# ISSUES

October 2024

*Formerly Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center*

IGNITE PEACE

## New Nonviolence Trainings!

*By - Samantha Searls, Program Director*

This summer the Program Directors, Bekky Baker and myself, attended an 8-week Train-The-Trainer course with Pace e Bene, an international non-denominational organization fostering justice, peace, and the well-being of all through education, resources, and action for nonviolent change. Ignite Peace has worked with Pace e Bene and their Campaign Nonviolence project for many years.

Pace e Bene's "Engaging Nonviolence" curriculum has reached over 30,000 peacebuilders throughout the world; and after experiencing it ourselves, we are excited to bring the resources to the people of Cincinnati. Utilizing the fifteen-part study and action guide, *Engaging Nonviolence*, Bekky and I created our Nonviolence Training Program consisting of four unique offerings.

***1) Understanding Nonviolence: Unpacking Violence***. This session begins with a discussion on the spectrum of violence and how people in society define violence differently. As a basic introduction to nonviolence, participants gain a working knowledge of the five dimensions of nonviolence and practice using the Two Hands of Nonviolence. To conclude, we discuss Dr. King's vision of a Beloved Community and how nonviolence plays a part in achieving that vision.

*Participants at the Strategic Nonviolence Intensive engaged in bystander intervention and de-escalation training.*

*Continued on page 3*

## Barriers to Connection

*By - Bekky Baker, Program Director*

Over a year ago I walked down the street from our office to visit Elwood Jones at the Hamilton County Jail, where he was staying during the course of his exoneration hearings. Despite being located just a few floors above me, we met on a video monitor that was fuzzy, lagged, and used a small screen the size of an average laptop. The people around me, virtually visiting loved ones, used every second of their brief 20 minute video call, determined not to miss a moment. This is the reality of visiting people in jail.

During the pandemic, jails across the country switched to video visitation to protect people's health and still provide that face-to-face connection with loved ones. Securus Technologies, one of the companies that provides this service, has a contract with the Hamilton County jail. Since this switch four years ago, our jail system has not brought back in-person visitations.

In addition to the lack of access to human interaction under these new visitation practices, county jails are now working with Securus to obtain recordings and transcripts of video calls between those in jail and their visitors, including loved ones and lawyers. These recordings and transcripts are then provided to the Prosecutor's Offices. The Wren Collective, an organization working to decrease the legal system's footprint, outlines in their report how this is a violation of sixth amendment rights and access

*Continued on page 3*

# A Letter from Shannon Hughes

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of Ignite Peace. It is a tremendous honor to join a community that shares such a deep commitment to fostering peace and justice.
As a college student, I was trained by Ignite Peace staff members on nonviolence and de-escalation tactics before I headed to my first large-scale protest. Later, as the leader of the NETWORK Education Program in Washington, DC, I was further shaped by the ethic and vision of Catholic Sisters who saw ministry in the political and were called to champion systemic change though federal policy. I have spent the last ten years working with students at Xavier's Dorothy Day Center for Faith and Justice, and six of those on Ignite Peace's Board. As Dorothy wrote, "The greatest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us." I truly believe in Ignite Peace's ability to meet that challenge.

During my first month here, I met hope-filled partners at the Festival of Faiths. I was trained as a Peacekeeper for the upcoming election cycle. I watched as members of the Immigrant Dignity Coalition explained to City Council members the resources Cincinnati needs to invest in to be a truly welcoming city. I learned tactics and practiced interventions in our Strategic Nonviolence Intensive with folks who ranged from college sophomores to new retirees. With our team, I have invited city leaders to help us expand the reach of our Race and Racism Docuseries. I was welcomed by many of you at our meet and greet! In each of these spaces was the spark of that revolution.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your support of Ignite Peace up until this point, and your trust in our continued work. I am eager to build upon this momentum and look forward to connecting with many of you in the weeks and months ahead. Please reach out with your ideas and hopes for Ignite Peace!

In peace,

**Founding Partners:**
Congregation of St. Joseph
Sisters of Charity
Sisters of Mercy
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg

**Partners:**
Anawim Community
Bellarmine Chapel
Cincinnati Friends Meeting
Cincinnati Mennonite Fellowship
Comboni Missionaries
Congregation of Divine Providence
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor
Franciscans, St. John the Baptist Province
Glenmary Home Missioners
Mt Auburn Presbyterian Church
Sisters of Notre Dame of Covington
New Jerusalem Community
St John Unitarian Universalist Church
Ursulines of Brown County
Ursulines of Cincinnati

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*Program Director*
Hayley Huge
*Operations Director*
Shannon Hughes
*Executive Director*
Samantha Searls, MSW
*Program Director*

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Continued from page 1, *New Nonviolence Trainings*

*2) Conflict & Community: Using Nonviolence in Our Lives*. This training explores a range of responses to conflict and violence. We'll practice taking different perspectives, increase our empathic abilities, examine how emotions give us information about our needs, and practice de-escalating tense situations using the CLARA method and the 5D's of Bystander Intervention.

*3) Building a Culture of Nonviolence: Why We Need Nonviolence In Our World.* This session explores some of the principles of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. and will introduce a challenge to examine the idea of Constructive Programs and how we can build a nonviolent vision for the future. We will also embrace the Soul Force we all have inside of us to inspire action.

*Shannon Hughes and Abby King-Kaiser volunteered as peacekeepers at the Catholic Charities Su Casa Health Fair.*

*4) Strategic Nonviolence in Movements for Change*. The final session will be the latest evolution of the original Strategic Nonviolence for Peace Advocacy work we did a few years ago. The training will begin with by exploring power and the different types of power. Then we will learn about the history of nonviolence in social movements and dissect the four components of Strategic Nonviolence.

To organize a private training for your community, visit our website and fill out the request form. Public sessions hosted by Ignite Peace staff are also listed on the events page of our website and in this newsletter. There are so many tools we have at our disposal to move us away from violence into the Beloved Community.

Continued from page 1, *Barriers to Connection*

to counsel.

In response, the Ohio Jail Coalition, a group of Ohioans from across the state, formed to work to end the harm of Ohio's carceral system. The group is currently working to raise awareness about this issue and bringing back in -person visitation. The coalition is gathering data on county jails and collecting stories from people across Ohio.

You can get involved by collecting data on jails and visiting the Ohio Jail Coalition website.

# Upcoming Events

For more information and to register visit www.IgnitePeace.org/events

Immigrant Dignity Coalition
**Wednesday, November 20**
**Wednesday, December 18**
6:30 - 8:00 PM
*Mt. Auburn Presbyterian & Zoom*

Anti-Death Penalty Grassroots Meeting
**Monday, November 4**
*6:00 - 7:00 PM*
*Zoom*

Peace Potluck
**Wednesday, December 11**
6:00 - 8:00 PM
*Peaslee Neighborhood Center*

Understanding Nonviolence: Unpacking Violence
**Wednesday, January 15**
6:00 - 8:00 PM
*Ignite Peace Office*

Conflict & Community: Using Nonviolence in Our Lives
**Wednesday, February 12**
*6:00 - 8:00 PM*
*Ignite Peace Office*

Building a Culture of Nonviolence: Why We Need Nonviolence In Our World
**Wednesday, March 12**
6:00 - 8:00 PM
*Ignite Peace Office*

Strategic Nonviolence in Movements for Change
**Wednesday, April 16**
6:00 - 8:00 PM
*Ignite Peace Office*

Formerly Intercommunity
Justice and Peace Center
215 E 14th Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Nonprofit
Organization
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# Correcting the Narrative about Immigrants in Ohio

*By - Samantha Searls, Program Director*

Anti-immigrant rhetoric seems to be everywhere right now. With the election looming, our immigrant neighbors are being subjected to lies, scapegoating, racism, and xenophobia. The past few weeks have been especially challenging for the Haitian immigrant community in Springfield, Ohio. After being thrust in the national spotlight by former President Trump and Ohio Senator J.D. Vance, white supremacist groups have descended upon the town with nefarious alt-right reporters crafting malicious stories and "swatting" innocent people. Over 33 bomb threats have shut down primary schools, local colleges, and even City Hall.

We've seen how hateful rhetoric leads to real violence. To counter it, advocates in Ohio have been working alongside Haitian Ohioans to lift up stories of kindness, community-building, solidarity and support through the One Love Ohio campaign. In addition, people have donated to local organizations and submitted op-eds to their local paper. It's vital that elected officials who support immigrants use their platform to speak out against hateful rhetoric. We all need to use our voice to let the public know that immigrants are welcome in Ohio. Call your representative and tell them you support immigrants.

In Cincinnati, show your support for immigrants by getting involved with the Immigrant Dignity Coalition. Our next meeting will be at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church and on Zoom on Wednesday, November 20. This network over 40 organizations is dedicated to informing, connecting, and mobilizing to defend and protect the dignity of the immigrant and refugee community by working in partnership with one another. Together, we can tell the true story of immigrants in Ohio.