**PeaceQuest Workshop - Oct.11, 2013**

**Faith Day at Holy Cross S.S.**

Elizabeth Neely and Viktoria Barnes

**First Slide (Liz)**

**-**group of people who have come together to discuss important issues of peace and war

-it is in response to the government’s near-future celebrations of the 100th anniversary of WWI

-at the end of our talk we are having an activity that we hope will kindle a conversation about peace to start in this room and then we hope that you will be inspired to take this conversation about peace back to your classrooms

-in fact PeaceQuest hopes to stimulate a nationwide conversation about peace and our country’s role in peacemaking, reconciliation and social justice as we approach the 100th anniversary of the War to End All Wars and Canada’s 150th anniversary.

[What’s the relationship of PeaceQuest to Canada’s military?](http://peacequest.ca/faqs/i-support-our-troops-whats-the-relationship-of-peacequest-to-canadas-military/)

-the members of PeaceQuest are grateful for the service of the Canadian Forces and their families, past and present. We share many similar values and ideas with those who have dedicated their lives to the Canadian Forces. While we recognize that differences exist among Canadians, PeaceQuest is interested in building upon the foundation of our common ground.

-one point that was made clear during these meetings was that PeaceQuest is very respectful of the military and cognizant of the military’s achievements.

-peace is not just the absence of war

-our goal is to strive for peace

**Second Slide (Viki):**

-in our first meeting, we were given a question that turned out to be very difficult to answer. The question was, “What is peace?”

-it turned out that we all had different definitions of peace.

-some other questions that were asked for us to think about were:

* Should we lament or celebrate war?
* What do Canadians want our military to achieve?
* How do we make peace so that we can keep peace?
* How can people who believe in peace achieve peace?

-asking our students in our classrooms also showed that all children view peace differently

**Third slide (Liz):**

-PeaceQuest has 4 streams. The one stream we are involved in is the education stream. This group has teachers from ALCDSB, Limestone School Board, the French school board, retired teachers, Queen’s students and high school students (even from war-torn countries)

Education – this is what we are working on…

* Gathering and creating curriculum resources for teachers
* Publication of an anthology - a collection of original Canadian fiction and non-fiction writing by high profile Canadian poets, novelists, essayists and journalists on themes of peace and war.
* Publication of a children’s book - A book of quotations about peace accessible to children ages 6 to 12 years of age.
* University common reader - Many universities offer a *Common Reading* Program as introduction to academic life. Every new undergraduate student is provided with the common reading selection and the university hosts an online forum where students can discuss the book with other new students. PeaceQuest will seek agreement from four Canadian universities to use a book with a strong peace theme as a common reader for first year students.
* A contest - PeaceQuest will work with the local school boards to mount a contest for students tied to curriculum in history, social studies, religious studies or other relevant subject areas. The planning committee will determine the structure (an essay, a video, a poster, a blog or other e-project) and the design of the contest (timing, eligibility, judging, etc.)

Faith stream

– Each faith tradition holds and cherishes peace as a value. A multi-faith committee is planning public *Peace Pilgrimages* journeying from one sanctuary to another to:

~ promote and pray for peace within ourselves, within our relationships, our families, our city, our nation and the world,
~ raise awareness, to learn from others’ perspectives,
~ atone for the violence in our own lives and the world,
~ support each other’s conviction for peace,
~ promote peace as justice and fairness,
~ remember and honour the value of peace and mourn the tragedy of the war,
~ imagine a world without war,
~ be in solidarity with one another,
~ take a collection for the poor so that they might have enough food, clothing and shelter,
~ hold *Vigils of “Grief and Hope”* at different cenotaphs connected with a significant event of WWI. In grief, because of the tragic loss of lives and, in hope, because the torch of peace has now been passed on.

Culture stream

- PeaceQuest is excited to work with the entire Kingston arts community on initiatives that will engage the community and will encourage discussion. We encourage artists from all disciplines to get involved by creating or programming peace-themed works during 2014 to 2018. (includes theatre, choirs, book clubs, etc)

Policy stream

– this group will focus on local, national and international issues of peace and war, to influence governments to commit to the promise of peace. The City of Kingston honoured the International Day of Peace on September 21st , with the unveiling of a monument which reads “Grieving the tragedy of war – committed to the promise of peace.” This stone is placed at the base of an old oak tree in City Park. A newly planted peace tree is marked with the plaque pictured.

**Fourth Slide (Viki):**

-I was involved in the education group that was planning celebrations for the United Nations International Day of Peace.

-There are resources now posted for this Day of Peace on the PeaceQuest website as well as on our religious education department page.

-Also, I took it a step farther and asked John XXIII teachers if our big idea this year could be “I am a peacemaker.”

-so I had 2 Objectives:

1. I was looking for events/ideas that our school could do to promote peace

2. I was also looking at how we could teach empathy, kindness, compassion, restorative practices, prayer, and caring for others and for our earth in the classroom, schoolwide and communitywide and how they all related to peace

Quick list of ideas were:

-Roots of Empathy

-Jim Reilly’s Circles

-PeaceOneDay activities

-peace prayer services

-Advent and Lenten projects

-I am a peacemaker bulletin board (students ‘caught’ doing something kind/peaceful have their names put on the board)

-eco-school initiatives

-What is peace? Create a quilt where on each square a child is holding up his/her answer

- Visit the Peace Exhibit at the War Museum in Ottawa (can view until Jan. 2014)

-go online to visit the many websites that promote peace

-nvite military members to come and speak in your classroom. Invite refugees or high school students who are from another country that have witnessed war.

-Dave Hueglin, teacher at St. Pat’s and his group are working on coming up with a list of peace resources that can be used throughout the school year. He could use some more help if anyone is interested.

-so now I have some thoughts for you to think about:

How can you envision peace education:

-in the curriculum

-in the school day

-in the building

-in the community

-in the world

What does it look like? Sound like? Feel like?

-tie it in with your School Improvement Plan, or, your school’s main focus/big idea

-look at the new s/s curriculum, esp. the older grades. There is a definite theme of thinking critically about the history of Canada.

**Fifth Slide (Viki):** Show peacequest website

-new items are being added regularly

-there are thought-provoking articles to read through

**Sixth slide:**

**Viki**: distribute white squares, paper and markers.

**Liz**: I would like to now invite participants to have a conversation with a partner by completing the sentence starter: In our quest for peace in the world, we need to….

We can share our answers in about 5 minutes. You may also fill out a piece of paper and Viki or I can take a picture of you and have it posted on the PeaceQuest website.

Allow 5 – 10 minutes for this, then invite individuals who wish to share their response with the whole group.

If you have a camera: some may choose to write their statement on large white paper and have their photo taken.

Wear a white square: the goal is for 10 000 in Kingston to wear a white square for July 1, 2014. It is intended to show support for the quest for peace. Wear a square to show that you have talked to at least one person about peace and that you are supporting peace.

The Significance Of PeaceQuest’s White Square



* White is a symbol of non-combat.
* White is the colour of the hundreds of thousands of crosses in war cemeteries.
* War supporters pinned white feathers on men who were not in uniform during World War I to shame them.
* White poppies were adopted by the “No More War” movement of the 1920s. The white poppy has become a symbol of mourning for civilian deaths in war and war’s environmental devastation, and of the belief in peaceful conflict resolution.
* The Shot at Dawn campaign started in Britain in 1990 to highlight the killing of World War I soldiers by their own military. These soldiers were made mad by the carnage of trench warfare and were condemned for their inability to cope with it, considered cowardice or desertion. They had a white target pinned to their chests and were shot by firing squad. In 2006, the British government issued a blanket pardon to the more than 300 soldiers who had been executed this way.
* White is a symbol of truce, an agreement between opponents to stop fighting.
* The White Square signifies our quest for peace.

**Seventh Slide:**

 -show resources on alcdsb religion dept. website

**Eighth Slide:**

-invitation to next PeaceQuest meeting

PEACE comes with EDUCATION

A commitment to a peaceful society, and to a leadership role in active peacemaking around the globe, is part of what it means to be Canadian. It shapes our actions, informs our public policy, infuses our education system, inspires our culture and underpins our international relations.