



Peace Bridges



Newsletter of Peace Education
Centers (issue #8, 2006)



*Gyodakyan Rima
Member of Gymurys Artists
Club of Pioneer Palace*

Daily Activities of Peace Education Center Operating in Meghrashat village school



Peace Education Center was established in Meghrashat secondary school back in 2005. There are 15 pupils of 7th and 8th grades involved in the activities of the center. The school has never had such program before. The children were taught only school curriculum subjects. It was interesting and surprising for the children to become familiar with such program materials. I myself studied the training materials with great interest, and as for a teacher of mathematics it

was very pleasant for me to teach pupils a subject, which relates to the real life situations. Life is full of conflicts and one can encounter a conflict each day; this training provides skills and knowledge for resolving encountered conflicts in a peaceful way and helps to approach such situations in a more mature way, to analyze such situations, to be able to negotiate – striving to find a peaceful resolution.

Children attend the classes with pleasure and sometimes forget the concept of time by entirely dedicating themselves to the topic discussions.

They became more active and are free to express their opinion. Members of the center are trying to apply the acquired skills in everyday life, however sometimes it is difficult to achieve the desired result. As a teacher, I would like to see this subject included in the school curriculum so that all the children have the chance to study and become familiar with “Peace Education and Conflict Resolution” training course.

*Haykush Mkhoyan
Vice Principal of Meghrashat secondary school
Peace Education Center teacher*





Let the sun always shine...

International Day of Child Protection was celebrated in Gyumri. On that day the town was very beautiful and pleasant. Activities dedicated to this holiday were organized in almost all the schools, and the most little kids gathered in the city square in order to participate in the holiday parade and to greet other guests with their childish smiles. Children, dressed in nice clothes, were inspiring the guests with their joyful screams and great mood and made everybody believe in happy future.

That day was a real holiday for all children and it was also celebrated in School #9. The school was full of colorful balloons and white pigeons. We, members of “Women for Development” NGO, were also invited to participate in the celebration and it was extremely

interesting and pleasant for us to see colorful chalk drawings of the schoolchildren.

Children were drawing on the ground the images born in their fantasy – flowers, beautiful nature, smiling and shining sun, colorful rainbow, house, family, children holding each other’s hands...

Pupils of Peace Education Center draw the planet Earth embraced with white belt of the peace.



The most joyful thing is that when we were observing children’s drawings we have noticed that all of those were based on the ideas of peace, which once again proves that the dream of both young people and entire humankind is peaceful and creative future.



With their drawings children contributed to peace, poems and songs dedicated to childhood, they united their voices for the demand of peace, harmony and tolerance by reaching out to those who are responsible for their happy future.



June 1st is not only a day for organizing fun activities for children. It also strives to once again remind the society about the necessity of protecting and respecting children's rights, which is stated in the Convention on Children's Rights: "For complete and harmonic development, a child should be raised in a family – surrounded with happiness, love and mutual understanding". The same is written in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. This means that life and psychological calmness are born from peace, which grants tolerance to human beings.

Let each and every one of us make at least a small contribution to the difficult but desirable process of building the road towards peace and let us be able to maintain the smile on our children's faces and establish peace on our green Planet. We are assured that love towards peace exists in all hearts, and a small amount of sunlight is enough for creating this peace, which will spread happiness all over. And at that hour only kindness, tolerance and love will rule on our planet.

Peace to all...

***Let always be the Sun,
Let always be the Sky,
Let always be Mother,
And let always be I...***



“Women for Development” NGO
Information Department



The greatest success of our project is Inga Danielyan's achievement (one of the members of the Peace Education Center at School # 7). While spending a year at Spoken, Washington - one of the remote states of the US, Inga not only applied her skills and knowledge gained at the Peace Center, but also transferred and taught those to her American classmates. In high school she was the leader, facilitating interactions between pupils and helped many schoolchildren and even teachers to resolve conflicts. Below is the letter, which we received from Inga.

Hi there,

This is Inga Danielyan from school #7.

I hope you remember me. I am e-mailing you to tell how thankful I am for all that I learned during last two years. **Your classes about con-**

flicts and peace helped me a lot this year,

because I was far away from my family, friends, culture and everything else that I was surrounded with for many years. I was out of my comfort zone and plus homesickness and feeling of being alone making you be more stressed out are great for getting depressed and have a lot of conflicts with people around you. I will always remember the things we learned during our classes and it will help me go through my year much better and gets much more life changing experiences.

I want to say thank you one more time and hope that we will work together after I will be back in Armenia.

Miss you a lot,
Inga

Peace Education Center at school #40



Since 2005 Gyumri School #40 cooperates with “Women for Development” NGO, which implements “Peace Education and Conflict Resolution” project in our school.

15 schoolchildren from 7th “B” class greeted the organization’s staff members with love and they were taking part in the classes with great pleasure and sense of responsibility. Julieta Chaloyan, teacher of the center, managed to become friends with the pupils in a very short period of time and to conduct the classes in a very interesting manner. During this training course pupils learnt the reasons of conflict formation and the possible ways of their resolution, they also became familiar with the concept of conflict escalation. They are already able to bring examples from their everyday life, to freely speak about conflicts and seek ways for their resolution. Therefore, the project helps to identify children’s abilities and assists in realizing them.

With direct assistance of school’s administration, a special classroom was given to the NGO, which became the school’s Peace Education Center. It differs from other classrooms with its wallpapers, didactic materials and posters telling about the activities of the center. With all this pupils express their wishes – peace to the world, no to war, no to violence, desire to leave in peace, to be able to resolve conflicts. Christmas tree was also very beautiful, children decorated it with paper toys containing New Year wishes and prepared by themselves. Several members of the center sent their drawings, essays and other handmade goods to the contest announced by “Radiant Peace” organization and recently received certificates of participation.

Currently children realize that during a conflict it is important to listen to the opponent, to try to understand what he/she wants, to express opinions and find ways of peaceful solution.



After the lessons children spread their gained knowledge to others which contributes to the peaceful everyday life of the school.



She also presented “Peace Bridges” newsletter and encouraged the teachers to submit articles for publishing. Several teachers spoke about positive changes they had observed among the pupils and expressed their satisfaction with the cooperation. Principal of the school Anahit Papoyan said that her school will continue to cooperate with the NGO with great pleasure because it corresponds to the contemporary demands and she expressed her hope that Peace Education training course will be taught as a supplementary subject in all schools and all grades.

In the end of the year a meeting took place between “Women for Development” NGO and teaching staff of the school, during which President of the NGO Armine Mikayelyan presented main principles and goals of the “Peace Education and Conflict Resolution” project implemented by the organization in schools of Gyumri to the teachers; future plans and activities were also discussed. Participants of the meeting became familiar with other projects implemented by the NGO.

Education Department Officer Susanna Aslanyan spoke about the successes of Peace Education Centers’ pupils and presented results of different international competitions in which they took part. Julieta Chaloyan, school’s Peace Center’s teacher told meeting participants about the activities of the Peace Center at school #40, children’s interests and activity in general.



Nune Barseghyan
Teacher, School #40
Peace Center Coordinator

New Victories of Our Centers' members

With the goal of promoting the ideas of peace culture and tolerance among young people, "Education for Sustainable Development" Foundation in cooperation with British Council Armenia initiated and



implemented a contest on essays in English language on the topic of Peace and Tolerance for high school pupils of all regions in Armenia. Ten out of 105 essays in total were announced the best, two of which were written by pupils of Gyumri School #2 after Lord Byron – Lilit Ghazaryan and Hakob Aznauryan. It is worth mentioning that Lilit Ghazaryan is also a member of Peace Education Center at School #20. Organizers of the competition awarded prizes to 10 best pupils during the event organized in "Education for Sustainable Development" Foundation's office.

Children received vocabularies, and schools they were representing received "Journey and Other Stories" textbook in English Language published by "Education for Sustainable Development" Foundation in cooperation with British Council Armenia.

Our organization also congratulates all the winners and we wish them new victories and successes.

Below you can read Lilit Ghazaryan's essay.



The Story of Granny Jemma

Let's think a little about Peace and Tolerance. What beautiful and positive words. Just pronounce them, and everything that surrounds you becomes brighter; you look at everything through rosy eyeglasses, people who surround you, become kinder and nicer; everything matters three times as much, the sun shines three times brighter and you are three times as happy.

But the pronunciation of these magic words is not enough to change your world. Be a corn of peace and spread it everywhere. Grow up and become the biggest tree of peace in the world. In spring give green "peaceful" sprouts, in summer spread oxygen, in autumn decorate the world with your golden leaves and let them fall to the ground and spread peace on the pavements, and at last in winter, standing naked within the entire silence and peaceful atmosphere, be a lighthouse of Peace.

Oh, I am sorry; I got distracted, because I've pronounced these magic words and something has happened to me. Now I shall tell you a real story from my life. I'll tell you how the life becomes easier when you help the others and when you are a corn of Peace.

As you know we live in the zone of disaster. Every child has heard about the disastrous earthquake of 1988 and that during it thousands of people became victims to it. Our family lives in an apartment. An old woman of about 76 lives next door to us. She lost all her family during the earthquake and has no other relatives. She is very lonely. Can you imagine this? Yes, loneliness is the worst thing in the world. Her name is Jemma. I call her Granny Jemma. In 1988 she lost her granddaughter whose name was Narine. As she told me, she liked her very much and she wished her to become a linguist so that she could speak many languages. She was an excellent pupil and probably would have a very promising future... But the disaster broke all the dreams of Granny Jemma, took the beautiful idea to an unknown world. She lost her will to live and was extremely disappointed as my parents told me. Five years ago Granny Jemma and I were just neighbors. But now I am the dearest granddaughter for her and I like her as I would like my real Grandmother. It happened very accidentally: we started to spend more time together. I had a warm feeling and conscience towards the poor woman. I began to help her to do the shopping and the housework. When I have time, I try to cook something tasty for her (of course I am not a good cook yet but I am trying my best).

When I am back from school, my parents are at work and I spend my spare time with her. I tell her about my day in school, my problems, my goals, what bothers me and she always gives me good advice. She makes lunch for me and tells me some secrets in cooking. She is my friend. Our relationship is good for both of us.

She sees her granddaughter Narine in me. Now she is more enthusiastic and eager to live. This really makes me happy. I have a grandmother, a good adviser, a faithful friend. She looks younger and happier. You know, I had even collected some money and my mother added little more and we bought a modern jacket for her. She was happy than ever. I am the happiest person because I feel I am useful for someone and that I can take care of someone. This makes my life easier and lighter. Granny Jemma likes me very much and so do I. Everyday she impatiently waits for me when I shall return from school. She is eager to talk to me. Only I have been a little busy lately because I have to work hard to enter the University and I spend less time with her than before. But she understands me and even more. I've decided to become a linguist to make Granny Jemma's dream for Narine come true. I hope I shall do it because she believes in me. Our relationship is very strong and it will last forever. Our friendship has grown tolerance in Granny towards life. It has grown a will to overcome the difficulties, continue to live. Now there is a peaceful smile and stillness in her eyes. Sometimes she is capricious and I understand why she behaves herself in such a way – she had seen a crushing grief; she has lost her family, her dreams. That's why I am tolerant towards her. She doesn't have anybody to take care of her. And she really appreciates my patience and loves me more and more. There is a great hope in her eyes filled with love and belief.

I wish there were no disasters and earthquakes. I wish there were no orphans, lonely people. Let's settle peace by tolerance and kindness. Let's love each other, help each other, take care of each other. Only in this way there won't be any wars and the God won't be cross with us and won't make disasters.

I hope I am sure that kindness will win evil, as it is in all fairy tails.

Fly over the world "Peace"!

And there will be kindness and tolerance, peace and love.



Lilit Ghazaryan
School # 20 after Lord Byron
X form, 16 years old



From the Story of International Day of Child Protection

The idea of celebrating International Day of Child Protection was raised back in 1925, during the international conference dedicated to child well-being taking place in Geneva, Switzerland. It is not totally clear why exactly the 1st of June was chosen, but according to the general statement, on this same day chief council of China gathered Chinese orphans for the first time in San Francisco to take part in “Dragon Ship” annual festival. In the future this day became symbolic for the children.

However, the decision to officially celebrate the International Day of Child Protection was made in 1949 during the Congress of Women’s International Democratic Federation held in Paris. And in 1950 for the first time in many countries the International Day of Child Protection was celebrated. This day was celebrated with special joy in former communist countries.

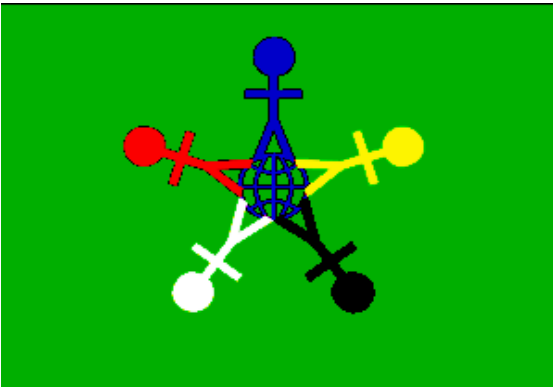
Besides this day, children all over the world also celebrate International Child’s Day (November 20) and Africa’s Children Protection Day (June 16).

Despite the fact that June 1st is officially declared as International Day of Child Protection in many countries of the world, each country itself chooses the exact date to celebrate it.

International Day of Child Protection in Armenia is also officially celebrated on June 1st, and parades and celebrations are being organized throughout different regions of the country.

A symbolic flag, dedicated to the International Children’s Day also exists.

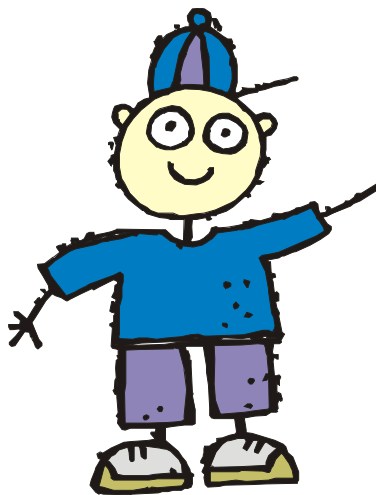
Green color of the flag symbolizes growth, harmony and freshness: we have the opportunity for growth, and we must achieve it and maintain it. Red and yellow, black and white symbols mean discrimination and tolerance. Thus, children are the key to eliminating racial, religious, intellectual and civic discrimination and establishment of tolerance.



The star, which is made up of the figures' legs, represents light. We can be a light for the world, if we choose. The five points on the star represent the continents. We are all part of one true race, the human race.

The earth figure, which is directly in the center, represents our earthly home and all the blessings on it, which God has given us all to share and respect. The large blue circle engulfing the figures symbolizes peace and God's universal love. It also represents the unity that we can achieve if we reach out to one another in love. Blue symbolizes trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth, and heaven. The blue figure at the top represents God, who is the author & finisher of all things. God loves all of us equally and we should be striving to imitate that love (which is represented by the figures reaching out to each other)

This flag was accepted and applied mainly in the United States. Here as well the Child Protection Day is celebrated on June 1st.



“All people are born free, with equal rights. They have mind and conscience and must treat each other like brothers and sisters” .
“UN Convention on Children’s Rights”





Dear readers, we continue to familiarize you with the «Message and Other Stories» English language book, published by «Education for Sustainable Development» foundation in cooperation with the British Council in Armenia. In this issue also you can read another story from that book.

The Sacrifice

It was a cold winter evening. It was getting dark. There was nobody in the laboratory. Professor Sargis Simonyan was sitting at the desk. There were a lot of papers and journals in front of him. He was looking through them. He was deep in thought. Suddenly Professor Simonyan jumped up and shouted. ‘Oh my God! At last I have done it! The results are perfect. People will get rid of cancer. This invention will make me famous all over the world’.

Sargis Simonyan was a young scientist and he was full of great ideas. He was leading a team of scientists. They were experimenting to find a cure for cancer. Sargis’s father was very ill. Sargis was still at university when they found out that his father had cancer. He decided to spend all his life searching for a cure for the disease after he had finished university three years before. He began his experiments and worked hard. He managed to interest a company in his research. The company opened a new laboratory and hired some scientists. They worked hard together. The director was happy with their work and gave them everything they needed. But once he called Sargis to his room.

“ Hello, professor, how are you doing?”

“Fine, thanks. And what about you?”

“Not so bad. I see that your results are improving.”

“Glad to hear it. We are trying to do our best.”

“And how is your father?”

“Oh, he is a nice old chap. His health is getting worse and worse day after day. But he doesn’t give up. He tells everyone, “ My son will save me.”

“Pleased to hear that there are people who believe in a future when all diseases can be cured”.

“It’s only thanks to your work and the money you have given me that I can go on working.” “Oh Sargis don’t mention it. Listen, Sargis, I’ve got bad news for you. Now I am short of money. If I can’t solve the problem, I’ll have to close the laboratory.”

“You don’t say so! And what about the secrecy of our research?”

“I think I can take care of it. Don’t worry. I’ll tell you as soon as I find another company.”

Some time later the director told him that everything was arranged.

They continued their research.

Sargis was so happy with his invention that he wanted someone to share his joy with. He closed the laboratory door. He was about to leave when he heard the director’s voice coming from his room. He was speaking on the telephone. He sounded nervous and Sargis stopped. He heard the director say...

“ I can’t do that. How have you learnt about that? Don’t do that! Yes, I know that you are giving the money. But if you use it that way it will cause a lot of damage and people will suffer...Remember please, if it is invented it must be used only as a cure for cancer... I am against it. You mustn’t do that!”

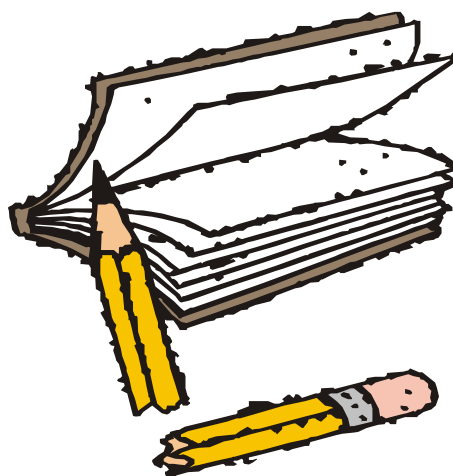
It was a great shock for Sargis. He began to shake with anger. At first he hesitated. Then he went back to the laboratory and locked the door.

“Oh, what should I do? People will die... But he hasn’t all my life been devoted to them... Now I have it...” He began to rearrange the papers.

“Do I have to take a step back? What if they use it for their evil purposes? What will happen? I don’t want people to suffer. Why did the boss trust them?” He opened the window and breathed in the cold air. “Nobody will know about this. There is no other way out.”

He took the papers from his desk, put them in the sink and put a light to them.

“Forgive me, Dad!” He looked at the fire with no regret. The smoke took away his bright ideas and great hopes.



Successes of the Artists' Club of Pionner Palace



“Women for Development” NGO cooperates with Pioneer Palace of Gyumri starting from 1998. Artists’ club members of the center participated in many drawing competitions announced by NGO “Women for Development”, as well as different international organizations – including paintings on the topic of disaster reduction, peace and tolerance.

The club members’ works were disseminated in many countries of the world through our organization, posted in the website and distributed to the offices of different organizations. Many members of the artists’ club received certificates and prizes from international drawing competitions for submitting best paintings.

Several paintings were published in different issues of “Peace Bridges” newsletter. In this issue the posters from the most recent competition where Pioneer Palace artists’ club members took part are presented to the reader. Competition on Youth Participation topic was announced by UN Population Fund and took place in July of 2006. The goal of the competition was to show youth participation through paintings, the positive impact of young people on the progresses taking place in various spheres. To show that young people possess equal rights with the adults in economic, political, cultural and other spheres of their country’s life and that their active participation is of vital importance for achieving Millennium Development Goals.

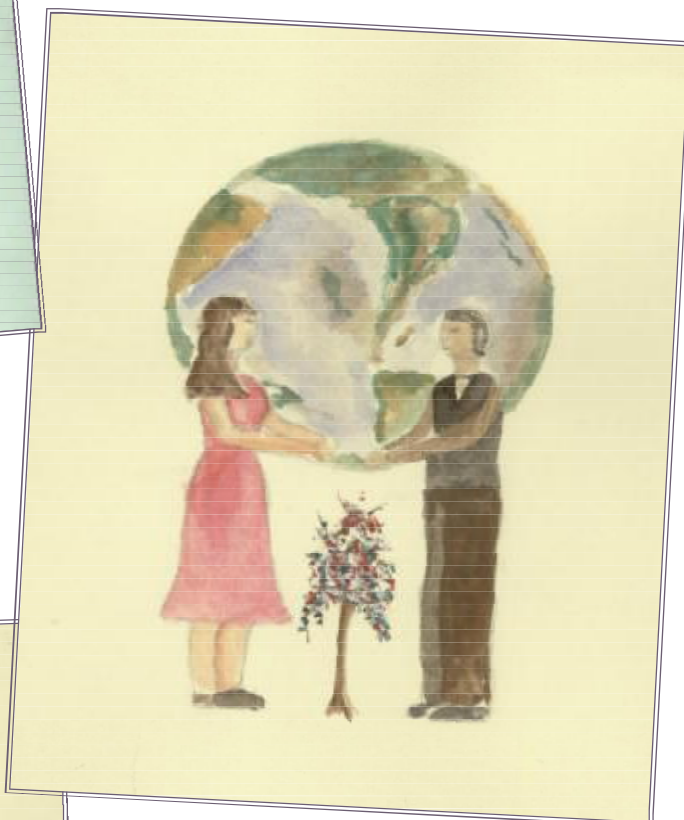
Posters were also aimed to showing equal rights of boys and girls and their cooperative work in terms of solving the problems they encounter and achieving their goals.

From sent pictures the best one in the second nomination was Rita Gyodakyan’s (member of the painters’ club) poster, and all the participants of the competition received certificates.

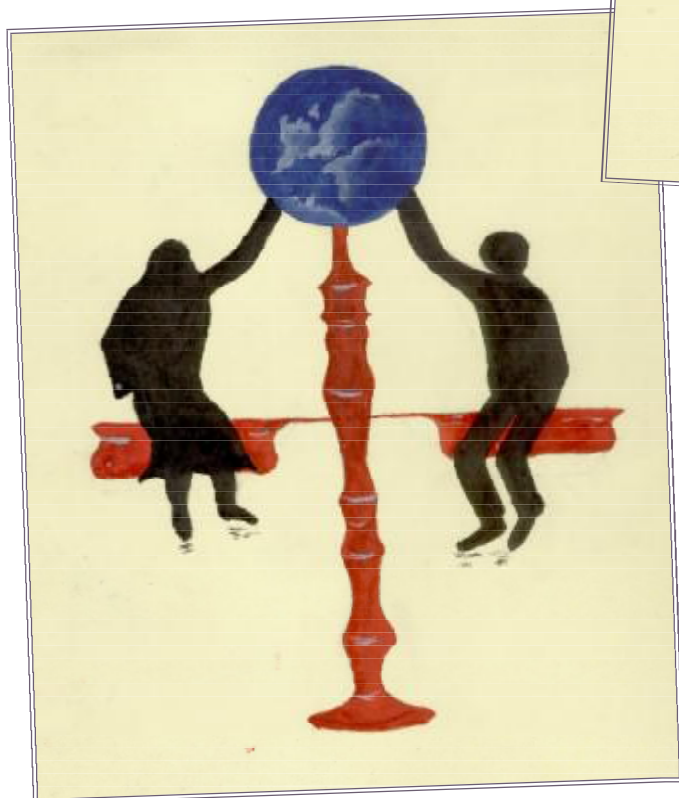
We would like to congratulate Rita Gyodakyan and wish her new achievements and successes in art.



Rima Gyodakyan
13 years old



Haykush Vardanyan
14 years old



Sargis Mkrchyan
13 years old

“Peace Bridges” is being distributed



On June 17-22, 2006 Project Director Armine Mikayelyan and Coordinator Gohar Markosyan participated in the last fifth seminar in frames of the First UNESCO/EURED In-Service Teacher Training Course on Human Rights and Peace Education in Europe. It took place in Shlining, Austria. The seminar was conducted in cooperation with Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR).

17 participants of the seminar from Armenia, Austria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Spain, Switzerland and USA had the opportunity to visit and become familiar with the ASPR Peace Library.

Representatives of “Women for Development” NGO used this opportunity to familiarize the staff members of the library with “Peace Education” project being implemented in schools of Gyumri and presented them a copy of “Peace Bridges” newsletter and painting by Parandzem Davtyan, a member of Pioneer Palace Artists’ club. The painting is currently kept in Shlining International Peace Museum.

Pen pals have already been established with Peace Library and all the issues of the “Peace Bridges” were sent to them, which are also being stored at the library. Recently our organization received a letter of gratitude for cooperating with the library and for print materials exchange.

You can read about Shlining Castle (where the Peace Library and Peace Museum are located) in the next page of this newsletter.



A Town for Peace

The province of South Burgenland with Stadtschlaining in its heart, is a territory with a changing history. At a crossroads of peoples and cultures, peace was a rather unsteady guest. In today's Burgenland a particular spirit of tolerance and mutual respect has developed, making harmonious coexistence of the various ethnic groups possible including the Croats, the Hungarians, who live together with the German speaking inhabitants.

Castle of Schlaining

The wonderful castle of Schlaining that you see was built in the middle of 15th century by Andreas Baumkircher, a local mercenary leader. Today Baumkircher would hardly recognize his castle as it has greatly changed and belongs to the Austrian national estate. At first people called it a "castle of the devil" for its mystic and odd pictures. Later it passed into the possession of the family Battyány for more than 300 years. Since 1980 it has been owned by the Province of Burgenland and in 2000 its administration was given to the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR). Now it is called the castle for peace. House International was newly erected in 1991/92 with financial support from the



Province of Burgenland. It comprises forty-four rooms, a kitchen, and three seminar rooms. It is primarily used as accommodation for students. Together with the Hotel Burg Schlaining, which has been sold to its former manager, House International provides the possibility to accommodate conferences of up to 250 participants.

One can also find a chapel in the castle with the Knights' Hall situated nearby which quite often serves as a unique setting for romantic wedding ceremonies.

Peace Library and documentation

Our organization collaborates with Peace Museum and Peace Library which are also situated in the castle of Schlaining. Peace Library has taken on the task to collect and make accessible peace-related printed matters for academic researchers in the fields of peace research, military and security policy, peace education, world politics, psychology, and development policy. The library stock comprises at present of 25.000 books and 340 different and foreign newspapers and journals published in Austria and abroad.



Peace Library of Schlaining

A small video library and a collection of CD-ROMs round off the library stock.

Peace Museum

The European Museum for Peace was opened in 2001 as an offshoot of the Provincial Exhibition on “War and Peace”. Based on the long-standing experience of the Peace Centre, the Museum endeavours to adapt and present the breadth and depth of knowledge on violence and conflict, security and peace.

Some of the most important themes addressed in the Museum are the causes and structures of violence and war, ways out of everyday violence, different dimensions and courses of individual and collective conflicts, as well as peace issues broadly considered –e.g., with topics such as peace research and peace work, human rights and global peace.

The museum makes efforts to elaborate peace-related and thematic educational programs –especially for schoolchildren –in order to facilitate access to the complex issues treated

by the Museum and to respond to the concrete demands and needs of the visitors. Besides its destination is to give deeper and wider knowledge especially to schoolchildren and organizations who are greatly interested in these trainings.

The location of the peace centre in the castle, a bulwark of power and war, might be a symbol for the change of consciousness being procured by the peace centre. Those who want peace must prepare peace.

The restored “Granarium” of Schlaining castle was converted into a conference centre, giving a contemporary atmosphere to events concerning themes peace research and conflict transformation.

The material is taken from the collection of “Peace library” of BurgSchlaining.



Peace Museum of Schlaining

A Letter to Alien

During this semester pupils of Peace Education Center of School #29 visited Human Rights Center after Sakharov. The goal of the visit was to conduct a lesson on the topic of Children's Rights and Conflicts. Seyran Martirosyan, the President of the Center, presented the organization to the children, familiarized them with its activities and issues. Afterwards, through numerous examples he showed the guests how important it is for each of us to know our rights and how many conflicts may occur because of being unaware of rights. Then children were suggested to do a practical exercise. They were proposed to write a letter to aliens and explain what the conflict was, as far as the aliens didn't know anything about it. You can read the best letter below.



I wish you would never encounter a conflict in your life, but as far as you are going to visit our planet, you have to know what it is. Therefore, we will try to briefly introduce you to the concept of conflict.

Conflict is a discrepancy between two or several sides. It also occurs as the result of not listening or not being heard. Conflict, discrepancy, intolerance, offence are the main features of the conflict; and genocide, murder and war are more complicated types of the conflict. You can avoid conflicts if you are not an egoist, ungrateful, humble, if you have grace and dignity, and even if you are in a conflict situation, try to resolve it with all possible ways.

*Silva Khoranyan, Lena Grigoryan
Anahit Melkonyan, Karush Mkrtychyan
VIII "A" form, school # 29*



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