

YOU are the Change: Peace Week 2012

April is a notoriously violent month in the United States. In 2012, the BSU Center for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution offered a nonviolent solution during April by hosting "Peace Week: YOU are the Change." According to the Center's Director, Professor Lawrence Gerstein, "from April 9 to 13 the Center will coordinate a series of programs that will allow students to serve as peaceful change agents in their community, on campus, in their relationships, and in their education." Gerstein also stated, "The shooting and killing of seven people a few days ago at Oikos University in Oakland, California, unfortunately, adds yet another act of horrendous violence on a university campus during the month of April. Our "YOU are the Change" program takes on even greater significance as a result of this very disturbing incident."

There were multiple events that were a part of Peace Week 2012. First, to help beautify the community, the Peace Center sponsored a trash clean up in the Village near campus on Monday, April 9, beginning at 5 pm. Second, to increase students' awareness that Ball State supports nonviolence, group and student cohesion, and sustainability, the Peace Center hosted an "Amazing Race Scavenger Hunt," on Tuesday, April 10. Students found various locations and items on campus linked to the concepts just mentioned. Third, Ball State students can have a very positive affect on the university and others. For this reason, the Peace Center hosted a "Conflict Resolution Challenge" on April 11. Fourth, the best way to make change is to be informed. To help students acquire personal knowledge about nonviolence, the Peace Center hosted "People Choosing Peace" on Thursday, April 12. Beginning at 12 pm there was a film screening of "Little Town of Bethlehem" in the Schwartz Digital Complex Viewing Room at Bracken Library on the First Floor. Immediately following the film there was a 15-20 minute discussion. The film was sponsored by the Department of Geography and co-sponsored by the Peace Center. From 2 pm to 3 pm a Poster Session on Nonviolence was held in the same location. Finally, on Friday, April 13 there was a presentation by Dr. Erinn Nicely entitled, "The Reconstruction of Peace and Despair in Post-Conflict Nicaragua," in Bracken Library, Room 104. This talk was sponsored by the Department of Geography and co-sponsored by the Peace Center.

Background: Some of the most horrific acts of violence in the recent history of the United States have happened during April including the FBI's siege of the Waco compound that left 76 dead and the Oklahoma City bombing that killed 168 people. More concerning though is the trend of violence on school campuses during this month including the Columbine High School Massacre that left 15 people dead, and most recently, the Virginia Tech Massacre that resulting in a death toll of 33 persons. To promote a message of nonviolence and to remember and honor those that have lost their lives in April, for the past few years, the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies has hosted a series of programs on nonviolence.

About Us

The Center for Peace and Conflict Studies is an interdisciplinary, university-based unit that pursues research on structural and direct forms of violence and conflict; implements nonviolent strategies to resolve conflict; offers mediation services to individuals, groups, and organizations; and trains people in conflict resolution, mediation, peace-building, leadership, meditation, and sportspersonship skills. It also pursues public diplomacy, sports diplomacy, and cultural exchange as part of local, regional, national, and international projects designed to promote mutual understanding, appreciation, cooperation, and respect.

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