

For immediate release

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Peace Holds “Women Impacting Community” Harmony Day

Queen of Peace High School held its second Harmony Day of the year - “Women in Community” - on March 11. During this full-day event at Peace, speakers from the community, as well as student groups, facilitated workshops aimed at raising awareness of a number of issues women face daily. The day also coincided with International Women’s Day (March 8), a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

“Harmony Day offers our students the opportunity to experience Peace’s mission,” said counselor and Harmony Day coordinator Heather Saylor. “We looked at creating community generally this fall and (on March 11) focused on our responsibilities as women to our local and global communities. As sustainers of the human race, it is incumbent that we encourage education for all, healthcare for all and support for all. We were able to see some real world examples of our call to action and how what we do here at Peace can impact the world.”

Throughout the morning, students – divided into Harmony Communities that included representation from each grade level – participated in five workshops. These workshops included presentations about creating community from the perspective of the Dominicans of Sinsinawa and a local chapter of Zeta Phi Beta, an international, historically black sorority, as well as a reenactment of the Stations of the Cross from a woman’s viewpoint.

Members of Queen of Peace’s Art Club and Human Rights Task Force facilitated two workshops devoted to assisting the victims, families and relief workers of the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile. The entire student body participated in the “Haiti Houses” project, which began in 2008 by two art teachers in Florida after they saw the living conditions in Haiti. Since the

earthquake, the Haitians' "homes" have been reduced to piles of rubble, and the project – started to make a difference in the lives of Haitians – has raised more than \$159,000 through charities, schools and churches. During this workshop, each student colored and decorated three "houses" – one to keep and two to donate to the "Haiti Houses" project. Each "house" – a one-of-a-kind piece of art to be made into a pin or magnet – will sell for \$5 each and will soon be available for purchase on Peace's website (queenofpeacehs.org).

Members of the Human Rights Task Force, as well as third, fourth and fifth graders from J. Covington Elementary School in Oak Lawn, facilitated a final workshop on the recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile. The Human Rights Task Force members simulated an earthquake and recited accounts from the perspectives of earthquake survivors, while everyone then participated in an interactive activity related to finding and sustaining the necessary supplies after an earthquake. Students from Covington School presented a video on the earthquakes' devastation and explained the importance of offering assistance and making a difference in the world. The Covington School students, along with teacher Peggy Keiner, a 2000 Peace graduate, started a "Culture Club" and also are part of Oprah's O Ambassador Program.

Harmony Day concluded with a presentation from Harmony, Hope and Healing – a creative music program offering dignity and spiritual healing to the homeless and underserved in the Chicago area. Executive director and founder, Margaret Nykaza, along with three women recovering from addiction, spoke and sang to Peace's students.

"When you bring all different talents together in a community, great things can happen," said senior and Human Rights Task Force member Megan Graves of Oak Lawn. "Seeing the Covington kids showed me that no matter how young or old you are, you can still make a difference in the world."

Photo captions:

Queen of Peace students and teachers decorate “Haiti Houses” on March 11 during Peace’s second Harmony Day of the year. The “Haiti Houses” will be sold on Peace’s website and all proceeds will support relief efforts in Haiti.

Members of Queen of Peace’s Human Rights Task Force, as well as students from Covington Elementary School’s Culture Club participate in an interactive activity focused on the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti during Harmony Day on March 11.