Research Community Forum.

Said Rebecca, “I grew up in a culturally conflicted home; my mother is an English/Irish Episcopalian, my father a Russian Jew. Throughout my childhood, it seemed as if the Holocaust was a bonding tool for my family, facilitating my desire to know the reasons for evil in the world and how it could be prevented.” Rebecca taught herself how to research and write in order to fuel her obsession, preferring self-education to institutionalized schooling. “This planted a seed of desire to stop human rights abuses in me, something I have carried to this day,” she said.

As Rebecca was finishing up her junior year of high school, her father became ill. Unable to work due to frequent hospitalization, the family lost the income of the chief breadwinner in the home. While her mother did her best, it was not enough, so Rebecca dropped out of school to work full time to support her family, saving what little she could.

“At the same time, I became a crisis counselor for

survivors of human trafficking. These girls became my inspiration for a career as a genocide analyst for the United Nations, specializing in gendercide and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where most of my girls were from. I then began reaching out further within the community, becoming a counselor for Sunserve, an LGBT youth group in South Florida,” Rebecca said.

By the time her father recovered, hospital bills had eaten up her parents’ savings, making college a distant dream financially. However, she completed a GED and received an honors high school diploma. With student loans, Rebecca continued to put herself through school for the last two years without familial assistance, earning a 4.0 GPA, and gaining admission into the Seneff Honors College as an Undergraduate Research Track student.

Rebecca is currently the vice president of scholarship for the Alpha Gamma Omega chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, double-majoring in genocidal studies and cultural anthropology while minoring in international politics. She is also a Peace Ambassador for the Peace and Justice Initiative, assisting in the implementation of nonviolent programming and curricula.

Through Valencia, she has been able to help spearhead projects like Operation Coalition, the largest clothing drive for the homeless that has been done in Valencia’s history. She founded, “A Walk in Their Shoes,” a nonviolent demonstration to raise awareness of the homeless population and the largest community event that a Valencia student organization has ever attempted. Additionally, she has volunteered at the Coalition for the Homeless, Harbor House and Relay for Life since beginning her career at Valencia.

“Rebecca is an outstanding student and person,” said Professor of History Michael Savage. “She adds considerable value to the academic community and that includes members of the teaching faculty. Her commitment and engagement to learning is of the caliber I normally expected of my doctoral students.” Michael predicts that Rebecca will make a significant contribution to the future of academia in the world.

“As she balances her keen intellectual prowess with her refined emotional intelligence, Rebecca promises to have an incredible career ahead of her,” said Diana Ciesko, professor of psychology. “She has proven her ability to overcome obstacles and stay positive in the face of challenges. She inspires others, offers friendship to her peers and serves the campus in multiple capacities with grace and humility.”

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



PEACE AND JUSTICE STUDIES CURRICULUM

Peace and Justice Studies Courses at Valencia

CCJ 2930: Peace, Conflict and the Police
 EDG: 2935: Promoting the Culture of Peace
 ENC 1102: Freshman Composition II: Perspectives on War, Philosophies of Peace
 HUM 2930: Conflict Transformation: Paths to Peace
 LIT 2174: Multimedia Literature and the Holocaust
 PAX 1000: Introduction to Peace Studies
 PSY 2930: Psychology of Peace
 PSY 2930: Positive Psychology
 SLS 2940: Peace and Justice Ambassadors: Service Learning
 SLS 2940: PJI Service Learning Internship
 WOH 2003: A History of Genocide

For course descriptions, please visit this [link](#).

Introduction to Peace Studies Offered on Campus and Online

Professors Paul Chapman (Osceola), AJ Quackenbush (East), and Cade Resnick (Online) will teach PAX 1000: Introduction to Peace Studies this fall 2015. We would like to send a special welcome to Professor Quackenbush, our newest PAX professor.

Peace and Justice Libguide



The [Peace and Justice Resource Guide](#) will assist users in locating information on the key issues surrounding peace and justice. It highlights the Peace and Social Justice Collection at East Campus, new materials including books and e-books at all campuses, electronic resources, databases, journals, and links to other relevant information. This guide is not intended to be comprehensive, but highlights some of the useful resources as a starting point for inquiry into this interdisciplinary field of study. Please contact [Ruth Smith](#), West Campus Library Director, or a reference librarian when seeking additional information to meet your research needs.

PEACE STUDIES

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." ~Nelson Mandela

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

Register for Introduction to Peace Studies PAX 1000 for Fall 2015

Osceola	M/W	10:30-11:45 AM	CRN 18211
East	T/R	2:30-3:45 PM	CRN 17575
Online			CRN 18211

For more information, contact the Peace and Justice Office at 407-582-2291 or send an email to peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu.

Please contact peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu with any questions about Peace Studies.

Hunting for Happiness: Positive Psychology Students Take Action

By Linda Freeman, PhD, LMHC, CAP
Professor of Psychology



Over the past decade, Positive Psychology has been drawing in the attention of both academicians and researchers for its unique and fresh approach to life. Often called, the “Science of Happiness,” Positive Psychology is leading the way in its discoveries of what creates long-lasting joy. Among the many theories that are purported to cultivate happiness, one stands clear. When we engage in activities out of a sense of personal enrichment rather work in pursuit of money, fame or fortune, our happiness quotient increases. One such activity that Positive Psychology students are tasked with involves altruism.

Altruism is best defined as “doing good for no good reason.” You can spot an altruistic act when someone engages in an activity purely for the benefit of another person. One of the forces driving us to engage in altruistic acts is empathy. For example, consider the following story:

A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the 4 pups and set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of a little boy.

"Mister," he said, "I want to buy one of your puppies." "Well," said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck, "These puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money." The boy dropped his head for a moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer. "I've got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?" "Sure," said the farmer. And with that he let out a

whistle. "Here, Dolly!" he called.

Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur. The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight. As the dogs made their way to the fence, the little boy noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse. Slowly another little ball appeared, this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a somewhat awkward manner, the little pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up.

"I want that one," the little boy said, pointing to the runt. The farmer knelt down at the boy's side and said, "Son, you don't want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would." With that the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe. Looking back up at the farmer, he said, "You see sir, I don't run too well myself, and he will need someone who understands."

When we understand another's emotions, we are drawn to reduce suffering. This is empathy. Our ability to resonate with the emotions of others is part of our neural-wiring and provides humans with an extraordinary ability to reach out and help one another in an effort to reduce distress. During the course of the semester, students are introduced to the value and art of altruism through engaging in 3 random acts of kindness. The key to this exercise is to surprise people by doing them a favor they were not expecting. The value of this exercise is illuminated as students begin to reflect on the meaning of lending a helpful hand.

Since launching the Positive Psychology curriculum, Valencia students have taken active steps in their “hunt for happiness.” Read on to find out how our students are actively shaping a culture of giving for the sake of another.

At my apartment's laundry room, all the dryers were full. I was waiting to dry my clothes and noticed one dryer was silent. I opened it and noticed all the clothes inside were dry. Instead of just throwing the clothes on top of the washer (which is what most people do) I decided to neatly fold them and place them in the basket on top of the dryer (Clayton Masters, 2015).

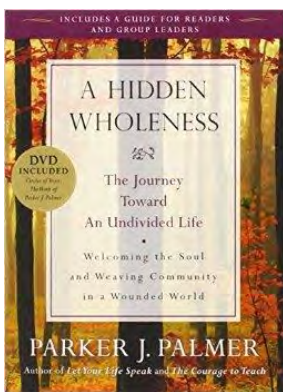
On my drive home from Monkey Joes, there was an elderly man standing next to his car, on the phone on the side of Semoran. As I passed him I realized that he had a flat tire, so I made a U-Turn to help out. I was able to push the man's car into a parking lot and change his tire. I was with my kids, and my young daughter leaned over and

asked me, “Why are we helping this man?” I told her because when you do good things for others, it makes you feel real good inside.” (Eric Solberg, 2015).

I decided to initiate five random acts of kindness, which came about by a feeling of gratitude I have for those around me. My first act was surprising a friend with an annual pass to Wet and Wild. The second act was surprising my co-workers by bringing pizza to work. Next, I gave my favorite teacher at Valencia a rose and followed this act with buying 10 print cards for Valencia students and placing them on the front desk with a sign that said, “Free print cards.” Afterwards, I went around campus and taped dollars and quarters on the vending machines along with a sign that said, “Your next purchase is on me!” (Sara Reim, 2015).

Since launching Positive Psychology in the fall of 2012, students have designed and engaged in over 100 projects oriented towards altruism that have positively impacted the community. As students continue to experience the course, it is my hope a culture of sharing and understanding along with interpersonal sensitivity will achieve increased momentum. In reflecting upon the continual eruption of conflict and violence, the need to teach the role of altruism and empathy as human needs and values deserves educational priority.

**The Journey Toward An Undivided Life:
Peace and Justice Faculty and Staff Retreat
February 27-28, 2015**



A leader’s first work, her most important and enduring work, is her interior work.

–Dr. Sanford Shugart
President of Valencia College

The annual Faculty and Staff Spring Retreat highlights a core value of the PJI: reflective practice. Guided by the belief that, “We teach who we are,”

([Parker Palmer](#)) and recognizing that every employee at Valencia acts as a teacher in some capacity, the value of coming together in retreat to do the “interior work” is critical to our mission. This year, Elaine Sullivan from the [Center for Renewal and Wholeness in Higher Education](#) returned for the 10th year in a row to guide our work. The retreat was a beautiful and meaningful experience for everyone involved, creating lasting bonds and meaningful insights into our personal and professional lives.

Peace and Justice Faculty Curriculum

Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.
– Parker J. Palmer

The Peace and Justice Initiative at Valencia College promotes peace and justice for all. Our aim is to nurture an inclusive, caring and respectful environment on campus and within our community--one where conflict leads to growth and transformation, rather than violence or aggression. Faculty members who wish to integrate practices promoting these values into their classrooms are encouraged to engage in faculty development courses with the Peace and Justice Curriculum.

Principles of Peace and Justice Pedagogy

- Places collaborative relationship as central to the work, focusing on the culture of collaboration
- Encourages a reflective practice to support meaning and purpose (mindfulness practice, emotional intelligence)
- Addresses conflict as a source and opportunity for growth and transformation
- Uses the tools of dialogue, discussion and conversation (introduces the Principles for How We Treat Each Other) in the classroom
- Supports an inclusive community in which all voices are heard and valued; engages in the exploration of the “other” with an acknowledgement of our inherent interdependence
- Recognizes that there can be no peace without justice for all

Course Offerings for the 2015-2016 Academic Year

- **INDV7311 Creating a Safe Space for Dialogue**
- **INDV7315 Danger of a Single Story: Racial Identity Development**
- **INDV7310 Working with Conflict**
- **INDV7312 Cultivating the Contemplative Mind**
- **INDV7313 SEED I and II (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Seminar Series**
- **INDV1116 Peace and Justice Faculty and Staff Retreat (two-day, off campus retreat in February)**
- **INDV1116 Special Topics Courses Related to Peace and Justice**

Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity: A Faculty and Staff Development Program

By Born Allah
Student Services Advisor



From my involvement with [Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity \(SEED\)](#) for the last two years, one year as a seminar participant and now as a facilitator, I see SEED as the stepping stone where we take our own pre-conceived ideas from past stories or experiences and examine

them from a real learning perspective. SEED sensitizes a person to their biases and actions, and opens a person up to understanding life from another viewpoint.

My belief is that the SEED program at Valencia College is an important building block for these discussions as we move toward a more inclusive environment and persist toward inclusive excellence. We use the power of a story to educate those around us on authentic experiences and to find common ground in an effort to build a cohesive community that thrives and supports one another no matter our differences.

I feel as though SEED has changed how I go about making a true personal connection with the people I work with and come into contact with on a day to day basis. It has helped me become more of an active change agent for the oppression that goes unaddressed here within our communities, no matter if it's an "ism" that we are addressing, a preference that is unjust, or the system as a whole that is truly unequal for all.



SEED has always been more than just a seminar. It's more than a group of people coming together to tell stories. SEED is the place where we become more centered in our humanness—no matter our race, creed, color, or belief.

Developing a Peace Course in Police Studies: How a Culture of Peace Can Enhance Police Legitimacy in a Democratic Society

By James Russell McDonald
Published in the [Journal for Peace Education](#)
2015 Vol. 12, No. 1

Abstract: This paper reflects my experiences developing a course within the Criminal Justice Technology Associates of Science degree program at Valencia College that fuses topics unique to peace and police studies.



The key challenge in developing this course was in confronting the paradox of the police as instruments of both peace and conflict. In dealing with this paradox, students examine the role of the police in a democratic society and the authority of the police to use coercive force.



Key topics covered in this course include defining peace, the police role in peace movements, the history, structure and strategies affecting the police, causes of violence, conflict analysis and conflict intervention, and ethical foundations

for peace. In addition, this course examines occupational, organizational, institutional factors that contribute to the development of a unique police subculture that values crime fighting as its core responsibility and the impact of that orientation on police attitudes and behaviors toward the public. Throughout the course, students are challenged to envision a new paradigm for policing that emphasizes a culture of peace rather than a culture of conflict.

To read the full text of [click here](#).

PRINCIPLES FOR HOW WE TREAT EACH OTHER

Non-Violent Communication: The Power of Open and Honest Questions in the Classroom

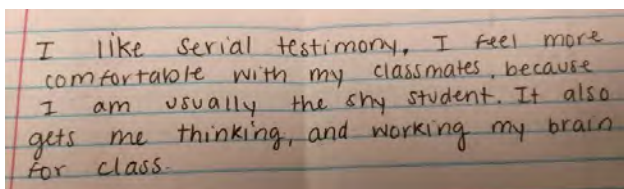
By Crystal Smith
Professor of English

For me, becoming a teacher was a decision heavily rooted in my belief in the transformative power of social justice. As a student with a disability, I was marginalized and wonderfully supported by teachers and teaching professors in equal measure. I chose to become a teacher not only because of my belief in the ability of writing and literature to articulate the human experience in revolutionary ways, but also because I wanted to create new educational spaces and stories about difference and identity.

Parker Palmer, in *The Courage to Teach*, asserts that “we teach who we are.” Despite my passion for stories, and my passion to share my personal narrative to create change, the Peace and Justice Initiative at Valencia College has helped me articulate my own narrative since I began applying the Principles for How We Treat Each Other to my personal and teaching life. This semester, I decided to fully integrate the Principles into my classroom and pedagogy, and the results have indeed created new pathways for student learning and strengthened community in my classes.

In the fall of 2015, studying argumentation, my Composition I classroom had suddenly become an adversarial environment, an uncomfortable place, and I felt defeated and frustrated. What concerned me most was that I felt that our sense of community was being eroded, and as a learning community, we needed to reconnect with ourselves and one another.

I decided my Composition I classes would practice—and not just discuss—the points in King’s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* using [serial testimony](#), a technique I learned and practiced the previous year at the annual Peace and Justice Faculty and Staff Retreat.



Starting classes the next day, I was excited but nervous:

what if the students refused to participate, or even worse, what if we became even more disconnected as a group? I was resolved to change the climate of the classroom, so I started by discussing my own experiences—and the transformations—that grew out of practicing serial testimony with my colleagues. Then, I announced that I wanted all electronic devices turned off and put away, and I wanted them to face each other so that they could look into one another’s eyes as they shared their feelings about marginalization and our shared investment in social justice, focusing on Martin Luther King’s legacy.

Throughout the day, I was invigorated as an educator. I taught students how to hold silence and confront the difference between open honesty and curiosity. All but four students—out of fifty—asked to do the activity again, and one class said they truly felt heard and understood while discussing the topic. Students felt free from the desire to text and disconnect if another person was facing them. While sharing, if interrupted, they asserted that it was their turn. Thus, we heard from students that had been silent all semester. They held one another accountable for asking “open and honest questions” that unearth the thoughts of the speaker versus curiosity questions that fulfill the curiosity of the listener.

After seeing students fully find their voices in the practice of non-violent communication, I decided to integrate the Principles into my classroom as guidelines for how to contribute in a writing community in all my courses. I open my classes on the first day by passing out the Principles with the syllabus and having students read the principle that most resonates with them; we discuss how they interpret the Principles. In Composition I, my new writing diagnostic is for students to write about the principle of their choice. In the past, regardless of the prompt, students often struggled with writer’s block on the first day of class, leaving them frustrated with themselves before we’ve even begun. The Principles have generated richer writing from my students, and I believe it’s because by their very nature, the Principles support and encourage bravery, which is necessary in the process of self-expression.

Most importantly, the Principles have given me a pathway for discussing the importance of being present to learn and cultivating self-awareness. I allow electronic devices for group work. However, after the student feedback about connection and the relief I saw on their faces as they put their phones away, I now more deeply emphasize the importance of being able to truly see and hear one another, and I’ve seen the devices disappear voluntarily. Now, the center of my classroom is gathering together to uncover the truth of the narrative and ourselves, to practice principle two as a hallmark of literary study: “listen to the feelings beneath the words.”

PJI Staff Assistant Reflects on Principles

For a class at the University of Central Florida (UCF) titled Writing for Social Change, PJI Staff Assistant and UCF student, Krystal Pherai wrote a blog post in response to classroom conflict about the Principles for How We Treat Each Other. The following is Krystal's blog.

Yesterday in class, we briefly discussed how to respectfully engage in difficult conversations with one another. Speaking from my own experiences, it can be extremely challenging to keep oneself from arguing, defending, and criticizing (both verbally and nonverbally), when in disagreement over "hot topics." The challenge heightens when the topic is one that you hold deep concern for, causing an immense urge to react.

While I can't say that I'm constantly well-composed and free from judgment during a difficult conversation, I am happy to say that over the past few years, I've been practicing how to become more open, accepting, and nonjudgmental when faced with an opposing view.

Working with the Peace and Justice Initiative of Valencia College has been the reason I've learned helpful, constructive ways to deal with conflict and challenging conversations, as our work is guided by thirteen practices of respect and nonviolence called our Principles for How We Treat Each Other. These Principles include practices like, "suspend judgment," "when things get difficult, turn to wonder," "all voices have value," and "listen deeply." You can read the [full list of Principles at the PJI website](#), which provides a description for each one.

Since I've begun practicing the Principles, more often than not, I use the different steps in order to pause, reflect, and *then* respectfully respond to someone with whom I may not agree. With the guidance of these Principles, I am able to imagine myself in the other person's place, rather than jumping to assumptions and false conclusions. I am more understanding, as hard as that can be, and I have more empathy than ever before. My communication and conflict management skills are transformed as a result of the Principles; I am transformed.

I appreciate having been introduced to the Principles for How We Treat Each Other and believe (and have witnessed) that they are incredible tools for creating healthy, civil dialogue. A friend, Valencia professor, and colleague of mine at the Initiative always encourages: let's engage in *conversation, not confrontation*. The Principles allow this to happen.

This article first appeared in the [Millennials Writing for Social Change Blog](#).

In response to Krystal's blog post, a classmate commented:

I'm so glad you bring this up. Sometimes I think that in school settings, the art of respectful, yet meaningful conversation and discussion in classrooms is lost and less effective methods of lecture and question-response-type learning take its place. As a student, I don't feel as if I have ever been "taught" how to debate, how to argue a point effectively, or how to have a difficult discussion with people of opposing views and prevent it from turning into an argument based on judgment and lacking open mindedness. At a certain point in our education, it is almost as if that skill is supposed to have been acquired somewhere along the way, or that it is inherent within us, and for some of us that is not true. It is difficult to feel confident in one's ability to do something if there is no practice involved, which is why I think these Principles you discuss here are so relevant.

As I read over them on Valencia's site, I was surprised at how obvious each point seemed and yet how difficult it is to achieve each one when actually in a discussion-based circumstance of a difficult nature. I was particularly interested in the principle "create an advice free zone." I have often noticed difficult discussions begin to derail when people argue from what seems to be a place of power and when they start speaking as if to impart their wisdom upon others. While we should absolutely learn and grow from these conversations with one another, I can also appreciate the idea that "advice" doesn't really have a place in the kind of conversations we are talking about here. As the principle itself states, "we are not here to set someone else straight, to 'fix' what we perceive as broken in another member of the group." These are key elements to keep in mind when having conversations similar to the one we had in class on Monday.

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

Posters of the Principles for How We Treat Each Other (11" x 17" and 24" x 30") are available for free to faculty and staff for classrooms, offices, and common spaces on campuses. Please contact the Peace and Justice Office to acquire posters.

Follow this [link](#) for printable versions of the Principles for How We Treat Each Other found in English, Spanish and Creole.

PEACE AND THE ARTS

The Trayvon/Jordan Project—“Division”



VALENCIA THEATER Feb. 11 - 16
 JOHN DIDONNA Valencia College, East Campus
 Black Box Theater VALENCIA COLLEGE

The deaths of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, and Jordan Davis in Jacksonville, Florida, brought the "Stand Your Ground" laws and the painful deaths of African American youth into focus in the minds of many. The opinions around the nation were divided and varied wildly. The original docudrama, [The Trayvon/Jordan Project—“Division,”](#) developed by Valencia College Theater explores those issues through research, interviews, and collaborations with a variety of media outlets and community groups, to present an unvarnished look at the events that truly have caused, and continue to cause, great division in America today.

If you missed the spring production of “Division,” which played to near sold out audiences, you’ll have the opportunity to participate in a reading of the play in the fall of 2015.

Parramore

What materializes in a vision lost?
 Will it stay on
 like a key lime in the pie?
 Or sizzle like grill fat –
 flame and gone?
 Will it smell like sour sweat?
 or frost and foam up-
 like a café treat?
 Perhaps it just pauses
 like a dream deferred -
 Does it go unheard?

By Melvin E. Thompson
 Former PJI Intern, Valencia College Graduate
 and Rollins College Graduate

Peace

Do you hear what I hear?

The waves pounding on the shore
 The birds calling out, “Wake up, it’s morning!”
 The alarming fire engine rushing down the highway to
 help someone in need

Do you see what I see?

The portrait of Mary, cuddling the baby Jesus with love
 The sun rising, creating an image in the clouds,
 reminding me of God
 The man on the street, hungry and desperate to be
 seen

Do you feel what I feel?

An uneasiness inside myself as I read the news
 The absence of peace in the world
 The unwillingness to come together, to share our
 differences and to love one another

Do you know what I know?

There is enough, yet people are starving and
 homeless
 We are destroying our world, bit by bit
 We must have conversations with each other, and let
 go of being right

Do you know what peace is?

Tell me what you believe, and I will listen
 There is no one right way, believe it or not
 Peace may be different for each of us, but the ideal is
 to be inclusive of every person and belief

By Bickley Wilson
[ArtReach Orlando](#), Founder
 Peace and Justice Advisory Council, Member

A Tribute to Ralph Clemente 1943 - 2015



Ralph Clemente filming the PJI's Global Peace Week 2013 festivities with this film students

On several occasions, Ralph and I would take a short break from our scheduled classes to discuss the latest movie projects or some other cultural events as we shared a deep appreciation of the arts. Henry James once wrote, "It is art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance, and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process." As an artist, Ralph had this type of radiance and impact that inspired everyone around him. The "Humble Bavarian", as many called him, had more than a "schmoozing" effect on his audience. Ralph genuinely cared about everyone and was always truly immersed in his passion for the film industry. Professor Clemente was one who would magically and carefully select his words to create a relaxing atmosphere for his companions while engaged in meaningful and cheerful conversations.

He and I often discussed the endless possibilities of film-making embracing all art forms, including literature. At one point we discussed Tim O'Brien's "On the Rainy River," one of my favorite stories that I shared with Ralph, a veteran himself, and we even considered the possibility of turning it into a script for production. I remember how, some few months after that discussion, I was heading to my office building crossing the mall area here on East campus when I took a glimpse of Ralph sitting in one of the lunch-set tables enjoying his meal. He waved in a gentle gesture for me to join him, so I accepted his invitation for lunch. We had baked beans and chicken as we sat together facing the Library's rotunda under the clear blue sky. Then I looked to my side and read the nearby colossal poster displaying in big letters the words, "Free Lunch for Veterans." Ralph noticed my sudden uneasiness as he smiled and comforted me saying, "I paid your dues, Aby—thanks for accepting my invite." This was simply Ralph in his natural "raw" genius as a colleague and human being.

I am sure that each one of us has something special to share about Ralph, and I am certain that no words can describe the sense of loss that all of us felt. Losing such a colleague and friend is not easy, and only time—if any—can bring some comfort, not through forgetting, but through remembering. Chief Seattle once said that "There is no death, only a change of worlds." Ralph, in memory and spirit, is and will always be with us.

In honor of Ralph Clemente, Professor of Music and Band Director Jonathan Territo will include a musical tribute during the Halloween Annual Concert on the 29th of October. Jonathan and I discussed this event after my communication with Ralph's brother, Peter Clemente, who wrote about how he and Ralph both grew up in the Alps and spent their early years on the estate of the renowned composer Richard Strauss. "We strolled with him through his beloved gardens—he especially loved the sunflowers-humming tunes and appreciating the world-renowned man," Peter told me while adding how "Ralph, like Mozart, was born on January 27th; therefore, Mozart and Strauss must be the genesis of Ralph's later 'Maestro' status in life." I could not agree more as Ralph always was a fellow philanthropic director of global artists, who once shared with all those around him the joy of life and the elixir of happiness.

Join us at the East Campus October 29th from 1:00 - 2:30 pm for a musical celebration of Ralph Clemente's life.

In Memoriam:

Irreplaceable

A spark of gold
As bright as day,
Invaluable, I would say.

A Shimmering light,
Sparkling from above,
Iridescent, I would say.

An angelic smile,
Radiating from afar,
Irresistible, I would say.

A cheerful Bavarian heart
And a gentle soul,
Irreducible, I would say.

A teacher, a legend,
And a friend,
Irreplaceable, I would say.

By colleague and friend Aby Boumarate
Professor of English

FACULTY AND STAFF FOCUS

Mayra Holzer Leads PJI Work

During the 2014-2015 academic year, Mayra Holzer Professor of Speech and Interpersonal Communication, and recipient of the Patricia Havil Whalen Endowed Chair in Social Sciences led the PJI on Valencia's West Campus with exceptional leadership and strength.

Through her endowed chair, Mayra worked to advance the Principles of the PJI on West Campus and collaborate with Student Development and student clubs to create activities and cultural events during Global Peace Week and the Conversation on Justice.

Under her leadership, Mayra sponsored national speaker, Dr. George Lopez, from the [United States Institute of Peace](#) in Washington, DC to host workshops for faculty and students to address the principles of peace and global citizenship.

Her endowed chair also led her to partner with the [Teaching/Learning Academy](#) and [Faculty Development](#) to develop courses to infuse the principles of peace and justice into the curriculum and faculty pedagogy.



Mayra Holzer during Global Peace Week 2014

We thank Mayra for her outstanding leadership that served to energize the West Campus' commitment to the Peace and Justice Initiative and strengthen programming and community.

Congratulations, Mayra!

PJI Advisory Council Member and GSA Advisor is Featured Colleague



By Joy S. Jones
Copywriter, *The Grove*

Valencia's East Campus Coordinator, Career Program Advisor [Liz Jusino](#) advises students in business and accounting majors and aids in academic planning for those seeking to attain Associate in Science and Associate in Applied Science degrees and technical certificates. She also works with deans, faculty and staff in identifying barriers to learning and recommends approaches to overcome those barriers to enhance student success and retention.

In addition, she works to remove barriers to fairness and equity on campus and collegewide through her volunteerism with the Peace and Justice Initiative (PJI) Advisory Council on which she serves, as an advisor to Valencia's Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), facilitator for [Safe Zone](#) and via her involvement with [Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity](#) (SEED).

"I truly believe in social justice, and how better to demonstrate it than through PJI! I've been able to advance my interests on important issues such as poverty, hunger, the environment, women's rights and LGBT concerns," Liz said. "Being Puerto Rican and gay is tough on your own, and it's good to have others with you in your struggle," she shared.

Liz, a New York native, came to the College in 2005 after having worked at several other institutions of higher education, including Hillsborough Community College, University of California, Santa Cruz, Stanford University and Yale University.

Upon her arrival, she found Valencia to be warmer and more personal, comparatively speaking. Still she was surprised to discover that Valencia did not have domestic

partner benefits, which troubled her because her wife was ill, unable to work, and Liz felt hopeless in her ability to afford needed medical attention.

She began to address her concern at professional staff meetings, benefits meetings and with other faculty members who'd tried, prior to her, to secure partner benefits. She became the "squeaky wheel" on the issue. "I never shut up," she said.

Eventually she met with Dr. Shugart whom she says advised her to write a letter to the College's board of trustees, which she was reluctant to do, because she felt the issue wasn't hers alone. Domestic partner benefits are not just for same-sex partners. Qualifying straight couples who cohabitate and remain unmarried also benefit. After nearly two years passed with no change, she penned the letter.

"In it, I indicated that my wife was my family, and while I understood that it could be a hardship for the College, I thought this was needed and the right thing to do," Liz recounted. "Valencia was progressive in many ways, and I felt strongly that the College should also be a leader in this area too."

After continued advocacy efforts and meetings with members of the collegewide leadership team, the year 2008 proved to be a watershed moment when it was announced in Academic Assembly in fall 2007 that the College would finally offer domestic partner benefits, a moment Liz recalls with pride.

"I'm glad that the College, president, trustees and human resources decided it was worth it. As employees, we are a good cohort, and we shouldn't be excluded just because of our private lives," she said.

Her efforts resonated with her colleagues, Remy Ansiello, counselor, and Elvin Cruz-Vargas, scholarship coordinator.

"Liz has played an integral part in strengthening the diversity of the College, as well as getting rights and protections for LGBT employees," said Remy. "She is compassionate, an excellent career program advisor, mentor and a joy to work with."

Elvin elaborated. "I'm constantly inspired by her willingness to get out there and just be herself. She has such a great spirit and has been a tremendous asset to Valencia's Safe Zone program."

Liz says her upbringing and lived experiences inform her resolve and make her empathetic toward other marginalized groups.

"I believe if you find someone who is struggling that you should help them out. Being from a different culture, not having money or a different orientation can all be fearful," she said. "Put yourself in others' shoes. I find the need to fight for the rights of others as much as I fight for the rights of myself. If we don't have others fighting for those with no voice, what good are we?"

In the community, Liz partners with the [Miracle of Love, Inc.](#), which brings free HIV testing to the East Campus each semester, [The Center – GLBT Community Center of Central Florida](#) and the [Zebra Coalition](#) for displaced gay youth.

"I want my students and all people to have a safe space to be themselves," she said, and encourages [Safe Zone](#) training for Valencia employees to help LGBTQTI students know that not only will they receive a high-quality education, but that Valencia is also a safe place for them to learn.

"I love my job as an advisor, which allows me to help students to better themselves, their families and to cope with life. The opportunities Valencia gives students are highly-valued and very important. Each encounter affords me the opportunity to give back all that I've been given."

Liz graduated from Yale University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American Studies.

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



Liz Jusino organized the day on Sexual Orientation at the East Campus during the PJI's 2015 Conversation on Justice. Under her leadership, several community organizations working with the LGBTQI community visited Valencia to share their work.

PJI Advisory Council Member and Director of Sustainability is Featured Colleague



By Joy S. Jones
Copywriter, *The Grove*

On April 14, 2015, Resham “Rae” Shirsat observed her one-year anniversary as director of sustainability. Since her hire, she has undertaken the compilation of data and organized the College’s resource use and current practices in her department, a process that was necessary before developing solutions and initiatives, which she hopes to begin working more on in year two.

Resham shared that one of the most significant accomplishments to date is the year-long [Chevy Motors Carbon Reduction Initiative project](#), which entails a data and time-intensive validation, verification and monitoring process that will earn the College approximately \$250,000. Having students become interested in sustainability practices has also been a high mark.

“I am proud that presentations I’ve provided to students over this past year have attracted three student interns who are hungry for sustainability management experience,” Resham said. “Those students will go on to work in their different fields and be able to implement sustainable practices specific to their industry throughout their careers.”

Before retiring, her predecessor, Deborah Green, laid a firm foundation for sustainability awareness collegewide. Continuing that work, just last month Resham began to write a monthly column for *The Juice* titled, [“Talking Trash with Resham.”](#) after urging by a colleague to share more about the field and how it impacts each of us daily.

“It is encouraging to see that the Valencia community wants to do the right thing and is interested in gaining knowledge about how sustainability practices are incorporated into their work environment and home life,” she said.

After all, sustainability is all about community and relationships, she believes, and views the College’s connection to the community as most essential to this work.

“I’m inspired by the fact that partnering with the community is one of the Valencia’s strategic goals. The community looks to Valencia to be a strong partner and leader in the sustainability movement,” Resham said, explaining that while the cities of Orlando and Winter Park and Orange County all have teams of full-time, fully dedicated sustainability employees who are working aggressively to move the needle on sustainability, each entity views Valencia as a major stakeholder.

“We are a particularly valuable partner since we are an educational institution capable of promoting sustainable living practices through our curriculum and operations. I think the community views Valencia as a critical role model for action and best practices during these ever changing and uncertain times.”

Resham’s expertise as a highly-valued team member is duly noted by Assistant Vice President of Facilities and Sustainability Allen Bottorff, to whom she reports, who offered that to her credit, Resham is continually looking for what can make Valencia better.

“Rae epitomizes Valencia sustainability,” said Allen. “Her commitment to incrementally advancing our sustainability is one of the many gifts that she brings to our team — day in, day out. Without a doubt, she provides a new and welcome dimension to our facilities and sustainability leadership team and to the College.”

Resham’s colleague, Patti Riva, operations manager, energy education, adds, “Rae brings a wealth of knowledge about sustainability to Valencia ... While I had always thought of myself as a sustainable-focused individual, I quickly realized there is so much more to learn. With Rae’s background and experience in this field, I have appreciated learning about more sustainable ideas and actions both for myself and for the College.”

Resham holds a Bachelor of Science in biology, a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology and a Master of Science in environmental management, all from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook. In addition, she has certifications as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Building Design + Construction accredited professional (LEED AP BD+C) and is also a certified permaculture designer.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conversation on Justice Awarded Program of the Year



We are proud to announce that the Peace and Justice Initiative (East Campus) Program of the Year Award for the second annual Conversation on Justice! We could not have done this without the support of many great campus and community partners! Thank you!

Campus Partners

- African American Cultural Society
- Gay Straight Alliance
- Human Empathy Rights Organization
- Latin American Student Organization
- Model United Nations
- Muslim Ambassadors for Peace
- Phi Beta Lambda
- Phi Theta Kappa
- Student Development
- Student Government Association
- Valencia Future Educators
- Valencia Intercultural Student Association
- Valencia Volunteers

Community Partners for Conversations on Justice



Long-Time PJI Partner Reveals New Name and Logo

Since the inception of the Peace and Justice Initiative, the Valencia East Campus student club, Muslim Ambassadors for Peace (MAP), formerly known as the Muslim Student Association (MSA), has been a strong, supportive partner. Dr. Yasmeen Qadri, a founding member of the Initiative has served as the advisor for MAP for many years. The new name will give the club a new vision: that of promoting Leadership, Service, and Peace on campus and in the community. MAP's objective is also to support Student Development's goal to

"transform lives, strengthen the community and inspire individuals to excellence."

This fall 2015, MAP will open its doors to all students and will not be limited to Muslim students. The fundamental purpose of MAP will be to promote peace, mutual respect and appreciation between diversity of cultures, ethnicities, languages and faiths. MAP will provide educational monthly seminars and cultural celebrations and holidays to promote a better understanding of Muslims and Islam in order to combat racism and prejudice. MAP's events will provide many opportunities to meet the needs of students in the Global Distinction Certification, Humanities, Religion, Sociology, Diversity, and Service Learning courses. MAP will also continue to be an active supporter of PJI. For membership or participation in MAP events please contact [Dr. Yasmeen Qadri](#).



PJI Advisory Council Member Awarded for Community Service at Dinner of Tribute



Susan and Gordon Arkin were honored for their community service by the [Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida](#). Susan Arkin is on the Advisory Council of the Peace and Justice Initiative.



PJI Members celebrated the Arkin's at the Dinner of Tribute



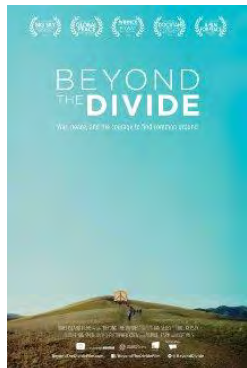
Global Peace Week 2015!



Join us September 28th-October 2nd for Global Peace Week with celebrations and events including peace education, music, arts and crafts, guest speakers, and free film screenings in partnership with the [Global Peace Film Festival](#).

This year's theme for Peace Week is "With Whom Will I Make Peace?"

The United Nations sanctioned International Peace Day is September 21st. The mission of International Peace Day is to have at least one non-violent, cease-fire day throughout the world. Visit [Peace One Day](#) for background on how International Peace Day came into being and for more information on what you can do to help accomplish a global change.



This year's peace activities begin with a community screening of [Beyond the Divide](#), a film about paths to healing old wounds and authentic peacebuilding. IN the 50 years since the Vietnam War, deep scars remain among those who served and those who resisted the war. The story inspires us to take courageous first steps to move beyond polarization toward what unites us rather than divides us.

The film will be screened for free at the Winter Park Campus the evening of September 11th.



We also welcome Angela King, Deputy Director of [Life After Hate](#) to Global Peace Week. Growing up in South Florida, Angela King struggled with her identity. She became confused about the messages she received from her church and family on issues like sexual

identity and racial stereotypes. Disenfranchised, Angela began acting out and felt welcomed for the first time by a group of racist skinheads. Though the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing made Angela reconsider her beliefs, she knew that abandoning her skinhead affiliates would result in retaliation.

Angela was arrested in 1998 and sentenced to six years in prison for her part in an armed robbery of a Jewish-owned store. Angela was released from prison three years early, in 2001, for good behavior and cooperation with the authorities. She has since graduated from the University of Central Florida with an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies. Angela routinely works as a keynote speaker, consultant, and character educator in schools, communities, religious centers and elsewhere.



Does Religion Cause Violence? And What Is the Role of Religion in Peace Building?

Dr. Atalia Omer, Ph.D. to Speak at Valencia
October 29th at the West Campus



This fall 2015, Dr. Atalia Omer, Associate Professor, Religion, Conflict, and Peace Studies will visit Valencia as part of the [Hesburgh Lecture Series](#) in partnership with the [Notre Dame Club of Greater Orlando](#).

Atalia Omer earned her Ph.D. from the Committee on the Study of Religion at Harvard University. Her research interests include the theoretical study of the interrelation between religion and nationalism; religion, nationalism, and peacebuilding; the role of national/religious/ethnic diasporas in the dynamics of conflict transformation and peace; and multiculturalism as a framework for conflict transformation and as a theory of justice. Her first book *When Peace is Not Enough: How the Israeli Peace Camp Thinks about Religion, Nationalism, and Justice* examines the way the Israeli peace camp addresses interrelationships between religion, ethnicity, and nationality and how it interprets justice vis-à-vis the Palestinian conflict.

Her presentation will consider the following questions: What are some of the relationships between religion and direct violence as well as social, cultural, and systemic violence? What constructive roles do religions provide to peace-builders in various contexts of conflict and devastation? Religion is often blamed for violence that is irrational and divisive. Do we have evidence to problematize this assertion?



**Fall 2015
Calendar of Events**

September 11th
Beyond the Divide
Film Screening and Panel Discussion

September 21st
International Peace Day Festivities

September 28th - October 2nd
Global Peace Week with Angela King

October 9th
Valencia Night at the
Islamic Society of Central Florida

October 24th
Fall Festival service project at the
Coalition for the Homeless

October 29th
Dr. Atalia Omer
Does Religion Cause Violence? And What Is the
Role of Religion in Peace Building?

November 2nd - 4th
Conversations on Race and Privilege

November 17th
Peace Breakfast:
An Interfaith Gathering

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the success of the Peace and Justice Institute. The Institute would like to send a special thanks to the Valencia Foundation and the private donors who support our work.

To make a tax-deductible donation to the Peace and Justice Institute, please follow this [link to the Valencia Foundation](#).

Good News!

This summer the Peace and Justice Initiative officially transitions to the Peace and Justice Institute!

We've watched the seed of an idea grow into meaningful work that changes lives and consciousness.

Thank you to the countless individuals who have supported this work. Together we are making a difference.



PEACE AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE

All People. All Voices. All Matter.





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.

BE A PART OF THE PEACE AND JUSTICE INITIATIVE.

Visit us online facebook.com/valenciapeaceandjustice
valenciacollege.edu/pji

