case study – *pre-teen*

MS 145 Arturo Toscanini School

Diffuses Violent Situations with PeaceBuilding Techniques

Problem:

In 2000, gang activity was prevalent at MS 145 Arturo Toscanini School in the Bronx, New York. Serving pre-teens in fifth through eighth grades, intervention teacher Eleanor Ferguson says that "looking at someone the wrong way or wearing the wrong color" would result in violent activities putting all the children and adults on campus at risk and forcing her to involve law enforcement.

Solution:

Site staff was trained by PeaceBuilders professionals to recognize a hostile situation as an opportunity for discussion before it escalates into a fight. By appointing student PeaceCoaches™ as peer leaders on campus, children use the common language of PeaceBuilders to communicate effectively with each other and with the adults. There is a new-found level of mutual respect.

Results:

MS 145 has reported a dramatic decrease in violent activities and an increase in positive social behavior. Ferguson says that by using PeaceBuilders techniques and removing the "audience" of others, most conflicts are managed peacefully and without law enforcement. The highly-coveted PeaceCoach positions provide an avenue for peer mediation and conflict resolution. One young girl was constantly angry, fighting and performing poorly in school. She attended a PeaceBuilders leadership program, made a 180 degree turn, improved her grades and is now one of the most enthusiastic PeaceCoaches on campus! The PeaceCoaches of MS 145 asked to share this message with their principal Robert Hannibal, "Give Mr. Hannibal a BIG thank you for letting us be important!"

results:

- Discussions replace fights.
- Gang activity reduced.
- Decrease in crime and law enforcement involvement.
- Increase in positive behavior and peer leadership.

Ferguson added that it is important for kids to come to school and feel safe. If they feel safe, they will graduate.

"Our PeaceCoaches are trained to use the PeaceBuilders Principles as a guide to deflate minor issues. They engage in conversations with their peers and seek wise people for guidance during challenging situations."

About PeaceBuilders:

PeaceBuilders is the research-validated violence prevention youth program approved for the federally funded Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act. It is a hybrid science-based program that shifts the entire climate to a peaceful, productive and safe place for children, parents and the community. Our experienced corporate team manages the PeaceBuilders program to work seamlessly with any organization seeking peaceful solutions.

Contact:

Toll-free 1-877-4-peacenow
E-mail info@peacebuilders.com
www.peacebuilders.com

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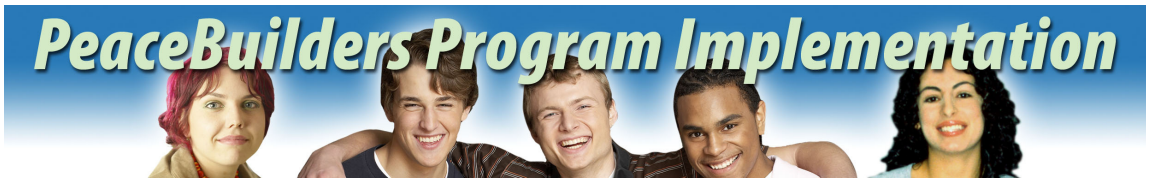

case study – *teen*

Assabet Valley Regional Vocational School

Targets Bullying and Harassment with Student PeaceCoaches™

Problem:

In 2002, Assabet Valley Regional Vocational School in Marlborough, Maryland was dealing with aggressive issues of bullying and harassment, with 1000 students from 11 different communities merging on campus. Principal Mary Jo Nawrocki was approached by its student leadership team seeking help with these incidents.

Solution:

Staff and select students were trained by PeaceBuilders professionals to establish common language and to use peer mediation to resolve issues peacefully. Student PeaceCoaches™ now give heart-felt anti-bullying presentations to communicate clear expectations of positive behavior on campus.

Results:

Principal Nawrocki says that PeaceBuilders has created a positive, respectful school community that fosters acceptance. They have reported a decrease in violent and aggressive behaviors as well as a decrease in the number of suspensions and expulsions. The focus has shifted away from discipline and back to teaching. With students as a driving force and the support of Assabet's staff, the PeaceBuilders program has empowered all on campus to unite in their mission to create a peaceful environment. Within three years, the student attendance is up to 94% and staff attendance is up to 97.5%, both above the state average.

"During one peer PeaceCoach session, a freshman student tearfully approached the student leaders seeking help from real-life bullies. The harrowing experience opened everyone's eyes."

results:

- Bullying and harassment drastically reduced.
- Bullying and harassment drastically reduced.
- Attendance up to 94%.
- Staff attendance up to 97.5%
- Suspensions and expulsions decreased.
- Marked increase in respectful behavior.

About PeaceBuilders:

PeaceBuilders is the renowned violence prevention youth program approved for the federally funded Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act. It is a comprehensive research-validated program that shifts the entire climate to a peaceful, productive and safe place for children, parents and the community. Our experienced corporate team manages the PeaceBuilders program to work seamlessly with any organization seeking peaceful solutions.

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E-mail info@peacebuilders.com
www.peacebuilders.com

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PeaceBuilders® Program for Safe, Positive Learning Environments

PeaceBuilders is the research-validated violence prevention youth program approved for the federally funded Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act. It is a comprehensive program launched in organizations that shifts the entire climate to a peaceful, productive and safe place for children, parents, staff and faculty.

Dedicated to reaching and teaching adults the art of creating safe, positive environments for all children across North America and U.S. Territories, we are building peace one partner at a time by providing exceptional products, interactive training and unwavering support. PeaceBuilders straightforward, yet effective science-based program is designed to integrate into your daily routine by identifying specific risk factors and managing them with simple techniques.

Created for the young child, child, pre-teen and teen, PeaceBuilders addresses risk factors, which predict violence, bullying and drug and tobacco use. Participation in PeaceBuilders reduces aggression, promotes language development, teaches pro-social skills, increases parenting skills, creates inclusion for special needs children and fosters safer communities.

In the school setting, PeaceBuilders increases academic achievement by allowing teachers to spend more time teaching and less time disciplining. In all settings, the program creates a peaceful environment by increasing positive, respectful, thoughtful behavior, while decreasing violence and disruptive behavior.

Participation in PeaceBuilders Yields Proven Results

- Suspension rates decreased from 51 to 9 in the first year at Burroughs Elementary in Southern California
- 80 point API increase in three years at Christopher Elementary in Northern California[1]
- 94% of teachers surveyed perceived PeaceBuilders to decrease the level of school violence and 94% of teachers reported an increase in pro-social interactions among the children[2]
- Name-calling down 59%, assault down 58%, theft down 67% in Hemet School District in California
- City of Burbank, California declared a PeaceBuilders City by committing schools, after-school programs and the community for greater compound impact on children, parents, staff and civic leaders

PeaceBuilders® Principles™

- Praise People™
- Give Up Put-Downs™
- Seek Wise People™
- Notice Hurts™
- Right Wrongs™
- Help Others™

PeaceBuilders is owned and operated by PeacePartners™, Inc., the single-source provider in North America and U.S. Territories.

[1]Academic Performance Index, California Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999, federal No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress
[2]Fisher, C.M. and Pulver, E.R. "School Counseling Research Brief 3.1", 2/7/2005, eight diverse urban and rural K-5 schools in Pima County, Arizona

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PeaceBuilders® Receives Multiple Accolades as Violence Prevention Program

- The White House – *Helping Americas Youth Community Guide* identifies PeaceBuilders as a Level 1 Program which recognizes effective programs with the highest quality research design. 2005
- U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools names PeaceBuilders as a "Promising Program." 2001
- U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Model Programs Guide. 2003
- California Department of Education names PeaceBuilders to its "Science-Based Programs" list. 2005
- California Healthy Kids Resource Center recognizes PeaceBuilders as "Research-Validated." 2003
- U.S. CDC names PeaceBuilders as a *Best Practice in Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action.* Part of the Safe USA Coalition. 2000
- Drug Strategies publishes *Safe Schools, Safe Students: A Guide to Violence Prevention Strategies.* PeaceBuilders receives a grade "A." 1996
- State of Virginia names PeaceBuilders as Best Practices in School-based Violence Prevention, Top 10 Violence Prevention Programs. 2002
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Prevention recognizes PeaceBuilders as a "Promising Program" on the National Registry of Effective Programs and Practices (NREPP). 2002 - 2006
- Education Development Center publishes *Applying Effective Strategies to Prevent or Reduce Substance Abuse, Violence, and Disruptive Behavior Among Youth.* PeaceBuilders rated "Promising." 1998
- PeaceBuilders awarded Australia National Violence Prevention Award. 1999
- SECAC (Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center serving AL, AR, GA, LA, MS from 1995-2005) names PeaceBuilders on Exemplary Program List as it has been identified in three or more expert panel reviews as "Effective" or "Promising." 2001
- State of New Jersey includes PeaceBuilders in *Resource Guide of Model Research Based Programs.* 2001
- U.S. CDC renews PeaceBuilders for longitudinal study for effectiveness; 1 of 4 programs renewed of the original 16 studied. PeaceBuilders is the only program in grades K-5 that is renewed. 1996
- U.S. Department of Education funds "El Hogar de la Paz Grant." Studies efficacy of community rollout of PeaceBuilders Program in 52 schools. 1995
- U.S. CDC awards three-year grant to University of Arizona and Pima County Health Department to study PeaceBuilders Program in schools. 1993

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PeaceBuilders® PeacePack for Teens
A Curriculum Sampler

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Introduction

PeaceBuilders®, Who Are We?

We are a committed team of educators, youth leaders and young people who work to create a climate change designed to reduce aggression. We have the effect of decreasing negative behaviors and creating peaceful environments conducive to learning. PeaceBuilders improves interpersonal relationships and encourages peaceful ways of solving disagreements. PeaceBuilders works because we are not just a program, but a way of life.

Why Do We Care?

Violence and its devastating impact on sites continue to erode the fiber of our schools and other youth-serving organizations. Study after study has proven that violence doesn't "just happen." Very specific processes cause violence. We can impact these processes and shape desirable behavior. As a PeaceBuilders team member, you will play a critical role in shaping the thinking, behavior and relationships of teens at your site. Peaceful environments are deliberate in charting

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the course for our society and world. We care because we know we can impact this community we call our world.

Two Schools

Imagine two schools. Both are located in the same school district and the same "at-risk" neighborhood. Both buildings are old, and both schools are funded at the same level. Yet one school has 50 to 75 percent fewer acts of juvenile delinquency than the other school, one-half the level of substance abuse, and more students who complete school and do well academically, even on standardized tests.

At which school would you rather work? To which school would you prefer to send your children? Where would you be more likely to volunteer? Differences listed in the paragraph above are actual results of the PeaceBuilders model, demonstrated in a scientific study of some 400 schools and in experimental studies testing the ideas of PeaceBuilders (see the "Science of Building Peace"). The PeacePack™ for Teens will help you, and everyone else at your site, to create the same benefits for your site and community. Will PeaceBuilders work for all young people? It works for about 85 percent of young people, and benefits the other 15 percent by creating a climate in which the more intensive programs they need are more effective.

PeaceBuilders is What We Do, Not Just What We Say.

Adults and young people must work together to build peace. Adults model PeaceBuilding skills for young people to copy. High expectations become the norm. Building peace is about creating the type of environment in which we all want to live.

WIFM-What's in It For Me?

As a teacher or youth leader, your goal is to impart a body of knowledge to young people in a safe, orderly environment. Just think how much easier it would be to do your job if there were fewer fights, arguments and acts of disorderly conduct. PeaceBuilders provides an environment in which teachers will have more time to teach, and youth leaders will have more time to lead productive activities. Teens can focus on learning and growing and working together. What's in it for you is the fact that PeaceBuilders works. It is an approach which takes proven research findings out of the laboratory and puts them where you need them: your classroom, playing field or youth group.

First, be open to the possibility that change can take place within your immediate environment and, ultimately, throughout the site and the surrounding community. Don't be quick to judge the following principles and activities with "This will never work with my kids" or "The kids won't want to do this." Teens pick up on a leader's negative attitude and respond negatively in turn. The teens will respond favorably to the PeaceBuilders program if, and only if, they see that their leaders believe in it. Change for the positive is possible! Young people are capable of great things. Believe it and create it!

What Will My Students Gain?

PeaceBuilders provides a nurturing climate where teens know that adults care about creating positive learning environments. Young people notice that their peers make progress toward individual and group goals. Adults and teens praise and appreciate each person at the site. This genuine level of care

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and support results in academic achievement, success and good citizenship. Praise and acknowledgement also build constructive cognitive connections and promote a path of resiliency for our teens. Teens see peace in their daily interactions with adults and their peers. The site is the laboratory where risk taking is encouraged and young people evolve as partners in peace.

Everyone is a PeaceBuilder

PeaceBuilders establishes a norm for behavior based on specific principles that are shared by staff, students and parents. When a whole school or youth group community uses the common language and strategies provided by PeaceBuilders, there is movement toward a common vision of the ideal site. Everyone becomes a PeaceBuilder. PeaceBuilders inspires the whole community to work together in rearing and educating its young people. Because the young people themselves are active participants in all phases of this change, they have many opportunities to learn and receive recognition for PeaceBuilders actions.

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The Science of PeaceBuilders®

PeaceBuilders is a **research-based** program. This means that when the program was created by a team of psychologists and education professionals, they applied the proven findings of a number of research studies. PeaceBuilders is also a **research-validated** program. This means that after PeaceBuilders was implemented, research was done to measure the impact of the program on the lives of children. Those findings are significant.

In one of the most famous studies on resiliency, Dr. Emmy Werner conducted a 31-year study looking at "at-risk" children. These children were exposed to many risk factors in their environments, such as poverty, abuse, substance abuse, mental illness and lack of education. Many of these children grew up having some of the same issues as their parents, resulting in a lack of success in interpersonal relationships, education and employment. Yet, some of these children grew up to be resilient, that is, they were able to bounce back from the risks and to be successful in relationships, education and employment. The study focused on why some children made it and others did not. The most significant and profound factor in the lives of successful children was the presence of a caring, nurturing adult in their childhood: someone who believed in them and expected the best from them. Most often, this person was a teacher. PeaceBuilders teaches young people to seek out these adults in their lives and to gain the skills and integrity to become the kind of adults who can provide this kind of care and dedication to others.

In a famous study called the "Robbers Cave Experiment," two groups of eleven-year-old boys were chosen to attend a special camp during the summer. Each group was given a group name with t-shirts and flags. Soon, there were put-downs, name-calling and aggression. Merging the two groups did not help. Only when there was a **common language** and **common purpose**–getting food and water for the whole camp–was the aggressive behavior changed and a sense of camaraderie established.

In another study by Dr. Dennis Embry, a **language of identity** ("I am a Safe Player") was used to help young children choose safe behaviors (eg. wearing a bike helmet, looking both ways before crossing, etc.). Thus, in the PeaceBuilders Pledge™, all people at the site, adults or young people say, "I am a PeaceBuilder™." When young people misbehave, adults ask, "What would a PeaceBuilder do?" This reminds children of their positive identity and helps them align their behavior with it. The pledge also describes the kind and caring behaviors that PeaceBuilders do.

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PeaceBuilders uses the practice of praising young people for kind, caring and responsible behavior. This is based on the Seattle Social Development Study, which showed that when all school adults greeted students, using their names and showing personal interest in them, and gave out "caught being good" notes, substance abuse and teen pregnancy were dramatically reduced ten years later.

G. Roy Mayer also did studies in south central Los Angeles. Adults did two things: avoided accidental reinforcement of negative behavior (such as calling out a misbehaving young person's name in front of the class or writing a name on the board) and gave notes of praise for prosocial behavior. Problem behavior, vandalism and school drop outs were reduced and academic achievement increased.

PeaceBuilders is also based on brain science. Two substances in the human brain are notable in the discussion about aggression and violence or peace: serotonin and dopamine. When levels of serotonin are normal, people are more able to think abstractly and are, therefore, more ready to learn and achieve. They feel positive, friendly and cooperative. Serotonin is decreased by insults, perceived threats and through being the target of aggression. This leads to depression, which decreases the ability to learn. It can also lead to aggression and violence as seen in some of the school violence incidents that have been publicized in the past few years. Dopamine is released when a person achieves a goal, such as winning a game, learning something new, or getting a good grade. It may also be released when someone does something that is wrong. It may be helpful to think of it as "the thrill of getting away with something." It is, therefore, important that adults who work with young people are both strict and caring and that they do not reinforce negative behavior. PeaceBuilders promotes a style of positive classroom management, designed to achieve the highest possible prosocial behavior on the part of young people.

PeaceBuilders is **research-validated**. In a comparison study funded by the Centers for Disease Control, some schools implemented PeaceBuilders and were compared with other schools that did not. These schools were chosen because of violence, crime, drugs and poverty. Students in these schools were followed for five years. When there is violence, there are symptoms of victimization. Young people usually go to the school nurse's office for these. In the PeaceBuilders schools, there were far fewer visits to the nurse's office for fighting injuries and illnesses. Young people who are bullied are often affected by real or imagined illnesses in order to escape the threatening environment. These problems affect attendance, legal liability and the potential for a "persistently dangerous" ranking. There were also significantly fewer office visits for discipline and, therefore, fewer

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suspensions. Students at the PeaceBuilders schools demonstrated increased social competence. They were better adjusted to school and had improved social skills. This is important because low levels of social competence predict juvenile delinquency, violent crime and school failure. The study also found that PeaceBuilders benefits high risk, aggressive children the most. These children experienced more decreases in aggression and more increases in social competence in comparison to children at medium and low levels of risk. This is a remarkable finding, but is predictable from the core theory of the science of peace that predicts aggressive and difficult behaviors are adaptive for children living, learning and navigating social environments with high levels of violence.

When introduced to the simple philosophy and strategies of PeaceBuilders, most people think, "Why of course it works!" PeaceBuilders stands upon a strong foundation of research, yet some may also say that we must only go to the "Academy of Common Sense."

As PeaceBuilders is implemented in hundreds of sites across Northern America and U.S. Territories in schools, after-school organizations, youth groups and community programs. Reports indicate more positive environments, fewer discipline problems and much happier places to live, grow, learn, work, and play.

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The Minds, Bodies and Behavior of Teens

What do scientists know about young people? In elementary school, children seem open and excited about the world. But something happens about the end of sixth grade: puberty. At the onset of puberty, many changes occur.

Teenagers have much higher levels of sex hormones than at any other age. This creates an imbalance in brain chemistry that makes young people hypervigilant and causes negative and aggressive thoughts.

During the teenage years, the brain "prunes back" structures that are not frequently used. Thus, teens may temporarily lose close to one-third of their ability to use their cerebral cortex, creating confusion, reduced attention span and reduced fluency for several years.

Teens need more safety cues, positive feedback and reinforcement than at any time since the primary grades. Yet modern society does not provide this support. At this time of increased confusion and reduced abilities, teens often lose the security of adult guidance.

Teens are highly sensitive to threats and slights, because of changes in their brain chemistry (substantially less serotonin as a result of the increase in sex hormones), yet adults tend to threaten and slight teens more often than younger children.

Put-downs and other threat cues act to shut down the higher learning centers in the brain It's no wonder more teens than ever are drinking, using drugs, having babies, dropping out of school, and hurting each other. These are not normal features of adolescence; they are teenagers' reactions to being highly disconnected from adults. Throughout most of human history, adolescents have received a great deal of attention from all the adults around them who acted as models of effective participation in the adult community. If adults disconnect from teens, then violence, confusion and disrespect are the natural result.

PeaceBuilders® is about restoring the connections between wise adults and teens. It creates a whole site and community standard of PeaceBuilding™. It focuses on learning, mentoring and creating positive social environments for all students, rather than increasing the negative focus on those teens who are most disruptive.

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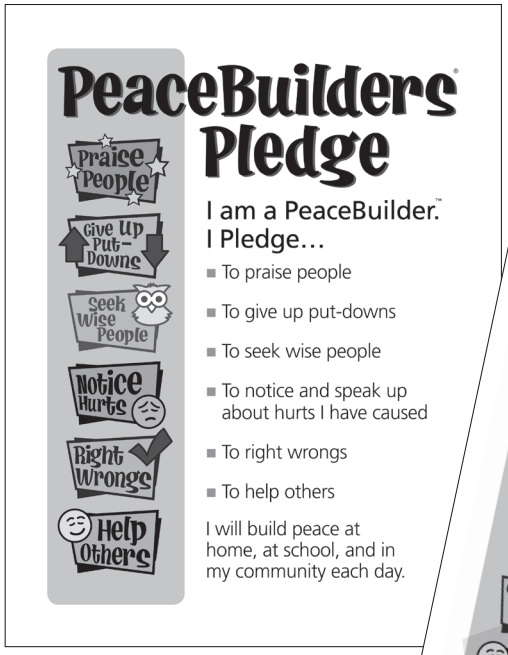
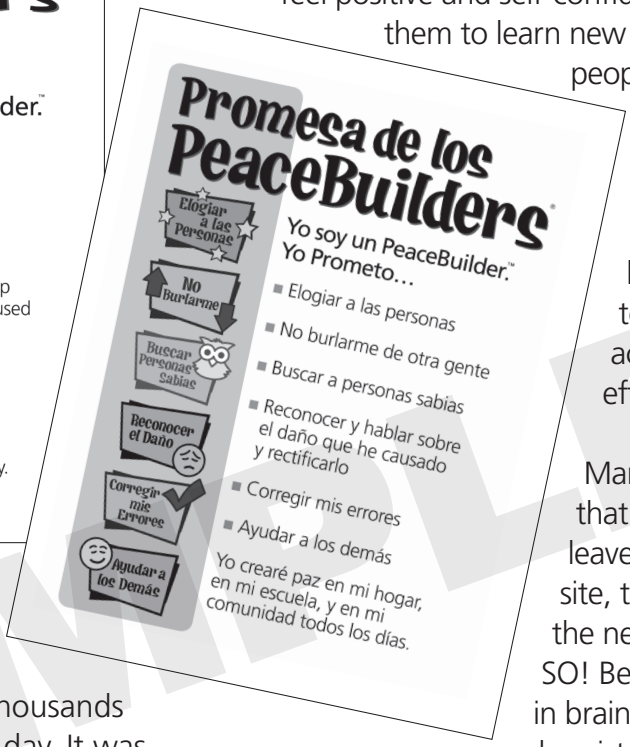
Six PeaceBuilders Principles™ for Teens





The six principles for PeaceBuilders® sites are expressed in the PeaceBuilders Pledge™ that thousands of young people recite every day. It was written by a group of children in south central Los Angeles. Some sites may want to include the PeaceBuilders™ Challenge as a substitute or addition, or have young people write their own pledge being sure to incorporate the PeaceBuilders Principles. It is important that the pledge be recited regularly to reinforce the common language and the PeaceBuilders identity.

Praise People™

People who praise others are more successful in their personal and career relationships and are perceived as having a higher social status. All good leaders know how to bring out the best in others through praise and positive feedback.

Praising people means recognizing the good in others. Specific, legitimate praise helps people feel positive and self-confident and encourages them to learn new things. Praise helps people of all ages see the positive effects of their actions in the world. Praise and acknowledgment become motivators to repeat positive actions and expand efforts.

Many people assume that by the time children leave the elementary site, they have outgrown the need for praise. NOT SO! Because of changes in brain structure and brain chemistry at puberty, young teens need two to three times more praise (acknowledgments, validations and positive social feedback) in middle and high school than they did in the elementary grades. Children who have witnessed violence or experienced trauma need even more. (See "The Science of PeaceBuilding" section.) Thus, PeaceBuilders sites create many opportunities for teaching young people to look for and recognize good in others.

Give Up Put-Downs™

Put-downs trigger angry feelings leading to thoughts of revenge. Most verbal and physical fights begin when someone feels insulted/put down (even if the insult was unintentional).

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People who have experienced trauma may interpret even neutral cues, like someone looking at them, as hostile. Giving up all forms of insult brings peace to the campus and community, but it takes commitment and daily practice from teens and adults alike. Some adults and adolescents have developed habits of sarcasm and put-downs, and may use put-downs without being aware of them.

Seek Wise People™

People tend to be cynical about heroes. Yet heroes (positive role models) are essential for young teens. For the most part, the media and popular culture show negative models of behavior. As wise people, PeaceBuilding™ adults help focus on positive actions at the site, in families, in history and literature, in the community, and in the world.

Despite family hardships, teens are able to learn from wise people they find in the world. Most teens who become successful despite adversity have many wise people in their lives. Young people need to learn how to distinguish between adults who are safe and trustworthy and those who are not. At PeaceBuilders sites young people emulate the characteristics of wise people and learn how to gain their assistance. Both adults and youths can be wise people.

Notice Hurts I Have Caused and Make Amends™

PeaceBuilders learn to notice when they've hurt someone, whether intentionally or not. PeaceBuilders develop empathy and compassion. PeaceBuilders restore cooperation and trust by making amends. At PeaceBuilders sites, teens who hurt others have to do more than say, "I'm sorry." They need to admit and own their hurtful actions and make amends to those who were hurt. PeaceBuilders also make specific peace plans to ensure that they will not cause hurts in the future.

Right Wrongs™

Righting wrongs is about applying the lessons of history so that past wrongs won't be repeated. Young people care about social injustice, homelessness, racism, poverty, crime, and the environment, to name a few important issues. They know the world is not the way it should be, but they often feel helpless to do anything about it. However, teens are far from helpless. We know them to be fierce in defense of respect and other values, and in protecting their friends and turf. Ask any parent who has ever criticized their child's friend. Teenagers tend to be idealists. In a recent survey more than 90 percent of eighth-grade teens rated "feeling like a good person" as important or very important to them. PeaceBuilding teens become involved in solving problems in their world, starting with their site and their immediate community.

Help Others™

Helping others is about practical altruism. Helping others moves the big picture of social justice to the practical level of caring for the environment and helping with daily tasks which are essential for having a peaceful community. This strengthens relationships and increases praise and a sense of well-being.

PeaceBuilders sites provide roles and responsibilities (jobs) for teens. These roles enable young people to make their campus and community more positive and more caring. Specific job descriptions written in the language of the working world also help teens recognize their own skills, talents and strengths.

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Praise People

All humans have the ability to praise and acknowledge others. However, the skill of praise must be directly taught. It is at the core of becoming a PeaceBuilders® site. Praise lets us engage in a common purpose with grace, harmony and efficiency. Praise makes us more open to the good things we want and need.

Why Does Praise Matter?

The skill of praising the accomplishments and positive actions of others builds healthy relationships, which are the foundation of productivity, achievement, well being and good citizenship. Healthy relationships build peace. This creates a positive learning environment, where each individual— adult and child—can reach his or her potential.

Young people who are praised and acknowledged, and who learn how to praise others for positive actions, are far less likely to become juvenile delinquents or adult criminals. Children (and adults) who praise their peers are better liked (see the following references). People who praise others are usually successful in their personal and career relationships. Good marriages and good parenting are based on positive interactions. Productive work relationships are enhanced when people notice, acknowledge and support the good in others. In sites with caring, positive environments, the adults praise and thank one another. They notice the good things others do. They notice people making progress toward individual and group goals. These adults frequently praise the accomplishments of all teens. Ample praise

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helps to build a high standard of achievement, success, and good citizenship, even in young people who often have undesirable behavior. Praise helps troubled youth to be more on-task and cooperative.

Of course, young people copy what they see adults doing. They start praising one another. Many replicated scientific studies show that frequent praise in a school increases academic achievement, positive behavior and health. Praise and acknowledgment build constructive cognitive connections and promote a path of resiliency. Schools rich in praise build more peace. Disruptions go down and test scores go up; vandalism goes down and volunteerism goes up; staff and administrator stress levels go down and job satisfaction goes up. Site staff can intentionally create an environment that reverses the trends of defensiveness, aggression and withdrawal, and that builds resiliency and success.

1. Defining the Principle Praise People

Two conditions must be joined to learn this Principle: noticing the good in people and situations and giving praise and recognition for it. The concepts must be developed in many contexts. Infuse the following activities into your curriculum where appropriate.

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On my way to school a while back, I met this guy coming out of the gas station across from the school. He was older than me and a lot bigger. I was scared – I did not know what he would do. I did not want to stare at him, but it is tough. I wanted him to know not to mess with me. I put my hands in my pockets and wondered where my friends were.

Then I hear him say "Hey Dude!" and see him move toward me, I have to think fast. I remembered the first line of the Pledge we say every morning in class and at assemblies and stuff – PeaceBuilders Praise People. I wondered how that could help... this guy is about to pound me...but, I could not think of anything else, so I turn around and turn up the corners of my mouth and say, 'Hey, cool shirt.' I felt really stupid.

I was really surprised; he told me he's new, and he's been very nervous his first day at our school. He needed to know where his first period classroom is. I said I'd show him and gave him some of my candy.

I told him about our school being a PeaceBuilders school, since that was on a banner out front. He asked about it. I told him that praising people is part of what we learn. I told him about the PraiseNotes we write every day and the PraiseBoards that are up in every classroom and in the office, and about the PeaceBuilders Recognition Lunch. I went to one last week with my mom. She was proud of me. She called everyone in the family.

I found out his name: James. He lives down the street from me. When he was introduced to his new class, he told them how I helped him find the class. His teacher wrote me a Nomination and sent a Good News Postcard home to my mom. I felt great!

– P.H., 7th grade, Phoenix, AZ

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Moving into Action:

How "PeaceBuilders Seek Wise People" Becomes the Norm

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1. Defining What it Means to "Seek Wise People as Friends and Advisors"

Two concepts must be joined to learn this principle: the concepts *wise* and *seek*. What are the characteristics of a wise person? These concepts must be developed in many contexts, and over different times and settings, in order to be truly integrated into the teens' lives. Because this skill is so critical to resiliency, teens who are troubled typically will have a harder time practicing it than other teens. Teens in some cultures, who have been taught not to ask for help, may need to do some historical cultural research before they can accept the idea. There have always been wise people, and others have always sought them. Fortunately, in this model, teens have plenty of opportunities to explore and accept the concept before putting it into practice.

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- **Create a group vision of what it means to Seek Wise People.** What would the world be like if everyone found wise people and asked for help and ideas when they needed to? What if friends and colleagues always acted as wise people? Would people be more likely or less likely to succeed? What would be seen, heard and felt at a site? These visions can be written, drawn, or spoken. Display them throughout the site.

- **Look up the meanings of the words *wise, seek, help, advisor,* and *friend* in the dictionary.** Then look in a thesaurus to find synonyms for these concepts. Broadening the meaning will help teens and adults become more skillful in applying the Principle at different times and in different places. Include these words in assigned vocabulary lists for extra practice.

- **List and categorize types of wisdom and wise people.** Who are the wise people in your home, site and neighborhood? Do these people know you think they are wise?

- **Describe the characteristics of an ideal adult and young wise person.** Based on the list and further discussion, create a "Characteristics of a Wise Person" poster to display on site bulletin boards and in other public areas.

- **Find and list examples of Seeking Wise People.** In a few sentences, describe a situation and how a wise person made it better. Start with historical or current events, then move to personal examples.

- **Draw distinctions. Using a T-chart, list qualities that are wise and qualities that are not.** Use the chart to frame a discussion: What is help? How is asking for help like Seeking Wise People? Is a public official necessarily wise and a teen necessarily not so? How do you tell whether a person is wise? Make a group list, decorate it, and display it.

- **Create posters that depict various ways to Seek Wise People and display them around the site.** Who seeks? Whom do they seek? What does Seeking Wise People look like in class? In the cafeteria? At the bus stop and on the bus? On the playing field? How would Seeking Wise People make a site and life better? Make posters to place in those areas.

2. Examining the Principle Seek Wise People

Teach by Direct Example

Teens are more likely to learn skills if the adults in their lives model them. Not only should adults use the skill consistently, but they should also help teens to notice when others use it and give praise when the skill is being used. Counting is one way to notice. Labeling the positive action is another. Ask teens Socratic-style questions to deepen their understanding of the principle Seek Wise People. Here are some examples to start with:

- **Play a Seek Wise People game.** During the game, everyone is to mention wise people as often as possible in the lesson discussion. When a wise person is mentioned, everyone calls out "wise person!"

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- **Send teens on a "wise people hunt"** for 24 hours. Each teen searches for at least five wise people within the site, then writes a paragraph about each one telling why they are wise. Ask whether they would have noticed these people if they were not seeking them.

- **Model asking teens for help,** labeling your action as Seeking a Wise Person. Encourage peer modeling by having teens ask each other for assistance.

- **Speak about the wise words and actions of other people at the site:** "Mr. Quantz was very wise in the way he searched for solutions from other sites and good teachers."

- **Model Seeking Wise People and wisdom yourself.** "My family is planning to take a trip to Washington, DC. I think it would be wise for us to read about things to see and do there. Has anyone gone there in the last few years?" Point out to teens that you are seeking wise people—them!

Teach by Using Symbolic Models

In order to create a norm of "Seeking Wise People," teens need to see examples in history and literature of people succeeding by practicing this Principle.

- **Language Arts/English** - Assist the librarian in preparing a reading list for each grade level of stories in which characters get good results from seeking wise people. Let each teen pick a story and write a report about how Seeking a Wise Person made things better.

- **Social Science/History** - Create and play games in which teens spot examples of seeking wisdom in stories or in history—a sort of "Seeking Wise People Treasure Hunt." Also look for times when someone picked the wrong person to ask. Were there times when people didn't succeed because they were reluctant to ask someone who knew how to help?

- **Use Socratic methods** to help teens recognize the Principle applied in different situations, times, places, and cultures.

- **Hold a formal debate** about whether someone should or should not have sought a wise person in a particular fictional, historical, or current events situation the class is studying. Decide what characteristics of wise people the person most needed in that situation.

- **As a "sponge" activity, opening question, or a journal activity,** have students respond to the following question at the beginning of the class period: "Identify one example of seeking a wise person you experienced or witnessed in the last 48 hours. Write about this in four to five sentences." It may be about a parent, friend, coach, teacher, employer, or may be about something they witnessed at home, at work, out shopping, or even on television. Ask volunteers to share their response with the class.

Teach with Proxy Examples

Proxy examples are invented characters similar to the teens or people they know. Proxy examples allow teens to examine actual situations without naming names, which helps build a positive group norm.

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- **Help teens invent a character.** Make up an imaginary person. Give him or her a history, friends, family, etc. As a group, invent challenging experiences in which the character may not know what to do. As teens discuss how to resolve the dilemmas, coach them, using Socratic-style questions, to decide which wise person to seek and how to seek that person's counsel or help.

- **Write a skit about the character's adventures.** Present it at the next PeaceBuilders Awards Assembly or Family Night. Teens may choose to present the skit as a puppet show, which will entertain the younger siblings in the crowd.

- **Use the character as a reference for behavior.** When problem solving around an actual situation, attribute the behavior to the character to help teens evaluate it.

Teach by Live Models

Using live models, together with labeling, will teach teens how to seek wise people in real situations. Socratic questioning methods can help them understand why this is important. You may even have the teens rehearse the skill (see the next section). Have teens keep a log of times when they or others used the following methods:

- **Use the person's name.** "Jane, would you please help me pass out these papers? Thanks."

- **Move close enough to the wise person to be able to speak quietly.** Exceptions to this are emergencies where immediate help is needed—name examples of such situations.

- **Smile or offer some other sign of friendly intention.** If you are upset, make clear it is not at that person.

- **Use PowerWords.** "Excuse me, Mr. Wilson, I have some questions about this week's Peace Theme. Can you please give me a few minutes after school today? Thank you."

- **Be Direct.** "Excuse me, Mrs. Quintana, may I please talk to you for a minute? I'm really upset about something that happened today in my class. I could use some advice." "Mrs. Romero, could you please let Edward help our class with our project for an hour? He did such a fine job last year, and my class could really benefit from his input."

- **Interview Wise People on campus.** First discuss why each interviewee is wise. In the interview, have teens ask the person how it feels when someone comes to him or her genuinely seeking advice or help, then ask questions about the person's life. Obtain a photo. Create a bulletin board of wise people or a "Book of Wisdom." For each person post a photo, a biography and a statement about why the person is wise. Make sure the principal gets a copy of the teens' work so the wise people and the teen teams can be recognized. If several classes do this activity, coordinate so that one wise person doesn't have too many interviews.

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Teach by Monitoring and Self-Monitoring Results: Teach Teens to be Everyday Scientists

Give a lesson on the scientific method. This is a great opportunity to read from the *Dialogues of Socrates* by Plato.

- **Ask teens to log and chart their experiences of seeking wise people.**

- **Survey people** at home and in the community about times they sought a wise person (elders, clergy, a grandmother, a public official). This amplifies the norm of seeking wise people.

- **Create and test hypotheses** about whether successful people (adults, teens, business people, etc.) are more likely or less likely to go to others for assistance and ideas.

3. Rehearsing the Principle Seek Wise People

Here are some of the many ways teens are rehearsing how to seek wise people. Like the other components of PeaceBuilding, this Principle requires extensive rehearsal in many different situations. If teens learn to consciously practice this Principle, their chances of success in life go up dramatically.

- **Role-play the skills of seeking wise people** in everyday situations, such as asking a teacher for extra help, requesting parental assistance with homework, or asking a youth leader for relationship advice.

- **Ask local media to publish or air stories** highlighting people who exhibit the characteristics of a wise PeaceBuilder. This can help tremendously in creating a community norm of PeaceBuilding. Have teens submit nominations with general facts about various wise people, so the reporter can select the ones who would be most interesting to the public.

- **Invite special wise people,** who are experts about a subject teens are studying, to speak to their class.

- **Have teens reflect on how they might be a wise person** to younger students, brothers or sisters, cousins, neighbors, etc.

- **Create PeaceCards, each listing a characteristic of a wise person.** Give each teen a card and ask him or her to find someone who has that quality, give him or her the card and interview the person about the characteristic that he or she embodies. Have teens journal the experience.

- **Send PraiseNotes or Good Neighbor Nominations** to wise adults at your site or community who have done something good or worthy, or who display other characteristics of a wise person.

- **Play a variation of Kudo Judo.** Have the group decide on a wise person. As fast as they can, have teens say things they might tell or ask the person. Start with historical or fictional characters, then move to people known by the teens. The game needs a timer, counters, judges, and two individuals or teams.

- **Look for wise PeaceBuilders in current events.** What wise person did the central figure in the event seek or not seek? Teens may write letters to those people or to

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the editor, expressing their thoughts. They might compose a general cover letter to explain what they are studying.

- **Play the "Wise People Game."** In this game, the person who finds and documents the most wise people wins; this encourages others to seek wise people.

- **Send out PeaceAgents** (special reporters) to scout out wise people in action. Have them report their findings to the class or in the site newspaper. Be sure to send the wise person a PraiseNote.

4. Live the Principle Seek Wise People as Friends and Advisors

Seeking Wise People can provide a lifetime benefit for teens and adults. Wise people abound. They need to be noticed, talked about, and celebrated. The community will never run out of new people to seek and honor. Many of the activities already listed provide opportunities for staff, administrators, youth leaders, teens, families, neighbors, and community leaders to make practicing this principle a daily habit at the site. The teens may very well lead the greater community in seeking and honoring wise people.

Start the day with wisdom. Once a week, have teens take turns preparing to celebrate a wise hero, preferably one close to their own age so that they can see that maturity, not age, is what counts. This can be done during homeroom, either live or in a short video broadcast over the TV or computer monitors.

5. Revisiting the Principle Seek Wise People as Friends and Advisors

The arrival of new teens and staff, as well as predictable slumps in energy at the site, will mean that the principle of seeking wise people has to be revisited to keep everyone charged. Here are things to help boost the energy level during slumps:

- **Take field trips** to visit business partners, government officials, etc., asking them to assist with PeaceBuilders projects. This allows teens to seek wise people as friends and advisors in a group and to meet more wise people.

- Virtually every concept or activity can be revisited with a different twist to enliven the site's commitment to seeking wise people. "The Book of Wisdom" might be revisited by sending letters to leading politicians or business people, requesting them to fill out a page and return it to the site. New biographies can be read aloud or during silent reading time. A contest could be organized around reading biographies of famous people.

- Continue to create relationships with community members who can share knowledge, expertise and other wisdom with the teens. Create a mailing list to ensure these people are kept updated with "Good News Postcards" about the classroom and site, that they receive the teen and staff newsletters, and are invited regularly to events at the site.

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6. How People Coach PeaceBuilders and Use the Socratic Method

Proven teaching methods are also effective strategies for PeaceBuilding. Try a few tactics that improve learning and increase the peace in your room—you might call them "Socrates' Secret Recipes." Adults can set limits without entering into crisis, drama or power struggles. Remember, no single method will work every time. Use them in combination. Watch carefully for small improvements in behavior as a clue, which is what another wise person, Aristotle, would have advised.

- **Use the teen's success metaphor.** Whatever the teen wants to be—a race car driver, a scuba diver, an actress or a coal miner—use that as a metaphor to help explain ways to succeed.
  "You said that you wanted to be a professional baseball player. What kind of person do you think coaches and team-mates would want on their team: a PeaceBuilder or a troublemaker?"

- **Provide a choice of rewards for completing a task.** This engages goal setting and intrinsic motivation, while imposing a single "take it or leave it" reward creates resentment and fear—especially in teens who have been abused or who have witnessed violence.

  "Here are some rewards for reaching our goals. Please pick which one you'd like to work for today."

  "We can use the computers or watch a video after we finish the project. Which do you choose?"

- **Model behavior to be mastered before asking for action.** Showing the teen a positive model before requesting action increases success, whereas requiring action without a model to imitate invites failure.

  "Here is how to find answers to the questions at the bottom of the page from the study guide. I'll do it first . . . Now, you try it."

- **Offer ways to finish incomplete tasks.** Offering ways to complete an unfinished task increases self-discipline. Allowing teens simply to avoid the task, even with punishment, encourages failure. Choice preserves dignity—and reduces power struggles.

  "Do you want to finish this before you go to lunch or take it home and bring it to me first thing in the morning?"

  "Do you want to finish this by yourself or with a partner?"

- **Invite and clarify daily or hourly goal setting.** Long-term goals and orientation are easier to achieve when short-term objectives are made clear.

  "What two things do we need to finish before going to lunch?"

  "What can we do to build peace at the game tonight?"

- **Bracket talk about outcomes.** Aggressive young people tend to overestimate the rewards and effectiveness of violence. Thus, bracketing your talk helps a teen see outcomes:

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"Is he more or less likely to want to get back at you if you hit him?"

"Will that action increase or decrease the peace?"

"Will people want to work with you if you insult them?"

- **Give frequent positive feedback on performance.** Positive coaching increases cooperation and perseverance. Some young people, especially those who have experienced difficult challenges, may need two to three times the rate of positive feedback that others need. If positive behaviors are not acknowledged, they think they are wrong. Studies also show that aggressive children are least likely to be praised— even when they are right.

  "Good PeaceBuilding."

  "You gave a wise answer."

  "You listened well."

  "You gave up a put-down when you didn't respond to Maria's degrading comment. Well done!"

- **Model asking for help.** When children see adults seeking help, this invites cooperation and achievement of common rewards.

  "I might need a wise person to help me with this computer. Who would be a good person to ask?"

- **Inquire whether the teen is open to considering new options for action**. Ask the teen if he or she would like to hear options that will increase his or her self direction. Giving advice without permission increases resentment and the sense of powerlessness.

  "I heard you say nobody is nice to you. If I were to show you some ways you could get people to be nicer, would that help or hurt you? (Wait for answer.) May I show you a couple of ways that you can behave so that people will be a lot nicer to you? You could pick one you'd like to try."

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Wise People Then and Now

PeaceBuilders Principle:

1. Objectives

- The teens will identify the characteristics of Wise People at their site and in the community. They will understand why they should seek wise people as resources for themselves.

2. Description

Using historical wise people as models, young people will recognize that living wise people are all around them, available to help. They will also strategize on identifying the problem and ways to ask for help.

3. Materials Needed

- Paper, chart paper or whiteboard
- Pens/pencils

4. Procedure

- Young people brainstorm names of historical figures considered to be wise, for example; George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Jimmy Carter, Thurgood Marshall, Ronald Reagan, Maya Angelou, or Colin Powell. Using their graphic organizers, teens compare and contrast similarities and differences among wise historical figures.
- The leader facilitates a discussion exploring why the wisdom of these people is sought.
- Characteristics such as dependability, good communication skills and calmness in crises, which are considered key to being a wise person, are posted.
- The leader makes a correlation between the characteristics of historically wise people and the other PeaceBuilder Principles these wise people practiced.

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- The leader reinforces the characteristics of wise people asking teens to identify wise people in their own lives and how these wise people made a difference in their lives.
- The young people write PraiseNotes to the wise people in their lives.

5. Teen Jobs

Researchers: Identify historically significant wise people.

Artists: Make the Characteristics of Wise People poster.

Aide: Assists the leader in distributing materials.

6. Criteria for Successful Completion of Activities

- Teens provide insights on the characteristics of wise people including how they too have exhibited characteristics of a wise person.

7. Multicurricular, Multicultural, or ESL Connections

English Language Arts, English Reading Arts, Social Science, Visual Arts

8. Multiple Intelligences

Inventory

___ Bodily/Kinesthetic
___ Naturalist
___ Interpersonal
___ Logical/Mathematical
___ Rhythmical/Musical
___ Visual/Spatial
___ Intrapersonal
___ Verbal/Linguistic

9. Tips for Success

- Teens who struggle with identifying wise people or characteristics of wise people can explore what it would FEEL like to have wise people in their lives. Help identify resources at the site and in the community wherein they might seek out and ask help of wise people.

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Minute Recipes for Peace for Adult Advisors, Leaders, Teachers, Counselors and Administrators

Young people need to see PeaceBuilders in action. They need to know that each classroom or youth group that they enter will provide a positive learning environment and every area outside of class promotes peace. The time you take now to become a PeaceBuilder and teach young people how to become PeaceBuilders will have countless benefits for you, your students, and your community.

1-Minute Recipes

- Acknowledge a positive behavior
- Smile
- Use a personal name and positive statement
- Use touch or hugs appropriately
- Ask questions about the lives of young people
- Recognize changes and show interest
- Give rewards
- Use courtesy
- Shake hands
- Ask how things are going at school and home
- Sit next to someone you don't know
- Compliment students/teachers/staff in person and/or over the PA system
- Share a cookie or food
- Tell a joke per day
- Use eye contact
- Make one positive phone call to parents
- Have teens create a daily reminder to practice peace for the week

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5-Minute Recipes

- Smile and greet each person by name as they enter the room
- Share positive thoughts
- Play calming music
- Pair teens to share one positive thing that happened to them
- Ask questions and listen
- Write a positive note to someone
- Share yourself with others
- Do a favor
- Open a door, carry a package or help with some other task
- Share a good thought - "I heard about a good thing today while..."
- Ask someone for his or her opinion
- Listen for five minutes with no judgment or quick response
- Model PeaceBuilders Principles
- Call a teen's home and praise him/her
- Describe a Wise Person in your life
- Ask teens to write in a journal about how they built peace in the last 24 hours

10-Minute Recipes

- Write personal contact notes to several people
- Role-play solutions to a few problems
- Discuss good news
- Have teens brainstorm solutions to a problem
- Have teens write a positive note to someone whom they hurt
- Sit down and talk with a teen or adult
- Decorate the surroundings with good news about your teens or site
- Share a problem and ask someone for help

30-Minute Recipes

- Help teens create and show video role plays
- Share experiences of how you increased the peace
- Categorize and sort "peace" activities
- Post newspaper articles that show PeaceBuilders skills
- Write and act out short plays
- Play cooperative games in which everyone wins
- Build a sense of community with other groups at the site
- Do "community service" or acts of kindness at the site
- Brainstorm solutions
- Create and test projects or ideas that build peace
- Use current events to design peace solutions
- Create personal posters that show one's goals
- Interact with teens through games
- Have lunch with someone

60-Minute Recipes

- Spend time visiting with people during lunch, between classes or before/after school
- Attend school events
- Plan lunchtime activities
- Direct teen rehearsals for a play or performance
- Review newspapers for peaceful solutions to problems
- Rewrite historical events with peaceful solutions
- Practice relaxation and visualization

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