



World Citizen Update

Spring 2017

Empower communities to educate for a just and peaceful world.

Joining Forces for Peace: World Citizen and Caren Stelson Team Up

Award winning author and World Citizen Board member, Caren Stelson, has invited World Citizen to partner with her to turn Sachiko's words into actions as she shares the story of her new book, *Sachiko - A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story*. Caren has received numerous awards and rave reviews for her book. "*Luminous, enduring, utterly necessary.*" -*Booklist, starred review*

As Sachiko shared her story, particularly with young people, she would always leave them with the following questions to ponder: "What is peace?" And, "What kind of person should I be?" Then she advised them to "keep pursuing answers to these questions."

Caren chose **World Citizen's 5 Peace Actions** as a way to carry on Sachiko's quest to promote peace:

- » **Seek** peace within yourself and others
 - » **Reach Out** in service
 - » **Protect** the environment
 - » **Respect** diversity
 - » **Be** a responsible citizen of the world

For more information on Caren, her award-winning book, and how to purchase it, please visit <http://www.carenstelson.com/>.

In Recognition of Our Beginning: A Brief Note About World Citizen

World Citizen was founded by Lynn Elling in 1972 in response to witnessing war and destruction while serving in WWII as a naval officer. Lynn passed away last year on February 14, 2016, at the age of 94, but his mission for our organization is still as strong as ever, carried out by the hundreds of people who support our cause. Since the beginning, World Citizen has worked tirelessly to empower communities to educate for a just and peaceful world. Through our Peace Site and Peace Education programs, Lynn's vision and commitment to peace will continue to flourish.

We are a private, non-profit organization that focuses its activities on children and youth, following the wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi and Maria Montessori. The mission of World Citizen is to empower the community to educate for a just and peaceful world. In that spirit, World Citizen reaches thousands of young people through the Peace Education Program and the International Peace Site Program. A tremendous thank you to everyone who has worked to ensure World Citizen stays true to its mission, and will continue to preserve it.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE SITE?

If you would like to know more about Peace Sites or want to become a Peace Site, here is some information about the program:

An International Peace Site can be a city, school, place of worship, business, park, home or exhibit where people want to dedicate themselves to becoming a peaceful community. Anyone connected to a Peace Site is committed to the Five Peace Actions (see the top article for a list).

For further inquiries about becoming a Peace Site please call the World Citizen office at 651-695-2587 or visit www.peacesites.org.

If you have been newly dedicated as a Peace Site or have had a re-dedication ceremony, please send us a brief news release and/or pictures of the event. We will put it on our World Citizen website and in our next newsletter, which will be out this summer.

Peace Education Update

Peace Education Workshop Encourages Participants to Open Their Hearts and Minds

One of my roles as Peace Education Coordinator for World Citizen is to report on our workshops. I am currently staring at my keyboard and a blank Word document as I search for the right way to summarize the profound messages from our February 7 Peace Education Workshop. Stumbling to find the words to use is similar to trying to describe the intense beauty of a sunrise when words cannot do it justice; you just have to witness it with your eyes.

Hearing the eloquence of the message from Hanadi Chehabeddine was as beautiful as witnessing that intense beauty of a sunrise. Hanadi started out by warmly encouraging the participants to share with total honesty and candor their questions, fears, and concerns of Muslims and Islamic practices. She then wove her presentation around those questions, fears, and concerns. She shared the similarities in her life to our lives beginning with being first and foremost a mother to three children. She shared her witness to her religious beliefs, and is a living example of how her faith teaches her to be a source of mercy.

We learned that Islam comes from the Arabic root word “SLM” meaning peace/submission; a Muslim is one who submits to God (regardless of ethnicity); Islam is a monotheistic religion; and Alms are given as 2.5 percent of their accumulated wealth. We now know that there are 1.5 billion Muslims in the world (1 out of 4 people) and 150,000 Muslims in Minnesota. Hanadi shared some of the similar stories in the Quran and the Christian Bible, including Adam and Eve, Noah’s Ark, and Jesus and his disciples.

Hanadi is committed to being a peacemaker and community builder, bridging the gap between the Muslim community and the world. We were able to have Hanadi as a speaker through the Islamic Resource Group (www.irgmn.org). She is currently a keynote speaker with Tour de Force Speakers (www.tourdeforcespeakers.com) and has recently completed her TEDx Edina talk on new approaches to help eliminate prejudice against Muslims in



Photo Courtesy of Eden Prairie News

Hanadi Chehabeddine

the United States. Hanadi encourages all of us to talk about uncomfortable topics and to reach out to one another with nothing but love!

Also on February 7, Jerad Green and Kate Towle led us through “Finding Your Place in the Talk about Race,” and encouraged all in attendance to move from a safe place to a brave place. “Truth is like a rabbit in a bramble bush. You can’t get your hands on its quivering little body, but you know it’s somewhere in there.” –*Pete Seeger*

Race is not real. There are no genetic differences between perceived races, yet *racism* is very real. Race is a man-made classification of human beings. Sometimes studying race means facing brutality. *Black Lives Matter* was started by a queer woman as a love letter to black people. It now has become a way that activists have made invisible brutality VISIBLE! We are encouraged to free ourselves from the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual toll that racism takes; both the racist and the subject of racism. We need to remember the three universal elements of respect according to Paul K. Chapell: “Listen, Speak to the other person’s highest potential, and Practice what you preach!” Remember that no one ever says ‘You listen to me too much,’ we need to have moral authority, and we need to plug in where we fit in to shift minds and hearts!”

Please join our Peace Education sessions so that you can experience this contagious passion for truth as we strengthen our moral authority.

— *Lonnie Strand*,
WCI Peace Education Coordinator

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Peace Education Workshop on February 7. Here are some wonderful quotes from the day!



Photo By: Lonnie Strand

Peace Education participants from Rutherford Elementary, Stillwater.

“I am looking for a place where I can be the most helpful/effective so I will do some research on the organizations mentioned throughout the day.”

“Such a wonderful presentation, wonderful information. I wish the whole nation could have this learning on the truth of

International Peace Site News & Dedications

A Call to Action: Attending the Red Balloon Re-Dedication Ceremony

Guest Column By: Caren Stelson, WCI Board Member

What is peace? What kind of person do I want to be? Pursue answers to these questions. These were the last words Sachiko Yasui shared with me for our book before I sent in my manuscript to Editor Carol Hinz at Carolrhoda/Lerner Publishing Group. Sachiko's words also have been ringing in my ears ever since I wrote them down.

What is peace? What kind of person do I want to be? These questions are a call to action. One action I've taken is to join the board of directors of World Citizen, a Minnesota nonprofit organization that promotes peace education and international peace sites. World Citizen helps any community — schools, businesses, places of worship, parks, even homes become intentional and committed places to practice Five Peace Actions: **Seek** peace within yourself and others; **Reach Out** in service; **Protect** the environment; **Respect** diversity; and **Be** a responsible citizen of the world.

On January 7, 2017, I was invited to do a reading of *Sachiko: A Nagasaki Bomb Survivor's Story* at Red Balloon Children's Bookshop, a well-known and respected book store in Saint Paul, MN — and an International Peace Site. A wooden Peace Pole with a message of peace written in six languages stands in front of the bookshop. What if we combined a reading of *Sachiko* with a ceremony to rededicate Red Balloon as a Peace Site? World Citizen members could come to help celebrate. Bookstore owner Holly Weinkauf and events and marketing manager Angela Whited agreed.

On the Saturday of the reading, an audience gathered at the Red Balloon. I shared Sachiko's atomic bomb survival story, her words of peace, and my own journey writing Sachiko's story. Afterward, we sang peace songs as we walked outside, carrying strings of origami cranes. In the chilly air, Holly spoke to us:

"When [former owners] Carol [Erdahl] and Michele [Cromer-Poire] dedicated the Red Balloon as a Peace Site, they did so in part as a response to local events happening at the time. They felt that becoming a Peace Site was a way to make concrete something they were already doing: creating paths to peace through books. Today we are re-dedicating Red Balloon as a Peace Site in part as a response to current events, in response to harmful words that have been spoken by public officials, and in response to our current climate of hostility and tensions. As Carol and Michele knew in 1998, being a Peace Site is a natural fit for a kids' bookstore. Through books, kids can walk through worlds that sometimes reflect their own experiences and validate their reality. Through books, they can also walk through worlds where the experiences are very different, and that helps give our kids different perspectives and broader perspectives. Through books, we *all* gain more empathy and understanding for each other."

Holly is right. We all need to gain more empathy and more understanding for each other. In our unstable world, we cannot understate the power of books to bring peace.



Photo Courtesy of: Caren Stelson
Red Balloon owner Holly Weinkauf, *Sachiko* author Caren Stelson, and original Red Balloon owner, Carol Erdahl.



Photo By: Flora Tsukayama
Saturn Returns sings at the Red Balloon Peace Site Re-Dedication Ceremony.

Saturn Returns members: Hannah Longley, Ellie Jones, & Marla Paschke.



Photo Courtesy of: Caren Stelson
Left to right: Keiko Kawakami (Caren's Japanese interpreter), Danielle Carnito (Carolrhoda/Lerner Publishing Group book designer for *Sachiko*), Caren Stelson (*Sachiko* author), Carol Hinz (Carolrhoda/Lerner Publishing Group editor for *Sachiko*).

St. John's Episcopal Church Dedication Ceremony: By Martha Roberts and Karen Johnson



A very meaningful Peace Site Dedication for St. John's Episcopal Church in Mankato, MN, was held Nov. 11, 2016, inside the sanctuary with the Rector, Paul Rider; Church Secretary and event organizer Gerald Schneck; three speakers from the community's ethnic backgrounds: Spanish, Somali, and Dakota; and World Citizen President, Martha Roberts. David Braveheart played a chant on a Dakota flute that 38 Dakota men chanted on their way to be hanged just outside of Mankato in 1832.

The service and the resolutions complemented World Citizen's Five Peace Actions. During the ceremony, a Peace Site plaque was presented to St. John's and received by Gerald Schneck, who is also one of several Veterans for Peace who are active in the church and the area. The dedication continued with an outside candle lighting ceremony in a garden that included a labyrinth. Schneck designed a special Peace Pole for the occasion. In addition to the words "May Peace Prevail on Earth" written in English, Somali, Spanish, and Dakota/Lakota, the pole also had solar panels on the top that lit up the pole at night.

The evening program continued as part of the Mankato Good Thunder Reading Series, "Making Meaning of War," in partnership with Veterans for Peace, St. John's Church, and Minnesota State University - Mankato. The program started with the ringing of eleven strikes to a deeply pitched bell for the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month - the signing of the Armistice of WWII. The program included a talk and reading with Brian Turner, Dunya Mikhail, and Gwen Westerman, poets and writers who shared their war experiences through speaking, writing, and Q & A. The program ended with visitors and speakers mingling and sharing thoughts and feelings.

Information About Donating to World Citizen

Donating to World Citizen is Easy with Options that Fit Individual Needs

Your gifts to World Citizen help fund our ongoing programs of Peace Education and International Peace Sites, which make a lasting difference in our communities. You, too, can join us in our mission as we seek to provide a peaceful future for our children. There are several giving opportunities available, including:

- » Mail in cash or checks to the World Citizen office
- » Donate online at www.peacesites.org/donate

» Consider the following options to direct dollars to World Citizen, at no additional cost to you:

- » **Thrivent Choice Dollars:** If you are a Thrivent Financial member, you can choose to designate your portion of Thrivent Choice Dollars to World Citizen. Thrivent will donate \$25 to \$2,500 a year to World Citizen on your behalf, depending on the amount of your investment. Visit www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice to learn more about this option, or contact your financial representative.
- » **AmazonSmile:** If you enjoy shopping online, consider signing up for AmazonSmile to easily support World Citizen as you shop. Visit www.Smile.Amazon.com to start your shopping, and choose World Citizen as your charitable organization. AmazonSmile shows the same products at the same price as you would normally see on www.amazon.com; the only difference is that 0.5 percent of the price of eligible purchases is donated to World Citizen on your behalf!
- » **Employee Matching Gifts:** Does your employer match donations to charitable organizations? Many companies encourage their employees to participate in charitable giving to non-profits through payroll deductions, and will match your gift with a gift of their own. Please consider talking to your employer about the possibility of a matching gift to World Citizen.
- » **Future Estate Plan:** Support a Just and Peaceful World as part of your legacy by putting World Citizen in your estate plan.

Thank you for your continued support to our World Citizen programs!

World Citizen is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization so your gift is tax deductible.

NEED ANOTHER OPTION TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF WORLD CITIZEN?

1. SCHOLARSHIPS: If you know of an organization or individual who would be willing to support World Citizen because the mission or ideals of both match, please let them know we are looking for Scholarship support. Each scholarship provides substitute costs when needed, facilitator costs, guest speakers/specialists, supplies/materials, and website management for the event scheduled. There are three levels of sponsorship: Gold Sponsor \$2,500 (equivalent to 5 scholarships); Silver Sponsor \$1,500 (equivalent to 3 scholarships); and Bronze Sponsor \$500 (equivalent to 1 scholarship). Highland Bank System and North St. Paul/Maplewood Rotary are supporters of our scholarship opportunity.

2. SPONSORSHIP: If you know of a company or service that would benefit the work of World Citizen, please recommend them to us for contact. Listed below are examples of people and organizations who already provide sponsorship to World Citizen, and we would like to acknowledge their contributions:

- » All of the volunteers who contributed to World Citizen by dedicating more than 1,200 hours of their time. World Citizen would not be able to reach as many adults and young people without your important commitment. Thank you for your time and dedication to the World Citizen mission!

- » Expert Benefit Solutions (EBSO) in St. Paul provides office space and office services through in-kind donation.
- » St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Roseville provides space for Peace Education workshops at no cost.
- » Lowell and Carol Erdahl in Roseville provide meeting space for our Board of Directors meetings and Annual Retreat at no cost.
- » Bart G. Cuderman, CEO of Winning Edge, Inc. in Maple Plain, Minn., provides in-kind support for the design and production of Peace Site plaques.
- » Highland Bank provided a Scholarship to World Citizen.
 - » North St. Paul-Maplewood Rotary also provided a Scholarship.

What are the benefits to the Scholarship and/or Sponsorship provider?

- » Recognition of tier sponsorship
- » Recognition in all written World Citizen communications
- » Recognition/link opportunity on World Citizen website
- » Recognition of sponsorship at all Peace Education Sessions and in all Peace Education written broadcasts
 - » Tax deductible

We are so grateful for this assistance.

Thank you to all who provide such services at no cost or a reduced cost for World Citizen.

THANK YOU WORLD CITIZEN DONORS!

*If we have missed anyone, please accept our sincerest apologies.

Fran Abbott
 Dwight and Elaine Anderson
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 John and Eleanor Yackel

Congratulations to Hidden Valley Elementary School for Re-Dedicating as a Peace Site!



Photo By: Holly Circle

Students at Hidden Valley Elementary School, in Savage, MN, stand by their school's Peace Pole at the Jan. 20 re-dedication ceremony.

On January 20, 2017, Hidden Valley Elementary School, Savage, MN, was rededicated as a peace site. Students signed their names on red, white or blue ribbons as a way of pledging themselves to a peaceful school. The ribbons were then adhered to a wreath. The Peace Ambassadors walked it out to the peace pole at the end of the ceremony.

World Citizen's Five Peace Actions

- » Seek peace within yourself and others
 - » Reach out in service
 - » Protect the environment
 - » Respect diversity
- » Be a responsible citizen of the world

Not only do the Five Peace Actions give us the direction we need to understand and practice key elements of Peace Education, but they strengthen our World Citizen Mission Statement:

Empower the Community to Educate for a Just and Peaceful World!



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Envisioning a Just and Peaceful World

World Citizen Update

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WORLD CITIZEN NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE TO KEEP OUR PROGRAMS GOING

- \$1,000 Provides an entire school with trained leadership in peacemaking skills
- \$750 Contributes to the facilitation needed for an ON-SITE Peace Education Program
- \$500 Contributes to the facilitation needed for ONLINE Peace Education Program
- \$250 Contributes to ongoing maintenance of website to communicate with educators worldwide
- \$100 Provides materials for Peace Site Dedications
- \$50 Provides materials for ON-SITE Peace Education sessions
- Other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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*Please make checks payable to World Citizen. No credit cards please. Donations can also be made online at www.peacesites.org/donate.

**Your donations truly make a difference.
Please consider making a contribution to provide a peaceful future for our children.**