



PEACE AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2

All People. All Voices. All Matter.

VALENCIACOLLEGE

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www.valenciacollege.edu/pji



#OrlandoUnited



LIVING WITH CHANGE

By Patricia Ambinder
Peace and Justice Institute, Advisory Council Chair

For peace-builders, the human longing for peace and justice remains resolute during a time of social upheaval. The first instinct may be to withdraw and seek circles that provide a sense of security. This can be rejuvenating and help us regain strength for the role that civil society needs us to fill.

This is also the time to be imaginative and take risks, as peace-builders must work with greater urgency to listen deeply and connect the reality of what we hear and observe with the transformation we seek. We must adapt to living with change as undeniable and challenging as it is.

In these uncertain times, PJI will not waiver in its commitment to the practices and principles guided by its vision and mission. PJI will educate, advocate, and when necessary, agitate the status quo to cultivate inclusive excellence.

PJI newsletters feature the prose, poetry and experiences of students, faculty, staff, college leadership, members of the community and global citizens who live the ideals of peace and justice with passion and purpose.

We at PJI feel the newsletter needs to change its name (Peace and Justice Institute Newsletter) to reflect PJI's flourishing identity as a dynamic force for social justice, and to celebrate the voices and imagery that grace its pages. Information about the opportunity to name the newsletter can be found on page 37.

Remember...“the cure for despair” that may result from unexpected change “is not only hope. It's discovering what we want to do about something we care about.”

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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.



FEATURED

We Are Valencia

*A Special Message from Sandy Shugart,
Valencia College President*

“Remember who you are and where you come from.”

These words have stayed with me for more than 40 years since they were spoken into my life by a teacher, one of the sages in my early development, during a time of serious school unrest when I was a school leader. They come to mind now as I read of unrest, of incidents of harassment and marginalization, and of growing fears among many people, including students on college and university campuses across the country.

I write now to assure you all, the entire Valencia community, that we are aware of the deep sense of uncertainty and anxiety some may bear in this unsettled season following such a tumultuous national election. And I echo my teacher — “Remember who you are and where you come from.”

We are Valencia. We embrace every learner, every colleague who chooses to join our learning community with respect and regard for others in the community. We believe in the potential of every human being (“Anyone can learn anything under the right conditions.”). We stand with everyone who is seeking a better world through learning. We stand against every act of violence, bigotry, coercion and objectification of another human being. We stand for respectful, civil and robust discourse, including disagreement, both in and outside the classroom.

This isn’t just a value statement; it is a lived value. It is why we are able to achieve the best results among open access colleges, why we are able to assemble such a talented and diverse faculty and staff, why we come to work with the highest expectations for our students and one another. It is why we waive tuition for every homeless student and for victims of sexual trafficking, why we have become home to one of the largest communities of foster students in transition, why our international students rank us among the most welcoming colleges in America, why we strive to be the best college for veterans, why we double the diversity of graduates at the University of Central Florida through our successful transfer students, and why we have engaged the whole community — tens of thousands of persons — in purposeful reflection on peace and justice.

Barely 150 days ago, we were reminded powerfully how important our solidarity with one another really can be, as we joined hands across every perceived difference to stand with one another and with the victims of the Pulse tragedy and all those who found themselves in an anxious place in its aftermath. Only last night, I heard a wonderful young student from our Bridges to Success program share with members of the community that she loved Valencia because “at Valencia, the faculty, the staff and even the students have your back.”

We do, indeed, have her back. We have your back, too. If you are experiencing any unacceptable treatment born out of the ignorance of others, please reach out and let us stand with you. You are surrounded by people who know you belong here and know you matter beyond measure.

This is who we are. This is where we come from. We are Valencia.

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

Pulse Vigils at Valencia

The Valencia College community gathered together to mourn the loss of the 49 victims of the Pulse nightclub shootings during vigils held on multiple campuses.

Seven of the victims belonged to the Valencia College community:

Amanda Alvear
Oscar A. Arancena-Montero
Cory James Connell
Mercedez Marisol Flores
Juan Ramon Guerrero
Jason Benjamin Josaphat
Luis Omar Ocasio-Capo

Our hearts are still broken, but our pulse remains strong.
Together we stand in solidarity.



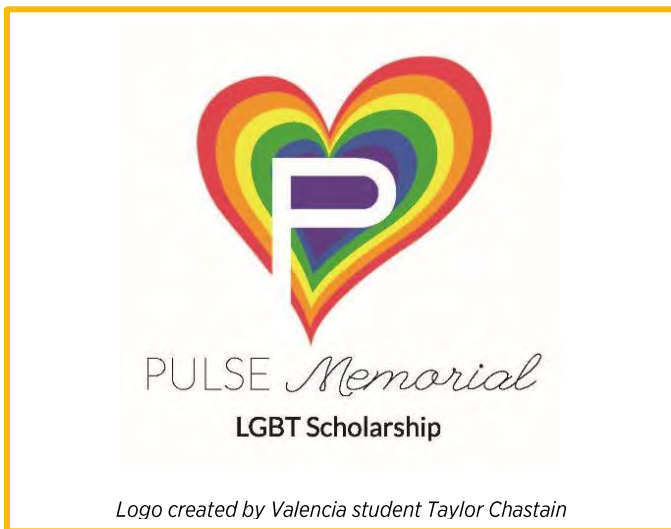
Deans Leonard Bass and Dr. David Sutton play beautiful music at Valencia's East Campus Vigil



Valencia's Osceola Campus honors the victims with a flower memorial



Dr. Sandy Shurgart, Professor Rudy Darden, Imam Musri, and others remember the Pulse victims on a meditative walk at West Campus



Logo created by Valencia student Taylor Chastain

As a result of the outpouring of love for the Pulse victims, the Valencia Foundation established a Pulse Memorial LGBT Scholarship. This scholarship serves to honor those who were lost or injured on that tragic night. To donate to this scholarship fund, please visit www.valencia.org.



Dr. Falecia Williams, President of Valencia's West Campus pays tribute to the Pulse victims at the West Campus Vigil

**Click here to see a recording of
Valencia's East Campus Vigil**





GLOBAL PEACE WEEK

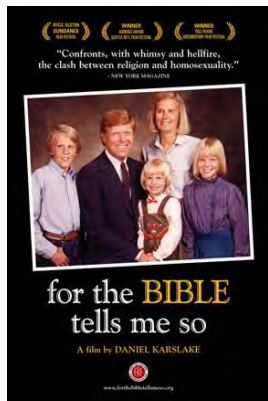
SEPTEMBER 19 - 23

PJI Celebrates International Peace Day and Global Peace Week September 19-23, 2016

The month of September offers a multitude of opportunities for our community to participate in peace activities. With International Peace Day on September 21st, the Peace and Justice Institute has taken the opportunity to expand the celebrations throughout the month.

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.

Clinton Francis, Reverend Cynthia Alice Anderson from Christ Church Unity, Christopher Cuevas of QLatinx, and Micaela Guyer of Equality Florida.



In light of the Pulse tragedy and conversations taking place about the role religion plays in creating inclusiveness for the LGBTQ+ community, this year's annual peace activities began on September 9th with a community screening of [For the Bible Tells Me So](#).

Dan Karlake's film, *For the Bible Tells Me So* is a multi-award winning documentary from 2007.

It is the first comprehensive look on film at the issue of homosexuality and religion that clearly addresses the questions concerning the Bible and homosexuality. His starting point for his examination of this issue is: Can it ever be a sin to love? Does the Bible offer an excuse to hate?

A panel discussion facilitated by Reverend Bryan Fulwider, from WMFE's Friends Talking Faith, followed the screening. Panelists included parents Lorelei Anderson-Francis and T.



Reverend Fulwider welcomes the panelists

Over 300 community members attended the event and many extended their appreciation for the effort to continue this important dialogue in our community.

Event partners included the Global Peace Film Festival, Equality Florida, OYA, GLSEN, Friends Talking Faith, QLatinx, Zebra Coalition, Valencia East and West Campus Gay Straight Alliances, and the League of Women Voters of Orange County.



On September 21st, PJI hosted its annual International Peace Day Festival at the East Campus, featuring arts and crafts, inspiring speeches, and live performances by Iron Eagle, spoken word artists, Valencia dancers, and Valencia Student Development. Don Burlinson took this year's human peace sign photo, which was rainbow colored in honor of the LGBTQ+ community.



Valencia's 2016 human peace sign, photographed by Don Burlinson

Global Peace Week took place September 19th-23rd. A diverse menu of workshops included conflict resolution, mindfulness, meditation, global peace poetry, conversations on race, gun safety, sustainability, cultural understanding, and more. The week also featured film screenings in partnership with the [Global Peace Film Festival](#). Through the Festival, the community is exposed to international topics of peace that are transformative, inspiring, and provocative.



Our guest speaker, Iron Eagle engaged audiences as he shared Native American teachings and music. Iron Eagle, a dear friend of PJI's, is a traditional Sun dancer who studied under Bear Paw (Apache Medicine Man) and Two Tree (Lakota Medicine Man). His grandfather and mother, both Chiricahua Apaches, taught him the traditional and spiritual ways of the Native Americans.

Over 4000 students, faculty, staff, and administrators across Valencia College experienced the annual Global Peace Week! To view the schedule of events that took place, [click here](#).



Global Peace Week was sponsored by the Peace and Justice Institute with funding support from Student Development.

Student Reflection by Naomi Angry Peace and Justice Ambassador

As part of my experience as a Peace and Justice Ambassador, I participated in Global Peace week. GPW consisted of various events on campus that allowed students and faculty to connect with each other. Interacting with students and faculty on campus helped me to appreciate the diversity here and be more open minded and accepting of others' opinions. Many of the PJI core values—the Principles for How We Treat Each Other— correlated to my interactions with people and taught me how to practice them in my daily life. I saw and heard a lot of different perspectives from a lot of different people throughout the week while identifying assumptions, suspending judgment, listening deeply, valuing voices, and creating a hospitable environment. These are skills that help to improve our relationships and broaden our ability to connect with others. I was very excited to interact with many speakers from different and unfamiliar backgrounds and eager to learn from what they had to say. I learned that it's easy to relate to a lot of people no matter how different they are or where they come from, we all are humans before anything else and we share the same emotions, problems, and often go through the same trials in life. I realized that there is a lot of hate all around us and it's important to break the boundaries that society enacts to try to separate us all. These events inspired me to go into every day with a different outlook, to ask myself what I can learn from everyone I encounter. How can I improve myself from new realizations and understandings? And most importantly how can I spread positivity and remove negativity from the world?



Larissa, Krystal, and Naomi enjoy the Peace Day Festival



September 21, 2016



PJI Ambassador Ashley Reyes engages in a Peace Day performance



Members of East Student Development after performing a powerful skit on social issues and how we can be a part of change



PJI East Campus Coordinator Nicole Valentino performs spoken word



Valencia dancers in a moving performance



Devinder Singh of Amnesty International informs a student on his work



Syrian refugees join our International Day of Peace event



Professor Ashley Miller shares popcorn with students



Iron Eagle Workshop Invites Reflection, Balance and Change



By Dani Moritz-Long
Senior News Writer

Balance. It's something so simple, so beautiful and so natural — such an integral part of our life that it's one of the very first lessons we learn. Our parents aim to teach us balance as we gain the strength to crawl and, later, walk. It's infused in the films we grew up with, as we learn about the circle of life and the connectedness of our existence. It's the foundation for our ability to process and manage emotions as we learn to communicate with others and ground ourselves when we feel rushes of anger or fear.

And yet, for so many of us, including myself, balance does not come easily and is too often overlooked.

We constantly feel the weight of the world on our shoulders as we seek unattainable perfection in both our personal and professional lives; we become weighed down with the gravity of our frustration and contempt — leaving not only ourselves in an imbalance, but also those around us.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

As I listened to Iron Eagle speak during his Winter Park workshop, he said something that resonated with me: “We can choose to be happy.”

This also means, he explained, that we can choose to find balance, to find peace.

Even when we feel the weight of the world on our shoulders and our stressors wreak havoc on our minds and bodies, we need only to take deep breaths, feel the ground beneath our feet and the wind in the sky to find our center and once again achieve the harmonious balance we need to sustain life.

As I listened to his songs — so immersive and rich in Native American culture — and pressed my hand to my heart before joining in the energy of his medicine wheel, which he passed through the audience's circle, the simplicity — and the beauty — of his lessons came rushing through me, and I, too, felt the calm he spoke of.

And I understood then. I understood the importance of finding our center and generating the quiet our world so desperately needs. I understood his notion that “it starts with each of us” and that, together, we can restore balance if we find inner peace and rally with those around us.

Iron Eagle also spoke of something called the Rainbow Warriors Prophecy, which he described as a time that our earth will be in dire need of help. He explained that the prophecy tells of the depletion of our resources and destruction of the land he calls “Mother Earth,” and that only by all living things coming together in harmony and balance can we restore our home to greatness and to health.

As myself and others hung onto his every word, contemplating our role in his story and our responsibility for protecting our home, he said, “This is the time.”

So, the only question left is: Are we ready?

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



Valencia Speakers Empower Students to Handle Conflict Positively



Students practice Conflict Resolution

By Wendy Jo Moyer
Manager, Employee Communications

Over or under — how do you prefer the toilet paper roll on the holder? Something as simple as this ongoing debate can cause conflict. Maybe you even experience this conflict at home.

This small conflict was one of many discussed during the East Campus session, “What is Peaceful Conflict Resolution? Prepare Students to Successfully Respond to Conflict,” presented by Jade Lewis, manager, instructional technology, and Richard Williams, lab supervisor, to a group of students who were mostly future educators.

“There are times when we just know that what we are about to do will result in conflict,” Jade explained. “We struggle internally and prepare for external results. And sometimes conflict rears an ugly head.”

During this interactive session, she asked students about their perceptions of conflict. Anger. Frustration. Fear. Hate. These and other negative reactions were the first student responses.

She then reminded students that there are positives to conflict as well, such as fostering an awareness that problems exist, creating better solutions and growing relationships.

What is peaceful resolution? It is a process that engages people in working together to de-escalate, resolve and process their conflicts. It’s a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement.

“You can choose to be peaceful,” Jade explained.

If conflict arises, Jade and Richard recommend:

demonstrating courage by addressing the conflict and sharing your feelings honestly; always looking at the conflict from the other’s point of view; showing compassion by listening to others’ perspectives and emphasizing with their experiences; working collaboratively with others involved to brainstorm possible resolutions and alternatives to make a plan for resolution; and using a third-party mediator, if necessary.

With this in mind, Jade and Richard asked students to participate in several exercises to reinforce their understanding of conflict and to practice these new skills.



Jade Lewis co-facilitates the workshop on Conflict Resolution

“Of course this looks great on paper,” Jade exclaimed, as she reinforced how important it is to internalize and continually practice how to resolve conflict every day, so you are prepared when a conflict arises.

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

Arab-American Cultural Festival

By Dr. Yasmeen Qadri
Professor of Education



“The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.” -Alvin Toffler

What better place than an educational institution like

Valencia College to wipe off stereotypes and build bridges of understanding through learning during Global Peace Week? On September 21-22, 2016 a group of student educators from my Teaching Diverse Populations class came forward to work hand in hand with the Muslim Ambassadors for Peace (MAP) to help combat stereotypes and negativity through the Arab-American Cultural Festival.

The festival was organized was a great hit! More than 100 students attended the two day event to learn about the Middle Eastern cultures and the role of Arab-Americans and Muslims in building peace in the Central Florida community. The event was a result of collaboration between the Peace and Justice Institute (PJI), [Valencia Global Distinction](#) (VGD), and Muslim Ambassadors for Peace (MAP). Professors Aby Boumarate, Nicole Valentino and Dr. Yasmeen Qadri, came forward to lead and support the event, modeling teachers as agents of peace. One workshop was facilitated by world-renowned calligraphy master Stewart J. Thomas, with over 35 years of experience in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, English, Sanskrit, and Chinese calligraphy, with additional experience in Kannada, Greek, Hebrew, and Amharic. The students loved practicing the art of calligraphy which was then followed by a movie feature: *Ibn Battuta the Man Who Walked Across the World* followed by a Q & A session.



Professor Aby Boumarate leads the Valencia Global Distinction program

Through the support of Dr. Karen Borglum (VGD) and Professor Rachel Allen (PJI), the event included Professional Development training for faculty on the topic: Crucial Conversations: Role of Arab-American Muslims in Promoting Global Peace. This was followed by a delicious Arabic luncheon for all attendees. Students from the diversity course presented exemplary poster sessions on Robert Hanvey's Model: An Attainable Global Perspective with seven Middle Eastern countries represented. The objective of this session was to help move the audience from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative stage of cross-cultural understanding by focusing on commonalities and human diversity.

In addition to the delicious Arabic food, cultural artifacts and music, there were keynote speakers who used current events, social media, Disney, cartoons, and movies to help eradicate prejudice and stereotypes against Arab-Americans and promote cross cultural understanding.



Arabic cultural artifacts on display

With the President and Vice-President from the [Arab-American Community Center \(AACC\)](#), President Muhammad Musri from the [Islamic Society of Central Florida \(ISCF\)](#), and Rasha Mubarak, a young woman leader and activist and the Florida Representative to Refugees, all talks were very enlightening. The highlight of the annual Global Peace Week at Valencia College this year was the most memorable peace image when students and faculty held hands forming a circle of peace, and widened their peace circle to include the Syrian Refugees! This is peace in action! A step towards real Global Peace!!



Recently immigrated refugees from Syria were invited to participate in Global Peace Week and the Arab-American Cultural Festival events



“Writing for Healing” During Global Peace Week 2016



Professor Linda Goddard discusses a powerful poem

By Linda Goddard and Crystal Smith
Professors of English

About ninety Valencia College students, as well as several faculty and staff members, filled one of Valencia’s East Campus classrooms on Thursday, September 22, 2016 for our workshop, “Write for Healing.” Having lost seven Valencia students in the Pulse Night Club massacre and witnessing one of the most, if not the most, hate-filled Presidential election campaigns in U.S. history, this writing workshop proved to be a welcomed healing experience for all present that morning.

As Crystal and I were planning for this workshop we’d noticed a deep sense of despair and disillusionment among so many of our Valencia students, as well as other Valencia people. As our workshop began to take shape, we shared concerns that many people in communities across the U.S. seem to experience similar isolating emotions. Fear seems to have penetrated and become pervasive across the American landscape.

As supporters of Valencia’s Peace and Justice Institute, we, too, are aware that lives are not lived in a vacuum: the ongoing rise in this country of racial and social injustice directed at women, African Americans, Muslim Americans and the LGBTQ community has affected and polarized many communities across the nation, and global unrest has further intensified these divisions. Crystal asked, “How do we take back our power from all this violence? How do we stand together in our power, not power over, but power with others?” These beautiful questions became our central focus as our workshop took life-affirming shape and form.

Crystal and I teach literature and writing. Through the literature and writing prompts we select, as well as using the Principles for How We Treat Each Other, we strive to create an open, honest and trusting environment in each of our classes. In doing so, students have felt free to risk

writing poems and stories about their personal despair and isolation as results of so much violence, racial and social injustice. Just as important, they have experienced healing affirmations through writing and through sharing their written serial testimonies among their classmates. It is this trusting, hope-filled and honest atmosphere that we wanted to create for the “Write for Healing” workshop.

The workshop opened with the song, “What the World Needs Now is Love, Sweet Love,” which generated an initial discussion about what can heal all that has gone awry in our world, while also being mindful of the growing good in the world. Both Crystal and I each gave testimony about one of our own transforming experiences of healing, which we used as reminders of how sharing among a caring group illustrates how good can take hold. A deeper sense of trust and honesty settled into the workshop. One of us read the poem, “Kindness,” by Naomi Shihab Nye while participants listened, some writing down words and phrases as spring boards for their writing. Several asked for lines in the poem to be re-read, lines, which turned the room to write: “. . . Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside, / you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing. / You must speak to it till your voice / catches the thread of all sorrows / . . . Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore . . .”



A student greets Professor Crystal Smith with a letter

We heard pens move across pages as participants began to write. Some wrote love letters to family members or others in their lives whom they hadn’t talked to for a long time; some wrote poems and love letters to the world, some wrote poems to friends who needed those words and some wrote brief stories or reflections for what can heal the world.

To make their experiences even more meaningful, we had a “tree” in a lovely cloth-covered bucket placed beside the stairs in the rotunda of building 4 and told everyone at the workshop we’d hang their writings—with their permission—on this “Love Letters to the World” tree. This tree encouraged some to write more because their pieces would have an audience beyond the workshop. Over the

few weeks that the tree stood in the rotunda, we noticed that more Love Letters and reflections on healing were added. Someone placed a long-stemmed red flower at the base of the tree.

After writing for about thirty minutes, those who read their pieces as personal testimonies moved others in the room to tears, not because of sadness but because of gratitude, affirmation that they are not alone in their isolating experiences of injustice. One student remarked, "I feel empowered by this writing." Another stood and said, "It feels so right when we're together in shared power." And when one Valencia student stood to speak, we were all mesmerized. He introduced himself as a Pulse Survivor and told us, not so much about the shooting, but about his experiences of gratitude for the ways the Orlando community came together for support and healing. He also talked of his gratitude for finding a community among other Pulse Survivors, all of whom are supporting each other in their healing process and helping each other move forward in their lives. Hope can spring eternal and did so among this gathering of Valencia participants.



Letters written by students hang on the Love Letters to the World Tree



Valencia student Luis bravely shared his story of being a survivor of the Pulse tragedy that took place in June 2016 in Orlando

What a gift of affirmation for the power of words to have witnessed participants finding their voices to write and share their personal experiences, making life-affirming connections to how writing can heal and can encourage personal empowerment. What a fruitful reminder about why we facilitate writing, and why an open, honest and trusting forum, which Valencia's Peace and Justice Institute always provides, does contribute to healing personal lives, reclaiming shared power, and in turn creates peace and justice in the world.



Student Love Letters to the World

Our City Beautiful,

After the tragedies our community has seen in the past few months, we deserve to stand together and fight violence, discrimination, and hatred. Our City deserves nothing but peace and love. If we stand as one, despite our differences and spread love, peace, and harmony, we will see our city flourish.

Dear People of Mother Earth,

If you have a soul and you are from the place we call home which is Earth this letter is for you... The person each of you see in the mirror and next to you is the same... Because we are beautiful and the same so we have to help one another, stand together and most importantly love each other because we are you and you are we.

EVENTS

Hillsborough Speaks August 25th and 26th

A team of twelve leaders representing various stakeholders from Hillsborough County trained with the Peace and Justice Institute to facilitate “Hillsborough Speaks.” Modeled after PJI’s signature dialogue program “Orlando Speaks,” the Tampa team worked to become versed in the philosophy, content and facilitation techniques of the program, preparing to launch Hillsborough Speaks in 2017.



Captain Mark Canty from OPD coaches the Hillsborough team



The Hillsborough team experiences a simulation of Orlando Speaks



The Hillsborough Team with PJI facilitators



Sam Odeid models facilitation techniques



The Hillsborough team experiences a simulation of Orlando Speaks



Patricia Newton from the City of Tampa enjoys her day with the group



Patricia Ervin with the City of Tampa takes a leadership role



Advisory Council Meeting September 7, 2016



The Peace and Justice Advisory Council met at the School of Public Safety at Valencia College for its bi-annual meeting and a chance to honor Patricia Ambinder, Council Chair, for her dedicated service to PJI. Patti brings 30+ years of community experience and philanthropy to PJI, and more importantly, is steadfast in her commitment to the work of peace and justice within our community.



Cindy Moon shares about Park Maitland School



Dr. Stacy Johnson, Patti Ambinder, and Greg Higginson



Dr. James McDonald discusses PJI's work in Criminal Justice

The Council meeting included a presentation about PJI's partnership with Continuing Professional Education by Carolyn McMorran and the School of Public Safety with Dr. Jeff Goltz. Dr. James McDonald also spoke about PJI's work with Criminal Justice and Kiki Grossman shared the new Legal and Judicial Peace and Justice Education program.



Susan Arkin, Anna V. Eskamani, and Kiki Grossman

Restorative Practices Workshop with Miguel Tello, MPA September 9, 2016



Miguel Tello, a Costa Rican representative from the [International Institute of Restorative Practices](#) (IIRP) facilitated a two day *Using Circles Training and Introduction to Restorative Practices* for students from the Valencia Future Educators club, faculty and PJI council members. PJI integrates restorative practices into its foundational program and looks forward to introducing future workshops for interested parties.

IIRP is dedicated to training professionals in the study of restoring relationships, social discipline, emotional well-being and civic participation through participatory learning and decision making.

El Canto Del Colibri Film Screening and Discussion October 5, 2016



In the wake of the Pulse nightclub tragedy, LGBTQ+ Latinx leaders of the local community organization [QLatinx](#), in partnership with PJI and Valencia East Campus' Gay-Straight Alliance, screened Marco Castro-Bojorquez's Award-Winning documentary [El Canto](#)

[Del Colibri](#), which recently wrapped up its major festival tour at Outfest, the Los Angeles LGBT Film Festival in September.

In an intimate and deeply personal documentary, immigrant Latino fathers across the U.S. recount the impact

of their children's coming out. Through raw, heartfelt testimonies, these families delve deeply into issues of immigration, prejudice, and isolation, while thoughtfully asking questions of their communities, culture, and even their religious beliefs. The result is a powerful lesson on solidarity and humility in a film that both heals and inspires.

Directed by Castro-Bojorquez, a longtime activist, community educator, and honoree of the White House's Champions of Change Program, the 53-minute documentary was created from directly within the queer and Latinx communities, including San Francisco community partners Somos Familia and BAYCAT Productions, as well as Lambda Legal and Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement.



Student Reflection by Ashley Reyes Peace and Justice Ambassador and Distinction Student

This night was unforgettable in the best way possible! Friends, faculty, and family gathered together as we screened the documentary *El Canto del Colibri*. After the film, a poignant dialogue was opened between our coordinators and a few special speakers. Professor Samsong announced the scholarship fund in honor of those we lost. The victims of Pulse would be proud. Audience members got to share their input on modern LGBT issues, like race or homophobia, as well as some possible solutions. A beautiful time was had by all. I even met a Latina bisexual! Having so much in common, we became fast friends. My favorite thing about this event had to be the intimate conversation of people coming out to their families; it takes a lot of courage. As the president of Valencia's Gay Straight Alliance drove me home, I truly felt a deep spirit of love settle in. Acceptance will always overcome hate, and although our hearts are broken, our pulse remains strong.



Orlando Speaks October 19, 2016

We are reminded of the value and necessity of dialogue when we reflect on our program Orlando Speaks. These community dialogues between police and citizens strengthen interpersonal relationships through the sharing of personal stories and experiences, developing trust and sensitivity among people who might otherwise not interact with one another.

In October, in partnership with the City of Orlando and the Orlando Police Department, PJI hosted the 4th Orlando Speaks in the District Two's Engelwood Community Center.

[Check out this short video](#) of Orlando Speaks from Wesh 2.

Orlando Speaks was mentioned by Scott Maxwell in the Orlando Sentinel as one of the "101 Things to Love about Central Florida." Click here to read the [article](#).

Moments from Orlando Speaks



Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer welcomes participants



Valencia East Campus SGA President Joseph Torres shares his personal stories



Orlando Speaks participant shares with her table



Table members dialogue about issues of race, bias, and trust



Deputy Chief Orlando Rolon listens to community members



Click the image above to view a video of Orlando Speaks.



PEACE AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE
All People. All Voices. All Matter.



Leonard Pitts November 10, 2016



Two days after the Presidential election Pulitzer Prize winning author Leonard Pitts came to Valencia's West Campus to deliver a keynote address as part of UCF's contributions to the [Pulitzer Centennial Campfires Initiative](#). One of Pitts' topics was "Fact-Optional America."

With many citizens reeling from the election results, Pitts noted that it was not time for action but time for grief. At the beginning of his talk he read the yet to be published [editorial for his Friday column](#), from which he stated, "But first, I must give grief its due. The state of the Union is not good — not just because Trump was elected, but because so many of us looked past — or embraced — his bigotry and misogyny to do so." He went on to say, "While I'm disappointed and embarrassed, I am not shocked. This country has always been loathe to come to terms with — or even admit — the depths of its biases. Witness the pundits who spoke of white "economic anxiety" while Trump supporters were beating up Mexicans and chanting 'Jew-S-A.' Still, I wanted to believe that in 2016, demeaning women or being applauded by the KKK would be a bar to high office, I wanted to believe my country was finally better than that. And it was not."

Among the audience of students and faculty were local community leaders who took time out of the workday to hear the thoughts of this nationally syndicated columnist and winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary.

We extend a special appreciation to UCF's John Bersia, Jessica Squires and the [Global Perspectives](#) Office for this meaningful partnership event.



Leonard Pitts speaks at Valencia West Campus



Byron Brooks from the City of Orlando



LaFontaine E. Oliver from WMFE 90.7



Patti Ambinder, PJI Advisory Council Chair



Jim Coffin, Executive Director of the Interfaith Council of Central Florida

CONVERSATIONS ON RACE



Conversations on Race

PJI is committed to advancing racial equity. Supporting safe spaces for dialogue, thousands of people have entered into conversations that they perhaps never thought possible – conversations inviting them to be honest about the often taboo topics of race and privilege.

On July 27th one such dialogue occurred at the West Campus with over 100 attendees – Community Conversation: Race Matters. Reeling from the police shooting of Alton Sterling and other black men over the summer months, participants explored how race impacts systems including healthcare, education and criminal justice. Challenging the myth of colorblindness, participants viewed the replication of the doll study, previously done in the 1940’s and re-enacted in 2010. The study is eye-opening for people to realize that internalized racism begins by the age of five or six years old. The workshop concluded with an opportunity to complete the statement, “I admit . . .”, recognizing that admitting to self is the first step in raising one’s consciousness and moving toward authentic change in our attitudes about race.



Christ Church Unity of Orlando hosted a series of conversations about race and privilege over the course of the year. On July 30th, at their Unity Café, congregants explored the idea of privilege in a small group that allowed for honest testimony and deep awareness of self and others.



Adinah Ragland adds her testimony



In order to advance inclusive excellence at the college, Dr. Neal Lester was invited from Arizona State University for the Inclusive Excellence Speaker Series on November 10th and 11th. Supported by the Teaching and Learning Academy, Academic Affairs, Organizational Development and Human Resources and the Peace and Justice Institute, the Inclusive Excellence Speaker Series is

an annual event aimed at advancing knowledge, skills and attitudes that foster an environment supportive of all learners’ success. Dr. Lester worked not only with Valencia students, faculty and staff but local law enforcement to address the impact of bias, stereotypes and pop culture on how we treat each other.



Healing Retreat with Iron Eagle November 19, 2016



By Buffy Pilloud
Professor of Yoga and Meditation

Our time in the forest with Iron Eagle was very healing on many levels. Being in Nature is healing and rejuvenating on its own, but when we're in the company of special friends, it's even more powerful.

During our PJI retreat day, I was honored to connect with students, staff and faculty, and community members on a much deeper level than would have been possible during a traditional workshop or event. We were led to enter the silence, to take time to offer gratitude for our many blessings, especially for the gifts of Nature. During a guided meditation, we were blessed with an opportunity to be at peace and to feel connected to each other and to the Earth. After the meditation, we paired up to share and to connect. It was a very powerful time for me—I felt I could be truly present and to speak from my heart with an authentic voice.

Our retreat supported our practice of the Principles for How We Treat Each Other, one of the hallmarks of PJI.

In particular, the following Principles were the most relevant for me:

- Create a hospitable and accountable community.
- Listen deeply.
- Respect silence.
- Suspend judgment.
- Speak your truth.
- Practice slowing down.
- All voices have value.

Iron Eagle is a master facilitator who created a judgment free zone that offered everyone a “place within the medicine wheel.” Through the powerful beat of the drum or the haunting voice of the flute, participants could find the solace and strength that enabled them to return to the outer world renewed and at peace with what is.



*“All things are our relatives;
what we do to everything,
we do to ourselves.
All is really One.”*

-Black Elk

Valencia Night at the Islamic Society of Central Florida October 7, 2016



The [Islamic Society of Central Florida](#) (ISCF), in partnership with PJI hosted the fifth annual *Valencia Night*, welcoming 75 people from the Valencia community to learn more about Islam. Valencia students, faculty, staff, and family enjoyed a tour of the masjid (mosque), an informational session on the fundamentals of Islam presented by Aminah Hamidullah, Executive Director of [Knowledge for Living](#) and PJI Advisory Council member and Imam Muhammad Musri, President of [American Islam](#) and PJI Advisory Council member. A delicious Middle Eastern meal followed.

Professor James Vrhovac brought his all-veterans composition class to the event stating, "I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to better understand Islam myself and to offer my students, many combat veterans of Afghanistan, Iraq, and a few both, a chance to experience Islam in a different context. Many of them going in seemed to have a pretty open view, but I believe that view can only be very narrowed by the context of a deployed experience. These men and women were always outsiders over there no matter how accepting and gracious their hosts. Armed and armored one never sits at the table the same as someone dressed in civilian clothes. My hope for this experience was to provide a wider vista for these students."

One of Vrhovac's students reflected, "I think that accepting the Islamic Society's invitation was a great opportunity to learn about their religion. Even though I didn't agree with everything and still remain skeptical of the religion, I feel honored to have been part of the event."

With misinformation circulating about Islam, PJI aims to bridge the gap between fears and facts regarding this peaceful religion. Our mission is to support an inclusive community in which all members thrive, including the over 40,000 Muslims in Central Florida.



The Valencia community learns about Islam together



How Does My Faith Welcome the LGBT Community? Interfaith Panel Discussion September 20, 2016

In light of the Pulse nightclub shooting and as part of Global Peace Week, Professors Julie Montione and Subhas Rampersaud hosted a panel discussion with local clergy addressing how religions approach homosexuality.

The panel featured representatives of the Buddhist, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Presbyterian, Sikh, Baha'i, Humanist, Hindu, and Native American traditions.



Panelists share distinct views on homosexuality and their faith



Pastor Laura B Viau of the First Presbyterian Church of Apopka



Students talk with Father Daniel Hickman of the Orthodox Church of St. Stephen



Jasbir Singh Bhatia shares about Sikhism



Subhas Rampersaud discusses the Hindu faith



Interfaith panelists discuss their faith during Global Peace Week



**GLOBAL
PEACE
WEEK**

SEPTEMBER 19 – 23



#OrlandoUnited

Peace Breakfast: An Interfaith Gathering November 16, 2016



PJI members with Jocelyn Williamson representing Humanism, Dr. Sheri Dressler representing the Baha'i Faith, Pastor Jim Coffin representing Protestant Christianity, Jasbir Singh Bhatia representing Sikhism, Ruth Geniac representing Buddhism, Imam Abdurrahman Sykes representing Islam, Sister Rosemary Finnegan representing Catholicism Christianity, and Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra representing Hinduism. Not pictured is Rabbi Joshua Neely who represented Judaism.

By Jim Coffin
Executive Director of the
Interfaith Council of Central Florida

Malcolm Forbes, an American entrepreneur, publisher of Forbes magazine and an avid promoter of capitalism and free-market trade, described diversity as “the art of thinking independently together.” I like that definition.

I also believe Forbes would have been impressed by the Peace Breakfast held on Valencia College’s East Campus on November 16, an event sponsored by the college’s Peace and Justice Institute. It was indeed a classic example of “thinking independently together.”

The breakfast was advertised as an “interfaith” event. But in the same way that its organizers clearly recognized that religion in the United States isn’t limited to just Catholic and Protestant Christians (as some seem to incorrectly assume), the organizers also recognized the contribution of those whose “brand” isn’t faith-based. So Humanists participated along with Baha’is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and others.

I think it safe to say that all of the 100-or-so student, faculty, staff, and community participants left with a deeper understanding of religions and philosophies that many of us may have known about only slightly—despite the fact that their adherents may be our neighbors, co-workers or fellow students.

But in the process, no one was pressured to change any allegiances or beliefs because of the brief presentations and subsequent discussions about the philosophical and/or theological underpinnings of the worldviews being

highlighted. The goal was simply to share information and get better acquainted.

As Executive Director of the [Interfaith Council of Central Florida](#), I always look forward to the Peace Breakfast, held twice yearly at Valencia College, because it provides such an inspiring example of the Interfaith Council’s “Shared Values” being put into action.

Those values include such beliefs as:

“Every human has innate value and deserves to be treated justly and with dignity and respect.

“We all have the right to pursue our own spiritual path.

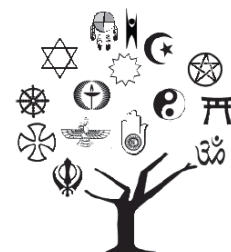
“Seeking to live out one’s spiritual values benefits the community as well as the individual.”

One of the rewards for me when I attend an event such as the Peace Breakfast is the realization that entities such as the Peace and Justice Institute have arrived at and have clearly articulated similar and/or complementary values.

It’s great to see such commonality of emphasis and such unbending commitment to a just and inclusive society. (I’m delighted to say that the Interfaith Council of Central Florida and the Peace and Justice Institute have worked closely together on a variety of projects and programs over the past few years.)

Emanuel Cleaver II, a United Methodist pastor and member of the U.S. House of Representatives, has declared: “God did not burden the United States with a diversity of backgrounds, ideas and religions; He blessed America with them.” I’d suggest that many who attended the November 16th Peace Breakfast left the event with increased agreement with Rev. Cleaver’s assertion.

Thanks to Rachel Allen, her staff, the Peace and Justice Institute and the numerous presenters of religions/worldviews for providing students with such a thought-provoking and community-building event.



INTERFAITH COUNCIL
OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
Faith • Friendship • Community



INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION WEEK

“Peace among religions is a precondition for world peace.” -Swami Agnivesh

PEACE NEWS

Celebrating peace news locally, nationally, and internationally



Kamala Harris celebrates winning her Senate race Tuesday in Los Angeles. Senate. | Barbara Davidson/LA Times via Getty Images

Women made history in the November 2016 election.

“Kamala Harris, Catherine Cortez Masto and Rep. Tammy Duckworth made historic inroads on Election Day, becoming, respectively, the first biracial woman in the Senate, the first Latina senator, and the first Thailand-born senator. In Minnesota, Ilhan Omar also wrote her name in the history books, winning a state race to become the first Somali-American legislator in the U.S.”

National Public Radio



The Paris Agreement, which “brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects” was passed in the UN and went into effect November 4, 2016.

United Nations



In September 2016, Georgetown University formally apologized for profiting from the sale of 272 African-American slaves. In fact, Georgetown University has announced it will rename two campus buildings after African-Americans, build a memorial to honor the labor of the slaves, and offer preferential admission to descendants of the slaves.

More than a dozen universities — including Brown, Harvard and the University of Virginia — have publicly recognized their ties to slavery and the slave trade. But historians said they knew of none that had offered preferential status in admissions to the descendants of slaves.

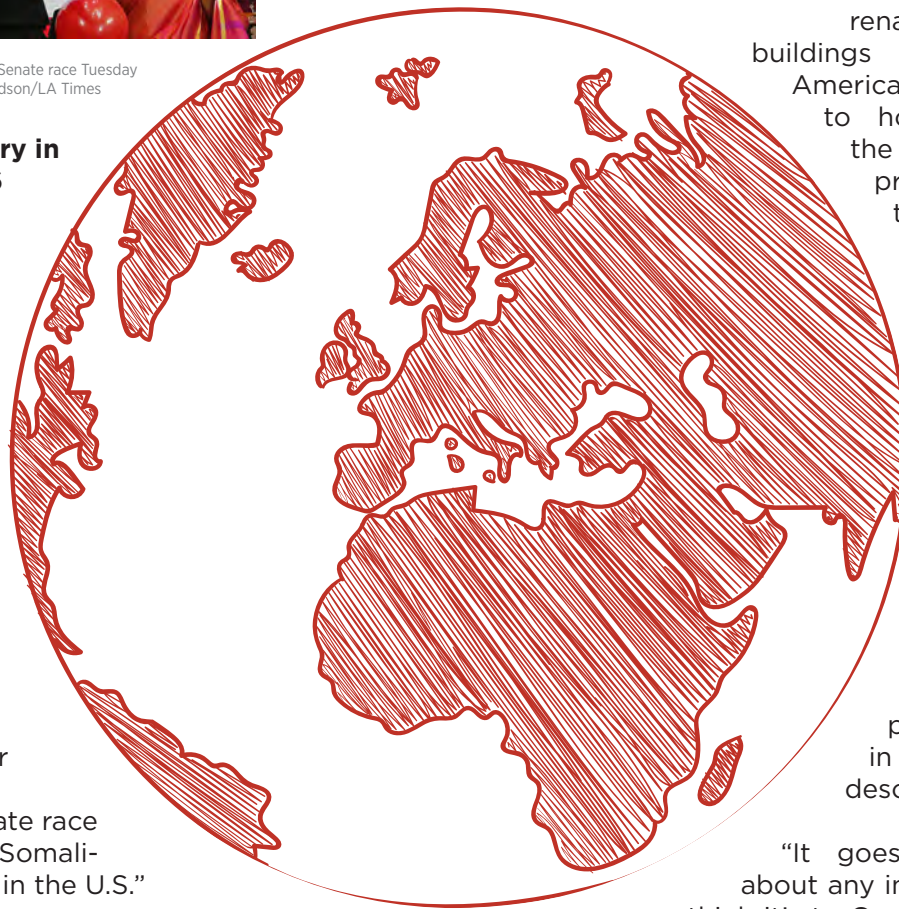
“It goes farther than just about any institution,” he said. “I think it’s to Georgetown’s credit. It’s taking steps that a lot of universities have been reluctant to take.”

The New York Times



The Columbia government and the “country’s largest rebel group” signed a peace agreement after 50 years of war.

The New York Times





PEACE NEWS



Andrew Jackson will move from the front of the \$20 to the back, making way for Harriet Tubman. She'll become the first black woman ever to front a U.S. banknote.

Tubman, who died in 1913 at the age of 91, escaped slavery in the south and eventually led hundreds of escaped slaves to freedom as a "conductor" of the Underground Railroad. After the slaves were freed, Tubman was a staunch supporter of a woman's right to vote.

Treasury Secretary Jack Lew announced plans to redesign the \$10, \$20 and \$5 bill. All three denominations will have a female presence.

The updated bills will also be the first in U.S. history to include a tactile feature to aid the blind.

CNN Money



In an effort to promote clean energy, Portugal ran for four straight days using solar, wind, and hydro power renewable energy sources.

The Guardian



Tesla announced plans for its solar roofing project.

Tesla's solar panels "can now be fully integrated and customized to match the texture and appearance of your roof - it can now be thought of as an integration rather than an addition where a homeowner chooses what fits their aesthetic preference."

Energy Sage



Photograph by Rajesh Kumar Singh, Associated Press

Over 800,000 volunteers helped India fight climate change by planting 50 Million trees in just 24 hours.

The effort is part of the commitment India made at the Paris Climate Conference. In the agreement, India agreed to spend \$6 billion to reforest 12 percent of its land (bringing total forest cover to 235 million acres by 2030).

National Geographic



John Raoux/AP

Orlando stood in solidarity as community members dressed as angels to block protestors from the funerals of Pulse victims.

The Orlando Shakespeare Theater led the effort after the Westboro Baptist Church called for its members to protest outside funerals in Orlando, holding signs with anti-gay slogans.

"We didn't know that anyone would protest the funerals here in Orlando, but that is now happening, so a counter-protest so that people that are attending those funerals and those that are in mourning don't have to deal with hate is an important thing," Orlando Shakespeare Theater's Jim Helsing told the Miami Herald.

National Public Radio



#OrlandoUnited

SERVICE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic Education with the League of Women Voters

Each month, students from our Peace and Justice Ambassador program attend “Hot Topic Luncheons” hosted by the [League of Women Voters of Orange County](#). Topics this fall included candidate forums, redistricting, and presidential election results.

PJI is thankful for our strong partnership with the League and happy to bring our students to their important events.

Student Reflection by Terrance Coakley Valencia Graduate Peace and Justice Ambassador

This year’s League of Women Voters’ Hot Topics were indeed “Hot,” with insight from professionals in the political world and professors from various universities around the state of Florida. The luncheons gave many from the surrounding communities, whether elders, middle aged or millennials a better understanding of the “why, how, and who” that many people seem to ask about, when it comes to districts, elections (local and federal), state government and much more. It was indeed great, and I cannot wait to see what the New Year 2017 holds!”



Peace and Justice Institute Ambassadors and Staff attend the League’s Hot Topics on Orange County Elections, moderated by Dr. Fogelsong



Harbor House of Central Florida’s Annual Purple Door Breakfast October 19, 2016



Members of PJI joined many organizations and individuals at the [Harbor House of Central Florida’s](#) Purple Door Breakfast to honor their 40 years of service to our community.

Harbor House seeks to eliminate domestic abuse in Central Florida by providing safety, shelter, empowerment, education and justice. The organization empowers domestic abuse survivors to take control of their lives—rediscovering safety and self-esteem and also offers a 24-hour crisis hotline, shelter, counseling, legal advocacy, and other services to thousands of people.



Student Reflection by Noor Hashim Valencia Graduate Peace and Justice Ambassador

There are many major issues in our society that are often hushed, with the victim not knowing that they’re a victim or not finding the source that will help them recover from their pain. Harbor House has been and still is the light for many women who face domestic violence here in Central Florida. Being at their annual Purple Door Breakfast has opened my eyes to how much they have served our society by helping these women and especially after seeing that that many of their top staff are survivors themselves. It was heartwarming to see hundreds of residents come in support of them at their Breakfast to ensure this work keeps happening and raise awareness for domestic violence victims to seek shelter and help.



PJI members attend the Harbor House’s Purple Door Breakfast

The Annual Fall Fest at the Coalition for the Homeless October 22, 2016



By Kim Marquard
Peace and Justice Ambassador
and PJI Distinction Student

The Fall Fest at the [Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida](#) is a bi-annual event created by the Peace and Justice Institute, its Ambassadors, and other participating groups from Valencia such as the Seneff Honors College, The Phi Theta Kappa, Valencia Future Educators and the African American Cultural Society.

This festival was a big day to let the kids and their families at the shelter leave their worries behind, have fun, and just be. PJI had a well-planned schedule of all the events for that day. As the music began, the atmosphere lit up, everyone was full of energy and the atmosphere was filled with laughter as the kids immersed themselves into a day of fun.



Members of Phi Theta Kappa dance to the Electric Slide

Rapidly, the participants were bustling like busy bees on a summer's day. Kids were creating murals on the ground with chalk, jumping about in a rice sack race, getting their

face painted, thumping with their handmade pumpkin tambourines, sharing cotton candy, and filling the air with countless bubbles. The jumping castle caught many kids' attention, and after they jumped themselves out they were given refreshing drinks and healthy snacks to energize them to seize the rest of the event such as musical chairs, mummy wrapping, hula hoop contest, and rope skipping.



A Valencia student participates in the hula hoop contest

The most touching part was when the families took their portraits together, decorated them and showed them off to their friends. All along, the Ambassadors and other group members joined in, played and laughed out loud with them. Everyone felt the inclusion, the feeling of community, of oneness, no above or below, rich nor poor, but only the joy of being able to share with one another such a beautiful day. The sun shined down upon us, brightened our day and sent us off at the end with high spirits knowing that even though it was only one day, we have made a difference of many lives, and many more to come.



Valencia Students Zianab and Gunika create a beautiful backdrop for portraits taken of the families in residence at the Coalition



Bi-annually, PJI partners with classes and clubs across Valencia College to host a party for the families in residence at the Coalition for the Homeless. This fall, volunteers from Valencia participated in the event, including representatives from the Gay Straight Alliance, HERO Club, Peace and Justice Ambassadors, Phi Beta Lambda, Phi Theta Kappa, Seneff Honors College, Valencia Future Educators, African American Cultural Society, Valencia Volunteers, LASO, Muslim Ambassadors for Peace, and East Campus SGA.



Volunteers laugh at a game of musical chairs

Save the date and join us for the Spring Fling at the Coalition on March 25, 2017!

Moments from the Fall Fest



PJI Ambassador Tommy Mullins dresses up in a cheetah mask



Face painting is a popular activity at the Fall Fest



A student enjoys a game of hop scotch



PJI Staff Assistant Mary Beth enjoys the "mummy wrap" race with volunteers Mary Clare and Zelle

PEACE AND JUSTICE AMBASSADORS



Our Fall 2016 Peace and Justice Ambassadors:
Ashley, Tommy, Naomi, Tucker, and Kim

The Peace and Justice Ambassadors give back to Valencia and the greater Orlando community by assisting PJI with events, projects and activities, with a mission, *“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 Institute.”*

Become a Peace and Justice Ambassador

The Ambassadors are PJI student leaders who meet weekly to practice the principles and skills of peace, justice, and nonviolence, work closely with faculty, staff and fellow students, and assist with events and activities.



3:45 pm. Click the flyer above for more information.

Ambassadors Visit Classes

This fall, Ambassadors visited Professor AJ Quackenbush's Peace Studies class and Professor Susan Dauer's English and Literature classes to share their experience with the PJI Ambassador program. An emphasis on the Principles for How We Treat Each Other and how students can get involved with PJI was shared.

If you're interested in having the Peace and Justice Ambassadors speak to your classes, please contact peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu.

Ambassadors Participate in Transgender Day of Remembrance November 17, 2016



Each year, the East Campus [Gay Straight Alliance \(GSA\)](#) hosts a series of events to honor Transgender Day of Remembrance. The Peace and Justice Ambassadors participated in this year's events, sharing information about our work and how students can get involved. PJI is proud to partner with GSA and to help create an inclusive environment for the LGBTQ+ community.



The Ambassadors represented PJI at GSA's Transgender Day of Remembrance events at Valencia East Campus



PJI Ambassador Reflection



Tucker Morgan (middle) facilitates a conversation on peace in the Conversation Pool during Global Peace Week

By Tucker Morgan
Peace and Justice Institute Ambassador

As I immersed myself in the knowledge of problems that people all over the world face, I found myself motivated to act for change. In my search for a platform or means to act, I found Valencia's Peace and Justice Institute. After meeting PJI Director Rachel Allen, I took her suggestion and became an Ambassador for the program.

As an Ambassador, I help plan and operate the many great events that PJI holds. With workshops like Conversations on Race, we educate the community on systems of oppression that people of different races endure, as well as provide an environment for them to share their stories or thoughts that they may have never spoken out loud before. Not only does this allow people to reach a higher level of understanding, but it also educates the public on issues that must change through political participation and self-improvement.

Contrary to what I've heard many say, I don't believe society is plagued with apathy. Rather, I think many of those who refrain from action do so due to a feeling of powerlessness. As an Ambassador, it is also my job to empower others to believe that they can make a difference. Because of the constant barrage of violence and negativity shown on television, it surprises most people to hear that the world is actually more peaceful than it has ever been; that global poverty rates have been cut in half since 1990, or that 71% of Americans would actually welcome Syrian refugees into the country. Fittingly, famous historian and political dissident, Howard Zinn, noted: "If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something."

It isn't enough to only discuss the appalling conditions humanity is faced with. We must shine a light on the very real progress being made through collective action and a passion for protecting one another. History has shown that

small groups have the power to successfully resist, implement radical change, and even topple governments if they are organized and united.

From its willingness to cooperate with different organizations, to its attention to both systemic and individual improvements, the Peace and Justice Institute has the capacity to bring about the necessary change needed in the community. In conjunction with the many similar groups around the globe, there is certainly hope for a better world. Because of this, I am thankful for the opportunity to work alongside the amazing people associated with this organization and movement.

Student Reflection by Dwayne Harris PJI Leadership Fellow UCF Psychology Major

This past semester, I completed my time as a Leadership Fellow at the Peace and Justice Institute (PJI) at Valencia College. At the beginning of the semester, I decided to no longer be stagnant against the tiring issues, disadvantages, and inequalities imposed on the lives of others. The decision to learn with PJI was entirely voluntary. The mission this organization chooses to pursue was something I felt passionate about. For all people, religions, creeds, genders, orientations, even another's POV I practiced an understanding and skill set to appreciate and respect someone who may be different than I am. From religion to politics to equal rights to promoting equality across all origins, creeds, genders, sexualities, and statuses proves the humanistic growth I have gained throughout these past two months. In turn, it was a privilege to a gain experience from other cultures, events, and initiatives. It goes without saying this was a life experience I will not take granted.



Dwayne takes a selfie with Valencia students after sharing his experience as a Leadership Fellow

PEACE LEARNING

AT VALENCIA



Constructive Program and the Peace and Justice Practitioner

By Rachel Allen
Peace and Justice Institute, Director

In the wake of a political season that unearthed the underbelly of our culture – revealing bigotry, racism, sexism, homophobia and prejudice lingering in the hearts and minds of many Americans, the need for peace and justice education becomes increasingly evident.

When PJI began in 2008, establishing a foundational understanding of peace and nonviolence was a primary focus, aiming to educate the college community about Gandhian nonviolence to assure a peaceful and thoughtful response to challenges that come our way. To be clear, Gandhian nonviolence does not teach passivity. On the contrary, Gandhian nonviolence encourages active resistance to injustice in a manner that does not embarrass or make an enemy out of the other, or mirror the injustice.

At a time when hard fought for human rights appear to be under threat, revisiting the foundational work of Gandhi is more critical than ever. How we respond to hate speech, religious bigotry, sexism, and homophobia has a tremendous impact on the future we co-create for ourselves and our community.

When Gandhi outlined the foundations of his nonviolent philosophy, the idea of a constructive program was integral. Peace education is central to PJI's constructive program, and this includes the Commitments of a Peace and Justice Practitioner (see box). Integrating these commitments into the peace and justice studies curriculum, faculty and staff development, student distinction, ambassador and leadership fellow programs, as well as community workshops and education assures the growth of the Culture of Peace in Central Florida.

A significant development for PJI came with this year's launch of the Peace and Justice Practitioner Program. This cohort experience for Valencia staff introduces the philosophical foundations of PJI through a series of workshops that supports one's personal growth and development as a peace and justice practitioner. Workshops include *Working with Conflict*, *the Reflective*

The Peace and Justice Institute regards every individual as a rising peace and justice practitioner and provides the tools for all to be leaders of socially inclusive change and innovation in their circle of influence. The commitments of a peace and justice practitioner are a pathway to building the Culture of Peace and an invitation to becoming an agent of change.

Commitments of a Peace and Justice Practitioner

- Places relationship and community as central to the work, focusing on the culture of collaboration
- Encourages a reflective practice to support self-awareness, meaning and purpose, including mindfulness practice, emotional intelligence
- Addresses conflict as a source and opportunity for growth and transformation
- Uses the tools of story, dialogue, and peaceful communication while practicing the Principles for How We Treat Each Other
- Supports a community of inclusive excellence in which all voices are heard and valued
- Engages in the exploration of the "other" with an acknowledgement of our inherent interdependence
- Recognizes there can be no peace without justice for all

and Mindful Practitioner, Conversations in Inclusiveness, the Principles for How We Treat Each Other and Creating Safe Space for Dialogue. Additionally, a two-day reflective retreat is part of the program, with this year's theme based on Parker Palmer's book, *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Experience.*

With the pilot cohort in session, PJI looks forward to offering the Peace and Justice Practitioner Program for faculty and community members, as well. Watch for announcements about how you can register for the program.

PEACE AND JUSTICE COURSES

SPRING 2017



Social Entrepreneurship

GEB 1155 | East Campus | CRN: 26881

Prerequisite: GEB 1011 or GEB 1136 or ECO 2013 or ECO 2023 or MUM 2720C or Department Approval

This course explores Social entrepreneurship as a rapidly developing and changing business field in which business and nonprofit leaders design, grow, and lead mission-driven enterprises. As the traditional lines blur between nonprofit enterprises, government, and business, students explore opportunities and challenges in this new landscape through local project based learning.

Introduction to Peace Studies

PAX 1000 | East Campus, Osceola Campus, Online

East: CRN 23030 | Osceola: CRN 22032 | Online: CRN 24123

This course studies peace in its philosophical, religious, literary, historical and other cultural contexts. It investigates the causes of violence on the global and personal levels. There is an emphasis on the interdisciplinary study of peace and the peace movement in historical and contemporary views. It also teaches the application of conflict resolution, nonviolence, and other practices necessary to become more powerful and peaceful members of our world.

Conflict Transformation: Paths to Peace

HUM 2930 | East Campus and West Campus

East: CRN 25693 | West: CRN 26963

This course is designed to create the potential for intrapersonal and interpersonal transformation while exploring tools for conflict transformation. Students will explore different approaches to conflict and the many reasons why conflict between individuals, groups and states arises and even turns violent. We will discuss the various actions that people can take to mitigate and transform the destructive forces of both inter and intrapersonal conflict, including, for example: reflective practice, dialogue, mediation and negotiation. We will explore these different "conflict interventions" by studying the theory and practice of negotiation and mediation skills, analyzing specific conflicts in history and in current events, and becoming proficient in skillful dialogue aimed at bridging personal, social and cultural gaps which often lead to misunderstanding and conflict.

Positive Psychology

PSY 2930 | East Campus, Osceola Campus

East: CRN 23299 | Osceola: CRN 26547

This course is designed to introduce a strength-based psychology that scientifically studies positive human functioning, specifically, the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. Emphasis will be placed on studying and applying topics such as; happiness, gratitude, flow, optimism and hope, wisdom and courage, positive affect, resilience, coping, friendship, and positive development across the lifespan.

Social Justice Hangs on *The Wire*

HUM 2930 | West Campus | CRN 26087

Prerequisite: Freshman Composition I

Social Justice hangs on "The Wire". This class is based on the popular HBO Series The Wire. Topics include: social justice, the war on drugs, mass incarceration, and the workings of inner city Baltimore.

Peace and Justice Ambassadors

Service Learning

SLS 2940 | East Campus | (3 credit hours) | CRN 26995

This is a planned service-learning experience that focuses on three hallmarks: service, leadership and scholarship. Students in this course will complete 60 hours of Service Learning. Students serve as Peace and Justice Ambassadors in Service to the Peace and Justice Institute at Valencia College.

Meditation for Stress Management

HLP 1093 | East Campus | CRN 24805

This experiential course is an introduction to the art and science of meditation for stress management. Topics include the benefits of meditation, meditation techniques, breath work, meditation and health, and meditation for everyday living. This course will help students find the type of meditation that is best for them enabling them to establish a personal meditation practice. This course is suitable for all students, regardless of physical limitations.

PEACE AND JUSTICE COURSES

CONTINUED

A History of Genocide

WOH 2003 | West Campus | CRN 25584

The primary focus of this course is to define and discuss genocide in all of its forms, expose the flaws in current pedagogy and reappraise in order to address the complexities of the topic. It will address bureaucratic mechanized genocides as well as the more spontaneous and the pre-industrial types. This course is a mix of theoretical considerations alongside the history of genocide ranging back to antiquity and various case studies.

Multimedia Literature and the Holocaust

LIT 2174 | East Campus | CRN 21502

Prerequisite: ENC 1101, ENC 1101H or IDH 1110

This course explores literacy characteristics inherent in various media including (but not limited to) Holocaust-related historical text, documentary film, comics (graphic narrative), survivor narratives, pre- and post- Nazi art and contemporary major motion pictures. The examination includes critical analyses of textual, visual, syntactical, mechanical and thematic conventional similarities found in traditional textual "literature" and in the structure, syntax and language of visual media. Gordon Rule course in which the student is required to demonstrate college-level writing skills through multiple assignments. Minimum grade of C required if used to satisfy Gordon Rule requirement.

Peace Studies for Teachers

EDG 2935 | East Campus | CRN 26727

This course titled Safe Schools and Safe Communities will focus on the 13 Principles of How We Treat Each Other. The course will give teachers effective tools for engaging in difficult conversations, empathetic listening, perspective talking, self-reflection and relationship building in their classrooms. By integrating the Principles in their curriculum and instruction, teachers will learn to contribute towards building peaceful schools and communities.

Environmental Science

EVR 1001 | East Campus | CRN 25101

This non-laboratory course provides understanding of our interdependence with and responsibility for environment, earth and all species. We will investigate such aspects as pollution, urbanization, population trends and changes in lifestyles. We will address present and projected solutions to current and future problems and predicaments. You are encouraged to inquire beyond these basic areas of study outlined.

Freshman Composition II: Voices From the Margins: Reading, Discussing and Writing for Peace and Justice

ENC 1102 | East Campus | CRN 22847, 23199, or 23222

Prerequisite: Freshman Composition I

This course will focus on literature written by and about people from marginalized cultures in America. Application of skills learned in ENC 1101. Emphasis on style; use of library; reading and evaluating available sources; planning, writing, and documenting short research paper. Gordon Rule course in which the student is required to demonstrate college-level writing skills through multiple assignments. Minimum grade of C required if ENC 1102 is used to satisfy Gordon Rule and general education requirements.

Freshman Composition II: Perspectives on War, Philosophies of Peace

ENC 1102 | East Campus | CRN 23202, 23888 or 24863

Prerequisite: Freshman Composition I

Through documentaries, photography, poetry, art, literature, philosophy, and non-fiction works, this online course explores multiple perspectives of warfare and introduces philosophies of peace to build pathways of healing. Application of skills learned in ENC 1101 is expected, while there is an emphasis on style; use of library; reading and evaluating available sources, along with planning, writing, and documenting a short research paper. This is a Gordon Rule course in which the student is required to demonstrate college-level writing skills through multiple assignments.

For more information please contact the Peace and Justice Institute at peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu

Peace Studies Curriculum

This fall a new peace course officially became part of the Valencia College curriculum. Conflict Transformation: Paths to Peace is now PAX 1500 and will appear as such in the Valencia Course Catalogue beginning in the summer of 2017. We are happy to announce three teachers with degrees from Nova Southeastern University in Conflict Resolution who will teach the course online and on West and East Campuses this spring: Cade Resnick, Ph.D., Maria Georgo, ABD, and Nadege Cadet, M.S. We also welcome Kinyel Ragland, Professor of political science as a new Introduction to Peace Studies (PAX 1000) teacher.

Peace and Justice Education for Our Community

The Peace and Justice Institute experienced an eventful fall with course offerings, workshops and programs for all employees from the City of Orlando, members of the City of Orlando's Volunteer Boards, the Sociology Division at the University of Central Florida, Hillsborough County's Safe and Sound Initiative, the Orlando community through Orlando Speaks and Orange County's Neighborhood Center for Families.

The City of Orlando completed its 100th session of our *Conversations in Inclusiveness* workshop. The workshop introduces participants to the idea of Inclusive Excellence and the importance of creating a positive work environment that fosters respect and dignity for all.

The two hour workshop begins by exploring how an inclusive environment benefits individuals, employees and the company, asking the question, "what would an inclusive work environment look and feel like for employees and customers?" This inquiry is meant to strengthen relationships in the workplace through raising awareness and knowledge about dimensions of diversity, building skills and supporting principled action toward PJI's mission: All People. All Voices. All Matter.

In the workplace, leaders, including directors, managers and supervisors, are responsible for fostering an inclusive organization and modeling diversity competent leadership. *Conversations in Inclusiveness for Leaders* adds a third hour to the workshop and begins the process of increasing cultural competency and situates leaders to be more responsive and skilled in addressing problems and making decisions. The leaders' workshop heightens awareness, builds skills, and explores the expectations and responsibilities of managers to create and maintain a diverse and inclusive workplace.

If you think *Conversations in Inclusiveness* is right for your organization, company or firm, contact Rachel Allen at peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu to explore possibilities.

FACULTY AND STAFF FOCUS

The Peace and Justice Institute 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 and staff members who wish to integrate practices promoting these values into their professional lives are encouraged to engage in development courses with the Peace and Justice Institute.

Faculty Course Offerings for Spring 2017

- INDV 7315 Danger of a Single Story
- INDV 7312 Mindfulness Tools for Education
- INDV 2255 Multiple Perspectives
- INDV 7310 Working with Conflict
- PJI Faculty/Staff Retreat (see flyer below)

To register for one of these courses, visit [The Edge](#).

Register Now for the Annual PJI Faculty and Staff Retreat



PEACE AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE

Spring Faculty and Staff Retreat

February 24th and 25th

This year, the retreat is based on Parker Palmer's book *Healing the Heart of Democracy* and invites participants to reflect on living as the witness, utilizing a reflective practice, and exploring ways of knowing beyond the rational. The retreat offers two days of quiet reflection, positive interaction with colleagues, and artistic expression, each of which help us to align with our purpose and renew ourselves for our work and lives.

Click here for details and registration. Space is limited.
For more information contact Rachel Allen at x2709 or rallen39@valenciacollege.edu

SEED at Valencia



[Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity](#) (SEED), utilizes a cohort-based, monthly seminar model with the intention of creating gender fair, multiculturally equitable, and globally informed educational spaces and workplaces.



SEED 1 and 2 participants gather for the final seminar for fall 2016

This past summer, Jennyly Charriez, Rudy Darden, Shari Koopman, Jeannie Rodriguez, and Lisandra Suarez were trained as SEED facilitators in California.

Staff Reflection by Angy Jimenez Nunez Student Activity Accounting Specialist

When I applied for the SEED cohort, I was interested in the fact that it was not the typical leadership experience where I sit and listen to a lecture or a power point, but that I get to participate in interactive exercises that make me feel something; make me think; make me search within myself to see how I really feel. However, the interesting part for me is not so much that I get to feel something, but that I get to share it with the group if I choose to and get to actively listen to someone else's feelings. SEED helps us be more aware and accepting of other's perspectives, and teaches us to listen to understand rather than listen to just hear. This is very important so we can serve our students better.

PJI Staff Assistant is Featured Colleague August 8, 2016

By Dani Moritz-Long
Senior News Writer

When Krystal Pherai enrolled in a Valencia class, entitled Introduction to Peace Studies, little did she know the impact the class would have on her life. At the time, she was merely curious about the topic — but, today, she realizes that her seemingly insignificant decision would forever alter the course of her career, even her life.

That's because the course became a catalyst for the kind of activism that fuels her personal life and her professional

ambitions as a staff assistant for the Peace and Justice Institute (PJI). It was through that course that she met the person Krystal considers one of her greatest mentors, Penny Villegas — a now-retired professor who taught the peace studies course.

"Penny was the first professor to ever make me feel inspired, and she still inspires me," said Krystal. "Her passion for justice, her love for animals, her care for people and her drive for inner peace encourages me." It was also Penny who led Krystal on the path that would lead to her employment at Valencia.

"She wrote a note on one of my assignments, asking me if I'd be interested in interning with the then Peace and Justice Initiative (PJI). I really wasn't completely sure what the organization was, but I jumped on board."

When Krystal began her internship, she met Rachel Allen — who, several years later, is now Krystal's leader. "Rachel is another person at the College who inspires me greatly," Krystal explained. "She is also one of my mentors and has connected me with so many amazing opportunities. Her wisdom is something I'm very thankful for, and working with her has been one of the most positive aspects of my life."



Today, in her role at Valencia, Krystal, who earned an associate degree from Valencia and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from the University of Central Florida, continues to build upon the themes she found so intriguing in her peace studies class she took as a student — except now she is the one facilitating conversations and events about those themes.

Among the projects she is most proud of is co-founding the PJI Ambassadors program, which invites student leaders to meet weekly to practice PJI principles and assist with events and activities; contributing articles to PJI's bi-annual newsletters; and organizing activities for Global Peace Week, which takes place in September, and Conversation on Justice, which takes place in January.

Krystal is also proud of her accomplishments with broader

PRINCIPLES FOR HOW WE TREAT EACH OTHER

Our Practice of Respect and Community Building

1. Create a hospitable and accountable community.
2. Listen deeply.
3. Create an advice free zone.
4. Practice asking honest and open questions.
5. Give space for unpopular answers.
6. Respect silence.
7. Suspend judgment.
8. Identify assumptions.
9. Speak your truth.
10. When things get difficult, turn to wonder.
11. Practice slowing down.
12. All voices have value.
13. Maintain confidentiality.

community activism, which has ranged from leading an Orlando demonstration to raise awareness for the #BringBackOurGirls campaign to organizing a vigil in the wake of the recent Pulse tragedy.

“One of the things I like best about working at Valencia is that PJI is really making a positive difference on our campuses and in the community,” she said. “I’m an activist, so I love hands-on work, raising my voice and standing up for important matters. I love taking peaceful action to make a positive change, and PJI does just that at Valencia.”



Krystal shares some of her favorite Valencia memories

In awe of Krystal’s vigor and passion, Rachel is proud of Krystal’s accomplishments. “Watching Krystal lead the Peace and Justice Ambassadors and grow in her ability to skillfully navigate conflict is thrilling,” she said. “Rarely do any of us want to move toward conflict to find resolve. I believe, for many of us, it is our instinct to avoid these challenging and uncomfortable situations. Krystal, through her work with PJI, has experienced the value of working to transform conflict and I have watched her do it successfully. Anyone who has worked with a supervisor or leader skilled at addressing conflict, or one who avoids it, recognizes the value of this strength that Krystal now possesses.”

She added, “I could go on and on about Krystal’s strengths. What I know for sure is that Valencia College, and PJI specifically, are the true beneficiaries of such a passionate, committed and talented employee and role model as Krystal.”

Of course, Krystal isn’t always out picketing for human rights and leading the charge toward a more peaceful world. So, to rejuvenate and regenerate, you can catch Krystal practicing yoga, trying out new local restaurants, making pressed flower art, enjoying nature and having fun with her family.

But even when she’s off discovering new local eateries or wandering the woods, you can bet that making the world a better place is always on this superwoman’s mind.

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

Staff Reflection by Mary Beth Bensey PJI Staff Assistant

The Principles are one of my favorite aspects of PJI’s work. No matter your religion, race, ethnicity, or gender, the Principles can serve as a guide to building a community where “All voices have value,” as the twelfth Principle states. My favorite Principle is “Practice slowing down,” as someone who is busy with work, graduate school, and family life, it takes an intentional effort to slow down in this crazy world.

Posters of the Principles for How We Treat Each Other (11”x17” and 24”x30”) 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.

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.

Visit our website for printable versions of the Principles for How We Treat Each Other found in English, Spanish, and Creole.

PEACE AND THE ARTS

The College, the tree, Valencia Grows

By Neal Phillips

College-Wide Faculty Association 2016-17, President
Professor of English

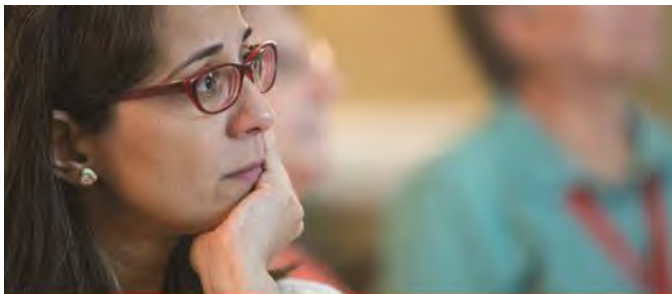
The college, the tree, Valencia grows
Branches out and perseveres with swelled heart
Dedicated to students, all do know
Our branches leave, but we never do part

Service nourishes, courage helps sustain
Faculty, leaves, determined an adapt
Fed with dedication, student make gains
The Aspen prize proved our oak is quite apt

But innovation, peace, and justice change
The tree weathers constantly in the wind
Each fall and spring, our leaves, they must arrange
Adapt, gardens on rooftops, and again

College faculty, leaves, covet buds all
Branches grow, leaves always answer the call

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Conversation on Justice

January 30th - February 3rd

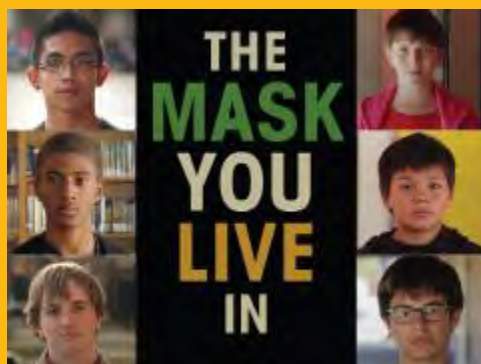
LEARN MORE

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, will delve into critical conversations whose ultimate goal is to promote a culture of peace and understanding and mend the fabric of humanity.

Conversation on Justice Featured Film:

The Mask You Live In

Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at 6 pm
Valencia East Campus, Room 8-101



One focus of this year's Conversation on Justice is on gender, the gender spectrum and how women and men are socialized in traditional gender roles. In partnership with the [Feminist Association of Valencia East](#) (FAVE) and the [Global Peace Film Festival](#) (GPFF), PJI will screen [The Mask You Live In](#), which follows boys and young men as they struggle to stay true to themselves while negotiating American's narrow definition of masculinity.

This year's Conversation on Justice also features Sam Obeid. Sam(ira) Obeid is a queer activist. She identifies as a masculine performing lesbian and is somewhat of a subject matter expert on gender identity and gender expression. An internationally renowned spoken word poet, her work focuses on the tensions of gender, immigration, love, religion and intersectionality. She was born and raised in India and moved to the U.S. in 2007, where she earned her second Master's in Multimedia Journalism and her third in Women's and Gender Studies. Sam now works in youth Development and youth empowerment as [ANYTOWN Coordinator for Community Tampa Bay](#).



Sam shares, "I'm a lot of things. But most importantly, I'm all heart. I live and breathe words, equality and equity. I write lines everywhere, words everywhere. I live in the work I do. Faces I photograph are pinned to my wall as are maps of subways in cities I love, and notes to places I haven't visited yet. I don't believe in drawing boxes or borders. I believe in open lines of communication. My pitbull is the love of my life."

To view videos of Sam Obeid's work, follow these links:

[Sam\(ira\) Obeid - "The Journal" \(WOWPS 2016\)](#)

["We Are All Trans" - Sam\(ira\) Obeid & Sara Crawley](#)

The Conversation on Justice will be hosted on each of the Valencia College campuses and are co-funded by Student Development. Find the complete schedule of events at valenciacollege.edu/PJI.

Konferans Lape Jacmel Took Place August 3-5, 2016



For the third year in a row, members of PJI partnered with [St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church](#) to provide peace education through the Konferans Lape Jacmel (Jacmel Peace Conference) in Jacmel, Haiti. The conference was designed as a

facilitator-training program, with co-leaders coming from various parishes and organizations from throughout Jacmel and Port Au Prince's SAKALA. The conference was facilitated by Rachel Allen and Paul Chapman from PJI with support from Brian Rusch from the Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation.



At the Jacmel Peace Conference participants

PJI Colleague Featured in The Huffington Post

A statement titled, *A Message to the Straight-Allies: Maintaining Safe Spaces and Honoring the Narratives for Queer and Trans People of Color* was written by Chris Cuevas following the Pulse nightclub tragedy. Chris is the Co-Founder of [QLatinx](#) and Co-Coordinates PJI's Peace and Justice Ambassador Program. Below is an excerpt from his statement.



I wake up every day in fear. Afraid of what the outside world has in store for me—for people like me. Afraid of the lingering stares, afraid of the not-so-quiet whispers, afraid of the taunting names that have followed people like me since adolescence—

faggot, illegal, homo, joto, maricon. People like me—queer people, brown people—already feel that our lives, at any given moment, are threatened. We fear the threat of institutional violence, of interpersonal violence, now we're forced to fear the threat of gun violence... [read more here.](#)

..... Help Us change the name of the PJI NEWSLETTER

We're naming the newsletter! We invite you to submit a name(s) for this dynamic publication that is a force for social justice, and to celebrate the voices and imagery that grace its pages.

We invite you to submit a name or names by emailing peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu by March 15, 2017.

If your submission is selected, a donation will be given to a nonprofit of your choice in your name and "the Story of You" featured in the spring issue of (You Fill in the Blank)



PEACE AND JUSTICE INSTITUTE

Spring 2017 Calendar of Events

For details visit www.valenciacollege.edu/pji

Tuesday, January 24th

PJI Student Skillshop: Be the Change

Winter Park Campus | Room 1-143 | 11:30 am-12:30 pm

Thursday, January 26th

PJI Student Skillshop: Be the Change

West Campus | Room SSB-206G | 1:00-2:00 pm

Monday, January 30th-Friday, February 3rd

Conversation on Justice

College-wide | Check online schedule for events

Friday, January 20th and Friday, March 3rd

INDV 7315 Danger of a Single Story (for faculty only)

West Campus | Room 11-106 | 1:00-4:00 pm

Thursday, February 2nd and Friday, February 3rd

INDV 7312 Mindfulness Tools for Education (for faculty only)

February 2nd | East Campus | Room 3-113 | 1:00-4:00 pm

February 3rd | West Campus | Room 4-236 | 1:00-4:00 pm

Saturday, February 18th

Peace and Justice Ambassador Student Retreat (for students only)

East Campus | Room 3-113 | 9:00 am-4:00 pm



Thursday, February 23rd and Friday, February 24th

INDV 2255 Multiple Perspectives (for faculty only)

February 23rd | Osceola Campus | Room 4-105 | 2:00-4:00 pm

February 24th | East Campus | Room 3-113 | 2:00-4:00 pm

Friday, February 24th and Saturday, February 25th

Faculty and Staff Annual Peace and Justice Retreat

(for faculty and staff only, Registration required)

Maitland Civic Center | 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Thursday, March 2nd

PJI Student Skillshop: Be the Change

East Campus | Room 3-113 | 1:00-2:00 pm

Friday, March 10th

INDV 7310 Working with Conflict (for faculty)

West Campus | Room 11-106 | 1:00-5:00 pm

Tuesday, March 21st

Peace Breakfast: An Interfaith Gathering

East Campus | Room 8-101 | 8:00-10:00 am

Saturday, March 25th

Spring Fling Service Project at the Coalition for the Homeless

639 W. Central Blvd, Orlando, FL 32801 | 8:30 am-1:30 pm

Join Valencia clubs and groups across the campuses as we come together to bring a day of fun and spring festivities to the children and families in residency at the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida.

Thursday, March 30th

**Mistakes Were Made (But Not By Me) Keynote Presentation
by Carol Tavris with the Psychology Speakers Series**

East Campus | Performing Arts Center (PAC) | 1:00 pm

Thursday, March 30th

**The Mismeasure of Woman: Q & A by Carol Tavris
with the Psychology Speakers Series**

East Campus | Room 8-101 | 2:45 pm

Saturday, May 6th

Orlando Youth Empowerment Summit (OYES)

Valencia College School of Public Safety | 8:00 am-4:00 pm

Visit www.orlandoyes.org for details



IN REMEMBRANCE OF

Richard Gair

We mourn the death of Professor Rich Gair who was one of the founding members and “Original Twelve” of the Peace and Justice “Initiative,” now Institute. He rarely missed a gathering or retreat and committed himself to practicing the Principles and growing his own inner peace. Rich is greatly missed by the PJI family. The following is a message from Dr. Stacey Johnson, East and Winter Park Campus President and PJI Advisory Council member. PJI dedicates this issue of the newsletter to our beloved friend.

“The only truly dead are those who have been forgotten.” As I mourn the loss of Richard Gair, a beloved colleague who passed away this morning, this Jewish proverb seems so fitting.

A professor of reading and Holocaust studies, Richard devoted his career to empowering students and changing their lives by teaching them to not be bystanders to today’s prejudice, hate and discrimination, but to be “up-standers” and always stand up for what is right. But while his teaching weighed heavy on students’ minds and conscience, that isn’t to say he lacked humor. On his website, Richard described himself as “short and overweight” with a “bald spot that gets bigger as the years pass.”

Needless to say, Richard will never be truly gone — because he will live on in the hearts of those who knew him and in the actions of those he has inspired.

Richard taught at Valencia since 2003. In his tenure at the college, he spent many years not only teaching in the classroom, but teaching around the world as he showed students firsthand the dangers of hate with study abroad trips to Poland to experience the remains of Holocaust sites. He also devoted his time to presenting at conferences, serving on educational committees and furthering his own education to better serve his students and impact the world.

Richard continued his teaching and learning in many areas outside of the classroom, including participating in Valencia’s Endowed Chair program. In this 2011-2012 Endowed Chair video, Richard shares his experiences traveling to Holocaust sites in Europe and his insights on genocide.

He had planned to someday retire and move to Israel to better connect with his culture and heritage. I wish with all my heart he could have made that trip — as he deserved every happiness in the world. In his honor and memory, however, we will plant a few trees in Israel in his name, as is Jewish custom, to honor his dreams.

I also hope that each of you will join me in honoring his memory and his spirit by living with peace and love in our hearts and by always taking a stand against the discrimination that plagues us. Richard taught us that each of us can make a difference, and so there is no greater way to keep his memory alive than by doing just that.

With deepest sympathies,
Stacey Johnson
President, East and Winter Park Campuses



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 INSTITUTE.

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

