

The Peace Platform



Imagining and Conceiving Peace





IMAGINING PEACE

ENLIGHTENED SOCIETY GATHERINGS

SAN FRANCISCO • CHICAGO • NEW YORK • LONDON

The April 26-28, 2013 Imagining Peace Weekend was the Chicago stop of a world tour by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, that included San Francisco, New York, and London. The Chicago weekend began with the Sakyong speaking to 1,100 people in the Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago about original peace, included a visit by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche with Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the Saturday Youth Congress on Peace, and the Sunday program on Peace Practices also at Malcolm X City College.



On April 27, 2013, over 400 young people and adults met at Malcolm X City College for the Youth Congress on Peace. Hosted by Shambhala Chicago and 23 partner organizations, this Congress showcased the voices of young people living in the midst of violence. Through poetry, rap, prose, song, in discussion groups, and on panels, their voices rang out.

Partners in Imagining Peace



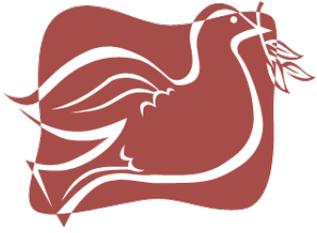
- Alternative Schools Network
- Chicago LAMP
- Chicago Urban League
- Community Media Workshop
- Community TV Network
- CeaseFire Illinois/Cure Violence
- Council Against Handgun Violence
- Enlace Chicago
- Goodman Theatre
- Great Cities Institute of University of IL at Chicago
- Heartwood Center for Body Mind Spirit
- Illinois African American Coalition for Prevention
- La Casa Norte
- Latinos Progresando
- Leaders Investing for Equality (LIFE)
- Metropolitan Family Services
- Safer Foundation
- Serve 2 Unite
- Thresholds
- UCAN
- University of Chicago
- Youth Connection Charter School
- WBEZ

Conceiving the Peace Platform

The over 400 youth and adults at the Youth Congress on Peace in 25 discussion groups chose the most important ways to create peace in Chicago.

These answers were rushed to the Malcolm X Theatre for compiling. Then all of us reassembled in the theater and voted by keypad to select the 15 statements of the Peace Platform.





Introduction

IMAGINING PEACE

*When the shot of violence was fired,
Simultaneously the echo of peace resounded,
Now on this day where we stand between the shadows of darkness
and the light of a new human horizon what will happen?
Will the rivers of tears lead to humanity finally being brave enough
to proclaim the victory of peace,
Or will this deep chasm of despair lead us to an abyss of suffering.
At this confluence of hope and fear
the proclamation of human goodness must be proclaimed.
Let the next shot be to the heart of human dignity.
Then we can arise from this confusion about our own worthiness,
And proclaim that we are descendants of original peace.*

Kongma Sakyong , Hyde Park, Chicago, April 28, 2013

The Peace Platform

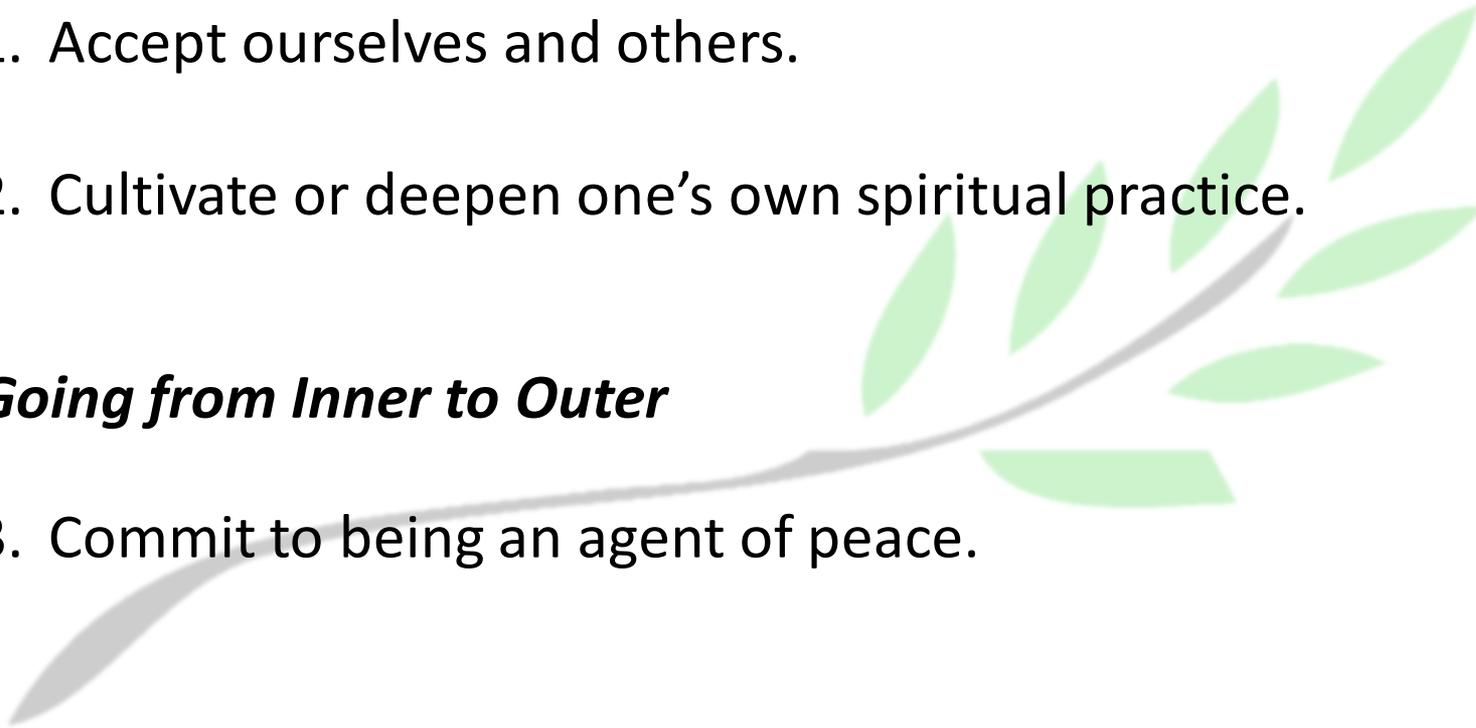


Inner

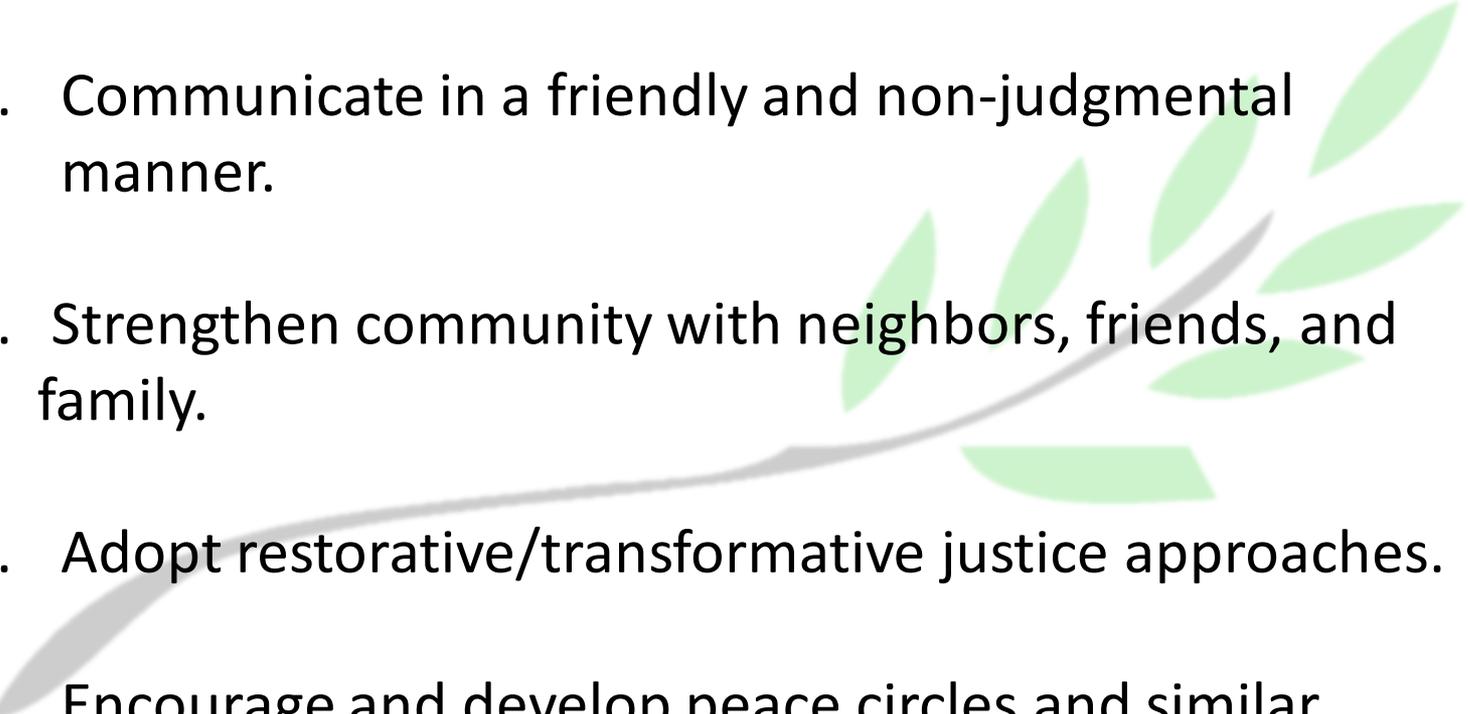
1. Accept ourselves and others.
2. Cultivate or deepen one's own spiritual practice.

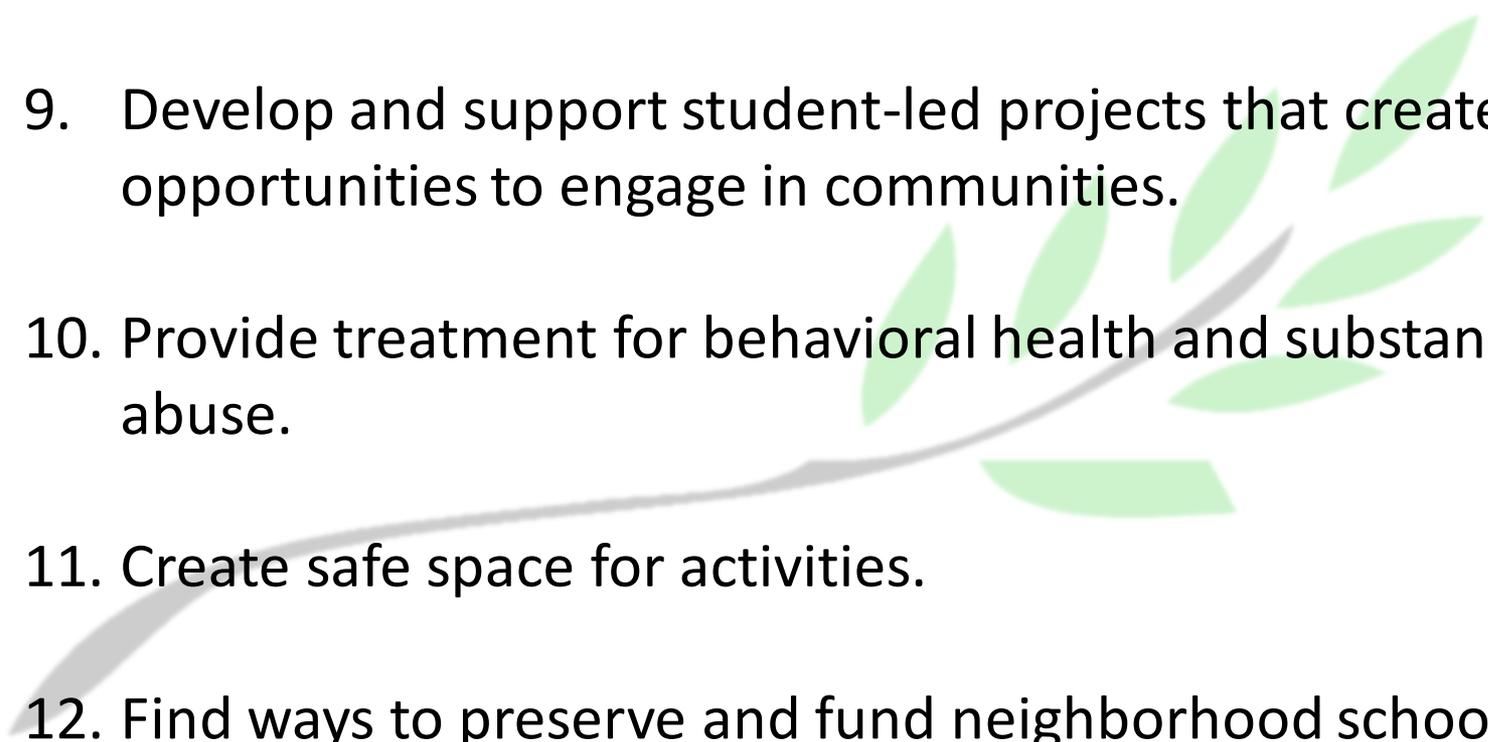
Going from Inner to Outer

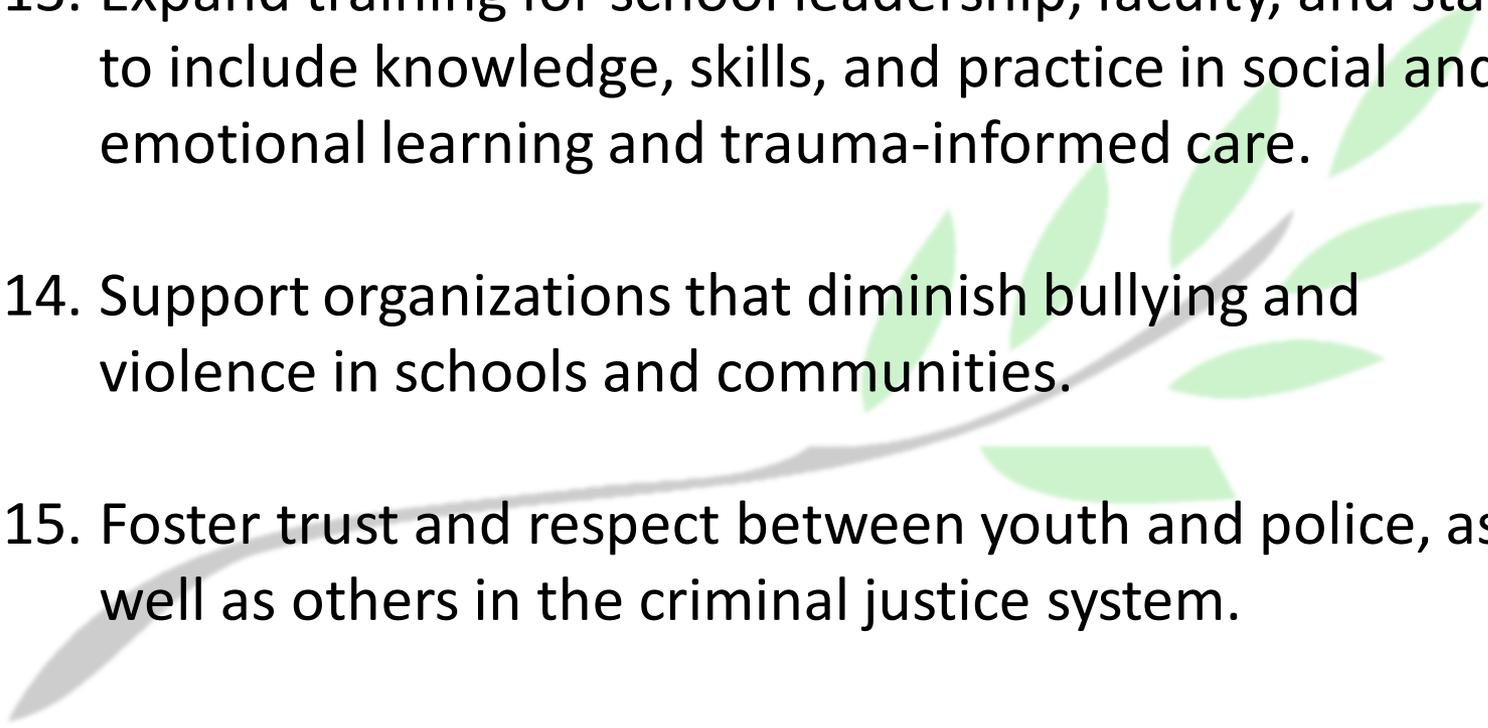
3. Commit to being an agent of peace.



Outer

4. Communicate in a friendly and non-judgmental manner.
 5. Strengthen community with neighbors, friends, and family.
 6. Adopt restorative/transformational justice approaches.
 7. Encourage and develop peace circles and similar group practices.
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8. Support youth jobs.
 9. Develop and support student-led projects that create opportunities to engage in communities.
 10. Provide treatment for behavioral health and substance abuse.
 11. Create safe space for activities.
 12. Find ways to preserve and fund neighborhood schools.

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13. Expand training for school leadership, faculty, and staff to include knowledge, skills, and practice in social and emotional learning and trauma-informed care.
 14. Support organizations that diminish bullying and violence in schools and communities.
 15. Foster trust and respect between youth and police, as well as others in the criminal justice system.

Building the Peace Platform



The Imagining Peace Partners bring the Peace Platform to life daily with their innovative and ongoing work with young people.

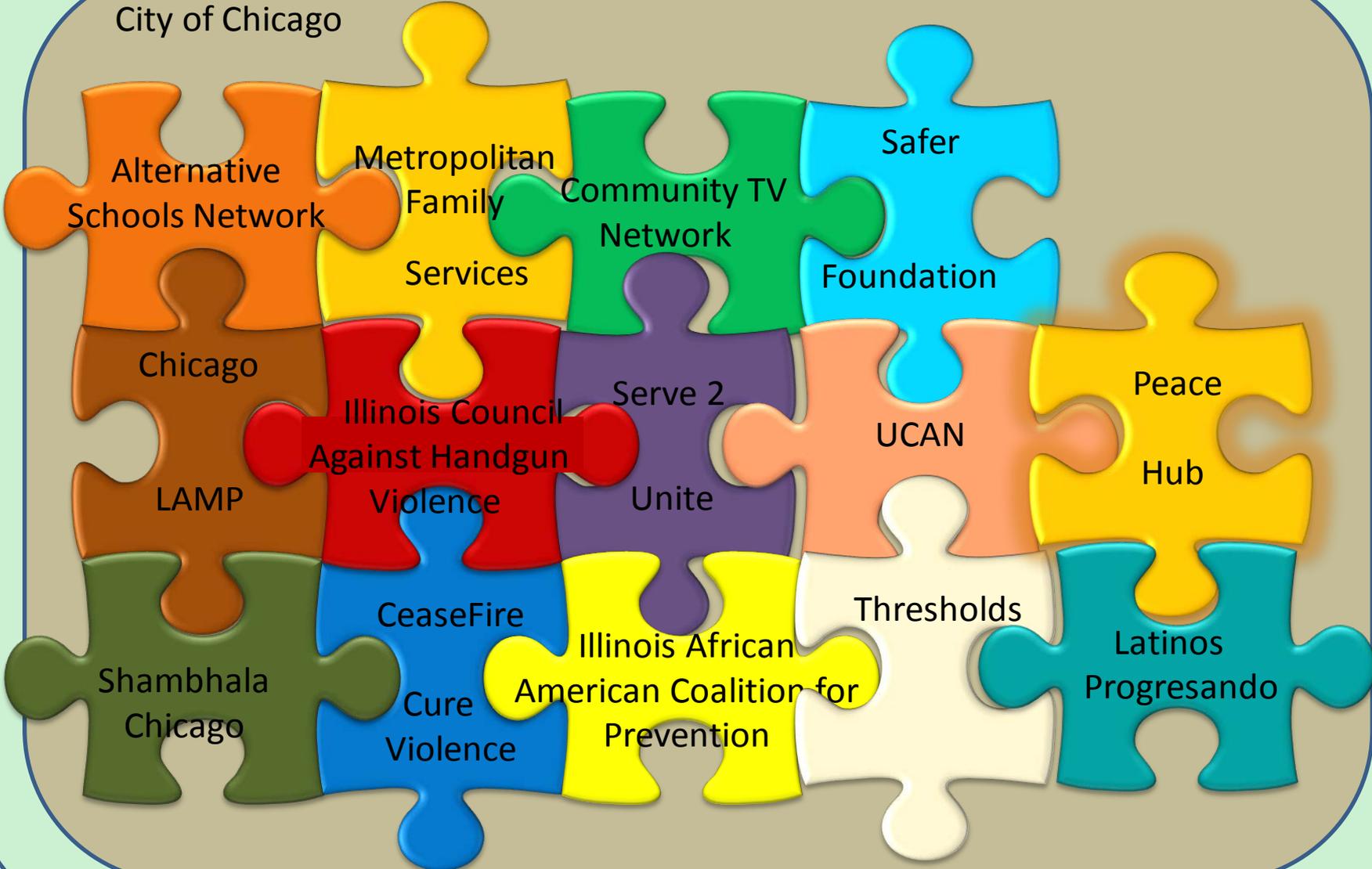
Here are samplings and summaries of some of the Imagining Peace Partners contributions to the Peace Platform

and partial summaries of the new collaborative initiatives and ongoing work of the City of Chicago under the leadership of Mayor Rahm Emanuel and of Cook County under Board President Toni Preckwinkle.

Mayor Emanuel and Cook County Board President Preckwinkle served as the Imagining Peace Honorary Co-Chairs.

Cook County

City of Chicago



Alternative
Schools Network

Metropolitan
Family
Services

Community TV
Network

Safer
Foundation

Peace
Hub

Chicago

Illinois Council
Against Handgun
Violence

Serve 2
Unite

UCAN

LAMP

CeaseFire

Illinois African
American Coalition for
Prevention

Thresholds

Latinos
Progresando

Shambhala
Chicago

Cure
Violence

Alternative Schools Network

After School Basketball League

ASN feels that education is a key component to peace in Chicago. But providing educational opportunities is not enough. There must be after school programming in place. ASN currently offers a basketball league for the alternative schools that it works with. This league teaches the youth about sportsmanship and accountability. Over 120 youth across 16 alternative high schools are impacted from this program. During the basketball league we see a marked improvement in attendance and grades. Those youth that participate in the league must also be identified as school leaders and must assist the school in diffusing any potential fights/situations – both in the school and on the basketball court. This program directly coincides with the Peace Platform's statements #9: Develop and support student-led projects that create opportunities to engage in communities, and #11 Create safe space for activities.

To learn more about the work of the Alternative Schools Network to create peace in Chicago, visit: asnchicago.org

Chicago Lawndale Amachi Mentoring Program (LAMP)

LAMP provides mentoring and support services to young people, 4 to 21, who are impacted by incarceration. LAMP improves the lives of these youth with helping relationships and cultural enrichment activities. LAMP develops and enhances leadership skills and community pride. LAMP provides workshops and support groups for parents and caregivers to help them ensure that their children are successful in school and beyond. Begun in 2007 by Dr. Betty Allen-Green, former principal of a North Lawndale School, LAMP has served over 600 children and youth; and is serving 182 people this year. LAMP is modeled after the evidenced-based National Amachi Program which provides help to children of incarcerated family members and has proved successful in breaking the cycle of generational poverty and incarceration in over 250 U. S. cities.

In 2011 the Center for Impact Research found 57% of North Lawndale adults involved in the criminal justice system. Nearly 99% of North Lawndale children qualify for free/reduced-priced school lunches.

LAMP recruits culturally competent mentors to provide one-to-one mentoring a minimum of one hour per week for one year. LAMP's successful intensive mentoring programs decrease violence and steer children away from gangs. Of the 600 youth matched with LAMP mentors, 95% have increased school attendance, 90% have increased academic achievement in reading and math, 60% have reduced school misconduct and 99% have avoided the criminal justice system. One hundred percent of our adolescents graduate from high school or are on track for graduation. Of those who graduate, 100% enroll in college. Our programs relate to #9 and #12 on the Peace Platform. For more:

www.chicagolamp.org/

Community TV Network

Community TV Network empowers 600 urban youth annually to identify, address, and resolve issues through the use and understanding of digital media arts. CTVN instills in youth the awareness, motivation and tools they need to create a positive future for themselves and their neighborhoods. CTVN provides in-school, after school, summer programs, special projects for youth. The organization has a video production company, Video Services, that provides video production for clients and freelance employment for advanced trainees. Youth who participate show greater school attendance and graduation rates. Each class/program creates its own video that displays positive youth and community images.

Community TV Network's work relates to Peace Platform statements # 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, and 15.

To learn more about the Community TV Network, visit:

<http://www.ctvnetwork.org/>

Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence ***Student Voices***

The ***Student Voices Program*** is specifically geared to get youth thinking, speaking and acting in response to gun violence and in the process, to help them better understand advocacy, civic engagement, research, outreach, engaged leadership, communication, and presentation.

Through our **Essay, Poetry and Art Contest**, open to students in 1st – 12th grade, we provide an outlet for expression and a platform for young people to address how they feel about real life issues taking place within their community. Our **Curriculum** offerings and **Workshops** facilitate conversations with youth on the causes of and possible solutions to the complex issue of gun violence. Through our **Activist Institute Project**, we help youth put their thoughts and words into action as they are trained in leadership and activism and ultimately create their own anti-violence campaign.

Each year we impact thousands of young people through ***Student Voices***. It is a measureable objective of the Art Contest to provide an outlet for students to express their thoughts and feelings about gun violence.

The Student Voices Program relates to numbers 4, 5, 9, and 11 on the Peace Platform.

To learn more: <http://www.ichv.org/>

Latinos Progresando

Latinos Progresando (LP) runs Illinois' largest Latino-led family based immigration legal services program, accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals. We also support undocumented victims of domestic violence and other crimes through the VAWA Project and U Visa processing—the only resource of its kind on Chicago's southwest side. Since 1998, we served over 20,000 clients with these programs. We create a safe space for youth after school through arts and culture programming, featuring the Teatro Americano ensemble, which writes and performs original plays about the Latino experience in Chicago. Teatro Americano also provides a yearlong paid apprentice program for young people aged 14-18 in partnership with Afterschool Matters. LP leads the Marshall Square Resource Network, a 15-organization collaborative that meets monthly to build the capacity of member agencies and organize for community change. For some of our community's most promising young people, LP helps defray the cost of higher education through the Dr. Angela Perez Miller Scholarship Fund. We host MEX *talks*—a one-day speaker series highlighting prominent Hispanic/Latino leaders to discuss the state of Mexicans in Chicago and the United States.

Latinos Progresando's work carries out numbers 1-9, 10, 11, 14, 15 of the Peace Platform.

For more information, go to: <http://latinospro.org/>

Metropolitan Family Services

Economic Stability and Empowerment

Our Economic Stability and Empowerment areas of service tie into Peace Platform #5. Our work will be focused on strengthening communities by empowering the entire family through workshops (homeownership, foreclosure, reverse mortgages, children's exposure to violence, grief and loss, domestic violence awareness, financial literacy, job readiness/employment); youth panel discussions focusing on issues (held twice a year focusing on empowering youth through peer and adult presentations); GED classes; post-secondary exposure and options; college tours; employment placement; hosting community meeting (block clubs and civic organizations). Targeting over 200 individuals with these services, we will measure high school and GED completion, employment placement, income gain, post-secondary enrollment.

Our holistic approach to services will empower families to become self-sufficient. Altogether, Metropolitan Family Services focuses on four areas of service: Education, Emotional Wellness, Economic Stability and Empowerment.

We empower families to learn, to earn, to heal, to thrive. Part mentor, part motivator, part advocate, since 1857 Metropolitan Family Services has been the engine of change that empowers Chicago-area families to reach their greatest potential and to positively impact their lives. Our Calumet Center served 11,600 individuals last fiscal year. To learn more, visit: <http://www.metrofamily.org/>

Peace Hub

The Chicago Peace Hub is a violence prevention initiative whose goal is to increase engagement of Chicago's youth ages 12-24 in programs and services, maximizing efficiency and leveraging underutilized services. Through systems integration of county, city and local resources, the Peace Hub will create a coordinated network which allows service providers to access, share and weave resources together to address each youth's individual needs and circumstances. The Peace Hub seeks to reduce exposure to or participation in violence, address trauma and improve positive outcomes for youth by facilitating access to programs and services and by fostering consistent continuum of care through case management systems.

The Peace Hub and its members work to fulfill statements 1, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15 of the Peace Platform.

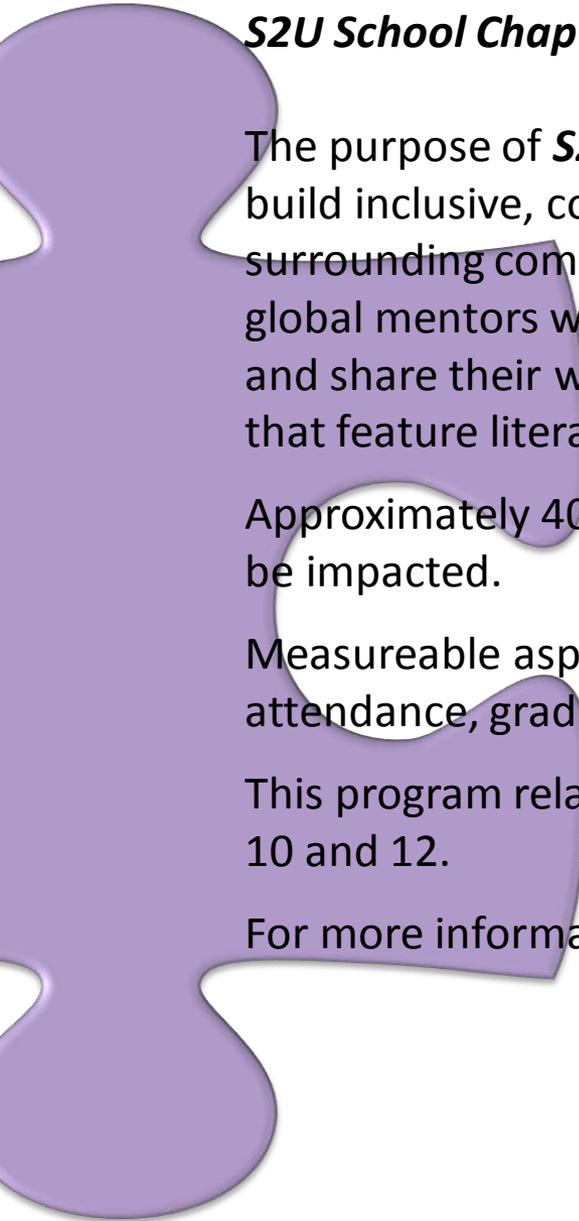
To learn more about the Peace Hub, go to <http://www.ucanchicago.org/peace-hub/>

Safer Foundation

For more than 40 years, Safer Foundation has focused on reducing recidivism by supporting, through a full spectrum of services, the efforts of people with criminal records to become employed, law-abiding members of the community. In a word the mission of Safer is employment. Over the years, Safer has come to know that the individuals they work with also need additional supports such as education and housing. Safer Youth Afterschool Program is geared toward engaging individuals between the ages of 14 and 17 with juvenile adjudication and/or court involved. The goals are academic enrichment, college or career planning, diverse cultural acceptance, and violence reduction through peer, group, and positive adult relationships. Clients will reside on the west side of Chicago.

The Safer Foundation's programs bring to life statements 1, 4, 5, 8, 10 11 and 15 on the Peace Platform.

For more information: <http://www.saferfoundation.org>



Serve 2 Unite

S2U School Chapters

The purpose of ***S2U School Chapters*** is to foster student leaders who build inclusive, compassionate, nonviolent climates in their schools and surrounding communities. We will do this by introducing students to global mentors who inspire them to create service-learning projects and share their work with the world through digital magazine entries that feature literary, visual, multimedia, and performance art.

Approximately 400 elementary, middle, and high school students will be impacted.

Measurable aspects of this program include discipline reports, attendance, grades, and emotional intelligence metrics.

This program relates to all the Peace Platform statements except numbers 10 and 12.

For more information, go to: <http://serve2unite.org/>

Shambhala Chicago

Creating Safe Spaces

With this program Shambhala Chicago will create three kinds of safe spaces. Shambhala will open its new West Loop Center one afternoon a week beginning in January for high-school-aged young people to talk with one another, have after school snacks, and experience various mindfulness practices meditation, yoga, qigong, arts, and music. They will be invited to participate in the March Grand Opening of this new center by contributing their poetry, music, and artwork. One Saturday a month, Shambhala will secure a gym for basketball and other activities for young people. In summer two groups of young people will have the opportunity to spend two weekends at the Windhorse Retreat Center, an hour north of Milwaukee in Wisconsin to enjoy a scenic, rural setting, outdoor activities, meditation, music, and arts. Shambhala expects to create safe spaces for at least 200 high-school aged young people. For young people who come to the West Loop Center on a regular basis, our measureable objectives will be decreased anxiety and increased ability to work with emotions. This project relates to 1, 2, and 3 on the Peace Platform.

To learn more: <http://chicago.shambhala.org/social-action-view/>

Thresholds

Thresholds, the oldest and largest provider of recovery services for persons with mental illness in Illinois, provides healthcare, housing, case management, employment, and advocacy to thousands of people each year, inspiring them to reclaim their lives.

Thresholds offers programs for young adults, young mothers, and their children in our Mothers Project and Loren Juhl Young Adult Program. The Mothers Project stabilizes the family unit and provides a social support network. We help women struggling with mental illnesses become better mothers and care for their families and themselves. Services include therapeutic daycare for children and agency-owned group housing that is specifically designed for families. Our Parenting Assessment Team evaluates the parenting capacity of persons with mental illness on an on-going basis, helping to ensure successful, lasting recovery.

Thresholds' Young Adult Program helps adolescents with mental illnesses, aged 16 to 21, transition to young adulthood. Thresholds takes a comprehensive approach to recovery, helping young people with identity formation, creating and maintaining relationships, developing a sense of caring, raising self-esteem, achieving autonomy from family, and committing to a vocation. Individual treatment plans may include structure, behavioral management, group processes, vocational training and placement, educational services, and housing.

Thresholds fulfills 1, 8, 10 and 11. To learn more, visit www.thresholds.org.

UCAN

Established in 1869 as a Civil War orphanage, UCAN has grown into one of Chicago's oldest yet most innovative social service agencies. UCAN serves more than 10,000 children and families annually in the greater Chicagoland area through a range of 30+ programs that promote compassionate healing, education, and empowerment. UCAN's vision is that youth who have suffered trauma can become our future leaders. Our programs create a healing process for youth who have experienced trauma including: clinical and youth development services, professional foster parenting, a therapeutic youth home, teen parenting service network, transitional teen services, and a therapeutic day school. To better provide youth with a safe place to mend, learn, and grow, UCAN is constructing a new 7.5 acre campus in North Lawndale, which will include a Therapeutic Youth Home and its program center and headquarters.

UCAN covers 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 on the Peace Platform.

For more information: <http://www.ucanchicago.org/>

The City of Chicago

Partial Summary of Programs Laying a Foundation for Peace

The City of Chicago provides the ground on which the platform for peace is built. Establishing the ground, the City developed a Youth Violence Prevention Plan in 2012, a multi-disciplinary partnership with Cook County, the State of Illinois, community organizations, businesses, and others.

In 2012, Mayor Emanuel mounted a major fundraising campaign to raise \$50 million to increase safety in Chicago. Last year, he created the Get In Chicago organization to identify and support the expansion of proven programs to make the city safer, to align these programs with existing efforts, and to monitor implementation. The current round of funding will support mentorship and innovative programs.

Also in 2013, the city began Thrive, an initiative to develop a cradle to career continuum of services for young people.

City of Chicago (continued)

Through the Department of Family Support Services, the City of Chicago operates before and after school programs, including After School Matters and After School Athletic Stars.

The city's summer programming includes the Summer of Learning public/private initiative infusing summer programs with learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Arts and more. Also in 2013, the city began a collaborative effort with Cook County and the civic and business communities to provide summer jobs and programming for youth.

The Chicago Public Schools changed their Student Code of Conduct in 2012 to resulting in a 36% decrease in out of school suspensions and increase restorative justice practices. The CPS 5-year action includes expanding proven school climate and social and emotional learning strategies.

The Department of Public Health's Safe Start initiative links people and programs to help the healing begin for young children exposed to violence.

Cook County

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle is working through the Justice Advisory Council (JAC) to reduce the populations at the Cook County Jail and the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, reduce recidivism, provide a fair judicial system, and promote public safety. Bond amounts are now reconsidered for people unable to pay so those who are not violence or flight risks can stay with their families and communities. Under Community Anti-Violence and Restoration Effort (CARE), 11 community teams are working in the areas with the most violent crime to reduce violence and stabilize these communities. JAC is funding re-entry service providers to help build their capacity and is promoting collaboration between these organizations. Working with the Violence Prevention, Intervention, and Reduction Advisory Committee, JAC has awarded \$1.9 million in violence prevention grants, investing in community-based alternatives to the criminal justice system.

Cook County Works Summer Youth Employment Program, as part of the One Summer Chicago County/City partnership, provides work readiness training and an 8-week paid work experience.

Cook County (continued)

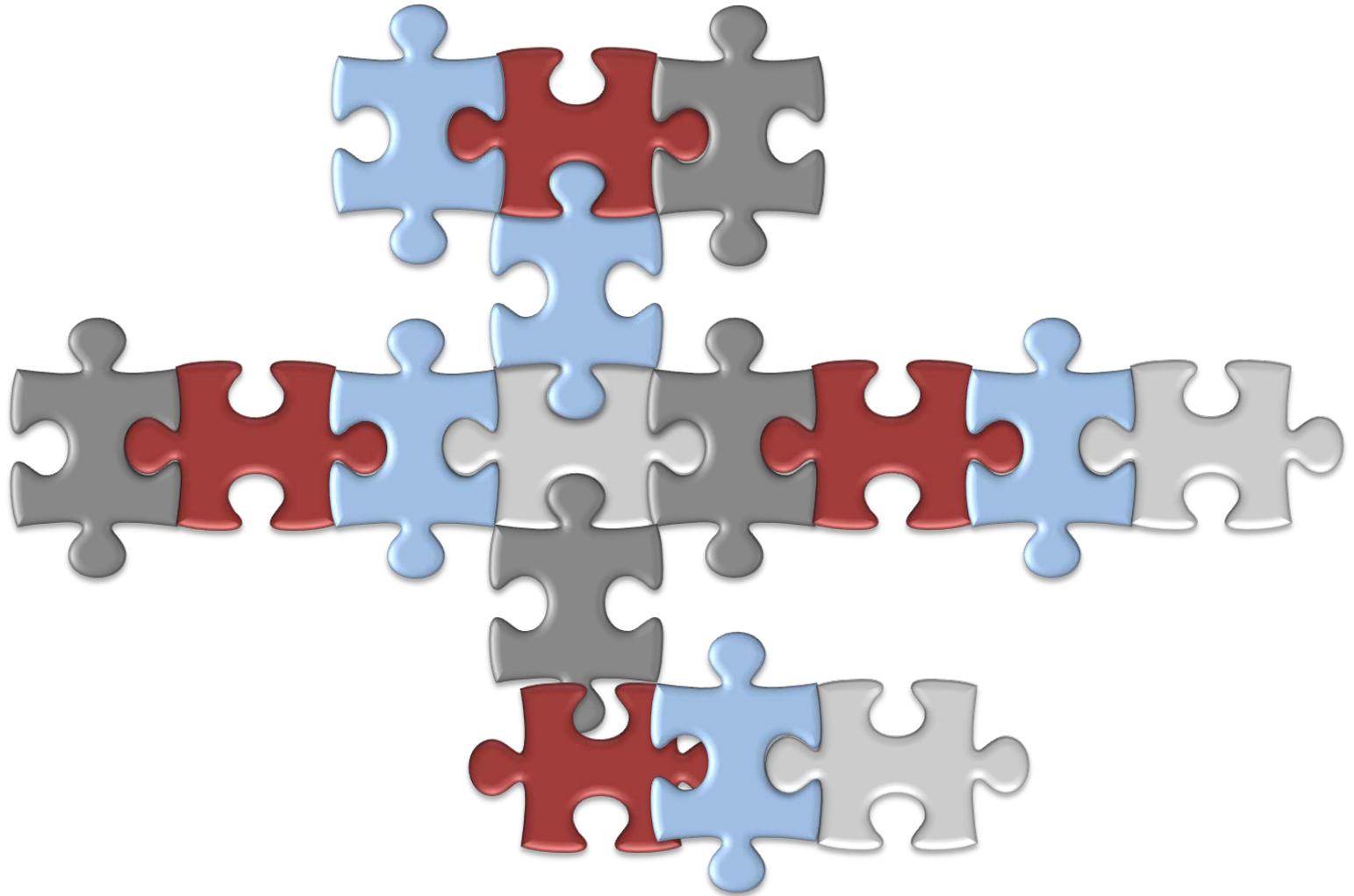
The Juvenile Probation and Court Services Department's continuum of detention alternative programs has earned the Circuit Court of Cook County designation as a model learning site by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. It enables the court to divert minors from detention into constructive community-based counseling, treatment and residential care. The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives (JDAI) enable judges to use these alternatives: court notification; community supervision; home confinement with electronic monitoring; evening reporting centers; Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (S.W.A.P.); KARE and the staff secure shelter.

The Cook County Sheriff Youth Services Department offers educational programs to students, teachers, parents, and other youth serving professionals. These programs provide the knowledge and skills necessary to prevent harmful and risky behavior and enhance the well-being of individuals in the community. Prevention programs offered address current issues related to youth especially in the area of violence.

Since last spring many entities added their contributions to building a platform for peace in Chicago. The platform is, of course, not yet complete.



Where are the Gaps?



Gaps that stand out for us right now are:

- **After school activities**, particularly for high-school aged young people, but also for middle school aged, including positive clubs.
- **Funding** for the current programs that are already working successfully with youth and impacting violence in a positive way, so that these programs can expand their impact.
- **Jobs**, places for youth to build competencies for jobs, especially in Chicago's high-demand industries and occupations.
- Consideration of the **effects of trauma** on young people.
- Ways for young people to access their **inner** being.
- **Parents** of at-risk youth are often a forgotten part of the equation.
- **Access to public transportation** for low income young people.

Ideas and recommendations for helping to fill some of the gaps:

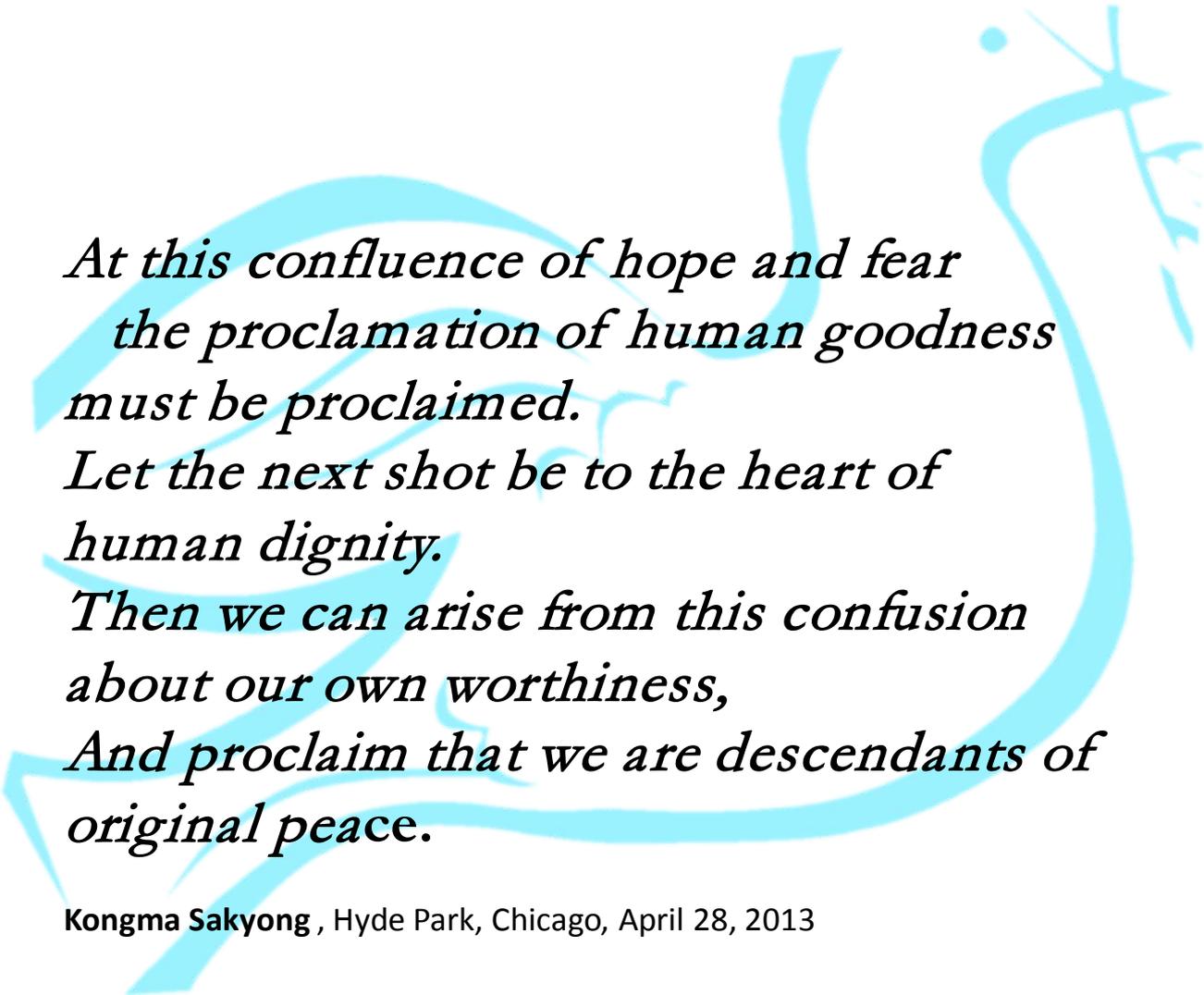
- Use the Park Districts for more youth activities, such as Windy City Hoops and Art Partners in Residence programs.
- Make the public libraries more available for after school activities.
- Explore the Mikva Challenge campaign to give low income high school-aged youth free CTA passes.
- Continue to purposefully assure community input into Thrive and the Public Safety Action Committee.
- Continue to shift resources from punitive criminalization of young people in schools to trauma-informed restorative justice practices and peace circles, social/emotional learning; from incarceration to restorative/transformational justice practices.
- Make free dual enrollment courses available at City Colleges to help youth get on the track to a high-demand occupation.

We applaud and strongly support the open-hearted, dedicated effort of many people and organizations who are working to build a strong foundation for peace, based on these directions.



Directions

- Movement away from punitive, criminalizing measures to
 - Recognizing and healing the effects of trauma
 - Using restorative justice methodologies, peace circles
 - Increasing social and emotional learning, including mindfulness training
- Organizing young leaders so that their wisdom is heard and heeded.
- Emphasis on pooling all available resources for job creation and training for young people in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, arts, and soft skills.
- Valuing and strengthening networks of care at the community level for collective impact from cradle to career.
- Serious and innovative fundraising and directing and re-directing of funds, with the emphasis on Chicago being one city and the importance of providing for all of its youth.
- Emphasis on mentorship, working towards every young person having at least one adult in their corner.



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the proclamation of human goodness
must be proclaimed.*

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