



The Peace Connection

A Few Words From the New PeaceBuilders® Northern California Assistant Director of Support Services

Violence Prevention Program
Santa Clara County
Public Health Department
770 S. Bascom Avenue
San Jose, CA 95128

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Wouldn't it be great if people told you at least once a day that they appreciate you? Imagine how it would feel to find out that someone you worked with sent a note to your boss describing how well you do your job instead of complaining that you made a mistake. I know it would put a spring in my step that would last for days. Over the past 10 years, I have been coaching and teaching students and have witnessed their constant search for praise and validation. It wasn't until I encountered the PeaceBuilders® program that I found a solid and consistent way to help address the needs of our youth.

I previously taught at Thomas Russell Middle School where we were testing to see if the PeaceBuilders® program could be effective with the middle school population. It has been successful and I am now a strong believer in the program.

I joined PeacePartners, Inc. early in October and I am very excited for the year ahead. I am currently working with Asya Zaraysky and Susan Lowery at the Santa Clara County Public Health Department trying to soak up all of their wisdom to ensure that my support can mirror what they have been doing for years.

As Assistant Director of Support Services, I am here to help Peace-

Builders® be a success. I am the resource for materials, implementation, training, and curriculum issues. During this school year I will be meeting with each of the local PeaceBuilders® schools to discuss how we can continue to improve the program. Additionally, we are constantly creating new lesson plans to enable PeaceBuilders® to become second nature, and any ideas or suggestions are greatly welcomed.

It is my goal to collaborate with the Health Department so we can continue to fulfill the basic needs for our children and establish a safe environment for us all to live. In the few weeks that I have been on board, I have met and talked with so many fascinating people that I know that my transition from a middle school teacher to focusing on the PeaceBuilders® program will be fantastic.

I praise you all for giving us the opportunity to experience life in a positive way and look forward to working with you to further the peace in our communities.

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PeaceBuilders® Parent Activities

Much of the PeaceBuilders program focuses on building positive relationships in the classroom and school wide, but who says it has to stop there? Think how students would be impacted if their families incorporated peace building activities into their home environment. Listed below are ideas gathered by PeacePartners, Inc. staff from schools around the country that are working with families to increase peace at home.



PraiseBoards at home

Create a PraiseBoard out of a piece of poster board. Place the PraiseBoard on the refrigerator or any place where family members can see it. Give each person in the family a different color post-it pad to write or draw praise notes for other family members and put them on the board.

Materials needed: Poster board for PraiseBoard and different color post-it notes

PeaceBuilders Principle: Praise People

Family poster contest

Each family member develops a poster based on a PeaceBuilders® principle the whole family agrees upon. There is a set time limit to create the posters using an array of supplies (markers, paints, pictures from magazines, felt, glitter and/or other arts and crafts supplies). Every individual in the family then writes a praise note or verbalizes what they liked about at least one aspect of each family member's poster. The poster contest is repeated throughout the year so that all PeaceBuilders® principles are covered. After the child's poster has been displayed at home, the child can bring it to school to be exhibited.

Materials needed: Poster board, an array of craft products

PeaceBuilders Principle: All

Parent and child appreciation time

Parents and children will set time aside to reflect on the qualities that they appreciate in each other. They will then draw, write, or verbalize what they appreciate.

Materials needed: Depends on way the parents and children choose to express their appreciation

PeaceBuilders Principle: Praise People

Parent praise notes

Parents can set up their own rewards system in their house and pass out special "parent praise notes." When the child receives a predetermined amount of praise notes, he/she receives a special reward.

Materials needed: Praise notes

PeaceBuilders Principle: Praise People.

PeaceBuilders family tree

Each family cuts a leaf pattern out of paper and then writes something about their family on the leaf, includes their family photo and decorates the leaf. The leaves are then hung on a tree in the lobby of the school or in individual classrooms.

Materials needed: Family photos, craft products

PeaceBuilders Principle: Seek Wise People

Moms and muffins day

Buy/bake muffins with your child and utilize this time to talk and build up self-esteem. Praise notes can be written as a follow up to the activity. You may wish to invite other relatives such as aunts or grandmothers.

Materials needed: Muffins, milk, juice, coffee, prepare topics to discuss, praise notes

PeaceBuilders Principle: Praise People, Seek Wise People

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PeaceBuilders® Parent Activities continued

Dads and donuts day

Buy/bake donuts with your child and utilize this time to talk and build up self-esteem. Praise notes can be written as a follow up to the activity. You may wish to invite other relatives such as uncles or grandfathers.

Materials needed: Donuts, milk, juice, coffee, prepare topics to discuss, praise notes

PeaceBuilders Principle: Praise People, Seek Wise People

School PeaceBuilders® family night

Have an evening at school for families filled with PeaceBuilders® activities and incentives to give away.

Parents and other family members can learn fun peace building projects to do with their children including a family talent show. Neighbors and friends can come and partake in the fun.

Materials needed: Incentives, food, praise notes, props, posters, etc.

PeaceBuilders Principle: All

If your school is using new or innovative strategies to involve parents or families in peace building efforts, we would like to hear from you. Please send your ideas to Asya or Susan.

The Gossiper

The following story was shared at a PeaceBuilders meeting several years ago but the message it conveys is timeless. Consider how the story may lend itself to discussing PeaceBuilders® in your classroom.

A woman repeated a bit of gossip about a neighbor. Within a few days the whole community knew the story. The person it concerned was deeply hurt and offended. Later the woman responsible for spreading the rumor found out that it was completely untrue. She was very sorry and went to a wise old sage to find out what she could do to repair the damage.

"Go to the marketplace," he said, "and purchase a chicken, and have it killed. Then on your way home, pluck its feathers and drop them one by one along the road." Although surprised by this advice, the woman did what she was told.

The next day the wise man said, "Now, go and collect all those feathers you dropped yesterday and bring them back to me."

The woman followed the same road, but to her dismay the wind had blown all the feathers away. After searching for hours, she returned with only three in her hand. "You see," said the old sage, "it's easy to drop them, but it's impossible to get them back. So it is with gossip. It does not take much to spread a rumor, but once you do, you can never completely undo the wrong." - Author Unknown

PeaceBuilders® Tips and Recipes

1 minute

Use a personal name in a positive statement



5 minute

Smile and greet each student

10 minute

Have students brainstorm a solution to a problem

30 minute

Play cooperative games where everyone wins

60 minute

Introduce or practice relaxation or stress management techniques in the classroom

For additional tips, see the Classroom Management Section of your PeaceBuilders® 2001 and Beyond

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Program Announcements

PeaceTalks Held October 27, 2004

PeaceTalks is an opportunity for representatives from local Peacebuilders® schools to network and learn more about the program. We would like to thank recent participants for sharing all of the wonderful peace building activities taking place on their school campuses as well as brainstorming how to address some of the challenges of implementing the program. The following are a few highlights of the activities discussed.

Classroom: Praise boards posted in the classrooms and office; classroom and playground praise notes printed in English and Spanish that list PB behaviors which can be checked off to make it easier for teachers and playground staff; individual classes compete for points by demonstrating positive PB behavior - the class with the most points wins a prize; a paper chain hung in the classroom made from "My wish for Peace is..." links; a class greeter welcomes students each day; stomp-out-putdowns using peaceful feet activity; peace treaties are used to address problem behavior and a copy of the treaty is sent home to the parents to sign and return to the school.

School wide: Peaceful, non-competitive playground games; principal goes to lunch with PB nominees of the month; there is a different PB principle per month with corresponding classroom activities (puzzle challenges, essays, etc.); every student at the school is recognized for a positive PB behavior by the end of the school year; kindergarten and fifth graders are "peace buddies"; special praise notes are sent home by the principal; school assemblies are planned with student input and include role-plays and peer recognition of students receiving special awards for exceptional behavior.

