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Citizens for Peace Minutes 7-13-10

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CITIZENS FOR PEACE

Minutes

July 13, 2010

The meeting opened at 7:05 pm with a welcome by President, Colleen Mills. She introduced, Inner Peace Director, Caroline Trout, who shared a passage from a book by Thich Nhat Hanh, "Peace Is Every Step", that teaches us conscious breathing and mindfulness in every act. When we breathe we are alive. Conscious breathing slows us down, and allows us to be more mindful. She also shared a passage from Louise Diamond's, "The Peace Book", that speaks of how breathing helps to center and relax us. Let us reconnect each day to our inner selves with conscious breathing.

Guest Speakers:

Colleen introduced **Carmen Dominguz**, a Dominican Nun and Licensed Social Worker, who has worked for the past ten years in Plymouth and Redford for First Step of Wayne County. She shared some startling statistics on Domestic Violence:

- One out of four women in our country will be victims of domestic violence. Not only are the women affected, but the children are too.
- Young women (ages 16-24) experience the highest rate of domestic violence – 16/1000 persons.
- The cost of intimate partner violence annually exceeds \$5.8 billion (\$4.1 billion in direct health care expenses, \$900 million in lost productivity and \$900 million in lifetime earnings).

Carmen defined Domestic Violence as a pattern of behavior that violates human rights to gain power over another. It exists in all areas of our society regardless of race, religion or economic status. Battering is a choice, not something one has to do. They do it because they can, to gain power. Among the many handouts Carmen brought to our meeting, she shared some of the characteristics of violence: Using intimidation; Using emotional abuse; Using isolation; Denying, minimizing and blaming; Using children; Using privilege; Using economic abuse and Using coercion and threats to gain power and control.

First Step is a private, non-profit agency providing advocacy and short-term shelter, since 1978. They offer free services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Their 24 hour help line, 1-888-453-5900; 24 hour, on-call assault team; In-court victim advocacy; Support groups; Counseling and Legal, court, financial, medical and housing information are invaluable to those in need. **First Step envisions a community where respect, fair treatment, comprehensive support and social justice are available to all survivors of domestic and sexual assault and their families.** To learn more about First Step or to volunteer at one of the locations, please call Sally Coder, at (734) 722-1772 or refer to their website: www.firststep-mi.org. Carmen thanked us for the opportunity to speak to us, and the group thanked her for enlightening us of this important topic.

Education Director, Rosemary Doyle, introduced **Judge Eric Cholack**, who supports the efforts of First Step. He was here to discuss his experiences as a prosecutor and in family court over the past 18 years. He is currently a Wayne County Circuit Court Judge in the Domestic Relations Division. He stated he tries to help people reach win-win solutions to their problems. With Domestic Violence it's not as easy to do so. He said everybody is a potential victim of domestic violence – it is a plague that knows no boundaries.

He brought a PPO – Personal Protection Order with him, as it is a tool used in many domestic violence cases. It can be obtained, without an attorney, from the Coleman A. Young building in Detroit, MI (Room 2928). It applies to a current/former spouse; live-in or former live-in; someone one had children with or someone he/she had previously dated. It goes into affect the moment the Judge signs it and restricts a variety of actions. It is helpful to carry it with you at all times, as it can be enforced by any police agency. If a police officer has reasonable means to believe the respondent has violated one of the restricted activities, he can arrest the respondent without an arrest warrant. The respondent will receive up to 93 days in jail for going against the PPO in addition to any criminal offense. Judge Cholack said the statistics show that PPOs are effectively used in domestic violence cases. He also stated that his court has applied for a special domestic violence grant where measurements can be made on the effectiveness of programs to rehabilitate batterers. The group thanked Judge Cholack for presenting this information.

Announcements:

- Our August 10th meeting will include a Vegetarian Pot-Luck and start at 6:30 pm.
- The September 14th meeting will include brief, Peace Collection, book reports by members.
- Colleen invited all in attendance to the One Peace event on September 21st at the Civic Center Library.

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm.