

RAYS

A Publication of NonViolence Alliance of Greater Cincinnati Spring, 2019

The NonViolence Alliance of Greater Cincinnati (NVA) is excited to present its first issue of our newsletter, "Rays"! This particular issue aims to bring readers rays of hope as we enter the spring season, and it includes an update about IJPC's NVA coordinator, an exciting opportunity to learn about the universal human values at a workshop this summer, and insights from a young peace activist. As you learn about NVA, we invite you to become a ray of hope that brings enduring peace to our communities.

NVA is more than the name of a group of organizations and individuals centered in the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky area; the NonViolence Alliance is a *happening*. Convened and facilitated by the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC), NVA connects individuals and organizations working to build peace in the greater Cincinnati community. It is a holistic, grassroots movement that seeks to make Cincinnati a welcoming, compassionate, reconciled, just

and peaceful community. Grounded in Kingian and Gandhian principles of nonviolence, the NonViolence Alliance strives to make a difference in our communities by uniting the efforts of existing organizations working to mitigate violence in its many forms.



Some individuals have expressed a sense of loneliness in their endeavors to create a more peaceful community, but joining with others who share unique approaches but similar goals builds a sense of community. After attending a Peace Builders Potluck, cohosted by NVA and SOS Art, one person said, "I don't feel alone anymore. I feel supported in this work."

If your spirit is not satisfied with your efforts to reduce violence in our area, the NonViolence Alliance may be an avenue to help you engage in the work for peace. NVA needs your help to make our community a more nonviolent place for all.

Peace be with you!



UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Tuesday, April 2, 6 - 8pm: Quarterly Peace Builders Potluck, Peaslee Neighborhood Center (IJPC), 215 East 14th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For more information, e-mail Jessie at Jessie@IJPCcincinnati.org or call 513-579-8547

Friday, June 14—Sunday, June 16: Human Values Workshop, Xavier University, Arrupe Lounge on 1st Floor, Gallagher Student Center. To register, email jessie@ijpcincinnati.org

CONNECTING AND SHARING YOUR GIFTS

To learn more about NVA, please visit us at www.nvagc.org.

If you or your organization are interested in becoming involved with NVA, please contact Jessie Frank via email jessie@IJPCcincinnati.org or call 513-579-8547.

NVA INITIATOR SISTER ANDREA KOVERMAN MOVES ON TO EL PASO AREA

Inspired by the Nonviolent Cities model from Campaign Nonviolence, Sr. Andrea Koverman, SC, then the program manager for the anti-death penalty and peace and nonviolence programs at the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC), believed that



Sr. Andrea Koverman, SC

Greater Cincinnati could also be a nonviolent city. With IJPC as the convener, and many passionate individuals and organizations supporting the effort, the Non-violence Alliance of Greater Cincinnati (NVA) was formed to promote the values and ideals we seek right here in our own community, like dismantling structures of violence and striving to live lives of nonviolence.

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Sr. Andrea led this initiative with passion and wisdom that brought many people with diverse backgrounds into a shared space to address nonviolence directly. After a year of volunteering in ministry at IJPC and then three years as a staff member, Sr. Andrea transitioned from her role at the end of 2018. She has moved to a small town near El Paso, TX where she and a small community of Sisters of Charity are working directly with migrants seeking asylum who have recently crossed the U.S./Mexico border and need assistance in their next steps.

Though we miss the light that Sr. Andrea brought to this work, the passion and vision for nonviolence continues through the active work of all those who are part of NVA.

Allison Reynolds-Berry, MSW

Executive Director
Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC)

MEET OUR NEW NVA COORDINATOR, JESSIE FRANK

Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Jessie graduated from Xavier University with degrees in both English and Political science, along with a Peace and Justice Studies minor. Through her studies and her time spent in the Dorothy Day Center for Faith and Justice, Jessie unpacked questions regarding racial justice, economic inequality, intersectional feminism, and nonviolent movements, among other things.

Jessie returns to Cincinnati after working in Columbus for state Senator Cecil Thomas. While there, she dove deep into criminal justice issues and gained a broad understanding

of and passion for the reforms necessary to make the system more just, rehabilitative, and effective for all.

Jessie comes to IJPC bringing a love for policy, hope in the power of radical imagination, and a readiness to engage with community members committed to systemic change.



Ms. Jessie Frank

HUMAN VALUES WORKSHOP

Jayanthi Ramesh, NVA member and peace activist

The Buddha stated that nonviolence was the highest virtue. Nonviolence, though, is not merely the absence of physical violence, but it is a practice that requires relating to others without violence in thought, word, and deed—unsullied by selfish interest. In essence, the practice of truth, righteous conduct, peace, and love results in nonviolence—which the Buddha declared as the highest virtue.

The goal of NVA is to create a culture of peace and harmony in our community; but in order to grow an oak tree, we must first plant an acorn. The Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) program is a perfect start that will put us on the route to foster peace and happiness.

SSEHV draws inspiration from the moral and spiritual teachings of Sathya Sai Baba, the most widely respected spiritual educator of contemporary India. He taught that, “good education is that which teaches the methods of achieving world peace, promotes unity, equality, and peaceful coexistence amongst human beings.”

The philosophy of SSEHV centers on this type of education, along with “educare”. Education as we traditionally think of it refers to secular education that is information based, related to the head, and useful for making a living. But educare is spiritual, focused on bringing out the inherent goodness in man, and translating human values into action. It is transformational, related to the heart, and is for life itself.

The practice of educare leads to the realization that love in thought is truth, love in

action is right action, love in feeling is peace, and love in understanding is nonviolence – the zenith of human values. This is true education, which will transform the heart of humanity. Ultimately, when education and educare are integrated, they create what is known as “3HV” – meaning the head, heart, and hands work in perfect harmony.

The universality of SSEHV is adaptable to all curricula, cultures, and creeds. Furthermore, it supports Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states: “Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, friendship among all nations, races or religious groups and shall further the activities of the UN for the maintenance of peace.”

If you are interested in learning more about the human values, please join the Nonviolence Alliance this summer from June 14-16 at Xavier University, where the Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE-USA) will lead a workshop that introduces participants to the philosophy, process, and methods of Sathya Sai Education.

Please stay tuned for more details, which will be posted to NVA’s website and Facebook page. We are excited to see you there!



Update from the NVA Education Committee:

The goal of the NonViolence Alliance is to provide knowledge and possible actions to aid in creating a culture of unity and peace. With that goal in mind, the Education Committee aims to fulfill the following:

1. Create a speakers' bureau. Speakers would be recruited and offered training regarding non violent living if requested. A contact system would enable groups or individuals to request a speaker from NVA.
2. Create workshops for teachers to help create a culture of peace in the classroom.
3. Create a nonviolence archive of materials for individuals and groups to use. It would include online resources, physical materials including posters, art, and music.
4. Expose and educate about structural violence that silently causes harm to the disadvantaged.
5. Serve as resources for and share peace culture ideas with school administrators, parent-teacher groups, faculty, student clubs, and service organizations. parent-teacher groups, faculty, student clubs, and service organizations.

UPDATE FROM THE EVENTS COMMITTEE



The events committee has worked hard planning our last potluck.

This month, we worked to prepare our next potluck on April 2.

Young at Peace

Ahalya Ramesh, young peace activist and freshman at Vanderbilt University

As young persons with much invested in the future, persons of faith, or simply global citizens, we share responsibility for the present and future well-being of our city, and of the human family. The world we are inheriting is rife with problems where tragedy strikes with a desensitizing frequency. I ask myself if this is the world I want to live in? What can I do?

I grew up in an environment where human values such as peace, nonviolence, love, truth and righteousness were ingrained into everything we did. My spiritual Sunday school helped me see these values less as abstract concepts and more as tools I could apply to daily life.

High school was the turning point. I transitioned from simply being a practitioner of peace to becoming an advocate. This was because I understood the importance and urgency of my individual role in spreading peace within my community. Maybe our younger generation will embrace this key role. We hope to help build Peace Clubs in high schools and colleges to help young people gain a better understanding of how nonviolence is the foundation of the social justice we seek in this world.

Last year, Cincinnati was declared an International City of Peace by the mayor and city council. Despite this first step, we are far from fulfilling it. The value of such a declaration stems from removing the perceived distance between who we want to be and who we are. Transitioning to a culture of peace requires a shift in mindset that comes from understanding core human values that transcend religious, socioeconomic and cultural differences. Incorporating value-based education into the formal school curriculum is a process we are embarking upon. This gives youth a seat at the table and equips us with the skills needed, such as empathy, active listening, non-violent communication, and conflict resolution, to solve the issues that define our lives. Come join us!