



Howard Zinn Fund for Peace and Justice

**VFP Chapter 67 Long Beach Final Report  
Youth Empowerment Project**

The Zinn Fund Committee approves the Chapter 67 Long Beach final report for the grant received in 2014 for its Youth Empowerment Project, grant period from January 2015 to July 2016. This project shows long-term strategic planning in identifying what results they want to achieve and in developing appropriate activities for how to achieve these objectives.

The overall goal of the project was to develop the skills and abilities of high school students in the Long Beach area to promote peace and justice. This project was built upon an existing Teen Memorial program. The specific objectives included expanding Peace Club groups in local high schools and building an alliance of Peace Clubs, developing student-led activities for peace and justice, and developing strong community networks to support youth empowerment.

As the project was initiated over the next year and a half, some activities were adjusted to better produce the desired results, and documentation of these activities and their impacts were developed to demonstrate the outcomes achieved. The Youth Empowerment Project has now been firmly established as an ongoing community effort.

The following report is an excellent example of the changes for peace and justice which Veterans For Peace can achieve, and a model for others to use in planning and developing other projects for peace and justice.

The Zinn Fund Committee actively collaborated with Chapter 67 in developing the proposal goals and plans, and continued to be involved as a resource during the implementation of the project. The project leaders Richard Madeira and Pat Alviso proved to be enjoyable partners with whom to work, as we all continued to collectively develop concrete understandings for the success of the project. We all learned and developed together our own strategic planning abilities, and this has been a Zinn Fund project of which we are all proud.

Zinn Fund Committee  
December 10 2016

**Veterans For Peace Chapter 067 Long Beach**  
**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT**



Members of Long Beach high school Peace Clubs  
march in the local Martin Luther King Day parade.

**FINAL REPORT**

VFP Howard Zinn Fund Grant 2014  
December 1 2016

VFP Chapter 067 Long Beach respectfully submits its final report with documentation of the outcomes and measurable results achieved from its Youth Empowerment project. The project was developed with the support of a \$3,000 grant from the VFP Howard Zinn Fund in 2014. The grant period was from January 2015 through June 2016.

The project goal has been to empower local youth to show awareness of, speak out and present, and act on peaceful alternatives to conflict. Major components of this project include displaying the Teen Memorial, creating and expanding Peace Clubs in local high schools, developing a Peace Club Alliance among peace clubs, expanding networks with other community organizations, and developing international friendships and understandings with youth.

For the past two years, our VFP Chapter 067 has worked with local peace and justice groups, recruitment awareness projects and high school peace clubs, to expand and develop an effective and functioning Peace Empowerment project for local youth. The Youth Empowerment project was developed upon the foundation of the Teen Memorial program developed by VFP Chapter 067 prior to the grant cycle.

The main **objectives** of the Youth Empowerment Project include:

- Expand the number of student-led Peace Clubs from two to six local high schools and to empower youth to take an active leadership in club activities.
- Develop the Peace Clubs Alliance, a network of peace clubs across these local high schools.
- Develop a curriculum and activities to stimulate leadership and advocacy skills among Peace Club members, and to explore and demonstrate knowledge of alternatives to conflict.
- Mentor organizing skills and leadership skills to youth to assist them to educate other youth about what it means to join the military today.

- Continue to expand and improve the Teen Memorial and to display it at appropriate times and locations in the Long Beach area.
- Create a Mural of Peace and a Garden of Peace in the Long Beach area utilizing the design and painting talents of our Peace Club membership.
- Develop a friendship exchange with high school youth in South Africa and Afghanistan.
- Expand community networks to support the empowerment of local youth to advocate for peace and justice.

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES



VFP Chapter 67 Teen Memorial set up by a local high school Peace Club.

**Activities** involved with the Youth Empowerment project include:

The VFP 067 **Teen Memorial** consists of over 400 crosses, Stars of David, and Crescent Moons representing the 18 and 19 year olds who have been lost in our current wars. The Teen Memorial has encouraged local high school students to assist in setting up the display and talk about the costs of war with interested viewers and participants. (See Appendix D.)

High school **Peace Clubs** are voluntary meetings where students gather on their free time at local high schools to advocate for peace and justice in their communities. This work has resulted in establishing Peace Clubs at Jordan HS, San Pedro HS, Artesia HS, Tracy HS, Cabrillo Lane HS, and Port of Los Angeles High School. Weekly Peace Club meetings at local high schools focus on student-lead activities on alternatives to violence and strategies for spreading peace and justice, on creating and participation in on-and-off campus activities, such as "Truth in Recruitment" other peace materials, showing movies at public events, and demonstrating for peace at high traffic locations. (See Appendix C.)

The local high school clubs are now linked together in a **Peace Club Alliance** across the Long Beach, San Pedro, and Artesia communities. The creation of this Alliance has allowed even more like-minded students to meet, interact, network, inspire, and share new and better ideas for our community. A Peace Club Alliance resource booklet entitled "How to start a Peace Club" was also created. (See Appendix C.)

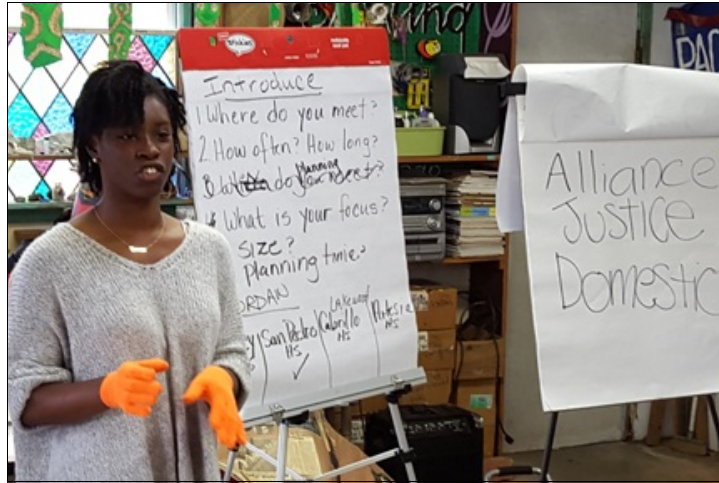
The Youth Empowerment Project has developed **active involvement** in events in order to develop personal skills to promote peace and justice. For example, the young people are directly involved with setting up and tabling the Teen Memorial, participate in local activities and parades, and attend the three-day summer weekend mountain peace camps organized by the San Pedro Neighbors for Peace and Justice. Peace education retreats have been organized by the peace clubs, and they are planning a peace mural and a garden for peace in Long Beach. Students also support the Arlington West Peace Memorial assisting and working alongside veterans who display the memorial near beaches in in Huntington Beach and Santa Monica. Students also organize other on and off campus activities, such as Peace Week, contingents in the MLK and Veterans Day parades, the annual Peacemaker of the Year event, Drum Circles for peace on the beach, student-led peace lessons at local venues, yearly Christmas packages for the troops, as well as help in beach-clean-ups and AIDS projects. (See Appendix D.)

The **Long Beach Recruitment Awareness Project** (LB RAP) was a primary supporter organization. Its mission is to educate and inform students, parents, teachers and administrators about the full impact of what it means to enlist in today's military. By providing truthful and realistic information about the military, LB RAP hopes to encourage students to make informed choices about military service. LB RAP with VFP 067 has been involved in meetings with parents at Back To School Night and Open House at three different high schools in Long Beach. At that time we table and distribute brochures from the War Resisters League entitled "What You Should Know Before Joining the Military" and "What Every Girl Should Know". We have also developed a petition asking the school board and the superintendent to develop a policy regarding recruiters on campus, with petitions, a letter to parents, and other appropriate materials. LB RAP also works under the guidance of the National Network Opposed to the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY) to obtain the latest legal and best practices for youth information. (See Appendix D.)

Local **collaborative networks** developed with this project include VFP Huntington Beach, VFP Santa Monica, San Pedro Neighbors For Peace and Justice, VFW Hawaiian Gardens, National Network Opposed to the Military Youth, Military Families Speak Out, Pax Christi, the War Resisters League. We have also worked with local community colleges and high school campuses, including school administrators, teachers, and staff who have supported the project and have hosted the Teen Memorial at their schools. We also continue to receive support from the Long Beach Peace Network, the Orange County Peace Coalition, and other local peace and justice groups. (See Appendix B.)

**Community outreach** has been developed through an Instagram account, an event reminder account on What's App, and a Speakers Bureau to share information and build local awareness. The Speakers Bureau consists of student/intern activists as well as adult activists from local VFP and peace and justice organizations that work together to speak on peace issues in the community. In addition, numerous workshops and retreats have been developed and led by our youth. (See Appendix B.)

## PROJECT OUTCOMES



Peace Club Alliance members plan for the coming school year.

It has been a very positive and rewarding experience for many people working together to achieve the goals of this project. We have found it has been both profound and exhilarating as we educate, make new student friends, and continue to grow as community activists and peacemakers in the process.

The VFP Teen Memorial continues to be a unifying and educational factor for our students. It is a very hands-on experience for the young people as they set up the display and have an opportunity to look at the cross and realize the sad loss of a fellow young person. The memorial gives the students an opportunity to speak among themselves while trying to understand the real truth about recruitment and the true costs of war. The Teen Memorial continues to be set up in the Long Beach area numerous times a year in high school quads, beach clean-ups, parks, holiday events, and the Martin Luther King parade park celebration. Peace club teens are always present to assist and speak to the public.

We also feel this unification will more readily support new and on-going peace events in Long Beach and the Southern California area. A major multiplier effect has been the impact on community members, families, and future generations, which have been witnessed by our project team in our daily interaction with schools and community.

Documented results of the Teen Empowerment Project include:

- We have expanded the number of Peace Clubs from 3 to 6. And another Peace Club is currently being organized. (See Appendix C.)
- Our Peace Clubs have an average of 25 students per club that attend each week. As an example, the attendance sheet for Tracy High School is indicated in Appendix C.
- The Teen Memorial has been displayed over 12 times with the students assistance in set up and answering questions from the public at high schools quads, community events, colleges, beaches, parks and beside Arlington West. (See Appendix D.)





Sabrina Ganoa and Wanda Watkins, previous Peace Club members who served as interns to help organize project events and to work with youth to help develop their skills and abilities to promote peace and justice.

- During the high school open houses and Back to School nights, MLK and Veteran's Day parades, vigils and the Teen Memorial, over 5000 peace and justice educational literature and material were handed out with discussion. (See Appendix D.)
- Over forty petitions have been signed by high school parents to create a written policy governing military recruiters on campus. This process was facilitated by Long Beach RAP and Peace Club students. (See Appendix B.)
- Videos have been exchanged between peace club students and students from Afghanistan. Ten Skype calls have been exchanged between peace club students and students at Manenburg High School in South Africa. Two person-to-person exchanges have been created with South African and Afghani students with our Peace Club students connecting monthly. In addition, students communicate with their international peers on What's App and students send gifts to the Sunflower AIDS clinic. (See Appendix D.)
- We have had a continued attendance of over twenty students from our high school Peace Clubs attending the Santa Monica Mountain summer Peace Camp. Due to the high number of students in 2015, a second Peace Camp was added. (See Appendix D.)
- We organized 5 new Peace Club Interns, including Wanda Walker, Austri (Sabrina) Gaona, Tiffany Fowler, Amanda Fowler, and Ezra Messer. (See Appendix C.)
- In collaboration with the Zinn Fund Committee, we organized a workshop at the 2015 VFP National Convention on the Youth Empowerment for Peace project to share principles of planning and implementing chapter projects, where two of the Peace Club Alliance interns demonstrated how they have developed their community organizing skills.

The project **Budget** with incomes and expenses are indicated in Appendix A.

### **EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE**



Peace Club members table a Veterans Day event to discuss options with youth who are considering joining the military.

The VFP Zinn Fund grant enabled us to develop a solid foundation for continuing to empower youth in the Long Beach area through the coming years.

To better understand the personal impact of the Youth Empowerment Project, we ask that you would read the documents in Appendix B written by our college interns, community activists, teachers and school principal, who have been involved with this project since the beginning. Their ideas have helped shape the success of this project and their growth, thoughtfulness, and eloquence is obvious in their statements. We are very proud of our interns and our students, how they have developed, and how they have helped to guide other youth in our area.

Lastly, we want to say a word about the process of collaborating with the Howard Zinn Committee. It has been a genuine delight to work with our local VFP Chapters, Military Families Speak Out organization, RAP and our other supportive partners, and the Zinn Fund Committee to guide us through the process of strategic planning of setting achievable objectives and developing activities in order to realize these objectives. With the application process broken into manageable monthly segments, we created a project that we know has made a difference and touched the lives of young people, and has resulted in creating new networks with our local peace organizations. Furthermore, we were extremely happy to receive follow-up support and guidance throughout the grant period as we implemented the project. Everyone involved in our project wishes to thank the Zinn Fund Committee for their excellent work, their vision in seeing our potential, and their patience and true commitment to assisting us through the grant process so that our youth empowerment project could become the success it has turned out to be as we continue this project into the coming years.

Richard Madeira  
President - VFP 067  
Long Beach, California

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Youth Empowerment Project Budget**

### **Appendix B: Community Networks Developed to Promote Peace and Justice**

Statements by project Interns Sabrina Gaona and Wanda Walker

Long Beach Community College

Long Beach High Schools Peace Clubs

Statements by Long Beach teachers and assistants, and parents

Military Families Speak Out

May 2016 Peace Clubs Alliance newsletter

National Network Opposed to the Militarization of Youth

Orange County Peace Coalition

Pax Christi

San Pedro Neighbors For Peace and Justice: Peace Camp and annual Peacemaker of the Year Award

VFP Chapter 110 Huntington Beach

VFW Hawaiian Gardens

War Resisters League

### **Appendix C: High School Peace Clubs**

Peace Clubs at the beginning of the project period (3 each)

New Peace Clubs established in the project period (3 each)

New Peace Club currently being organized (1 each)

Average attendance at Peace Club meeting: 5.6 members\*

How to Start a Peace Club at Your Local Schools

Peace Club Pledge

Peace Club Truths

Peace Club Meeting Agenda

Duties of Peace Club Officers

Peace Club Ballot

Peace Club Alliance Calendar

Peace Club Alliance Meeting, April 18: The Nature of Peace

Peace Club Alliance Meeting Notes, December 22

### **Appendix D: Youth Development Activities**

Questionnaire to stimulate critical thinking among Peace Club members

Youth-led skill development session on stereotyping

Youth-led skill development session on Islamophobia

Youth-led skill development session on conflict resolution

Setting up the Teen Memorial, and discussions with other youth on military service

Materials used with the Martin Luther King parade to stimulate thinking on race relations in the U.S.

Summer Camp training (See materials in Appendix B on San Pedro Neighbors For Peace and Justice)

Workshop materials for discussing military service

International Youth Exchanges (Afghanistan and South Africa)

Specific appendix materials are available upon request. Please contact the VFP Zinn Fund Committee at [ZinnFund@veteransforpeace.org](mailto:ZinnFund@veteransforpeace.org).