

Bridges of Peace



Newsletter of Peace Education
Centers, 5, 2004



Picture of Khoren Tigranyan
Sch. #2, 13years old

Peace to All



It has been two years already, since the “Peace Education and Conflict Resolution” project runs in our School #29. Despite the temporary houses condition, school administration provided “Peace Center” with the best classroom of the school – computer classroom.

Fifteen high school students are the members of the center. During the lessons they have learnt the concept of conflict, its reasons and stages of development. They have learnt skills of avoiding conflicts or resolving them in a peaceful manner. Ways of avoiding conflicts were shown with examples of Armenian folklore.

“Peace Center” also became familiar with the history of the UN establishment, its goals and peacemaking activities around the world. Using booklets, posters and Internet connection, children became familiar with the UN organs and separate departments.

In all the corners of the world both adults and children think about peacekeeping. The evidences of the mentioned fact are the letters we receive from different regions of Armenia, Georgia and Hawaii. The writers of the letters are of different ages, but one common concept is in the center of their attention - Peace.

Pupils of the “Peace Center” are the spreaders of peace. It was proved by the “Peace Month”, announced in the school, when our pupils conducted unforgettable peace lessons in 15 classrooms.



Peace education should be implemented in all schools and for all grades. This is the only way to keep our Earth in safety.

Peace to all.

*Karine Baghinyan
Teacher, School #29*

Peace Month



After completing the training course about Sadako and a thousand paper cranes in the Schools #29 and 30, the “Peace Month” was announced. Members of the centers conducted “open classes” for other pupils of their schools. During these classes they presented knowledge and skills, gained in the Center; they also showed wallpapers and issues of “Peace New Birth”

newsletter, prepared by them; they told the story of Sadako and the tradition of a thousand paper cranes, related to it – thus becoming true peace spreaders. Almost all pupils of the indicated schools learned to make symbols of Peace – white cranes.

Besides pupils, many teachers also participated in the trainings, dedicated to the Peace Month.



Sch. #30

Peace Month allowed for transferring the knowledge, gained in the Center to the pupils of our school. It was another chance to check our knowledge and make it more sustainable. First, me and Hasmik presented “Women for Development” NGO, its mission and activities. Then we presented works to our classmates, showed wallpapers, prepared by us and talked about the Center’s everyday activities.

It was very interesting for all, however the most interesting for them was the story of Sadako and a thousand white cranes, as well as learning how to make cranes.

My classmates were aware, that I was attending the “Peace Center” and it was a pleasure for me telling them about it.

*Gohar Simonyan
School #29*

I have conducted a lesson for the pupils of the 5th grade and I was trying to do everything in order to make the lesson more interesting and not boring for the pupils. And imagine, that I succeeded, because they asked me to stay with them for the following lesson as well. They brought numerous examples of conflicts, which occurred between their friends, and we tried to show the peaceful ways of their resolution. But the most interesting for them was the story of Sadako, and when we taught them how to make white cranes – everyone started to sing and dance during the break, carrying the cranes in their hands.

I am very happy, that by taking part in this Center’s trainings I have not only become a peace lover, but also was able to somehow spread peace in my environment.

*Manik Petrosyan
School #29*



Sch. #30

“Peace Education Center” organized a Peace Month in the school. We were assigned to spread our gained knowledge among other pupils. The entire group was divided into several couples, and we presented our knowledge, as well as everyday activities of the Center to others. was very interested in what we were dealing with and what we have learnt in the Center.

Me and my classmate conducted a lesson for the pupils of the 4th grade. Several teachers of the school were also present at the lessons, conducted by us.

*Anna Tovmasyan
School #29*

During the Peace Month we have conducted classes for the pupils of elementary school. We told them everything we have learnt in the Center; together with the kids we have analyzed Armenian fairytales and ballads, and they suggested peaceful ways of their resolution. At the end, we taught them how to prepare paper cranes.

I hope that they will also become “peace spreaders” and will disseminate the knowledge, gained in that short period of time in their environment and families.

*Arpine Petrosyan
School #29*

I have told my classmates about the activities of the “Peace Center”. My classmates were interested, because they have heard “Peace Education Center” title for numerous times, however they did not know about its goals and what we were doing there. Even teachers were interested. We have shown the wallpapers, prepared by us, issues of “Peace New Birth” newsletter, talked about the reasons of conflicts and the peaceful ways of their resolution, etc. We have told the story of Sadako and made white cranes together. They were very interested in one of the posters, prepared by us. On the poster we have written the word “Peace” in different languages, and they also wrote that word in different languages on the wings of the white cranes, prepared by them. Currently I consider myself a peace spreader, because I was able to transfer all my gained knowledge to my classmates.

*Hasmik Simonyan
School #29*

A "Peace Day" was organized in Secondary School #30 in 2004. On that day all the pupils of 9th grade conducted peace lessons for the schoolchildren of the 1-10th grades. Almost all pupils of the school became familiar with the activities of the Peace Center. With the efforts of our specialists, pupils gained significant knowledge during the peace classes. They were listening with great interest and attention. The class leading teachers were also satisfied. Members of the Center were very prepared and realized the responsibility of the work they were assigned. Vice Principal of the school created all the conditions, necessary for conducting the classes. Peace lessons had their positive impact.

To the opinion of the school's teachers, peace lessons are very efficient and they want those to be continuous.

Mr. Manukyan – the Principal of the school, as well as Vice Principals – Badalyan and Hayrapetyan encourage and support "Peace Center" classes.

We express our gratefulness to Ms. A. Mikayelyan, the president of "Women for Development" NGO, as well as project specialists for organizing and conducting the training course, and we wish that these classes will be taught in all the schools of Gyumri, as far as those are very useful and educational.

K. Meliksetyan
Teacher of the
"Peace Center" of School #30

Peace lessons were organized in all classes of the school. The goal of the lesson was to make "Peace Center" members – pupils of the 9th grade to facilitate discussions, dedicated to conflicts, friendship, avoiding conflicts, UN activities and goals.

Pupils were willing to participate in the training course.

Such events have positive impact on schoolchildren education process.

S. Badalyan
Vice Principal,
School #30

That day was very special for the school, as far as all the classes were conducted by pupils of the 9th grade – Peace lessons. The goal of the lesson was to make "Peace Center" members – pupils of the 9th grade to facilitate discussions, dedicated to the concepts of peace and conflicts, peaceful resolution of conflicts, UN peacemaking activities and other topics.

In the 9th grade's classroom Anna Petrosyan spoke about the activities and goals of the UN. She was very well prepared for the lesson. All pupils were listening to her attentively and with great interest, and expressed their ideas after her speech. Everyone was satisfied with the lesson.

As the Vice Principal, I also attended the lessons, conducted in other classrooms, and I think that such training courses are very positive and have educational importance in the process of forming contemporary generation.

R. Hayrapetyan
Vice Principal,
School #30



Our Pen Pals



Sch. #7

"Women for Development" NGO represented its "Peace Education and Conflict Resolution in Schools of Gyumri, Armenia" project in many local and international conferences, seminars and meetings. After each meeting, "Women for Development" NGO enlarges its cooperation with different organizations.

As the result of such cooperation, members of the "Peace Education Center" have developed Pen Pals with schoolchildren of different countries of the world. Members of the Center of the School #29 established pen pals with schoolchildren from Hawaii; pupils of Schools #2 and 20 – with schoolchildren of the Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Denmark. Children also continue to send letters to the "White Crane" magazine, issued in Tbilisi, "Radiant Peace" American organization and the "World Peace Project for Children" organization. And recently, members of "Peace Centers" of Schools #7 and 29 developed friendships with schoolchildren from Kapan and Noyemberyan - Armenian border regions. Our pupils want to know how their friends from Kapan live, what interest they possess, and what their school's everyday life looks like. But most of all our pupils are interested in the fact, that these regions are bordering areas with a population, overcoming the Karabagh conflict and impacts of the war. For these people – both children, and adults, peace is not just a virtual concept, but a great value. In their letters our schoolchildren share their knowledge, gained in the centers, write about the events, organized by them, Center's everyday activities, their families and friends. This is a unique opportunity for the children to discuss the issues of their interest with children of different nationalities; to write about their countries and hometowns, cultures and traditions. Therefore, peace is a common value for them, which does not depend on the distance, time, age and nationality. And the most important is, that through letters children are implementing their greatest and major mission – they spread the skills and knowledge, gained in the center, thus becoming peace spreaders.



A picture of children, living in Hawaii who are Pen Pals with the pupils of the School #29. They send letters and souvenirs to the schoolchildren of Gyumri with A. Mikayelyan, who is on business trip in Hawaii.



A. Mikayelyan presents the letters, souvenirs and sweets from Hawaii to the members of the Peace Center of School # 29.



Tatevik Zilfimyan and Arusik Ghazaryan – pupils of the Peace Centers of Schools #20 and 29, received gifts and certificates from the "White Crane" magazine, published in Tbilisi, for their active participation in announced competitions and for showing the best results.



Participation in "European Studies" Program

Starting with 1986, schoolchildren and teachers from more than 20 European countries are included in "European Studies" program. It has a goal of helping young people understand interrelations between different cultures, national traditions; allows its participants to realize the importance of cooperation and teamwork and developing their communication skills. The first stage of program implementation is the organization of conferences for elementary and high schools, with the goal of creating opportunity for teachers to meet and discuss the results of last year's work and to develop plan of cooperation for the next academic year. This year – 2004, was not an exception and 2 conferences for elementary and high schools took place in the Northern Ireland and Belgium. A. Mikayelyan - president of "Women for Development" NGO and G. Markosyan – vice president, also participated in the conferences, where they presented Gyumri schools #20 and 2, which were included in the "European Studies" program with "Peace Education" subject. The subject was new for the participants of the conference, as far as it was not taught as either a core course, or an elective in the schools of participant countries. More than 80 teachers from European Union member states attended the conference. Armenia was included in the "European Studies" program with the "Peace Education" subject. School #2 was included in one group, where 3 schools from the Northern Ireland, and one school from Denmark were represented.



As for the school #20 – it was supposed to cooperate with 4 schools from the Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland and Denmark.

Since the academic year 2004 pupils of schools #20 and 2 communicate with the schoolchildren of the abovementioned European Union member states through mail and Internet connection. After exchanging email and mailing addresses, children wrote each other about their interests, favorite heroes and their families; they told about the legends, traditions and culture of their nations, exchanged Christmas wishes, school pictures, etc. The most important is that our schoolchildren, as true peacemakers, through letters tell their international friends about the knowledge and skills, obtained in the “Peace Education Center”, share their experience in peaceful resolution of conflicts, occurring in the school or community, exchange ideas of importance of achieving peace in the world.

Our schoolchildren, in turn, became familiar with the history of the establishment of European Union, its goals and activities, rights and obligations of the member states, European values through numerous brochures, posters, pictures and Internet connection. They also received information about the countries, soon to be included in the European Union, their cultures and traditions.

Information about all the activities of the program and organized events will be placed on the project’s website. The most important result of the abovementioned conferences, is that Armenia was the first country in the region to have the chance to be included in the joint educational program of European Union member states, and thanks to our schoolchildren, more than 3000 pupils of 7 European schools will become familiar with our country, culture, present and ancient history.

Pupils of school #20 tell about their Pen Pals.

* Writing these letters was a pleasure for me. It gave me a chance to become familiar with the cultures of Ireland and Denmark, their traditions and lifestyle. 2 letters were of specific interest to me – writers were Matias from Denmark and Dave from Ireland. It turned out that we had many common interests – for example, favorite films, school subjects and features of character. In general, pen pals give opportunity for children to meet new people, to become familiar with new environment. There were also strange things in the letters, which made me really surprised. For example, the fact that children work after work and like to drink. I would like to establish new pan pals, and I would also like to meet these guys. Let my dream come true.

Mariam Mkoyan
9th grade



* After establishing pan pals with schoolchildren from different countries, I became familiar with their culture and traditions. In one of the letters it was written, that they like to drink alcoholic beverages and they were asking me whether I liked to drink or not. I clarified that drinking alcohol is a tradition for them and is a part of their lifestyle. In their letters they were asking questions about our country, lifestyle and culture. When I replied to their letters I asked what they knew about Armenia. 2 pupils of Danish school Risskov, who were the recipients of my letters, honestly replied, that they knew that Armenia is a small country, which is not included in the European Union.

Ofelia Harutyunyan
9- th grade

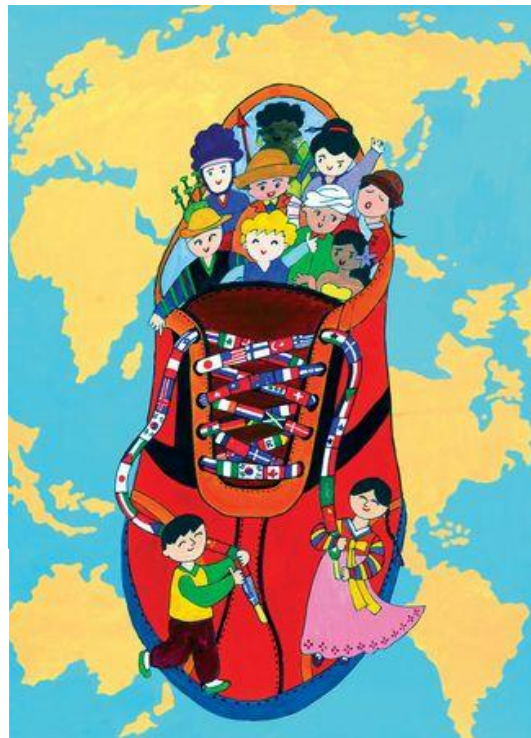
* I learnt many new things through pen pals, which were not clear for me before. To some extent I became familiar with foreign scientific establishments, lifestyle of the pupils. Some of their habits seemed unacceptable for me; for example - drinking alcoholic beverages. Pen pals gave me the chance for not only meeting new people, but also feeling the significant difference between their and our lifestyles. We were pen pals with schoolchildren from Denmark, Ireland and the Northern Ireland. I especially liked their study system and the fact, that they have a freedom of choosing subjects. I hope that I will have more pen pals.

Shushan Melkonyan
9- th grade

* ...We have learnt new stuff about their countries and themselves, as far as we have mailed each other our short biographies. I met Lotty Meyer, who is Danish. I also met Conor Finnerty. After becoming acquainted with them, I saw the great difference between us. Their days are very interesting, most of them work after school. It is very common for their countries. Frankly speaking, I wouldn't like to be European. I didn't really like their lifestyle and I wouldn't like to be like them.

Greta Sargsyan
9th grade

* ...Through pen pals I became familiar with the traditions of their country; I found out what interesting holidays they have and how they celebrate those. I became familiar with their religion; what they do after classes and how they spend their weekends with friends.



Through Internet I also became familiar with those schools. It is interesting to compare our schools with theirs. Many pupils work after school there, and to my opinion it's wonderful. As for Armenia, if children work, then everybody thinks that they are poor and work, because their parents enforce them to do so. I would very much want this idea not to be followed in our country anymore and for us to also work at this age and make our own money. I would like their subjects to be taught in our schools; for example – Business Studies and Home Economics, which are very interesting, and to my opinion, it is necessary to find out more about these fields at our age...

Lilit Ghazaryan
9- th grade

* ...They really want to find out about our town, school and our educational system. Most of them don't even know where on the map Armenia is. I reply to their letters with pleasure, ask questions that I am interested in – about their town, sports and school. I have to say that I would like to be like them in some ways. For example, it is very nice to see them all in similar school suits, or acting as a unite team at some sports events. I would like to mention, that such programs help to improve English language skills.

Emma Grigoryan
8- th grade

* ...I told them about our country, culture, sports, as well as Spitak earthquake, which took place 16 years ago. I wrote to the schoolchildren from those countries about the "Peace Center", which operates in our school, our classes, accomplishments and successes. To my opinion, the most important thing is that they become familiar with our country, and we, in turn – with the European Union member states, their cultures and traditions; we found out a lot about their schools and educational systems.

Mariam Hakobyan
9- th grade

Meeting With Sponsors



On November 16-17th, representatives of German organization EED - Ms. Carolin Kruchkow, Ms. Gerlind Melsbakh and Mr. Manfred Vaden, once again visited Gyumri.

One of the purposes of the visit was to become familiar with the activities of Peace Education Centers, established in the schools of Gyumri; to meet principals of the schools, teachers working in the Centers, and the pupils.

This time school #7 and its Peace Education Center, which was established 2 years ago, were selected.

Children were very enthusiastic to present their gained knowledge and skills to the guests; they also showed the wallpapers and conflict maps, prepared by them; talked about their pen pals and cooperation.



After answering pupils' questions, guests were pleasantly surprised with the level of the Center's members' knowledge in the field of conflict resolution in peaceful way.

Guests were delighted to answer all the questions children were interested in.



Chorus, consisting of the members of the center, performed song of Michiko Pumpian's "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes".

Guests also had a meeting with Gagik Karapetyan – principal of the school #7. He was proud to present current activities of the Center, its successes; he emphasized the importance of such Centers in terms of formation of peace culture and conflict resolution ideas among schoolchildren.



With the initiative of the members of "Women for Development" NGO, Gyumri school #2 Peace Education Center's members visited Holy See Saint Echmiadzin Cathedral. The purpose of the visit was to become acquainted with the Armenian "Round Table" Benevolent Interchurch Foundation of the

International Council of Churches.

In Echmiadzin, guests were welcomed by Karen Nazaryan – executive director of the "Round Table" foundation, who presented the goals and activities of the foundation, spoke about their programs and future plans. He told children about the mission of churches,

their role in maintaining peace and particularly the activities of Armenian Apostolic Church and Eucumenic movement.

In turn, teachers and pupils of Peace Education Center presented Center's activities and goals to Mr. Nazaryan, as well as their gained knowledge and conflict resolution skills.

Visit to "Round Table" Foundation

During the meeting issues, related to the educational reforms in the schools, were also discussed.

Children asked Mr. Nazaryan questions, they were interested in, and he answered those with great pleasure.

At the end of the meeting members of the Center presented 3 issues of "Peace New Birth" newsletter to

Mr. Nazaryan.

An excursion to the Holy See Mother Cathedral's Museum and Gallery was organized for the children. The majority of pupils visited those places for the first time ever, and it was a pleasure for them to see a thousand of spiritual and worldly artworks, collected in the museum for the past centuries – gold

and silver crosses of Catholicoses, crosiers, rings, crowns, old and new coins, etc.

At the end of the day the children headed back to Gyumri with high mood and new impressions. They expressed their gratitude to the organizers for this interesting and useful trip.

M. Juharyan

2004-2005 academic year's highlight for the members of the "Peace Center" of Gyumri School #2 was the trip to Saint Echmiadzin. The trip was educational. According to the initial agreement, we were going to meet Mr. Karen Nazaryan – executive director of the Armenian "Round Table" Benevolent Interchurch Foundation of the International Council of Churches. With great pleasure he told the children about the Eucumenic movement. His warm welcome initiated enthusiasm among our schoolchildren and they started to actively ask questions. Mr. Nazaryan prepared a series of questions about different religions and religious movements, and found out the opinion of the children about the abovementioned issues.

The meeting was conducted in a warm environment and schoolchildren expressed their gratitude to both K. Nazaryan and "Women for Development" NGO members for this pleasant and interesting trip.

*Gohar Ghochoyan
Teacher, school #2*

For my entire life I dreamed of visiting the places of our nation's historical importance. And one day my dream came true... I didn't believe that our car was moving towards the Holy See Saint Cathedral of Echmiadzin.

In Echmiadzin I visited several churches, the most glorious of which was the masterpiece of Armenian architecture – beautiful Mother Cathedral.

I will never forget the museum inside the Cathedral, and if I ever again get the chance to visit it, I will act as a guide and I will one by one present the saint masterpieces of my nation's art to the guests.

Our meeting with Karen Nazaryan was very-very interesting. I have learnt so much! Before that day we were not acquainted with Mr. Nazaryan, but after starting talking with him, we did not want to leave. He loved to answer all our questions. Unfortunately, the time was limited and we still needed to return home.

Singing and laughing, we drove back to Gyumri. This was one of unforgettable days of my life...

Khoren Tigranyan
8-th grade

...In the main square of Echmiadzin we saw the major Cathedral of the city. I loved the calmness of the church, as well as its cleanness and beauty. People were so bearable towards each other.

I am not sure whether Jesus was there, or nor, but the fact is that this place looks like paradise.

Armen Karchyan
8-th grade



Personal Hygiene and Conflicts



Members of Peace Centers of schools #20 and 2 had meetings with doctor and psychologist Karine Haroyan. She conducted talks with the children on the topic of “Personal Hygiene and Conflicts”. During the meetings, through numerous tests, didactic materials and brochures the impact of personal hygiene on conflicts initiation was discussed.

As K. Haroyan indicated, our children have very little knowledge about maintenance of personal hygiene rules, as far as the children are not taught in schools how to follow the rules of personal hygiene and cleanness; also at their homes appropriate attention is not given to teaching ideas of cleanness since early childhood.

After close and honest talks with the doctor, children realized that refusing to follow the rules of personal hygiene could lead not only to various illnesses, but also to many unwanted and unpleasant conflicts in interrelations with both schoolchildren and teachers. With the initiative of pupils, interrelations between parents and children were also chosen as a separate topic for discussions.



If we want the world to become a peaceful place, we all should start with our inner peace. Only then we should be able to share it with others. Let the peace be on our Earth and let it begin with me.

Kelon B. 4th grade, Atlanta

When I wake up in the morning, I hug all my dogs tightly. It makes them happy. If I woke up and started to shout at them, they would start barking at each other. Pets and people are very much similar to each other, because they have the same feelings. If people treat each other well each morning, then they would feel great for the entire day: kids wouldn't fight and teachers wouldn't be in a bad mood.

Arthur M. 4th grade, Sydney

For me peace means love inside me. World is peace. I am peace. Wind is peace. Trees contain peace in them. Stars are peace, night is peace.

Jason S. 2nd grade, Atlanta

Peace is the belief inside of you. It is something that you want to have inside you... It is something that keeps us together. Peace holds many secrets.

It is inside everyone, regardless them being black or white, red or yellow. Peace - what a wonderful choice!

April S. 5th grade



Happy New Year and Merry Christmas



I would like to congratulate all the schoolchildren on the occasions of the New Year and Christmas. I wish them all the best. Let the New Year bring luck and happiness to all and, the most important, let peace rule the world.

*Maxim Tonoyan
School #2*



I would like to congratulate the members of the "Peace Education Centers" on the occasion of the New Year. Let the upcoming year of 2005 bring everyone happiness, health and successes in studies. Let peace and kindness fly in the air.

*Mary Manukyan
School #2*



I wish Happy New Year and Merry Christmas to all the pupils. I wish them luck, kindness and peace. Let all the pupils, attending "Peace Education Centers", be clever and spread their gained knowledge for the sake of the environment and society. Let the upcoming year bring all Armenians peace, harmony and love.

*Khoren Tigranyan
School #2*



I would like to congratulate the pupils of the "Peace Centers" and our teachers on the occasions of New Year and Christmas. I wish everyone successes, only and only happy moments, peace and harmony.

Let everyone's dreams come true in the upcoming year.

*Grigor Janvelyan
School #2*



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*Picture of Hasmik Simonyan
Sch. #29, 15 years old*

