



**Veterans For Peace
Howard Zinn Fund**

**Successful Grant Proposal for 2014
VFP Chapter 67, Long Beach**

Teen Empowerment for Peace



High school Peace Club students in Long Beach participate in a community event.

ZINN FUND COMMITTEE SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER 67 PROJECT

Chapter 67 in Long Beach, California, received the Veterans For Peace [Howard Zinn Fund](#) award for 2014. Their Teen Empowerment for Peace project builds on their already proven Teen Memorial, a display of markers for all the teens killed in recent Middle East wars, which is used to generate discussions with local youth about the costs of war and which has resulted in building strong community networks, particularly with local schools, teachers, and others working with youth.

The Teen Empowerment for Peace project team recognized the strong potentials for building on these networks to significantly expand their activities in building a popular base for peace in the area through youth:

- They propose to produce ongoing new generations of citizens and voters who think critically about and actively promote peaceful alternatives to conflict. Through these youth, they seek to build a cohesive community base to promote peace and justice both locally and nationally.
- They have developed clear strategies and plans for actually accomplishing these outcomes. They drew upon a range of ideas and experience in developing youth Peace Clubs in local high schools, activities that will develop critical thinking about the causes and long-term solutions in conflicts, provide these youth with guidance and experience in developing their problem-solving and organizing skills.

The Zinn Fund Committee was particularly impressed by several points:

- This project is focused on achieving specific changes that result in greater peace and justice. The project team had obviously carefully examined the Zinn Fund [Project Guidelines](#) and materials, and understood the purposes of the Howard Zinn Fund.
- The project plans clearly show how it will actually achieve these changes. The project team includes local community partners who bring in a range of thinking and experience to assure that these results will be produced from their activities, and they work well together in developing these activities.
- This project serves as an excellent model for other chapters in how to plan and organize a grass-roots effort to produce concrete changes for peace and justice. It also serves as an excellent example of what Veterans For Peace does to achieve greater peace and justice in our own communities and around the world.



One of the Long Beach Peace Clubs at Tracy High School participates in a community event.

Project Goals

From the beginning, the project team was thinking in terms of the outcomes for peace that would result from their efforts, and their thinking was in terms of how to best produce these results. The primary goal to be achieved by the project is to build a popular base for peace among local youth. These young people will be the citizens and voters who will make an impact for peaceful alternatives to present and future conflicts. Through these youth, there will be a strong multiplier effect for peace through their families, the educational system and other community institutions, and internationally through interactions with youth in areas of conflict.

The project team identified specific changes to accomplish this goal:

- A new network of local high school Peace Clubs, at least six clubs during the funding period.
- A more developed critical thinking among the Peace Club students about peaceful alternatives to global activities.
- A new dialogue between local youth in the Peace Clubs and young people in Afghanistan, Iraq, and South Africa.

The views and abilities of the youth involved in this program will be developed through direct involvement in planning and implementing Peace Club and local VFP activities, with guidance provided by the project team. The youth and others also be actively involved in dialogues with each other and with local leaders about peace issues and non-violence in social change.

And the project team identified specific measures to confirm how much they had achieved their goal and objectives at the end of the funding period:

- A significant increase in the proportion of youth who are involved in peace activities and who speak out in their schools and community about alternatives to conflict.
- A significant increase in the critical arguments used by these youth in addressing the causes of conflicts and evaluating the different options for addressing these conflicts.
- Pre and post surveys for Peace Club students that reflect their ability to recognize and suggest peaceful alternatives to conflict. Examples of questions are: What are some of the differences and similarities of Iraqis and Afghanis compared to the US? What choices besides military intervention do we have should our country feel threatened by another country? How would you find out how many casualties the US has had in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq?
- Documented responses within the community to peace actions, including both the rates of response and the types of responses.
- Analysis by the project team regarding specific changes for peace produced by the program and changes that did not occur, how much these changes occurred with different audiences, and the lessons learned that can be carried into future activities.



Long Beach Peace Club members from Cerritos and Lakewood help with the Chapter 67 Teen Memorial.

Project Plans

Chapter 67 put together a project team that consists of chapter members and community partners, including local teachers and school counselors, Military Families Speak Out, Recruiter Awareness Project, Project Great Futures, the Long Beach Area Peace Network, Long Beach Peace Camp, and the San Pedro Neighbors for Peace and Justice. This team is also networked with national groups, such as Project Great Futures, Sister City International, Grannies for Peace, and National Network Opposed to the Militarization of Youth. College interns will also be involved in helping organize activities and working with the Peace Clubs. The team brings together a wide range of experience and skills in working with youth, and in planning and implementing youth activities for peace.

The primary audience to be reached by the project are students in local high schools, particularly those in the Peace Clubs. But a number of other audiences will also be impacted, including friends and fellow students, families, and those in local institutions to which the students belong, such as teachers and school counselors, and members of their churches and social groups. Another audience is the youth from Afghanistan, Iraq, and South Africa involved in the international dialogues, to share thinking about how to promote peaceful alternatives to conflict across national and cultural boundaries. With each activity, Peace Club members will be encouraged to bring family and friends with them.

The project team plans a number of activities to produce the desired goals, including:

- Organize three new Peace Club groups in at least three local high schools, by working with existing networks of teachers, school counselors, and others who are involved in these schools. Three such Peace Club groups have already been established. All Peace Clubs serve as a structure where issues can be discussed, alternatives to conflict can be explored, and activities and events to promote peace can be planned.
- Organize a network of Peace Clubs from different high schools, including holding at least four joint conferences a year, common planning for local peace events, teleconference dialogues on issues, and a shared Facebook page and Instagram site.
- Create thoughtful classroom exercises and activities to provide guidance and leadership training on critically thinking through and speaking out about alternatives to conflict and military enlistment, such as analysis of the causes of specific conflicts, developing long-term peaceful solutions to particular conflicts that address underlying causes and provide meaningful alternatives to all parties involved, and debates on topics like "Should military recruiters be allowed on high school campuses?"
- Directly involve Peace Club members and others in planning and implementing activities for local peace activities, to provide them with experience and guidance in developing their goal-setting, planning, organizing, and leadership skills.

- Hold regular Teen Memorial activities at local high schools, to allow students the opportunity to reflect on the true cost of war and alternatives to military involvements. Activities include an inter-active game wheel (with questions such as " How many troops have been killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?" and "How many veterans commit suicide every day?"), painting murals, and Truth in Recruitment literature. Students will be involved in setting up the memorial markers, passing out literature, and interacting with those who visit the event.
- Organize dialogues between local youth and Iraqi, Afghani, and South African youth, to support a model of peace and understanding and to stimulate ideas on alternatives to conflict. A citizen diplomacy model will be used as a guide to these dialogues, and Sister City International and Grannies for Peace will facilitate the initial connections and introductions. Skype and email will be used for the dialogues.
- Organize involved students to create a resource guide booklet on organizing and operating a Peace Club and related activities, such as a speaker's bureau for classroom discussions led by veterans.

The project schedule includes a year, with the following time line associated with project activities:

December	Meet with students, teachers, and administrators at four local high schools to help organize Peace Clubs. Recruit and train college interns.
January	Work with the new Peace Clubs to support their development and activities. Display the Teen Memorial at one of the schools with a new Peace Club.
February	Conduct a pre-test with Peace Club students. Conduct classroom exercises. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth. Display the Teen Memorial at one of the schools with a new Peace Club.
March	Conduct classroom exercises. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth. Display the Teen Memorial at one of the schools with a new Peace Club. Organize a Peace Club network event.
April	Conduct classroom exercises. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth. Develop a Peace Club Facebook page. Develop a draft of the Peace Club resource guide. Display the Teen Memorial at one of the schools with a new Peace Club.
May	Conduct classroom exercises. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth. Organize a Peace Club network event.
June	Organize Peace Club members to participate in a Peace Camp. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth.
July	Peace Club network members paint a mural. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth. Complete and publish the Peace Club resource guide.
August	Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth.
September	Conduct classroom exercises. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth. Display the Teen Memorial at a school with a Peace Club. Organize a Peace Club network event.
October	Conduct classroom exercises. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth.
November	Conduct classroom exercises. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth. Display the Teen Memorial at a school with a Peace Club. Organize a Peace Club network event.
December	Conduct classroom exercises. Organize dialogues with Afghani, Iraqi, and South African youth. Conduct a post-test with Peace Club students.

The project team will meet regularly to review the progress of the project, organize new activities, and keep a record of the project as it is implemented.



Long Beach Peace Club youth working with a college intern helps set the Chapter 67 Teen Memorial at a local high school.

Project Budget

Itemized project costs:

Work-Study internships for two college interns Mentors and advisors for Peace Clubs and their activities	1,000
Financial assistance for eleven Peace Club students to attend the Peace Camp	1,100
Bus Passes for low income students to attend Peace Club network events	250
Rental of bus to take students to the Peace Camp	150
Production, printing, and copying of project materials Peace Club Resource Guide, alternatives to violence curriculum materials, Truth in Recruitment, and activity materials	500
Learning materials and supplies for Peace Club network meetings	400
Mural materials and supplies	800
Materials to update the Teen Memorial exhibit	300
Total project costs	4,500

Project resources:

Zinn Fund grant	3,000
VFP Chapter 67 (for matching funds)	500
Peace Club network fundraiser (for matching funds)	1,000
Total project resources	4,500

Chapter 67 indicated that the Teen Empowerment for Peace project will be sustained in the future by:

- Annual donations from VFP Chapter 67 and community partners.
- Annual fundraisers by local Peace Clubs and the Peace Club network.
- Commitments by local colleges to support project interns.
- Commitments from local community partners and schools to provide needed materials for in-school Peace Club activities.

In summary, the Zinn Fund Committee found this project to be a good investment of the limited Veterans For Peace resources available:

- We were impressed by the project team in their vision of actual results that will take peace and justice another step forward in measurable ways. They continually thought about achieving outcomes, rather than just doing something and assuming it would have an impact. The project team had obviously carefully examined the Zinn Fund Project Guidelines and materials, and understood the purposes of the Howard Zinn Fund. They had a clear idea of where they were going in the long-term, and demonstrated both depth and breadth in their focus and in their active critical thinking.
- We were also impressed by the collaborative attitude of the project team in their setting goals and planning the project. There were ongoing open discussions drawing upon the ideas and experience of chapter members, community partners, and the Zinn Fund Committee in developing and brainstorming the project to ensure that concrete outcomes will result from the project. They were always prepared for the discussion, worked well together, and stimulated cooperative thinking through the project goals and planning. It proved to be a positive learning experience for us and the Zinn Fund program.
- We came to see this project as an excellent model for other chapters in how to plan and organize a grass-roots project that will produce concrete changes for peace and justice.
- And we also believe this project serves as an excellent example of what Veterans For Peace does as we seek to achieve greater peace and justice in our own communities and around the world.

We look forward to ongoing dialogues with Chapter 67 as their project develops and continues.

VFP Zinn Fund Committee

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