Message from the Director

When the Center for Peacemaking opened in 2008, the idea of preparing students to go out into the world as active, spiritually informed peacemakers was at the forefront of our mission.

As the Center has grown over the past 10 years, our focus on student formation, faith, and active, nonviolent peacemaking has remained. Today the Center is thriving. Students are engaged in applied and academic peacemaking, work on pressing issues locally and abroad, and continue to grow in their understanding of faith and nonviolence.

The following pages include stories of Marquette students whose lives have been transformed because of your generosity and support. Thank you for providing these opportunities—and so many more—for our students to be the difference.

Pat Kennelly

You helped Erica develop a passion for human rights in Latin America

Erica Ness (Arts ’18) first came to the Center for Peacemaking as a freshman in search of opportunities to learn about nonviolence. Over the past four years, Erica’s understanding of nonviolence grew as she gained valuable experience working on peace and justice issues locally and globally.

After graduating, she said of her experiences: “I really can’t express enough how appreciative I am for all the opportunities the Center for Peacemaking has given me.”

Erica first became involved at the Center for Peacemaking through the ‘Peacemakers’ student organization, of which she would eventually become the president. The Peacemakers group held weekly discussions on nonviolence, organized meetings with activists, and planned a few nonviolent actions. Erica said that her participation in the group helped her “to learn about injustice locally in Milwaukee as well as on a world stage—and how to build peace from injustice.”

After learning about the School of the Americas (SOA) at one of the Peacemakers meetings, she decided to sign up for the SOA-Watch Border Encuentro, an annual event at the U.S.-Mexico border which includes educational workshops on how U.S. policies have led to violence and destabilization in Latin America.

As the trip further kindled her desire to work for justice, it also left her questioning what her role should be. During her junior year, she decided to pursue three opportunities – each exploring a different way to work for peace. For the first semester, she studied abroad in Chile, where she completed coursework on the development of Latin American cultures and societies as well as indigenous rights in...
Erica’s story (continued)

Latin America. During the next semester, she moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked in the office of Congresswoman Gwen Moore. When summer came along, she knew she wanted to work with a nonprofit focused on international justice. But while applying for positions, she realized that all of the internships she applied for were unpaid. Erica then turned to the Center for Peacemaking for help.

Your generosity enabled Erica to receive a summer peacemaking fellowship. The fellowship allowed her to accept an unpaid internship at her top choice, the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL). CEJIL is a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group that promotes peace through international human rights courts. As an intern, Erica conducted research and assisted with the GEQUAL campaign, a project to promote gender parity in the international court system. Through research and observation, Erica learned how to work for human rights within the international court system.

For Erica, the fellowship was a culmination of all the opportunities she pursued through the Center. ■

You provided Abigail the opportunity to teach youth how to resolve their conflicts and become peacemakers

Abigail Krieck (center) facilitates a discussion on empathy with Peace Works students at a Catholic grade school.

The Introduction to Peace Studies course was one of the first courses Abigail Krieck (Arts ’18) registered for at Marquette. Four years later, she graduated with a degree in Peace Studies and a passion for teaching conflict resolution and peacemaking skills to youth.

Abigail discovered her passion through the Center for Peacemaking and by participating in opportunities made possible by donors like you.

When Abigail arrived on campus, she—like many freshmen—wondered if she would find others who shared her interests in social justice and youth. This led her to stop by the Center for Peacemaking during her first week at Marquette. “When I walked into the Center, I found people with similar passions and goals as mine. I immediately fell in love with the Center,” she said.

During her visit, Abigail applied for a job to work at the Center for Peacemaking for a few hours a week. Over time, she kept finding more ways to get involved. One day she saw a Little Friends for Peace brochure on the coffee table in our office. After reading the brochure, she applied to be a camp counselor for their summer Peace Camp. She enjoyed the experience so much that she went on to plan each of her summers around working with youth.

Last summer, Abigail received a summer peacemaking fellowship from the Center for Peacemaking to work as a camp counselor with the Casa Romero Renewal Center on Milwaukee’s south side. Casa Romero is a retreat and personal development space for youth. For
Student researchers turn class project into a book on interfaith dialogue in Milwaukee

When Dr. Irfan Omar assigned his graduate level theology class a research project on interfaith dialogue in Milwaukee, he knew there was a wide range of possible outcomes. It didn’t take long for him to see that his students felt a sense of purpose while working on the research. In fact, it became more than just a research project: Dr. Omar and his students came to see this project as important for historical memory, community relations, and for students at Marquette.

The students started by conducting interviews and compiling articles, documents, and photos. They didn’t have to look far to uncover a rich history of interfaith relations in Milwaukee. In 1980, two Catholic nuns, professors at Cardinal Stritch University, and a Muslim professor from UW-Milwaukee, formed an “official” Christian-Muslim dialogue group with the support of the Archbishop of Milwaukee. It was the first time in Milwaukee’s history a group brought attention to the city’s religious diversity which included Muslim communities and highlighted the need for dialogue.

The story became even more compelling to the students when they learned that this group of pastors and priests, professionals, nuns, professors and others met on a regular basis for nearly 20 years.

In addition to their monthly meetings where they discussed issues of common interest, they organized public events and brought notable Christian and Muslim scholars and leaders to Milwaukee. The group was diverse and included Christian and Muslim men and women from a variety of denominational and cultural backgrounds. In addition to learning from each other, this group focused on building trust and friendships, some of which have
Students research Interfaith dialogue in Milwaukee (continued)

lasted to this day.

The more time the students invested into the project, the more they wanted to share their research. The story of this dialogue, which even Vatican officials were aware of in the 1980’s, had become lost to history. The insights the students were gathering from past and present interfaith leaders in Milwaukee seemed too valuable to keep to themselves. With each passing day, this simple class project started to look more and more like a book.

Dr. Omar approached the Center for Peacemaking with a proposal to allow his students to compile all of their work into a book manuscript on interfaith relations, focusing on Christian-Muslim engagement in Milwaukee that would be of equal value to scholars, interfaith practitioners, and the general public.

Four Marquette students received research fellowships to continue working on this project. These funds were available because of donors like you.

Dr. Omar shared his thoughts: “Sometimes we don’t realize all the positive things that have happened and are happening all around us. People from different backgrounds have been getting together to engage in social justice projects. The present research project I believe will allow young people to see what has been done earlier and how it has impacted our city and our communities. This research will be a good example for them to know that in advancing inter-religious dialogue, there’s a way for them to make a difference for peace.”

Dr. Omar’s course and this ongoing project have already helped develop new interfaith leaders. Caroline Redick, a Ph.D. candidate in Theology, said of the project: “It was really enriching, because I felt like I was doing research on two different levels at once: my scholarly work and my relational and spiritual life.” Caroline recently presented at an inter-religious dialogue forum held at Marquette. She, along with others in the group, also presented to a community group off campus.

Sundus Jaber (Arts ’17) said that “conducting this research with Dr. Omar and the team has been one of my most priceless educational and inter-religious experiences so far and has meant so much to me. To be able to conduct research on something so close to me as an American Muslim woman who grew up in the Greater Milwaukee Area has had a huge impact on me.” Inspired in part by this project, Sundus is now completing a Master of Divinity in Islamic Chaplaincy at Claremont School of Theology.

EXPLORING THE POWER OF NONVIOLENCE

Your gifts provide students the skills and courage to work for peace.

Learn more about your impact at marquette.edu/peacemaking