

## Focus on Peace, Conflict, and Justice

Our second annual Student Voices Project brought in the creative works of over 100 middle school and high school students from 15 schools and educational venues in nine different states. We selected 24 honorees whose submissions are featured here. This year's theme of Peace, Conflict, and Justice was introduced as follows:

Conflict and violence happen all over the world with all kinds of people. Peace also occurs in many communities throughout the world.

Peace is often defined as the absence of war or violence, or an agreement to end hostilities. Justice is defined as fairness, equitableness, or moral rightness. Quakers believe that true, lasting peace can never be achieved through violence and that in the pursuit of justice, all people are equal and capable of working together.

The Friends peace testimony encourages the promotion of peace and the opposition of war or violence.

We supplied the students with eight prompts to choose from for that initial spark of inspiration which leads to great creation: Story Time, Ponder, Get Involved, Inspiration (with a list of quotes from peacemakers), Imagine, Interview (no submissions for this one), Visual Arts, and Photography. Look for the prompts in word bubbles on the following pages, with four visual art pieces placed throughout and two photographs at the end. Lastly, on page 21 you will find a complete list of all 116 students who participated in the project this year. We thank you for sharing your work with us.

Until next year, keep learning, writing, and creating!

—Gail Whiffen Coyle, associate editor

### Story Time

Has there been a time when you were involved in a conflict and there was a peaceful resolution? What about a time when there was no peaceful resolution? Tell the story of what happened in either situation.

## All the Way Home

*Amelia LaMotte, Grade 6, Sidwell Friends School*

It was a chilly mid-January night in New York City the day I saw a man get mugged on the street. I was walking back from dinner with my mom and sister. Then I saw it. There were two men. I saw a blur, and heard a loud, long-lasting scream. Stunned, I stood there, falling behind from my mom and sister who, through the busy crowds, didn't see it. Then, unable to help, I took a deep breath. I pulled my fur hood over my head, and walked on to catch up with my family.

That night, I couldn't sleep. As I tossed and turned in the uncomfortable hotel cot, I thought about what had gone on that day. Thoughts swarmed through my head. Why does that man feel the need to give so much pain to a helpless person? Who were those two men? Did they have a connection, or did the thief just need the money? If so, then what for? What if he didn't need anything but to give pain? Did the thief ever get caught? I wished that at that very moment, I had reached deep, deep down into my soul, and found

that little bit of courage, and helped the man. Why didn't I? Why do I always have to be so scared of everything at every time? Why do we need violence? Why does violence even exist? What would happen if there was world peace?

Now, two years later, I know not one single answer to any of those questions. I wish I did. All I know is that what the thief did was not right. This past September, I heard a poem called "Early Memory" by January Gill O'Neil about a similar story. In the third stanza, the last six lines go like this:

I saw a man pull a gold chain off the neck  
of a woman as she crossed the street.  
She cried out with a sound that bleached me.  
I walked on, unable to help,  
knowing that fire in childhood  
clenched deep in my pockets all the way home.

When the words of those last lines reached my ears, I was in New York again. I felt the cool rush of air from the

speeding taxis flying by me. I saw the bright lights from the tall skyscrapers. I felt the fear filling up my body and the pain for the other man, but as the poem ended, all these feelings turned into one. The only thing I felt was guilt. The thought that one punch and a grab of a wallet, that I could have stopped, could have changed the man's life, swam through my body. Everywhere, in my ears, in my mouth, trickling down

## Heritage

*Rachel Briden, Grade 11, Lincoln School*

"A true Arab knows how to pick a juicy watermelon," my mother would say, in the hot outdoor markets of Damascus. Clutching the large juicy watermelon over her shoulder and thumping it three times to make sure that it made a "touj" or a drum-like sound which meant that it was fresh.

As my grandmother said, it was true that Arabs believed that watermelon could heal in many ways.

Florence Eid, my great-grandmother, is 92 and lives in Damascus. She can read Arabic "ahweh"—"coffee." When you finish your ahweh, you spin the cup and let the remaining ahweh stick to the sides of the "founjan"—"small cup"—until it's dry. "Tété om Riad"—"Grandmother, mother of Riad"—will then proceed to read your fortune.

Once, my Tété om Riad read my cousin's founjan and told her that she was going to have a baby. A month later, she learned that she was expecting.

As my cousin's son has turned three, this year, their world has turned around.

U.S. Reuters Edition wrote, "Syrian Christians and Muslim clerics gather at a church in Damascus to hold mass for victims killed in bomb attacks." My cousin attended that mass on March 22 to commemorate the lives that were lost.

my throat, into my stomach: Guilt, for not helping the man. Guilt for letting such violence go, flowing away like the cool, clear water gushing down the stream in the woods, untouched.

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*Amelia LaMotte lives in Washington, D.C. Although she is not Quaker herself, she attends a Quaker school. Outside of school, she is a competitive gymnast.*

The chills that run up my spine, when I watch that clip, are because of my fond memories of walking down that street. It doesn't make sense to talk about the situation with others because we can't justify it.

The questions that no one can answer that run in my mind are as follows:  
Who knows when the Arab Spring will end?  
Who knows when the healing watermelon will come back to Syria, to my street?  
Who knows what Tété om Riad's coffee might say tomorrow morning?

(This poem is an approximation of "Blood" from *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East* by Arab American poet Naomi Shihab.)

When I think about what is happening in the Middle East and how this has impacted people's lives, the ideals of Quakerism, which include religious tolerance and peace, take on a very real and significant meaning. I have close relatives who live in Syria, and I speak Arabic. Through Facebook, I have been in daily contact with my family and have witnessed just how difficult their lives have been, living in a society where there is widespread suffering and war. The extraordinary hardship that has unfolded in their lives has made me understand the true value and significance of Quaker ideals in our global society.

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*Rachel Briden attends Lincoln School in Providence, R.I., the only Quaker all-girls school in North America. Her mother is from Syria, so she is fluent in Arabic and English. Rachel fundraises for Doctors Without Borders and volunteers at Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island.*

# Sibling Rivalry

*Claudia Labson, Grade 6,  
Sidwell Friends School*

**D**on't get me wrong. I love my siblings very much, but sometimes it feels like they are more of a burden than a gift. We are constantly arguing, even if it's about the most ridiculous stuff. Our parents are always telling us to stop fighting, saying they don't know anyone who fights as much as us.

One time, we were in Vermont for a month of summer break. I had just gotten back from sleep-away camp in the Poconos, from which my parents had

picked me up and driven me straight up to Vermont. One would think my siblings and I would have been rejoicing, but we were arguing. My brother thought that it wasn't fair that I had gotten to eat a ton of junk food at camp, while I argued that he could've come to camp if he'd wanted to, he just chose not to. My mom pulled me aside and asked me to try and not fight with my siblings, and I decided to give it a shot.

I mostly ignored him, but I also responded politely and not shouting to a few of his accusations. He quickly realized that I wasn't looking to fight with him, and he backed down. We both just slowly stopped talking until we weren't arguing. Instead, he started asking me about camp, which was the conversation we should have had in the first place. We had achieved peace.

Peace is better, but it is also hard to achieve. It is something that you have to work very hard for if you want it. I still fight with my siblings sometimes, but I try harder not to now. Once you have peace, it seems like all of the work was nothing compared to the reward, even if it took a great deal of effort.

Claudia Elliott Labson was born and raised in Maryland. She lives with her mom, dad, brother, sister, a cat, and two dogs. She loves music and plays the guitar. She also enjoys swimming and playing soccer, basketball, and tennis.,



## Visual Arts

Draw or create a visual piece in response to peace, conflict, justice, or all three. You may use any drawing tools (pencils, pens, markers, watercolor, paint, etc.) or materials (paper, clay, plastic, metal, etc.).

## The Dove

*Josie Carabello, Grade 6,  
Greene Street Friends School*

**I** created my sculpture based on the Quaker rights, religion, and beliefs. Though a white dove is traditionally a symbol of peace, I wanted to reimagine it representing happiness and equality. The hand represents peace and simplicity; the path on the base represents the path to peace; and the base itself represents our environment. I think

## Ponder

Why do people fight?  
What causes violent conflict?  
(i.e. race, money, religion,  
power, culture).  
How do people create peace?  
What ensures  
lasting peace?

## Why Can't We Get Along?

*Kayla Hayes, Grade 6, Greene Street Friends School*

*I combined Story Time and Ponder because thinking about peace and conflict happens a lot. We all have a story about when we were in a fight. I bet everyone has been in a fight with friends and family. And when I saw the questions for Ponder, sparks started to fly in my head. At first I thought conflict was the worst thing that ever existed, but then I thought about what happens after the conflicts and how you can learn from your conflicts so you and your community can become stronger.*

**W**hy do we have conflicts? Having conflicts can make you a better person. Maybe other people see conflict as a bad thing, but after you get into a fight it can teach you a lesson. For example, during the Civil Rights Movement everyone started hurting each other, and now blacks and whites know that equality is the best policy. You can also learn from a conflict by the positive or negative effect it has on you. What do you think causes violent

**I think people judge people by the color of their skin because they are afraid of someone different.**

conflicts? Is it race, money, culture, religion, or power? Race and power causes violent conflicts. One violent conflict about power is Ukraine and Russia fighting about who should get Crimea, and one violent conflict about race is when Martin Luther King Jr. got shot and there were big riots. People want more power because the more power you have, the more control you have over certain things. I think people judge people by the color of their skin because they are afraid of someone different.

Often times, peace can come out of conflict. One time I had a conflict, and we solved the problem peacefully. My sister and I were fighting over the remote, and we ended up kicking, punching, slapping, and pulling

each other until our mom came in and broke up the fight. I thought my mom was going to tell us no television for two weeks, but she made us hug each other until we had a solution, and that's when I knew that we were going to be on that living room couch for a long time. Then my sister and I made an agreement that when one person gets the remote one day the other person can

get it next time. I realized that talking it out was more effective than fighting. People create peace in different ways depending on what kind of person you are.

How do people create peace? Some people like to talk it out, and others just want to wait and see what will happen tomorrow. Everyone solves problems differently; it can sometimes depend on what kind of person you are or what type of problem it is, but you have to remember that sometimes problems don't go away, so you have to at least try to solve the problem before it gets worse. What ensures lasting peace? I think just talking it out or trying to learn from the situation, and being aware of hurting people's feelings. Also, try to put yourself in the person's shoes and try to feel what they are feeling, because you can end up hurting more people, even people that you care about the most.

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*Kayla Hayes lives in Philadelphia, Pa., with her mom and sister. She loves to dance and do a lot of creative projects.*

my sculpture combines all six things together, which I think are the basic beliefs of the Quaker religion. I was inspired by the quote "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way." by A.J. Muste to make my sculpture. I think the quote really represents Quaker beliefs, which is why I used it as my inspiration. My idea came from Quakerism and how respectful the Quakers are to other religions as well as their own.

I enjoy being artistic and creative and I thought it would be easiest to express my ideas using materials I love and work with on a daily basis. I also think I have some background skill in working with clay, and I wanted this sculpture to look special and important. I knew I would have a lot of fun as well as resembling and honoring peace in the Quaker community and religion. The prompt sounded interesting, and though it took some work, I am proud of the creation that formed from it.



# Peace Begins With Me

*Imani Thomas, Grade 6,  
Sidwell Friends School*

People fight mostly over the wrong things: differences. They fight about race, religion, ideas, equality, and justice. People fight for reasons both encouraged and discouraged. Even though there is really no good reason to physically fight, there are good reasons to fight other ways. A good reason is justice and equality, but a bad reason to fight is revenge. People fought about race during the Civil Rights Movement, when everything was segregated, because black people wanted to be treated equally, but whites wanted to be in control. This is a good fight because every person should have equal rights.

People fight about religion because they think that their religion is the only one that matters and anyone that isn't the same religion is a lesser person. An example is the Holocaust when Adolf Hitler decided that he would try and wipe everyone out that was Jewish. People also fight about ideas because those with strong minds are most likely to be listened to. People fight about their ideas and their ideals. In the Civil Rights Movement, black and white people were fighting about their ideal society.

Conflict is based on the way you react—whether you handle it like a pacifist or someone that is violent. Deciding to handle a conflict like a pacifist is when you use words or peaceful protests, like boycotting, to express your feelings. It is against some religious beliefs like the Quakers and Buddhists to be violent. Violent conflict mostly occurs when people feel they are powerless, fed up, or threatened, therefore they strike out in anger. People enact violent conflict because they feel as if they would like to be in power. The recent events that have occurred in Libya are a great example of this because they are fighting right now. Additionally, the recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, are a good example of dealing with conflict violently and like a pacifist. People are rioting and that is violent conflict, but people are also boycotting certain stores and that is a peaceful protest.

Creating peace in the world is important because it means that people wouldn't have to be worried about having a war any day. Peace can be created by tolerating and appreciating differences of others. Peace begins with one person and his or her commitment to nonviolence. We should try to accept each other, making sure that everyone feels safe because we want to make this a better place for each other. In order to do

that, we need to seek an understanding of others' viewpoints. Individuals can always maintain peace by thinking peacefully. But what ensures everlasting peace in the larger world? Nothing. Each individual impacts his or her community in both good and bad ways by helping or not helping. People create peace in their communities by getting to know each other better from community events. Another way people create peace is by putting that into their schools. My old school Elsie Whitlow Stokes Public Charter School had a motto that said, "I will take care of myself, I will take care of others, and I will take care of my community." To me this means that I am responsible for taking care of others and the areas I am a part of.

How do you know that you are creating peace? Ask your friends and family the questions throughout and compare their answers to yours. There will always be conflict in the world so you can't really solve that forever, but you can create peace in your own life and community. You decide. As Veronica Roth (author of the *Divergent* series) says, "If you actually succeed in creating a utopia, you've created a world without conflict, in which everything is perfect. And if there's no conflict,

there are no stories worth telling—or reading!" This means that conflict can be both good and bad depending on the way you handle it. Peace is not the absence of conflict, but we need to be able to handle conflict appropriately. Peace is not what you plan to do, it's what you actually do to make the world better.

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*Imani Thomas lives with her mom, dad, and two sisters. She loves to play basketball outside with her sister and dad. She likes to do many different sports.*

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## Why Do People Fight?

*Eliza Zurbuch, Grade 7,  
Carolina Friends School*

I think that people fight because they get stuck in their own way of seeing things and can't view a situation from another person's standpoint. Kids often fight because they get wrapped up in their own opinions and the idea of someone else being at fault. They don't take the time to consider the whole problem. In my Conflict Resolution class, my teacher always said that when you think about an argument, you need to zoom out and try to look at it from a different person's perspective—whether it's the person that you are fighting with or just a bystander.

I think that violent conflict rises when the fighting has

gone on for long enough that people are so frustrated that they use violence. Sometimes it might feel like there won't be movement in the argument unless there is some violence to respond to. When countries are in the middle of an argument, those disagreements can carry on for months or even years. Sometimes a way to break through is to use violence. I think this is wrong. I believe that anything can be solved without violence because hurting people isn't going to help anything; it will just make it worse. I believe that anyone can make a difference. Sometimes the smallest actions can make the biggest difference. Rosa Parks, when asked to move to the back of the bus, refused. A refusal to change seats is a small action that stood for a larger goal. This small action then led to bus boycotts, and in conjunction with other small actions, snowballed into a bigger and effective movement that changed the world.

Creating peace could be easy if it were the ultimate goal of all people fighting. If people thought, "What do I need to do to change this and make it better?" instead of, "How can I prove that I am right?," peace might come faster. People constantly think that they are right before they even know what really happened. I know that it is hard to stop and think about a conflict before I start jumping to conclusions. I am always trying to convince myself to think before I act, think about the entire situation, but sometimes when it's in the heat of the moment, it's easier said than done. I think that we all just need to try and put our best effort into thinking about the entire situation, how I could improve it, what the other person's perspective might be, and what am I about to do.

What we really need is lasting peace. One way to create lasting peace is to create environments that feel safe for people to say their opinions without being judged. They can agree to disagree but to respect each other anyway. It seems so easy to say that to create lasting peace people just need to respect and listen to one another but it really needs to start there. I think that one of the largest parts of lasting peace is having people around you that understand you and can help you when needed. If every person made continuous small efforts to demonstrate nonviolence and lead forward peaceful movements, these actions would catch on and create a culture that promotes peace as opposed to violence.

*Eliza Zurbuch lives in Durham, N.C., with her four siblings and her parents. She loves being part of a big family.*

## Liberty and Justice for All

*Parker Alexander, Grade 6,  
Sidwell Friends School*

In third grade, we covered the Japanese Americans being held in concentration camps during World War II. I wondered then, has America shown liberty and justice for all in its long history?

Three years later, I ponder that question again. Now that I've learned more about American history, I see that there have been terrible acts of excruciating pain and suffering—delivered by Americans.

I look back again to the Second World War. The Japanese Americans had done nothing to harm America! They were hard-working, loyal citizens of America! But, after the attack on Pearl Harbor by Japan, Americans decided, "We can't trust them after what their country did to us." They are American citizens! They do not belong to Japan, or should be associated with it! To make matters even worse, America dropped an atomic bomb on two Japanese towns as revenge, and people are still dying from the radiation! America caused the deaths of millions of people, who had done nothing wrong! They did not order the attack on Pearl Harbor. Did America not hear the sounds of death and pain they brought?

Now, I look back even further to the 1800s, when black people were used as slaves! They did it originally when they were a part of Britain, but even though the Pledge of Allegiance said that there was "liberty and justice for all," they still continued doing it! The slaves had to do manual labor throughout the day, were punished by their owners, and sold and treated like animals! Did they not see that they were as human as white men and women? They gained their freedom, but then there was segregation, making them seem even more inferior! They never have been and never will be inferior to white people! Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement brought an end to segregation, but then Martin Luther King Jr. was killed! Did his killer not see that all he wanted was for everyone to be equal?

And now, I look at today. There is still prejudice against black people, even after segregation. It heated up again in 2012 with the death of Trayvon Martin, a black boy who was shot and killed by a neighborhood watchman! The case went to court, and the killer was found innocent! Thousands of people, myself included, believed and still believe that it was injustice to the boy! Then, this summer, a black boy named Michael Brown was shot and killed—by a white policeman! The court

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didn't even indict the case, which made thousands of people mad again! Then, most recently, there were the deaths of Eric Garner and Tamir Rice. Eric was a black man who was choked by a white policeman, which was against police protocol! Not only that, but Eric had asthma. So, he died, and the court in New York didn't indict the case either! Tamir was a black boy carrying a toy gun in a playground, who was shot and killed by a white policeman!

Don't people see that we are all equal, or is every race other than whites going to be hunted down for being "inferior?" No one is inferior to anyone else, yet people still believe that some people are inferior!

Will my family or me be killed next? My mom, my siblings, and I are all black! Will we be shot for looking different, or being "inferior"? My dad, my siblings, and I are Japanese! Will we be shot for a crime

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that we did not commit?

Action will be taken. Over the weekend of December 13, 2014, there was a march in Washington, D.C., to say that black lives matter! And they are correct! All lives matter! But in order to accept that, they must look past the racism! As writer

Chimamanda Adichie says, we must look past the "single story." Only then, will there be liberty and justice for all.

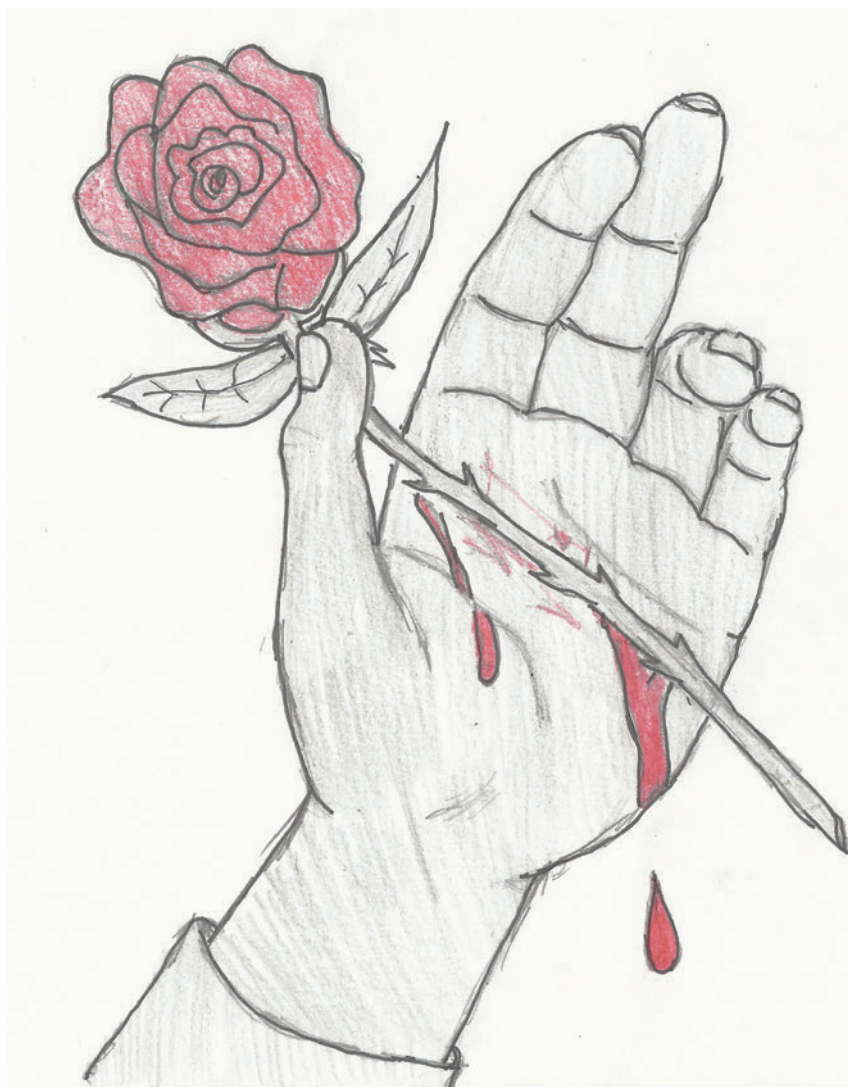
*Parker Alexander enjoys writing stories and hopes to be a professional writer. He also likes to read and play video games. He has four siblings, one of which is his twin sister. He doesn't have any pets, but his family hopes to get a dog sometime.*

## A Hope for Peace

*Joyce Okoye, Grade 8,  
Friends Academy  
of Westampton*

In my perspective, the rose indicates peace. The hand is the person striving for peace. However, since peace is hard to come by, it can hurt because of the thorns that accompany it. I was inspired to draw it by all the different events going on in the world today. I am also inspired by people who want peace, knowing it is extremely difficult to achieve. This picture means a lot to me, mostly because of the petals. The petals are referring to the good things that happen with peace. In my opinion, it is the most important part to achieving peace. An example of peace is Gandhi's Salt March in 1930. Instead of using violence, Gandhi decided to walk. Even though he was sent to jail, Gandhi gave the attention he needed to make the protest a success. The petals are India's independence and the thorns are him being sent to jail.

*joyce*





## Get Involved

Describe the scenarios and places where you see peace and conflict in your daily life. How can an individual be a part of creating peace (at school, in his or her community, in the world)?

## Inspiring Peace

*Leyla Ururshanova,  
Grade 12,  
Tandem Friends School*

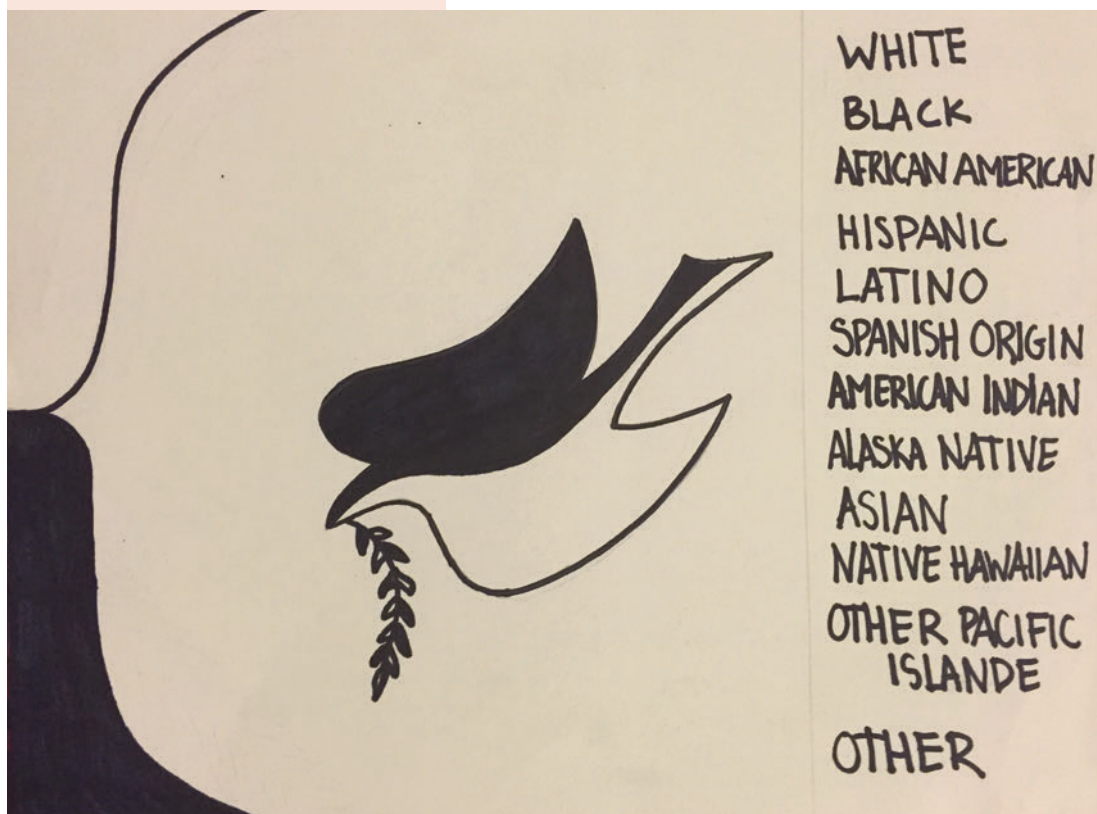
*Leyla Urushanova is originally from Russia, where she experienced a lot of violence and discrimination. For this reason, she was inspired to create an art piece that inspires peace among everyone.*

## Conflicts

*Aiknoor Kaur, Grade 7, Friends Academy of Westampton*

One day at night,  
there was a very big fight.  
Then the weapons were turned into a peace dove,  
the anger turned to love.  
A human helped the two,  
did some magic and ended the fight. But who?  
The person could be anyone,  
and the people fighting didn't have to be kids to make it done.  
Conflicts can be solved,  
if someone has helped.  
Anger only hurts yourself,  
and that won't help.  
Please be nice at all times,  
then everything will be fine.  
Conflicts can end with peace,  
then the fight will cease.  
Conflicts come and go,  
but some are so big that they stop a relationship to grow.  
We shouldn't let conflicts get in our way,  
if we keep it that way then life will be peaceful everyday.

*Aiknoor Kaur lives in New Jersey. Her family consists of her mother, father, oldest sister, and her twin sister. Her hobbies are playing basketball, baking, cooking, reading, and writing stories.*





## Inspiration

Respond to one or more of the following quotes (in red).

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**“There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.” —A.J. Muste**

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## To Make Peace, We Must Work Together

*Georgia Condon, Grade 6, Greene Street Friends School*

I appreciate and believe this quote. Muste’s idea is on a flag outside of my school, and I always think about it. You can’t just find peace, as if it were a person or an object. It won’t be sitting under a rock or hiding in a corner. Peace is something that you have to make. You have to compromise to make peace. You may not get everything that will make you happy. Sometimes you have to use other’s ideas, if it is what’s good for the group. You have to stand for what you believe in, but do it in a way where people agree and disagree fairly. For example, when you are sharing your idea, you have to let others share their thoughts, even if they are different from your thoughts.

## There Is No Way to Peace

*Celie Kaplan, Grade 7, Carolina Friends School*

These six words are telling us that throughout history humankind has been running and running and running, and now that we have finally reached the end of this race, it turns out that the grand finish line, with food, friends and family, joy, and a big trophy isn’t here. There is only the edge of a cliff.

As we have been running and running and running toward peace, we have tried other ways, shortcuts to the finish line, and the shortcuts took an incredibly wrong turn that led us to the cliff. These shortcuts to peace have involved guns and many other forms of weaponry and violence. For generations, we have taught our children that violence and war will get us what we want and “need.” In some cases, it has been true that violence became the only way, but even in those cases, violence seemed necessary because it was provoked by violence.

Violence has only caused society to spiral downward. Who knows what might happen if we don’t put a stop to the constant violence taking place around us?

As we try to stop ourselves, we have to help the next generation. While it may be too late for our generation and our parents’ and grandparents’ generations, we can help our future children to create a better world for themselves. We can teach them that violence is not the answer. We can teach them that there are so many better ways to solve conflict in the world around us. We can teach them to take the true route, not the shortcut.

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**“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.” —Albert Einstein**

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*Equiano Hunter, Grade 7, Germantown Friends School*

This quote really describes any and all conflict throughout history. In Ferguson, Missouri, and Staten Island, New York, police officers are delivering an overdose of force and violence, killing dozens of black men, but they believe that they’re “doing their job,” and are trying to keep the peace. You cannot keep peace through violence because peace and violence cannot exist in the same place at the same time. Nonviolent protestors protest against these recent “homicides,” believing that violence will only provoke more conflict. Police officers meanwhile gas them, put on gear as if they’re preparing for a terrorist attack, and arrest them for doing nothing but standing out in the middle of the street, hefting signs, and shouting against this injustice.

## Where the Great White (Privilege) Lay

*Emmanuelle Ward, Grade 11, Tandem Friends School*

There is a sea of injustice,  
I am watching from the shore.  
Until I have tasted the ocean spray,  
And felt the waves crash upon me,  
I can say nothing more.

*As a white person, I’ve never been discriminated against. I have never felt fear when around an officer—*

*paranoia maybe but never genuine fear. White privilege is a concept that seems to be hard to grasp for many of us, but we must use it to put the spotlight on people of color when they are speaking out about this and realize we have no right to speak over them about an issue we know nothing about.*

**"If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner." —Nelson Mandela**

*Madison Sings, Grade 6, Newtown Friends School*

To me, this quote means that no matter who your enemies are, the way to make them allies is through peace and resolution, not conflict. You might not have the same opinions, but there is always a choice whether or not to fight. The best reward for working together is peace, and once that is realized, war will cease to exist, and the earth will be a peaceful and serene place to live.

## Together

*Maddi Stewart, Grade 6, Sidwell Friends School*

Conflict has affected so many lives in the Middle East for a long time. It's been non-stop wars that have torn apart so many friends and families. The United States and many other countries like China and Russia have tried to help the Middle East, but they have rejected their help. Maybe it's because they want and believe that they can solve this all on their own. But that's the thing, the reason why we are having so many conflicts in the world is because nobody is working together.

This quote really speaks to me because it says exactly what the world needs to do. Especially in the places where there is non-stop conflict like the Middle East. They need to join together as communities and countries and put a stop to this. People's homes have been destroyed by war and conflict, and what was once a safe, tight-knit neighborhood in Syria has been struck by war and hatred.

People have been trying to stop the conflicts in the Middle East for years now. But you can never stop conflict, no matter how hard we try. There will always be that one person or group of people that hates anyone and everyone because of their differences. We need to put them out of our minds and focus on the things that matter. We have so many good and intelligent people in the world. Just imagine what it would be like if everybody worked together.

**"One has to fight for justice for all. If I do not fight bigotry wherever it is, bigotry is strengthened."**

**—Bayard Rustin**

*Julian Craig, Grade 6, Sidwell Friends School*

**T**o be completely honest, I never really used to think about peace and justice. It was not until I was ten that I realized that not everyone was treated fairly. I saw that in some countries there are dictators that do not give people all the resources or rights they deserve. I would be lying if I said that there is not injustice everywhere we go. I love this quote from Bayard Rustin because it tells me I always need to fight injustice no matter how small.

I hope that this makes someone realize that something has to be done. If I ignore the little things, then when bigger things occur I will ignore them too. Think of where the world would be if no one ever spoke up against injustice. Now, think of where the world will be if no one ever speaks up for justice again. If everyone waited for someone else to speak up, we would get nowhere. We have to start somewhere, right? So why don't we start with ourselves.

**"At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love." —Martin Luther King Jr.**

## Why Do We Have Conflict?

*George Wilson, Grade 5, Sidwell Friends School*

**S**ince my mother works in the business, I have been watching the news for as long as I can remember, and have seen stories of all kinds. I became interested in why people would do these things. Since this kind of thing was on the news almost every single day, I began to try to answer my question. I had heard about many different types of conflict: the war on the Taliban, the Boston Bombing, and of course 9/11. With each one I have always wondered how people would kill just because of, well, differences.

Sometimes it isn't about differences. People want money, and others imagine a world where only their race rules. To me, peace is more than not fighting. To me, a peaceful world is a safe world. It is a world where everyone is accepted. It is a world where no one is cast out because of being homosexual. No one is discriminated against because of their skin color. No one is bullied, and differences are resolved, a place where it is okay to be yourself: a loving, conflict-free world. As the great Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "At the center of nonviolence

stands the principle of love.”

Love is part of peace. As this quote states, nonviolence and love are connected as are nonviolence and peace. These three combined together become true peace. True peace is very hard to achieve, for it is not enough to achieve peace on the surface; you must achieve peace from within by accepting people’s differences.

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*George Wilson plays many sports and lives with his mom, dad, brother, sister, and dog. He likes to spend his free time at the park playing basketball or playing with friends. When he grows up he would like to be a lawyer, an advertising executive, or a writer.*

## Nonviolence and Love: Is There a Connection?

**Annie Rupertus, Grade 6, Greene Street  
Friends School**

I’m not technically Quaker, but I’ve been going to a Friends school for over six years, so I kind of feel as if I’ve developed an “inner Quaker.” All the Quaker testimonies that we celebrate and practice—simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship—are stored there. I feel like that part of me, where everything I’ve learned about Quakerism lives, sort of mentally highlighted this quote.

When I read this, the first thing that popped into my head was an image of a circle with a big heart in the center. It helped me to understand the quote when I visualized the object (love) as a literal object in the middle of nonviolence. This image raised a lot of questions for me. Some of the answers are very unclear. It’s tricky. For example, if love is part of nonviolence, is nonviolence love? I love my brothers, but sometimes we wrestle for fun at home (not the most Quakerly exercise, but it’s true). If I’m not fighting with a friend, does that mean I love them? Is it possible to have nonviolence without love? If two sides compromise and work together while some people still have hostility toward the other group, is that nonviolence, even if they aren’t fighting? And is love nonviolence? Again, I love my family, but we argue. We’re not violent in a literal sense, but does it count if we have verbal fights? I guess it depends on how you look at it. If you interpret the quote as more of a metaphorical statement, you might define nonviolence as working together and loving your partner at the same time, as opposed to not physically fighting. If you take it literally, it might not make as much sense unless the situation in mind has people who don’t fight and love each other.

This comes full circle to a previous question: can there be nonviolence without love? That also depends on

## Lasting Impression

**Jerica Xu, Grade 9, Wilmington  
Friends School**

In this “juxtaposition photomontage,” I incorporated many global issues throughout the world. Through this juxtaposition I convey messages about “war vs. peace,” “rich vs. poor,” and “conflict vs. justice.” Having such contrasting concepts and images pictured right next to each other amplifies the distinction and difference between the two groups. Think about the loads of money that are used on war, while children are dying from hunger around the world. Over conflict, countries can spend billions of money that can eventually lead to millions of deaths. Using that money toward those in need can save more lives and create better living situations for them. My photomontage is meant to remind everyone that

perspective. The dictionary defines nonviolence as follows: (1) absence or lack of violence; state or condition of avoiding violence; (2) the policy, practice, or technique of refraining from the use of violence, especially when reacting to or protesting against oppression, injustice, discrimination, or the like.

At least according to the dictionary, I’m on the right track in defining nonviolence as the opposite of violence. If that’s how Dr. King thought of it when he said this, maybe it’s love I should think about differently in order for the quote to make more sense. So far, I’ve been thinking he means that at the center of nonviolence is love for the people you might fight with. This isn’t exactly parallel to the example I explained earlier, where two sides compromise and work together but still don’t share any love for each other. He might have meant love for yourself or love for your allies instead of your enemies. Maybe he means that the center of not being violent is a love for yourself and a will to survive. Or it could be a love of the friends who might follow you into the battle and get injured, physically or mentally. I don’t enjoy seeing anyone in pain, especially people I love. All in all, I think the meaning and truthfulness of this quote depends on your perspective, and a lot of the questions mentioned earlier may or may not have answers, depending on how you look at it.

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*Annie Rupertus lives in the Mount Airy neighborhood of Philadelphia, Pa., with her parents, sister, two brothers, and bunny, Sambuca. Her favorite subject is music. Some of her favorite activities are reading, drawing, singing, and hanging out with family and friends.*



behind the conflict and chaos that snatches everyone's attention are people who are suffering and in need of life's basics. I hope this issue becomes more apparent to the world and that my photomontage leaves a lasting impression.

*Jerica Xu was born in Indiana, but grew up in Shanghai, China. She moved to Wilmington, Del., a few years ago due to her father's job. She loves painting, and hopes to share her ideas with the world through art.*



**My photomontage is meant to remind everyone that behind the conflict and chaos that snatches everyone's attention are people who are suffering and in need of life's basics.**

## Imagine

Imagine a world where violence doesn't exist.  
What does it look like?  
How do people resolve conflicts?

## The War, the Peace, and the Councilor

*Sara Heim, Grade 6, Greene Street Friends School*

**I** thought that it would be interesting to show the different thought processes and personalities of people who live in different environments and positions. I was inspired to write this by the talk-it-out chairs that we had in pre-K. I remember that we would have to sit and talk about whatever we had done, something we probably didn't even know was wrong. It would take a maximum of five minutes to sort out the tiny issue and apologize. I think that was a good way to solve problems, for four-year-olds at least. I thought that maybe this strategy could be helpful on a higher scale so for my story I took the idea of the talk-it-out chairs and elevated it to a governmental level.

### *Jackson's P.O.V.—A World of War*

The window is a perfectly good form of television. My grandmother used to say that all the time. I wish I could look out the window for five minutes without being traumatized by the violence unfolding outside the foggy glass. Most boys in my grade hoped to go into the war with their fathers. They thought I was a wimp for crying at the corpses lining the road on the walk home from school. Was there something wrong with me? No, you are a perfectly fine, sensitive young man who has a kind, empathetic heart, unlike those wild hooligans. That's what my grandmother said.

***Hubert Douglas, Councilor of the Peaceful World's  
P.O.V.—A World of Peace***

The blue sky shone into my office, the leafy trees making it show up in streaks on the wall-to-wall carpeting. Early this morning somebody had come into my office and polished everything until it shone. Or maybe it was just a beautiful day. Mr. Gatris, a small man in charge of the correlations with other countries, skittered into my office.

"Um, sir, the president of Jikolis just called in with some complaints about the factory workers' salaries over in Teoli," he said, quite confidently for such a small man.

I nodded. "Put him on line three, please. I will deal with this."

"Right away, yes, of course."

I leaned back in my chair and waited for the phone to ring. The familiar tone of the intercom buzzed throughout the room.

"Mr. Douglas, Gatris has informed me that President Lovenit is on the line," Lola, my secretary, says, her voice crackly through the speaker.

I pick up the phone. "President Lovenit! How are you? I understand you are having some disagreements with the salaries of Teoli factory workers?" I ask, not giving him time to answer my initial question.

"Hello, Councilor. Yes, I am afraid that they are not being paid enough to support their families, and I feel they deserve more for their efforts," President Lovenit said, very professionally, I might add.

"Thank you, Mr. President, I will contact President Houlin and get back to you ASAP."

"I would very much appreciate that, Mr. Douglas." Let me just point out that he said everything in this monotonous tone. He was like some kind of robot. I wonder what it would be like if you went to a comedy show with him . . . maybe he would short circuit.

I hung up with a quick goodbye and called down to the front desk. "Hello, Lola, sorry to bother you, but could you schedule a Skype meeting with President Houlin for Thursday around 2:30 p.m.? Teoli time, of course, wouldn't want to inconvenience anyone."

"Of course, sir, I'll call you with the confirmations as soon as they arrive." Gotta love Lola.

***Raina's P.O.V.—A World of Peace***

I cartwheeled over the hills, Dina chasing after me. The sun was blinding, even with my eyes squeezed shut,

it seemed to burn right through my eyelids. The green grass tickled my palms as they dug into the rich dirt. Warmth enveloped me as I pathetically fell out of my handstand position and into a patch of sunlight. I pulled off the awful pink wool sweater that my mom had made me wear, and tied it around my waist.

No need for television on such a nice day. That's what my grandmother said.

***Hubert Douglas, Councilor of the Peaceful World's  
P.O.V.—A World of Peace***

"Hello, Mr. Houlin, I am so sorry to interrupt your probably quite busy day, but—"

"You should be, I have important things to attend to."

The room in which he was sitting with a sober expression was dark; maybe it was a rainy day in Teoli. Or maybe he had the curtains closed.

"But, I am calling on account of some concerns expressed by President Lovenit." I saw him sit up straighter, of course, as soon as somebody he considered respectable had a problem with his country, he was all ears. He'd always thought I was too young and inexperienced to handle such an extremely challenging position. He was the most high-strung of all the presidents. I rarely ever voluntarily scheduled a meeting with him personally. He always contradicted me, about everything. I had to cut him some slack though. He's done more for his country and the world than almost any other president has. Also he's been doing this for a long time. He was still uptight. "He is concerned about the wages of your country's factory workers. He feels they are not being paid enough to properly support their families. Perhaps even if you simply increased it by a few dollars, a significant difference would be made."

"Did President Lovenit suggest this?"

"Um . . . not exactly . . . but it was certainly implied."

"All right. Thank you. I will increase the taxes on oil by a dollar or two. People will hardly even notice!"

"Sounds perfect. By the way, sunlight is good for you."

"Huh?"

"Never mind, nice talking to you, sir."

And all peace had been restored.

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*Sara Heim lives in Philadelphia, Pa., with her parents, brother, dog, and cat. She enjoys writing, making people laugh, and listening to music.*



## Photography

Photograph a scene or capture an image that you think inspires peace.

# The Beauty of Hardship

*Julia Dunn, Grade 6, Greene Street Friends School*

I see Malala Yousafzai as an extremely powerful and inspiring young woman. When she was only 11-years-old, she wrote a blog about being under the Taliban's control and her views on girls' education rights. Since the Taliban does not believe in girls having an education, Malala used the blog to express her feelings under a pen name. Unfortunately, the Taliban discovered her real name, located Malala, and fired bullets into her head. No one believed that she would live, but she did. Malala did not back down after that. She is still an activist and has won many awards. Malala had the courage to speak up for what's right. Malala inspires a lot of people because she is only 17, mature, and very well spoken. She said, "They thought the bullets would silence us, but they failed. And then, out of that silence came thousands of voices." Malala knew that people were inspired by her and the miracle that made her live, and they wanted to make a difference, too. When Malala was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, she donated \$50,000 dollars of her prize to help rebuild schools in Gaza. This activist is helping hundreds of children to get an education. As she restores peace in many places, Malala justifies women's rights to education and a fair and happy life. My photo connects to Malala's situation because she and her actions represent the flower, and her circumstances and location represent the



**I represented the concept of how beauty can grow from misfortune.**

background. Malala is like a flower who has emerged from dark experiences.

*In the picture, I represented the concept of how beauty can grow from misfortune. In the background, everything is dead, yet the flower brightens the picture up and symbolizes hope and happiness. As Albus Dumbledore from J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series said, "Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light." I think this quote means that even when it seems as if all hope and peace is lost, and only conflict exists, there is still a little bit of happiness. This only happens if you think on the bright side. That little flame burning inside you will ignite when you think positively.*

*Julia Dunn lives with her mom, dad, two cats, and a dog. Her favorite subjects are science and language arts. She loves drawing, playing piano, writing, reading, and hanging out with her awesome friends.*



# The Most Costly Definitive Statement

*Maddie Whitehead,  
Grade 10, William  
Penn Charter School*

It's so quiet up here on this hill  
finally alone with my thoughts  
It's been so long since I've seen  
my family  
the sense of tranquility is  
very different from the  
recent past,  
or was that long ago?  
I can't tell anymore.

I miss my wife, my children  
They're so far away, but so close  
I can feel their breath, smell  
their scent  
when they come to visit.

The flag ripples in the breeze,  
The one they brought  
Veterans Day;  
The flowers they bring on  
my birthday,  
The blanket at Christmas.

I do not regret my choice  
to defend my way of life.  
To protect the future, and  
the rights  
of all to live without fear,  
without censure  
free to worship, free to love,  
to live.

I just wish I were there and  
not here,  
in the cold, dark ground.



*This national cemetery is, in my opinion, a very true representation of the fine line between peace and conflict. Cemeteries are universal symbols of peace, so much so that the phrase "rest in peace" appears on many of the headstones that compose them. However, the tension between peace and conflict arises within the idea of the veterans cemeteries. These heroes suffered the cost of war, and I can only hope that they have now found their peace.*

*Maddie Whitehead lives in Philadelphia, Pa. She has two cats, Elouise and Olivia, and one bunny, Rex. At Penn Charter, she participates in crew and mock trial. She wrote this piece for an assignment in her Quakerism class.*

# Thank you to all of the participants of the 2nd Annual Student Voices Project!

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*The 3rd Annual Student Voices Project will be announced in September.  
Keep up with the latest updates at [friendsjournal.org/studentvoices](https://friendsjournal.org/studentvoices).*