

President's Welcome

It is my great pleasure to welcome all readers, including our peace ambassadors, supporters, and partners, to this maiden issue of our newsletter, *Afripeace Connection*. The newsletter will serve as a medium of peace education exchanges, program updates, project highlights, partnership networking, alumni news, and the overall development of the Afripeace Foundation. This inaugural edition of the newsletter, much thanks to our energetic youth editor Bailey Fairbanks, provides a useful opportunity to highlight the vision and main objectives of Afripeace.

Afripeace & Development Foundation (**Afripeace**) was established in 1999 as a non-profit organization, with the vision of promoting US-Africa relations through peace education, cross-cultural exchanges, youth leadership and community development. It is incorporated in the State of California and registered as a US tax exempt (501(C)3) organization.

Main Objectives:

1. Develop innovative programs that promote peace education and cross-cultural exchanges between African-US youth, educators and professionals.
2. Organize peace and community development-oriented visits to Africa.
3. Promote educational links and collaborations between African secondary and US high schools.

4. Build a Constituency of Peace Ambassadors and Partners in the US and Africa.

5. Contribute to Peace Leadership Development and a culture of peace initiatives.

6. Support allied organizations and partners in promoting peace, nonviolence and justice in Africa and her Diaspora.

The biennial Youth Peace and Cultural Education Program, scheduled for Ethiopia in the summer of 2014, remains a signature project of Afripeace. The student participants have been educationally and culturally enriched from the previous projects in Ghana, Nigeria and Rwanda. Each of the student travelers has found his/her experience to be personally rewarding as they continue to grow and mature. The stories in this newsletter and the online blogs from the Rwanda 2012 program speak for themselves and only reveal part of the invaluable experience. We look forward to the opportunity of having some of the African youth in the US in future, in what we envision as a two-way exchange program.

We value your feedback regarding Afripeace Connection, or any program ideas.

Your support is always greatly appreciated.

Please, join us!

Ernest Uwazie, Ph.D.
President/Founder

Our Hands Were Never Empty

By: Bailey Fairbanks

The Story Behind Rwanda 2012

A year and a half worth of meetings, fundraising, and dreaming led a group of eighteen high school students to Rwanda, on the adventure of a lifetime. I was lucky enough to be one of these students. During our month long stay in Rwanda our group experienced life and happiness on a whole new level. Through the children we worked with, the families we stayed with, and the bonds that were formed we were able to take Rwanda and her people into our hearts and leave a piece of ourselves there. It was a journey of giving, receiving, sharing, and learning. I can honestly say that I am the person I am today because of my experiences in Rwanda and I am so grateful for that.



High School students interested in the next Summer 2014 Youth Peace and Cultural Education Program in Ethiopia may contact Afripeace (see contact information at the end of the newsletter). Join us for an amazing journey!

The Ambassador of Awesome: Nim Mann



Nimrat “Nim” Mann is “commanding attention from all corners of the world.” Recently Nim, a Rwanda 2012 traveler, was featured in *Synthesis* (the California State University, Chico newspaper). The story focused on Nim’s many accomplishments and the bright future ahead of her. Born and raised in Chico, Nim graduated with the class of 2013 and now attends USC on a full ride scholarship. Nim attributes her many successes to her parents who emigrated from India and who always fostered in her a deep connection to India and the rest of the world. Nim’s journey with Afripeace began in junior high and continued her involvement throughout high school. When the opportunity to travel to Rwanda was presented to her, she couldn’t say no. While in Rwanda, Mann worked with street children and had the chance to share stories and experience post-genocide Rwandan culture and life. Nim states, “They’re making a movement to really empower women.” Nim also stated that the large role women play in Rwanda’s culture is why as a nation they are “just much more stable.”

In my opinion, the most striking thing about Nim is not her intelligence or her accomplishments but her heart and her compassion for others. Nim is quite honestly one of the most caring individuals I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. Getting to experience Rwanda with her was such a blessing because of the inner light Nim has to offer the world. She is truly an inspiration.

Bailey Fairbanks (quotes from Synthesis)

Reflections of a Teacher-Guide:

Mr. Jeremy Predko

As a chaperone for the Afripeace Foundation's Youth Peace and Cultural Education Program, I would have to say the most rewarding part of any trip is guiding the students through the cultural shift that is an inherent part of the experience. I enjoy getting to know the students during the pre-trip activities, meeting their parents, working with them to prepare for the trip. There is a palpable change in the students when they have said their 'goodbyes' to their loved ones and we are searching for our departing flight in San Francisco, from there the real trip begins! As the students take in the sights, the smells, and the beauty that is Africa, as they share their daily experiences, I am on a journey with them. Their journey to understand the culture of their hosts is why the Afripeace and Development Foundation's work is so important, as the students develop their deep cultural understanding; the process of peace

between two different cultures is created. The students quickly become 21st century global citizens as they interact-an education that a classroom could not completely prepare them for and one that a classroom cannot deliver.



The 2012 Youth Peace Program participants in Rwanda.

An Update from SACCA

The Streets Ahead Children Centre Association (SACCA) in Rwanda is the street children center that hosted the 2012 Youth Peace and Cultural Education Program. Our team of American students worked side-by-side with the SACCA children to build a Rabbit and Chicken House Vocational Center. We recently received an update on the center's events and projects. The children are actively engaged in raising rabbits, learning to care for their every need. The administrators have also been putting together some proposals and application for grants for the next financial year. Some of the donors have already positively responded... " SACCA is a non-profit organization relying heavily on the generosity of donors.

Update from SACCA contd!



All of the staff members that work directly with the SACCA children have been in a two week training facilitated by Hope and Homes for Children (HHC). The training is beneficial to SACCA as an organization. They have been trained on technical knowledge and skills of how to professionally handle deinstitutionalization of children from street children centers. SACCA has provided shelter, food, health and educational support for hundreds of homeless and abandoned Rwandan children.

*William Nyiridandi
SACCA Director*

I'm Not Leaving

By: Bailey Fairbanks

*I recently had the opportunity to interview Carl Wilkens, author of the book *I'm Not Leaving*. He shared with me the key parts and largest lessons from his experience as the only American who remained in Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide. I asked him several general questions: How did you find a way to talk about your experience? How did you make the decision to stay? Were*

there ever points that you just wanted to leave and give up? In response to these questions Carl expressed the importance of three main things: stories, presence, and purpose. Stories are how we make connections and how we educate and learn. They are the building blocks of any true human relationship. They are the windows to compassion and shared experience. Presence, sometimes that's all it takes! You don't always necessarily have to be dodging bullets and chasing down the perpetrators to make a difference. There are a lot of times in which just being present makes the biggest difference.



Carl's presence often saved many lives. It's just about being there. Purpose: as long as you have a purpose you are making change. Carl's main purpose was to protect the people in his life in Rwanda. He stayed to protect his friends Anitha and Janvier and because of them he changed so many more lives. Purpose harvests change. Carl and his wife, Teresa, "believe that stories and service are two of the most important tools that every person possesses to build peace".

2013 Nigerian Youth Peace Leadership Program

By: Ernest Uwazie

The Nigeria Youth Peace Leadership Workshop was motivated by the need to provide critical leadership skills and knowledge for the youth participants, the future leaders of Nigeria-Africa. The vision of the program centered on positive youth empowerment. The program's main mission was creation of a good foundation for preparation of future or young Nigerian/African leaders for just service and governance that promotes a culture of peace and social justice.



The program resulted from the 2010 JAMS Foundation sponsored pilot project on peace education in schools in Imo state, which led to the creation of school peace clubs. The August 5-9 2013 program trained 50 youth participants from high schools, colleges and universities in Imo, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi and Anambra states of Nigeria, including several Nigeria federal universities. The program was sponsored by Afripeace Foundation, with collaboration from Missionage Development Initiative, Nigeria, Young Negotiators and Mediators of Nigeria, and directed by Prof. Ernest Uwazie in cooperation with Mr. Kenneth Njoku (Nigeria), with 10 guest speakers on

various topics and 5 teacher guides. The participants resided in the hostels of the host institution, Government Secondary School, Owerri, Imo state.



By the end of the program, the participants were able to develop their own CV and personal statement, gain critical conflict mediation and employment skills, establish important networks, and learn about critical leadership styles and opportunities through lectures, role plays, individual assignments, group exercises, interactions with select guests, field trips and participant presentations.





Nigeria peace leadership workshop contd!

Some reflections and promises from the workshop participants:

"I have been motivated to take the message of peace to the campuses...around the southeast zone of Nigeria, training student leaders, class representatives on good leadership. I want to embark on what I call "the Cell Spread Project" on youth leadership development focus on peace and conflict resolution (Okoye, Chidera--recent university graduate).

"..When I go home I will teach my family the importance of peace, ...and that when eating don't talk.."(Raymond Chiamaka Peace-junior high school student).

"...With these lectures on peer mediation and conflict resolution as well as leadership..., my heart and mind have been enlightened to propagate....peace wherever I go.... To my young colleagues....no knowledge is a waste. You may not have understood some of the lectures and how to apply them in your immediate setting... Please keep these (your-emphasis added) notes safe as some day you are upto age and revisit them they will be of great help to

you."(Orji Isaac, final year undergraduate student).

"...Having participated in this workshop with my benefits from it...I shall try my best in establishment of peace club associations. I shall also adopt the key values in peace leadership...integrity, accountability, collaboration, diversity and volunteerism..." (Oguchukwu Michael, senior high school student).



Afripeace Board Of Directors 2013

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Important Dates & Upcoming Events

***BOD Meeting:** December 7,
2013

***African Dinner fundraiser in
Chico:**
Sunday March 9, 2014

***6th Youth Peace and Cultural
Education Program in Ethiopia,
East Africa:** July 7 – August 6,
2014
www.afripeace.org



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DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION