



*Cultivating Justice,
Nonviolence & Well-being*

**612 N. Main
Newton, KS 67114**

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www.peaceconnections.org**

Store Hours

Monday-Thursday
10 a.m.-5 p.m.
closed Fridays
Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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April-May-June 2008

PEACE CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER



Scott Miller introduces the Circles Initiative against poverty in Newton.

Poverty is not acceptable

The Bridges Out of Poverty community group has spent the past several years raising awareness about poverty and learning about the cost of poverty to our community. As the next step in this effort, Scott Miller, of Move the Mountain Leadership organization, came to Newton on March 10-11 to introduce the Circles™ Initiative — a way of surrounding a family from poverty with ongoing support. It was encouraging and exciting to hear about the impact the Circles™ Initiative is making in 35+ communities in the U.S. and what the potential for Harvey County can be.

Miller gave presentations to a wide variety of groups during his time in Newton. Nearly 600 people from the community and Bethel College were able to hear more about this high-impact strategy: Chamber and businesses, school personnel/administration, social services and churches, Kiwanis Club, Bethel College students and faculty, community-at-large, and fundraising consultants. We were excited that more than 70 people completed a Circles™ Interest Survey, specifying ways that they were willing to participate in developing Circles™ in our area.

Twenty-five people participated in the Guiding Coalition Introduction on the second day of Miller's visit. Preliminary Guiding Coalition Teams were formed at the meeting. Their names are listed after the purpose of each team (see page 2). The consensus was to move forward in forming a Circles™ Guiding Coalition in this commu-

■ Continued on page 2

Circles: An initiative to end poverty

■ Continued from page 1

community, while we seek funds for a Circles™ contract with Move the Mountain for the next three years.

■ The Big View Team identifies barriers, gathers community leaders and members to discuss and problem solve these barriers: Tina Payne, Kendall Heier, Cay Siebert, Craig Simons, Jackie Sprangers, Gerre Brown, Lorrie Kessler.

■ The Resources Team assures that there are sufficient resources to implement Circles™. If they are created, the resources team also develops and leads the following features: car donations, revolving loans, matched savings programs, and self-sufficiency tools: Steve Richards, Matt Schmidt, Marianne Eichelberger, Cyril Brown.

■ The Community Team provides leadership to ensure weekly meetings are effective at building community and helping people with skills and plans for getting out of poverty: Berni Kaufman, Curtis Stubbs, Ottmar Lang, Dee Anderson, Mary Baker.

■ The Circles™ Team recruits and supports both families leaving poverty and allies: Cookie Wiebe, Brad Schmidt, Julie Johnson, Sammie Simmons, Stan Bohn, Arnita Haury, Pam Schrag.

■ The Planning Team is composed of the chairs of each team and is responsible for the operational coordination and support of the Guiding Coalition. It is staffed by both the Circles™ Coordinator and Coach.

Reflections:

Scott Miller presents a compelling vision for a nation that does not accept poverty as a normal, morally acceptable fact of life. Move the Mountain Leadership Center is in touch with a range of resources that can be used to develop approaches suitable to our locale and region. They have a clear concept of the kind of real collaboration that will broadly benefit our community. Meanwhile, several years of interest and effort by leaders and collaborators around Harvey County have reached a critical point. Brought together at a unique moment of opportunity, we can create an epicenter for the elimination of poverty in Kansas and beyond. Will we choose to do so? — *Steve Richards, PC Board Chair*

We Invite You to Learn More:

Guiding Coalition Teams along with others who are interested, are invited to the **Bridges/Circles™ meeting on Wednesday, April 16, noon**, at Peace Connections, to meet together and develop next steps for their teams. If you are not yet on a team, we would encourage you to join one or just sit in on one for more information. You are welcome to invite others who were not able to hear Miller. If you can't come on the above date, but are interested **please let us know by filling out the Circles™ Interest Survey inserted in this newsletter.**

Getting Ahead class

The next "Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World" class for building resources and transitioning out of poverty will begin in mid-April. The class will be facilitated by Pam Schrag and Cookie Wiebe. There are still spaces available in the class — we have a need for participants and for sponsors at \$500/person. Please call Peace Connections to request an application or to make a contribution.

Reflections:

What if we simply assumed that anyone who works full time would earn a living wage? What if we would all take it for granted that health care is something we should provide for all citizens, just as we provide police protection, fire protection, roads, clean water, and many other services through our tax dollars? Would we all be happier, safer, and find that public services are actually less expensive if we would not tolerate poverty in our society? — *Arnita Haury, PC Chair Elect*

It has been amazing to see what can happen to individuals when you take the time to train and orient new employees to work as team members and to become more autonomous in day-to-day decision making. More responsibility and more accountability, with a higher rate of pay, have produced better employees and appear to have improved quality of life at home for the entire family. As a result, at Asbury Park we are experiencing a higher retention rate among our staff which in turn reduces our recruitment expense. As an employer living as well as working in the City of Newton, this constitutes a 'win-win' situation that is hard to beat. — *Tom Williams, CEO Asbury Park Retirement Center & Newton Chamber President*

A Case for Change

Reducing the cost of poverty in Harvey County through the Circles™ Initiative

"I was so relieved when I learned
that it's not all my fault."

- *Getting Ahead* building resources
class participant



Harvey County: Indicators of the Cost of Poverty

There were 2,638 people in Harvey County living at or below the federal definition of poverty in 2005, and 879 of those were under the age of 18. At least twice that number struggle to make ends meet. **The numbers call for change:**

- As of Sept 2007, 47.74% of all students in Newton Public Schools received free or reduced lunches. Cost for one year of breakfast/lunch program: \$790,432.55.
- From July 2007 through Dec 2007 SRS provided Harvey County residents approximately \$267,200 in cash (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) assistance, and \$1.1 million in food assistance (food stamps). This breaks down to approximately \$44,530 per month for cash (TANF) and \$175,500 per month in food assistance.
- The budget for Harvey County Low Income is \$512,500 for 2008. It includes: Senior Services, O T Cab, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Indigent Services, Low Income Assistance, Inmate Health Care, Health Department, Health Ministries.
- Health Ministries Clinic provided medical services to 1,967 patients in 2007 -- a 67% increase from the previous year. Of that patient population, on average 79% were uninsured, 90% were living at or below federal poverty level (which is \$21,200 for a family of four), and 83% were Harvey County residents.
- The hourly wage necessary to provide basic necessities for one parent and two children in Rural Kansas is \$14.63 an hour. For one parent and two children living in Urban Kansas, it is \$16.07 an hour (KS minimum wage is \$2.65; federal minimum is \$5.85).
- The Fair Market Rent and utilities (no phone) for a 2-bedroom apartment was \$618 in Harvey County in 2006. To afford a two-bedroom apartment, a worker needs to earn about \$12 an hour working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year. At federal minimum wage this equates to nearly 2 full-time wage earners, or one full-time wage earner working more than 80 hours per week.
- On average, 18 people stayed in the Harvey County Homeless Shelter every night in 2007, or 6,570 total overnights for the year.
- Approximately 1,000 older adults in Harvey County live in homes in need of repair.
- Women, Infant, Children program in Harvey County had 1,186 clients per month in 2007.

Calendar

April

A **book study** on *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* continues Monday, **April 14, 7 pm**. Light refreshments served. Ben Lichti will facilitate the discussion.

Bridges/Circles™ meeting on Wednesday, April 16, noon, at Peace Connections. Everyone is invited to come. See front page article for more information.

Your Life is a Story: Begin or continue writing your life story with Ann Showalter on Friday, **April 25, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm** at Peace Connections. "Everyone is writing a life story, not with ink and paper, but with our daily life." Join Ann for a one-day workshop where you will have the opportunity to put pen to paper and write a story about your life and to have others hear what you have written. Bring a sack lunch so we can eat together. Drinks will be furnished. Remember to bring writing materials. The cost is \$10 per person. Call Peace Connections at, 316-284-0000, to reserve your place as space is limited to 10. If at the end of the day there is interest, Ann is open to continuing the class as desired. If you have questions, contact Ann at 316-284-2960 or asho@cox.net.

May

Book study Monday, **May 12, 7 pm** (see April calendar).

How well do you understand the culture of poverty? If you didn't grow up in poverty, you may be unaware of the "hidden rules" that govern many aspects of life for the poor. People in poverty are often in survival mode, where the future holds limited promise, and support systems taken for granted in middle class and wealth are nonexistent. Two-day **Bridges Out of Poverty training** through SRS, South Central Region, in Newton will be held on **May 21 & June 25, 8:30 am-4:30 pm**. No charge, but space is limited. Call 620-342-2505 x 210 or email vlxa@srs.ks.gov to register.

June

Kids Summer Food & Activities Program, which provides meals for children ages 2-18, **begins June 2** and runs through July 18. Volunteers and donations are needed.

Sara Thomsen will be in concert on Friday, **June 6, 7 pm** at the Trinity Heights United Methodist Church, Boyd Ave., Newton. Thomsen will offer a singing workshop to anyone interested on Saturday, June 7. See flyer insert for details.

Second day of Bridges Out of Poverty training in Newton on **June 25, 8:30 am-4:30 pm** (see above).

2008 Summer Food Program Gears Up!

We are excited about the plans to again provide meals for Newton's children during the summer of 2008! This will be the third summer for the program. With 47.7% of children in Newton receiving free or reduced lunches this school year, the need continues to be great. Your help is requested (see below) to make this ongoing effort a success!

The Summer Food & Activities Program for Kids offers free breakfasts and lunches to all Newton children ages 2-18 during the months of June and July, as well as, provides summer jobs for four cooks. In 2007 the program was expanded through the addition of three part-time paid site coordinator positions, busing, and three mornings of learning activities. With the help of volunteers and donations from community members and area businesses (including HCUW), over 9,000 meals were served – a 30% increase from 2006!

The Summer Food and Activity Committee (with representation from Peace Connections, USD 373, Mid-Cap, Harvey Co. Health Department, Harvey Co. Extension Service) has been meeting regularly. Plans for 2008 include different busing routes that will be accessible to more children and expanding the learning activities to four days a week. USD 373 of Newton is again a key partner in this effort. Their staff will plan and prepare the meals, coordinate USDA funding, and provide sites – Sunset and South Breeze Elementary schools - for the program's use.

This program will support children who otherwise will likely not have access to the nutritious food that can help them maintain their academic status and physical health through the summer months. **We look forward to partnering with you to more fully meet the needs of Newton's children and youth through:**

- 1) **Financial gifts** – individual gifts, special offerings at churches, contributions from groups, etc.
- 2) **Volunteers** who can give time throughout the summer – individuals, women's/men's group project, church groups, and others.

Call, email, or stop by Peace Connections to be a part of this exciting venture!

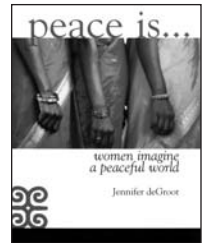
Gift Shop

Spring Book Features

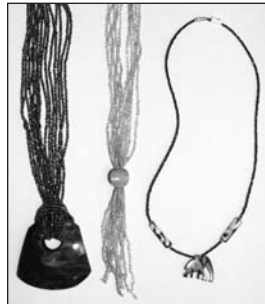


NEW Oil **Candle pottery lamps** made by Dick Lehman for Lehman Goertzen Pottery, Goshen, IN. Each Oil Candle is made on the potter's wheel and decorated and glazed by hand. **\$19.95**

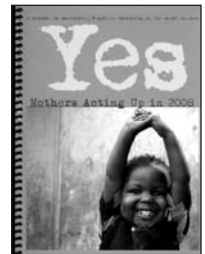
Peace Is ... Women Imagine a Wonderful World, designed by Jennifer DeGroot. This colorful collection of words and photographs from women in India and six African countries makes an inspiring and timely call for peace for women everywhere. The book grew out of DeGroot's six-month journey to India and Africa. **\$20.**



NEW **jewelry & shoulder bags** from Kenya, from a women's coop that has been formed to help women support their families. **\$6.50-\$28.**



50% Off! **YES! Mother's Acting Up in 2008** – a journal/calendar for 2008 – wish we'd known about these sooner! Sadie Mast, lifelong peace activist, brought these to Peace Connections and is featured in the journal. The journal features stories of women around the world and lists a number of important facts, references, websites, etc. **Regularly \$20 – now \$10.**



NEW **Sara Thomsen CD Everything Changes**, an intimate portrayal of the heart breaking open and apart, tumbling through transformation with elegance and grace. The album modulates from joy to despair, crusty to tender with hints of jazz, country, blues, Latin groove, Celtic and bluegrass peppering an acoustic folk base. **\$16.95**

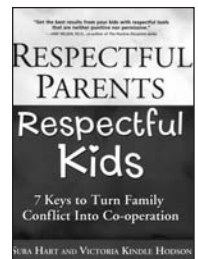
Until It's Gone: Ending Poverty in Our Nation in Our Lifetime by Scott Miller. Read the book by the author who recently visited Newton to give our community an introduction to the Circles Initiative. The first action plan that joins the resources of individuals, organizations, communities, and government to eradicate poverty. Learn about the Circles™ Campaign and how you can help eliminate barriers confronted by those in poverty. Become an ally to those in need and a transformational leader in your community. Scott Miller offers us practical hope that we can end—not just reduce—poverty through a change in the way we think and respond. **\$14.95**



Locally made **"Ol' Time Windmills"** — The windmill once dotted the countryside. They are a landmark that represents hard work and determination of the people of the prairie. Hand built in 12-inch and 15-inch. **\$28.95 & \$29.95**



Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids by Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson. This handbook offers 7 Keys to: express yourself so you're heard and respected, successfully handle disagreements/problem behaviors, motivate your kids to willingly contribute, set clear limits without using demands or coercion, empower your kids to open up, co-operate, and realize their full potential, create outstanding, lifelong relationships with your kids. **\$15.95**



Stop in and look over our gifts for many occasions, including locally made and small business products:

- For graduations: T-shirts, posters, flags, books, labyrinths, CDs
- For Mother's Day: therapeutic pillows, soaps, scrubs, jewelry, figurines, books
- For Father's Day: windmills, t-shirts, CDs, books
- For weddings & anniversaries: candles, wind chimes, books
- For birthdays: t-shirts, bumper stickers, magnets, cards, kids items, books and more!
- Can't decide? Give a gift certificate from Peace Connections.

Many thanks to . . .



■ Chuk Igwe and Berneil Muller for responding to our request in the last newsletter for help on

Saturdays at Peace Connections - we still can use some help – see box below! Also to Corinne Kehrberg and Marlene Smucker for their ongoing help on Saturdays.

■ Arnita Haury, Marilyn Helburg, Carol Hill, Ruby Moore, Cay Siebert, and

Leann Toews for their help when Myrna was in Boston greeting her new granddaughter.

■ Sara Parish, HS student who came to volunteer for her community service hours at Peace Connections.

■ Church of the Brethren couple who came seeking information about starting a community garden on church property.

■ Those who helped with Scott Miller's visit and those who attended the sessions, including Dale Schrag for inviting Scott Miller to give a convocation at Bethel and the Newton Public Library and USD 373 for use of their space for meetings with Miller.

■ The Circles Site Visit Task Force: Vicki Adame, Jeff Barton, John Bjerum, Ken Grochowsky, Cookie Wiebe, and Tina Payne

■ Brenda Bartel, Connie Esau, and Don Kehrberg for their work in making plans for the Sara Thomsen event in June.

■ First Presbyterian Church for using our space for their noon Lenten meditation.

■ Andrea Unruh for bringing the Whitestone Mennonite Church Jr. High youth group to Peace Connections for a Wednesday night visit.

■ Kathy Randall and her friend, Julie Griffin, who helped with Kid Fest.

We are grateful:

Peace Connections Receives Schowalter Foundation Grant & Compassion KS Grant

Peace Connections was grateful to receive a grant from the Schowalter Foundation in the amount of \$3,000. This funding went towards giving our community an introduction to the Circles™ Initiative with Scott Miller on March 10-11 (see p. 1 & 2). We appreciate what we were able to learn from Miller and thankful for this help in covering the partial cost of his visit.

Peace Connections has also been awarded a Compassion Kansas grant in the amount of \$11,111 for board development and for program development with the Circles™ Initiative. (This funding can NOT be used for operating expenses.) Consultants from the Center for Community Support and Research (CCSR) at Wichita State University will be meeting with our board during the next year to work on helping our board of directors better understand their responsibilities and thus improve performance, helping our staff enhance their skills in administration, management, and leadership, developing a clear succession plan, and effective ways to recruit and develop volunteers, along with training on how to best manage their time. We are excited about what we have to learn.

Share Your TIME with Peace Connections

as a volunteer and/or board member! Training is available at your convenience!

Monday volunteer: Work 4 hours on Mondays, helping customers, answering the phone, writing thank yous, and additional small tasks.

Saturday volunteer: Work 10 am-2 pm, once a month, helping customers and answering the phone. (Or find someone to partner with and split the 4-hr. shift into morning and afternoon slots.)

On-call volunteer: Someone who can be available from time to time when staff is out of the office – this could be for brief 1-2 hour meetings or for longer periods of time when staff is traveling or on vacation. Again, work would include helping customers and answering the phone.

Board Member: Join a great group of people who are working to make a difference – email or stop by for a job description and/or application or talk with one of the board members listed on the back of this newsletter.

25th anniversary: 'Feed the Good'

Supporters of Peace Connections celebrated the organization's 25th anniversary Feb. 7 at First Presbyterian Church in Newton. The featured speaker was Barry Bartel, president of Bethel College, whose involvement with Peace Connections goes back to the early days of the Newton Area Peace Center.



Barry Bartel speaks at the anniversary celebration.

Bartel shared eight ways the peace center influenced him and how Peace Connections can continue to be an influence. The following are condensed from his eight points:

- 1. Modeling is key:** Committed community members were role models for me.
- 2. Peacemaking is integral:** The people involved in the peace center were not peacemaking professionals. The peace center was not the primary work of anyone, nor was it completely separate from what people were doing. Rather, it was a natural extension of who the people were.
- 3. Small things matter:** The most inspiring experience can be to hear an individual story.
- 4. Effectiveness matters:** We constantly worked to define our effectiveness. Did what we were doing make a difference?
- 5. Keep in touch:** In many ways it is easier to travel to other countries and work for peace and justice. The hard work is in our own neighborhoods.
- 6. We are inspired by others:** We have profound insights from those in our midst and those who helped start this organization: Paul McKay, Mary McKay, Norma Wiens, Gordon Houser, Muriel Stackley, Wayne Swartzendruber, Ruby Moore, Gary Moore, Jean Hershey, Loren Reusser, Peggy Reusser, Willard Unruh, Rosemarie Matsuda, and many others since.
- 7. Peace work is broad:** It touches individuals and communities, and national and international issues.
- 8. Feed the good.** There is an essential goodness that we all can tune in to. For me it is a faith in God. If we feed the good, it will grow.

Celebrating our history, investing in our future

As 2008 marks Peace Connections' 25th anniversary, we look forward to special events in which we can join together to celebrate. One of these is a special fund drive. In addition to our annual support for Peace Connections, we are creating an endowment with a local foundation to strengthen Peace Connections with a more stable, diverse income in the years to come. We are very grateful to have already received pledges for over \$25,000, contributed by current & former board members and staff, towards a Peace Connections' endowment! **The board invites all of our constituents to join us in the creation of the Endowment Fund**, along with regular contributions for the year.

Inserted in this newsletter is a copy of the pledge form. The form has two parts, one to send in and one for your reference. Please consider sharing a significant commitment with Peace Connections. Gifts can be pledges from one to three years. If you have questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact us.

Thank you for your belief in and support of the mission of Peace Connections. We look forward to hearing from you!

Peaceful Prairie Farm

Peaceful Prairie Farm is offering Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) memberships for the summer session.

Crops available this session will be:

Spring: carrots, beets, lettuce, greens, onions, potatoes, radishes, peas, herbs (parsley, chives, basil, cilantro, etc.)

Summer: green beans, squash, cucumbers, melons, tomatoes, potatoes

Fall: broccoli, lettuce, Asian greens, radishes, turnips

A box will include approximately nine items for a full share, and during the summer will include more variety than we've been able to attain during the colder months. Pick-up points are either at 21st and Ridge between 7 am and noon on Saturday, or at Peace Connections between 1 and 2 pm on Saturday.

We adhere to organic management practices established through the USDA, since we are in the transition to be certified. For more information on the logistics of a CSA or to talk about prices and/or installments, please contact: **Terence and Tamara Herl, Peaceful Prairie Farm, (620) 345-7633, taliesinks@mtelco.net.**

Giving Garden news: Potatoes and onions have been planted. If you'd like to volunteer or contribute to the garden, let us know!



612 N. Main
Newton, Kansas 67114-2230

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

If you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter,
check here () and place in return mail.

Focus for this issue: Bridges Out of Poverty/Circles

***Each time we light a lamp
we have the opportunity
to begin anew with hope.***

***To share light with another is
To bless and be blessed
To forgive and be forgiven
To love and be loved
To make peace and to share peace.
May we all light our lamps each day.***

— Dick Lehman, Lehman Goertzen Pottery
see gift shop page for lamp information



This newsletter is published four times per year by Peace Connections, an ecumenical non-profit effort to join with others and God to create more peace. Contributors to this issue: Myrna Krehbiel, Melissa Koons, Amy Schmidt.

Peace Connections Director: Myrna Krehbiel.
Administrative Associate & Newsletter Editor: Amy Schmidt.
Newsletter Design and Layout: Paul Schrag.

Board Members: Stan Bohn, Bruce Bradshaw, Connie Esau, Shafiq Hasan, Armita Haury, Berni Kaufman, Don & Corinne Kehrberg, Becky Kindy, Kathy Randall, Steve Richards, Paul Schrag, Cookie Wiebe, Michelle Woods. The Board of Directors meets monthly at 612 N. Main, Newton, KS. Meetings are open to the public.

Peace Connections relies on individual and church contributions. Churches contributing to the support of Peace Connections include: Alexanderwohl Mennonite, Goessel; Bethel College Mennonite, North Newton; Eden Mennonite, Moundridge; Faith Mennonite, Newton; First Mennonite, Halstead; First Mennonite, Moundridge; First Mennonite, Newton; Grace Hill Mennonite, rural Whitewater; Hesston Mennonite, Hesston; New Creation Fellowship, Newton; Shalom Mennonite, Newton; Tabor Mennonite, rural Newton; Whitestone Mennonite, Hesston; Zion Mennonite, Elbing.

