

## **Mosaic Peacebuilding - Peace Day Philly Core Team**

*Manisha Patel, Hugh Taft-Morales, Frank Neil, Tom Di Nardo and Lisa Parker discuss the values of collaboration, inclusion, and respect in peacebuilding and their work as PDP Core Team Members.*

*By Mariko Siegert\**

**August 30**--I think that each individual can be a culture with his/her own histories, identities, beliefs, and values. We know and have seen that cultures can clash, but that they can also coexist, complementing and strengthening each other. Today, five of the PDP Core Team members--each with different backgrounds--share their thoughts on peace and PDP.

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### **How would you define peace?**

Manisha: A place full of calm that is in harmony with others.

Frank: As a zen practitioner, I believe that peace can be defined as “just this” - all that you could possibly need is contained in this moment. More broadly, peace is everyone in the world being satisfied with what they have and allowing others to live their lives without intrusion, violence or the need to control.

Tom: Not just the absence of violence, but the intention of equality, opportunity and freedom for everyone, everywhere.

### **What got you into peace related work?**

Lisa: I learned about the International Day of Peace, and I was inspired to begin encouraging everyone to use the global day as a day of local opportunity and action.

Frank: The need to do something, however small, to help highlight the need for the peaceful co-existence of all people.

Tom: A Quaker educational background, and the inspiring dedication of the volunteer team.

## **Why were you interested in being a part of Peace Day Philly, and what makes Peace Day Philly important?**

Hugh: All my life I have been aware of how lucky I am to live in relative peace. For so many, however, peace is illusive. Peace Day Philly is a time to draw attention to those less lucky, whether suffering from gun violence in their neighborhood or being victimized by war in battlefields far away. In some small way I hope PDP leads us all to demand that our leaders nurture peace in all corners of the world.

Manisha: Peace Day Philly initiatives address core issues human beings, communities and world struggle with and so being part of it gives me opportunity to engage others in important work to bring about positive change.

Frank: All things start with the individual. It is important for Philadelphians to be mindful of peace, both in our local community as well as understand how that shapes the entire world.

## **What has been the most exciting/valuable experience about being a Core Team member?**

Lisa: When I see people and organizations being inspired to take meaningful action on Peace Day as I was. We don't define what the peace activity has to look like - we let the organization choose that based upon their mission and interests.

Hugh: My fellow Core Team Members inspire me to reach out to the international peace community in Philadelphia. So many people from diverse cultural backgrounds are learning how to work together for social justice. Through the arts and dialogue, they bring together immigrants and citizens to find common ground. It helps ground me and encourages me to continue this important work.

## **Is there any peace message you would like to share?**

Lisa: The Dalai Lama said it is our "moral responsibility" to make an attempt at creating a more peaceful world. We must see peacebuilding work as a process and not as an all or nothing proposition. Anyone can be a peacebuilder in their world.

We can choose our words and actions, and practice keeping things in perspective so that we do not let emotions overwhelm us. Yet, this is a process, and we'll fall down a lot as we practice being peaceful within ourselves and with others. We must work to learn from these situations so that they are valuable lessons to us that help guide our future thinking and action.

Frank: "We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves." - Buddha

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We tend to develop different personal and social identities and belief systems in accordance with--and in response to--our backgrounds. We develop different lenses to see the world and our own and others' experiences through. I think we can see how each of these Core Team members approach peace differently, yet with a common goal of *building up*--ourselves, others, and community, all of which constitute the foundation of sustainable peace. I think that this interview illustrates characteristic of peacebuilding as a mosaic that is collaborative, inclusive, respectful of diversity and ever-evolving. ■

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