PEACE AT PLAY: 2020 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

PREPARED BY

LOUIS D. BROWN PEACE INSTITUTE
The last few months have been a whirlwind between a pandemic, senseless murders, acts of racial injustice, working remotely and home-schooling. Just like you, the Peace Institute is bearing these troubling times and learning how to navigate an unprecedented time in history. And even through this you have shown us your unwavering support.

The Peace Institute has been dedicated to being a center of healing, teaching and learning for families and communities impacted by murder, trauma, grief and loss for over 25 years. We have instilled in our legacy the Principles of Love, Unity, Faith, Hope, Courage, Justice and Forgiveness in everything we do. With this mission and list of principles comes a responsibility to the community to acknowledge and respond equitably and effectively to homicide and trauma around the Nation through our services, advocacy and training.

Every year, we celebrate the healing of survivor families and the community by coming together for our tremendously powerful Annual Mother's Day Walk for Peace. This year, COVID-19 changed the way we serve families by shifting our engagement to online platforms and hosting our 24th Annual Walk as a virtual event. Though it was a learning curve, our efforts were met with great patience and enthusiasm. As part of our work during these months, we continued to stand in solidarity with black and brown people to fight for racial equality and justice. As we stated in our #BlackLivesMatter movement response, “when the headlines have shifted, families and communities still need to heal” and we will continue on this journey.

This year has challenged the way we live our lives and what we view as important. So far, 2020 has proven that the Peace Institute’s work is crucial and must progress. Our families, communities and society need to heal and we thank you for being instrumental in making this happen.

In Peace and Service,

Chaplain Clementina Chéry
President and CEO
At first, the thought of hosting our 24th Annual Mother’s Day Walk for Peace virtually felt unthinkable. We were challenged to find ways in which the powerful emotions felt during the Walk could be carried into a virtual setting. Thankfully, our media partner NECN/NBC 10 Boston stepped in and helped us host a successful virtual Walk. The numbers spoke for themselves. This event reached over 24,000 viewers and brought in 1,100 comments and 419 reactions during the broadcast. One viewer commented, “very inspiring hour with all of you! Thank you to all who participated, particularly my fellow survivors. The work of the Peace Institute is so important in our shared world. ❤.” Our community, including walkers, allies, community members, partners, sponsors and survivors came out to show their support!
The celebration and work didn’t end there. Leading up to Father’s Day, we wrapped up our Walk season by hosting a second virtual event called 2020 Reset, A Healing Dialogue for Men Impacted by Murder, Trauma, Grief and Loss. The purpose of the event was to uplift the voices of men while recognizing their experiences in relation to violence and providing strategies for healing.

Our male panelists shared their stories and thoughts about what healing means to them, the available mental health resources for men to tap into in the City of Boston and our Brothers on The Mend Men’s Group.

During the event, Sibling Survivor of Randy Stevenson and Advocate, Lawrence Stevenson expressed, “I’m an adult and as I’m going through the world as a man, I want something different for my life than violence, I’ve got to ask myself: what does that healing process look like for me?”

“Healing didn’t take place until I decided to get off the ‘do nothing shelf’ and go to work on myself.”

– Pastor Ronald Odom, Father Survivor of Steven Odom and Cofounder of Spot for Life Foundation.
With your help from the funds raised during 2020 Reset, we have launched a new Reentry Starter Kit program. We realized that there is a need because when people transition from incarceration to the community they leave prison without basic necessities. This venture provides people with a backpack that contains personal hygiene items, masks, hand sanitizer, as well as a self-help and community resource guide to ease their journey toward healing, growth and new possibilities.

In the midst of this new normal and the death of the CEO’s beloved mother, Zoila, due to COVID-19, we were able to close out the 24th Annual Mother’s Day Walk for Peace season strong. At the beginning of the year, we set out to reach a goal of $400,000 to expand our services, advocacy and training. With your help and consistent support, we not only reached our goal, we surpassed it! As a collective, you raised $423,585. Thank you for being an instrumental part of transforming society’s response to homicide.

A THANK YOU FROM THE PEACE INSTITUTE FAMILY
Statistics

Over the past 6 months, the Peace Institute has supported the community by:

- Providing services to 37 new families directly after a homicide.
- Contributing $40,299 for 11 survivor families to support their immediate burial needs after the tragic death of a loved one through the Rest in Peace Fund.
- Allocating $65,975 to support 10 families through the Live in Peace Fund to meet the immediate needs of survivors during COVID-19 including paying for rent, providing hotels for family safety after a murder and providing gift cards for things like gas and food.
- Hosting virtual healing groups such as Girls Group, Healing and Recovery, Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction and Brothers on the Mend for 29 survivors.
- Holding 6 Virtual Peace Play sessions to support survivors and groups through healing and recovery.
- Supplying online activities and 66 "Always In My Heart Workbooks" for children and continuing to provide the space and time for our Survivor and Provider Networks to meet virtually.
NEW STAFF:

The Peace Institute is thrilled to announce the new additions to the PI family!

Training and Events Coordinator, BJ, is responsible for overseeing dynamic training, technical assistance and consultation program and will be engaging with major projects and initiatives related to training and events.

Executive Assistant to the CEO, Paula, is key in providing executive support to ensure the effectiveness and productivity of the CEO. Paula takes part in daily interactions with external and internal constituents.

Development Manager, Elizabeth, is responsible for increasing donor engagement, development administration, grant writing, fundraiser event planning and developing and retaining sponsorships and partnerships.
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Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator, Stefany, is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the Survivors Outreach Services Program and Family Outreach Advocates to ensure exceptional services to survivors of homicide victims after the death notification.

Board Liaison, Beth, is key in coordinating the relationship between the Board and the Peace Institute staff. Beth is the primary point of communication for the Board and assists the Board Members and Committees in optimizing their work and providing accountability.
The Peace Institute is surrounded by support and is proud to partner with small businesses. These businesses exemplify what it means to pay attention to societal needs and take action to be part of changing the course of justice.

Our local neighbors, Lucy’s American Tavern and The Bowery Restaurant, have been on top of helping during 2020 by delivering food to first responders of COVID-19 and then coming to the Peace Institute with a partnership proposal to give some proceeds to us for the month of August and September!

Rozzie Bound Indie Bookstore, located in Roslindale and now running exclusively online for the time being, has created a Racial Justice Bookshelf where proceeds are donated directly to us! Our partnership has been an amazing one thus far and we are excited for the opportunity to continue to work with them.
Thank you to our Walk sponsors for your continuous support!

**Peace Maker $15,000**
King's Chapel

**Peace Seekers $10,000**
Robert & Dana Smith Family Foundation
Rick & Gitte Shea
The Martin Richard Foundation
Beth Israel Lahey Health

**Peace Advocates $5,000**
Eastern Bank
Josie Greene & Glen Asch
Stanley N. Griffith & Anne E. Schauffler
South Cove Community Health Center

**Peace Allies $2,500**
Arbella Insurance Foundation
Boston Medical Center
MA Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence
UMASS Boston