

The Youth Peacebuilding Project



...I made friends with people I never thought I could be friends with...!



The Youth Peacebuilding Project

Thankyou for your interest in our project

We are a partnership of 7 organizations:

- ✚ The Institute for Community Peacebuilding, a program of Cdn Mennonite University;
- ✚ Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. “Those Who Lead”;
- ✚ Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, Inc. (IRCOM);
- ✚ YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg;
- ✚ Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc.. (Welcome Place);
- ✚ Newcomer Employment and Education Development Services, Inc. (NEEDS);
- ✚ Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. “We All Work Together To Help One Another”.

“Looking back on the Gathering the most important experience was...

- ... Meeting new people and knowing the culture and religions” – youth age 13
- ... Learning people’s characters, having fun with other kids” – youth age 13
- ... Working together with people from different places” – youth age 14
- ... Making new friends” – youth age 13

We have been funded by:

- ✚ United Way of Winnipeg ;
- ✚ The Winnipeg Foundation;
- ✚ Welcoming Communities
(Manitoba Labour and Immigration);
- ✚ Neighbourhoods Alive!;
- ✚ Winnipeg in Motion ;
- ✚ MB Culture, Tourism, Heritage and Sport;
- ✚ MB4Youth
(MB Education, Citizenship and Youth);
- ✚ Canadian Heritage;
- ✚ National Film Board;
- ✚ private donations.



The Youth Peacebuilding Project

Introduction:

In the summer of 2008 an unlikely group of 42 youth, and as many adults, gathered on an island in Shoal Lake to embark on a journey of peace. Based on work done in other contexts, they shaped an eight-day event that brought them past their stereotypes and distrust of each other to a place of trust, unity, and peace.

“Nothing could ever compare to how this gathering changed my opinion on different cultures and people. This was the most amazing experience ever and nothing can ever take this away from me. I love this gathering and I want to spend time with everyone all day, everyday” – Youth, age 16.

This was the first step of what is a year-round interaction with these youth – the beginning of what we hope will be a long future for the Youth Peacebuilding Project..



We are currently planning this year’s Gathering, and are asking you to participate with us by providing the resources needed to make this year’s Gathering a success for as many youth as possible.

In the pages that follow you can read a brief summary of the origins of the project, the success of the 2008 Summer Youth Peacebuilding Gathering, and our hopes and plans for the future of this exciting project.

The Youth Peacebuilding Project

Basis of the Project:

The project was conceived by work done at *Seeds of Peace*, a Maine-based project that brings together youth from conflicted international zones. A Menno Simons College graduate brought the model to Winnipeg, after involvement in the Seeds of Peace in India and in Maine.

This work is based on a number of models for **Conflict Transformation** that are relationship-centred, using **Transformative Dialogue** processes that, after building appropriate trust levels, **'surface the conflict'** that everyone knows is there but no-one talks about., and then proceed to discuss 'what next?'.
"The most important thing for me about the Peace Gathering... the dialogue session where I shared my knowledge on gangs. It showed me how I am used to the violence & that it isn't ordinary, because most of the people listening were shocked" – youth age 13

We also draw from the **'Contact Hypothesis'** of Ifat Maoz, which states that inter-group contact can reduce prejudice and hatred when, and only when:

1. both groups have equal status in the contact situation,
2. there are sustained and personal interactions,
3. groups engage in cooperative activities in which interdependence is required to achieve collective goals, and
4. equality is demonstrated as a social norm

We adapted the Seeds of Peace model to the Winnipeg environment, listening to the partner groups as they indicated what would work for their youth, engaging Aboriginal listening traditions, and incorporating a dozen other models and adaptations. For a full report of the principles we apply, please see our full report. at www.cmu.ca/icp/ypj .

The Youth Peacebuilding Project

The 2008 Gathering: “ONE WEEK OF PEACE”

In the summer of 2008 forty-two youth from different cultural groups in Winnipeg Manitoba (African, Asian, Métis, Aboriginal and European communities) attended an eight-day “Peace Gathering” on an Island operated by Pioneer Camp in Shoal Lake Ontario. Shoal Lake was the ideal location for the Gathering as it is both serene and exciting in its natural beauties of rugged granite outcrops, majestic spruce, clear cold waters, and magnificent skies.

It was here that the forty-two youth plus eighteen dialogue coordinators, fourteen cabin leaders, and other Gathering leadership engaged in a process of cultural and personal discovery; they came to share and learn.

What we did:

The core activities of the week were the **morning ‘dialogue sessions’**, where the facilitators provided a context in which the youth explored their perceptions of each other that otherwise would never get addressed. This was followed by an Arts session, and then sport and play for the rest of the day to ‘try out’ new relationships.

Out of this they were able to construct positive relationships built on new information and trust.



“The most important thing for me about the Peace Gathering...

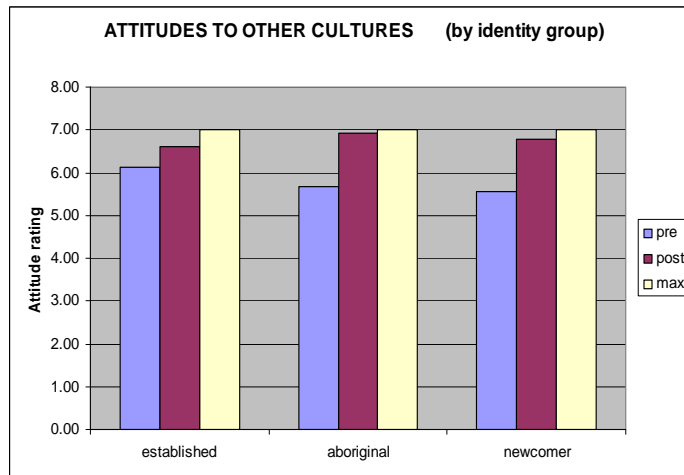
... was meeting my cabin mates. I made first assumptions which turned out to be wrong and taught me that first impressions aren’t always right. – Youth age 15.

The summer peace gathering was a *tour de force* of cultural connectivity. This was a gathering about fear, openings, discovery, trust, and change. This was a week of peace.

The 2008 Gathering: Evaluation Results

We asked the youth to fill out ‘surveys’ on the way to the Gathering and again on the way back from the Gathering. A full report of the evaluations is available on-line.

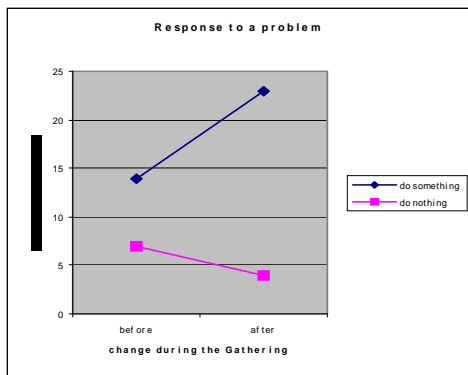
1. The pre- and post- Gathering answers to the ‘attitude to other cultures’ questions all showed significant increases in positive attitudes, as evidenced by the chart below.



All groups started with decent attitudes towards ‘the other’ (purple); and significantly improved attitudes (burgundy); to almost reach the highest score possible (Yellow)

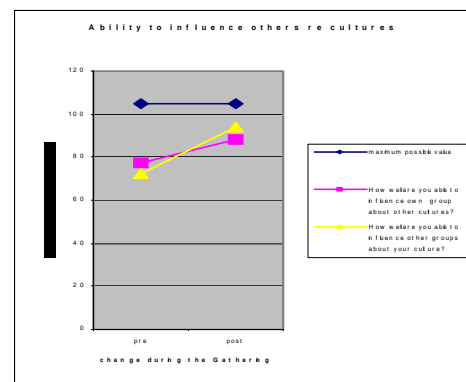
2. We also looked for a change in self-confidence of the participants - because when there is a strong sense of conflict with another identity group the person’s confidence to take action is significantly reduced.

“Going to the Sweat Lodge with my cabin mates taught me to share love, confidence, culture and friendship” – youth age 16.



The rise in the blue line in the graph on the left shows a marked increase in confidence. The drop in the pink line represents fewer answers that indicate an *unwillingness* to take action.

Similarly the graph on the right shows an increased confidence in affecting change in people from one’s own, and another’s culture.



... When I was going to camp I didn’t trust anyone at all but when I began to learn more about them I trusted them” – youth age 14

The Youth Peacebuilding Project

The Present and Future Project:

Having experienced success in a natural setting far from the influences of family and peers, we are bringing the project to the city – where the youth live, go to school and play – where the battle for their hearts and minds is waged on a daily basis.

The year-long project which we are now engaged in includes:

- Workshops in high schools and youth groups;
- following up with our Gathering participants and bringing in new participants with a YMCA-based leadership program;
- equipping this year's cabin leaders with weekly training workshops and a weekend leadership training canoe trip;
- Adapting our programming to work alongside the innovative work done by other organizations in Winnipeg's inner city through the 2009/2010 school year.

*"I like Native people, I learn about their culture and I like it. I change my mind about them" –youth age 15.
"I had no idea Aboriginal people felt that way about White people." – youth age 14.*

Each year we will work with several hundred youth in Winnipeg, selecting some for the Summer Peacebuilding Gatherings, and providing all with the skills to pass their new learning on to their peers.

Our budget for the year, in summary, is:

2009/2010 YPP Program Budget	
2009 Gathering	38,600
Personnel	47,200
Year-round program costs	46,400
Administration	19,800
TOTAL	152,000
(excluding in-kind contributions)	



The Youth Peacebuilding Project

Invitation

We are currently funded to the end of June. Our 2009 Gathering is the first week of July, and our need for funding starts at that time.

For the Gathering, we are obtaining funding in a variety of ways, including participation by the partners in the Run for Rights fundraiser, generating some fees and 'camperships' for attending the gathering, provision of staffing by organizations sending their youth, and funding through small proposals to Government and private funders.

We'll be interacting with youth year-round, and, as has been shown in many studies, the 'return on investment' in working with young people makes it not only money well spent, but futures well-secured.

By developing relationships with people 'they never thought they could be friends with', youth gain confidence in themselves and their abilities, expand their networks and opportunities, and find the hope and encouragement to build a life for themselves through education and employment rather than succumbing to the seemingly easier paths presented to them on the streets.

We are privileged to be part of that process, and invite you to participate with us in a project that:

- is based on success;
- is innovative; and
- builds peace among youth.



The Youth Peacebuilding Project

How you can partner with us this spring:

Our request to you at this time is for funding for the Gathering, which takes place from June 27 through July 3 at Camp Stephens in the Lake of the Woods.

With administrative costs, the Gathering will require just over \$44,000 in cash expenditures. There are other resources brought to the Gathering by the partner agencies totaling \$25,000, particularly salaried personnel and a reduction of camp fees.

2009 Gathering budget	
Camp fees	25,380
Honoraria	8,170
Transportation	1,200
Supplies	2,350
miscellaneous	1,500
	<hr/>
	38,600
Admin applied to Gathering	5,800
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	44,400
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We will have between 110 people at the Gathering, so the approximate cost to bring one person to camp is \$400. We are asking our supporters to contribute between one and ten 'spots' at the Gathering. We have also applied for other funding that we expect will reduce the number of spots that we need to have funded in this way.

We appreciate the attention that you are giving to this project – and to the youth whose lives will be transformed through your contribution.

The lead agency is the Institute for Community Peacebuilding, which you can contact as below. Cheques can be written to Youth Peacebuilding Project/CMU and sent to:

Institute for Community Peacebuilding
210-520 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0G2

Email: d.pankratz@uwinnipeg.ca or dpankratz@cmu.ca
Phone: 953-3865 | Fax: 783-3699

The Youth Peacebuilding Project

We invite you to join us in this important and exciting transformative work.

- ✚ **David Pankratz**
The Institute for Community Peacebuilding, a project of CMU (lead agency)
- ✚ **Albert McLeod**
Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. “Those Who Lead”
- ✚ **Noëlle DePape**
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, Inc. (IRCOM)
- ✚ **Ken Mason**
YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg
- ✚ **Wanda Yamamoto**
Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc. (Welcome Place)
- ✚ **Jodi Alderson**
Newcomer Employment and Education Development Services, Inc. (NEEDS)
- ✚ **Larry Wucherer**
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. “We All Work Together To Help One Another”
- ✚ **Phoebe Burns**
Coordinator, Youth Peacebuilding Project

“Eight Days of Peace”

In 8 days, you saw the life of your camper change,
In 8 days, you saw fear shatter,
In 8 days, you saw stereotypes vanish,
In 8 days, you saw lasting friendships built,
And in 8 days, never would you ever have thought
all of these could be accomplished
– and all of them were accomplished.
I don’t know how you did it, but you did it,
and not only that, but you did it successfully.
I am so proud, so incredibly proud of all the hard work
and I feel so privileged to have been a part of the first peace
gathering.
Thank you,
So much.

- 17 year old Youth Leader

