

John's post REN activities report

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SWY11, Ren2003, Education Course

Please take a look at my youth group's web site. www.peacewaves.net We are still putting it together, but it gives an over view of the school presentations I've been doing.

In early 2000 I started up a youth group with my brother called Peacewaves, and we have been giving presentation to students about "The Culture of Peace". We have presented to students in grade 1 through to grade 12. As well we have hosted a few seminars for youth and adults. Participating at the REN Conference was a very positive experience and I was able to share that energy with the work I was doing with Peacewaves. The Education group developed a CD ROM and made a list of Greetings from our many countries, both of which to be used to teach about "International Understanding".

We discussed about what international understanding is, and its relationship to peace during our visits to the two High Schools in Japan. This was a learning experience for both the students and we the participants.

Within the week after returning home from REN, Peacewaves was invited to give two presentations at a local High School about the Culture of Peace to their "Career and Life Management (CALM Class)". Our presentation was more of a discussion with the students about "culture" then us presenting our regular slide show. We focused on some local cultures by asking question about what is thought about when people are from the snowboard/ski cultures, what makes up someone from the skateboarding culture, or being part of different school clubs as part of their school's culture, what makes them be recognized from other high schools in the Calgary area. Once we had an understanding about some of the local cultures we talked about national cultures. The students at this inner city high school, come from a many different cultural backgrounds and were able to share some of the views with everyone in the class. Following this discussion we were more aware of the many cultures working together to create a culture of peace. We were also able to begin talking about what does make up a culture of peace, and what still has to be done.

Photo#1



Being fresh from REN, I explained about the SWY program and other exchange programs I've been involved with, which help build international understanding and helps make the culture of peace become a reality. Along with exchange programs there are many groups, NGOs, and individuals who are helping the peace movement.

Our presentations also raise awareness about the effects of armed conflict on children. I shared with them Article 38, from the Conventions of the Rights of the Child with focuses on children in armed conflict. As aspect of international understanding is learning about the many international treaties like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We showed two video which deal with this topic and continued a discussion with the students.

The students enjoyed our discussion with them and their Teacher has invited us back this spring to talk with other classes. I was pleased to be back at a high school so soon after REN, and look forward to visiting there again.

In the last week of January Peacewaves was invited to present to an elementary school. There were two grade 6 classes and one grade 3 class who we presented to all together. This presentation was very fun for us to give and the students too were pleased with it!

We were presenting to a French school, so I tried to give our introduction in as much French as I could, which I think the students liked. They could see that I was doing my best to use the language they were use to hearing in school even though it was not perfect. Fortunately from me, my brother is well versed in the language of French and was able to cover up for me.

I was looking forward to teaching some of the country greetings we had developed at REN with this group. We began asking the students if their parents had come to Canada from other countries. Many hands went up so asked them to share from which countries.

This allowed us to ask the students to share with us the greeting they knew in different languages. As well I shared some from the

list we made at REN. There was a map of the world on the chalk board, so we pointed out where some of the countries were that



Photo#2

we had just learned. Once one student shared a greeting with the class, we all repeated together. The students were pleased to participate and were excited to have learned a few new greetings.

Our presentation use a slide show with images from our travels and are based on 6 points referred to as Manifesto 2000, which was written by a group of Nobel Peace Laureates. The slide show goes through each of the points and allows the students to have an understanding about peace and the many aspects which goes into creating a culture of peace. I've been using many photos from my SWY 11 program and other travels I've been on. One of the points is Respect All Life. The image I like to use is from one morning on the ship where a large school of dolphins began jumping in front of us just as the sun was beginning to rise. I was able to take a few photos as well as film them. When I use this image, I explain that when we respect all life, we have to consider the many animals who we share our world with. I was also able to show the video clip too.

Another point is Listen to Understand. We had the students participating as we explained about this one. My brother wrote a rap/poem about it had the students clapping their hands to the rhythm. During it he would ask them "What's our mission?" and they would reply "Learn to Listen!" Later I shared a song on guitar I wrote about the culture peace and we talked about how music is a universal language.

We were able to answer many of their questions throughout the presentation. This presentation we filmed digitally, so hopefully soon we will be able to edit part of it and post clips on our web site. The grade 6 classes are currently studying about the wonderful country of Greece and the Olympic Games. I was able to lend their teacher the CD ROMS and Books about Greece we received from Vassilis Tikos-Moustakas during REN. I am excited about giving more peace presentation to students and sharing more about international understanding, with the ideas created by



Photo#3

our Education Group and all other groups from our REN conference and our Ship community.

Photos are of :

- 1) my brother and talking to the grade 6 and 3 students. (January 2004)
- 2) Me playing guitar to the grade 6 and 3 students
- 3) My talking about the Conventions of the Rights of the Child to High school students (October 2003)