



Hello Friend

The past few months have been filled with a tremendous amount of uncertainty for all of us. However, we are heartened and uplifted as we begin to reimagine the future.

Gretchen Grad first imagined **Hands of Peace** as a response to the horrific events of September 11, 2001, and the great divisions exposed in its aftermath. Much has changed since that time. With the changing and challenging realities around us, our commitment to peace, freedom, equality, and justice for all is needed now more than ever.

With the cancellation of the Summer Program for the first time in 17 years due to the pandemic, there is a silver lining. We have the perfect opportunity to assess our long-term impacts, and reflect on the context we are now working in and what we want to create. This year is dedicated to **Reimagining Hands of Peace**.

Hands of Peace remains grounded in its promise to empower young leaders to raise their voices as leaders of change. *How* we do that and *how* we make Hands of Peace more relevant and effective are the crucial questions we are asking today.

- What **impact** do we want to have for our alumni?
- How should our **mission, vision, and values** evolve to support these desired impacts?
- What are the **“must-haves”** to execute that mission?
- What **resources and networks** are needed to implement our programs?
- What are the **milestones, processes, and timelines** to secure those resources and networks?

This five-step process of **Reimagining Hands of Peace** will unfold between now and the end of October. This month we launched **Phase One** as we dig deep for ideas about the impact we can have. Our Site Directors and Regional Managers have called together ten focus groups, two groups from each delegation. The groups include recent and older alumni, as well as participant parents. All are asked to bring their full voice to the table.

This is only the beginning. We invite you to learn more about the entire process by joining a **Reimagining Info Session** on Zoom with Board member Adam Heffez, Sunday, May 31, 6 pm- 7 pm I/P

/ 10 am -11 am CDT / 8 am - 9 am PDT. Please sign up here, and we will send you the login information.

Register for Reimagining Info Session

There will be many other updates and engagement opportunities in the weeks and months to come.

While change is the only constant these days, we are confident that, with your help, **Hands of Peace** will emerge stronger, more impactful, and united than ever before as a peacebuilding community.

As always, thank you for all you do to create positive change.

Peg Lee
Board Chair

Staff Changes

Darling Kittoe and Sarah Heirendt have been fiercely devoted to youth empowerment and the advancement of peaceful dialogue as Site Directors in Chicago and San Diego. They have developed strong bonds with alumni, local families, and the many community members supporting Hands of Peace.

As of May 29 - Sarah and Darling will be departing from Hands of Peace, leaving a legacy of positive community-wide relationships, enhanced year-round programming, alumni empowerment, and a lasting impact on those they had the pleasure of working with.

"Their hard work has greatly advanced our mission to empower youth to raise their voices as leaders of change," said Rich Katz, Interim Director of Hands of Peace. "This was a difficult decision for each of them. But the cancellation of the summer program has given them the unusual opportunity to reflect on where their passion and skills might take them in the future."

Darling, who became Chicago Site Director in 2018, recalls, "I have been inspired by the more than 670 alumni, host families, and volunteers who have given me so much strength, insight, resilience, and courage to lead change."

Sarah started with Hands of Peace in 2016 as Assistant Program Director and leadership training facilitator. She became the San Diego Site Director in 2017.

"I have such immense gratitude and appreciation for this generous and beautiful community and the way we support the dream of a better future together," Sarah says. "We give life to this dream every summer, every gathering and with every bridge built. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for working with me to support and believe in the youth who are changing the world."

Darling and Sarah will be deeply missed, and we are thankful to them for their passionate service as Site Directors furthering the mission of Hands of Peace.



Alumna Maeve Plunkett has been asked to serve as our Outreach Coordinator, and her primary function will be to connect our Community Circles in order to engage them in the Reimagining process.



VIRTUAL CONCERT AND ART EXHIBIT FOR PEACE

Glenview Community Church and Hands of Peace bring you our own



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compilation of talented singers, musicians, and artists for you to enjoy! Listen to the songs of peace and share in the beauty of artists from around the globe.

Concert:
Concert for Peace

Program:
Art Exhibit

Concert Founder Katherine Hughes created this annual concert to inspire giving to Hands of Peace.

You may show your gratitude for this inspiring artistry by **making a gift to Hands of Peace** or by mailing your gift to the address below.

CONVERSATION
Sunday, May 17

Our first online Community Circle offered friends and families the chance to connect and share what they are experiencing during this extraordinary time. We heard from a large cross section of voices, and generations including many Hands of Peace alumni, like Camille (pictured above). This Sunday, we invite you to consider the positive opportunities that the pandemic has created for individuals, communities, and the world at large. You do not need to have participated in the first session to sign up for the one on Sunday.

**Sign Up for Learning
Conversation**

Volunteers Rock Our World!

As we prepare for the 2021 Hands of Peace Benefits in Chicago and San Diego, we welcome new and past volunteers to take part in bringing together our whole community to celebrate youth as leaders of change. Please email Diana Kutlow at **dkutlow@handsofpeace.org** with "Volunteer" in the subject line to volunteer and to find out how you can help.

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