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# History of the Institute for Peace and Justice

## 1970-1975: At St. Louis University

In response to the Vietnam War, the killing of student protesters at Kent State and Jackson State, and St. Louis University's decision to retain its ROTC program, several faculty members joined Jim McGinnis to launch the Institute for the Study of Peace at the University, one of the first such programs in the US, with Jim named as director. 30 students enrolled that fall in the new undergraduate program and within a year, the Institute had also developed an interdisciplinary graduate program.

In those early years, the Institute also began to be a resource for area teachers. In 1973, Jim and Kathy McGinnis wrote *EDUCATING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS*, the first comprehensive manual of its kind in the US. The publication of EPJ extended the Institute's educator outreach throughout the US. By the 8th edition of EPJ in 1993, it had expanded world-wide, in both public and religious education settings.

## 1975-1980: A Small Independent Not-For-Profit Emerges

In 1975, incorporating as an independent, interfaith, not-for-profit organization, the Institute left St. Louis University and changed its name to the Institute for Peace and Justice. The "headache ball" seemed to follow the Institute over the next few years, with the razing of buildings necessitating a change of location three times. But while the Institute's physical and financial existence were chronically at risk, the creation of new resources for peace and justice education continued to increase.

In 1978, Jim & Kathy made a cassette tape on their efforts to integrate peacemaking into their family, which evolved into the *PARENTING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE* book and an international network and many other resources that the Institute would create for families. Jim's *BREAD AND JUSTICE* book was published by Paulist Press the same year, shortly followed by *THOSE WHO HUNGER*, bringing Institute resources into high schools, colleges, parishes and congregations throughout the US.

In 1979, Roni Branding created the IPJ Shareholder Program as a successful effort to broaden and strengthen the Institute's outreach and base of support. Community forums, the IPJ Newsletter, and the Shareholders Dinner were initiated as a way for staff and Shareholders to "strengthen each other".

## 1980-1990: An Expanding Vision

The decade of the 80's began with an ever-increasing emphasis on ecumenism and Parenting for Peace & Justice. Both took shape structurally in 1981 with the formation of a racially and religiously diverse advisory board for the new Parenting for Peace and Justice Network (PPJN) and Program. As IPJ's work with educators continued to expand, the programs and resources for families expanded even more, especially after the appearance of the McGinnises on the Phil Donahue Show in 1983, prompting a response of 3,000 letters. Families in the US and Canada wanted to be linked with other families in their local area to help them integrate peace and justice concerns into family life.

The "Purple Ribbon Campaign", the "ArtPeace/Young People Respond for a Nuclear Freeze", and the "Playgrounds Not Battlegrounds" solidarity project for Nicaragua were all national IPJ initiatives to redirect US public policy during the Reagan era. Alternative Celebrations Fairs, Teaching Critical Issues workshops, a Peace Education through Puppetry program, family enrichment and leadership training workshops, and a variety of social justice courses for seminaries and pastoral ministry programs were also part of the mosaic of the 80's.

By the mid-1980's, IPJ's outreach extended overseas, through PPJN programs in the Philippines, Australia, Ireland, and elsewhere. Solidarity projects were begun in Nicaragua and Jim McGinnis' *SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF NICARAGUA* book was published. Sue Williams helped to connect US families with Russian families in the first of several IPJ "Global Family Programs." IPJ's creativity expanded in elementary schools with Jim McGinnis using his "Francis the Clown" persona as a way of teaching peace in more engaging ways.

## 1990-1995: An Established and Influential Agency

The 1990's began with the development of the Faith Communities & Peacemaking program under the direction of Roni Branding. Her *PEACEMAKING: THE JOURNEY FROM FEAR TO LOVE* book and Jim McGinnis' *JOURNEY INTO COMPASSION* book brought IPJ's faith perspective on peace, justice, and care for the earth to hundreds of congregations, seminaries and retreat centers.

Brenda Jones' year as IPJ Executive Director and Mary Webber's "Dismantling Racism" program deepened IPJ's commitment to racial justice. Joint programs with St. Louis area family service agencies, especially in the African American community, began bringing IPJ's parenting emphasis to low-income families.

Overseas connections continued to expand with Jim Vogt's Global Family Program in Jamaica and with the publication of the McGinnis' PARENTING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE book in Spanish, German and Hindi. Jim Vogt, PPJN Administrator, developed the "Building Caring Families" program and oversaw a long-range planning process that resulted in vastly expanding IPJ's collaboration with other US and international groups.

#### 1995-2000: Dedicated to Non-Violence

With Kathy McGinnis as IPJ Executive Director, IPJ's 5-year plan deepened and expanded IPJ's commitment to racial and economic justice. Both the Homeless Shelter Program and the Racial Justice Program were expanded.

With the escalation of violence throughout the US – in the forms of racism and hate violence; domestic violence; violence in schools and in the media, play and entertainment; gun violence and the violence of poverty – IPJ and its PPJN Advisory Board convened a national gathering of community, educational, religious, and social service leaders to explore how to challenge this escalating violence. From that meeting in March of 1996, the Families Against Violence Advocacy Network (FAVAN) was born and the Pledge of Nonviolence became the central tool in FAVAN's "Five Steps to Break the Cycle of Violence." The IPJ staff was expanded through a variety of grants, memberships, and organizational donations, and a variety of resources were created for local organizers and families around the Family Pledge of Nonviolence. FAMILIAS CREANDO UN CIRCULO DE PAZ, the Spanish translation of the FAMILIES CREATING A CIRCLE OF PEACE booklet, helped expand IPJ outreach into Spanish-speaking communities in the US and Central America.

#### 2000-Present: Bringing Non-Violence & Dr. King to the Youth, Ex-Offenders, and Faith Communities.

With the rash of school killings in the US in the late 1990s, IPJ adapted the Pledge of Nonviolence for schools, congregations and parishes, youth groups, workplaces, and prisons. Staff began creating a variety of resources for putting the Pledge into practice in these areas, especially the Alternatives to Violence Kits for public schools, for parochial schools and religious education programs, and for faith communities. The Teens Acting for Peace (TAP) Program was expanded from its St. Louis pilot program to 10 other US communities. The Pre-School Peace Program was started at the St. Louis Public Schools. IPJ deepened its collaboration with the Violent Offender Program (VOP) at Missouri Eastern Correctional Center and is helping to adapt this program for other correctional centers and at-risk youth.

IPJ began collaborating with the Center for Women in Transition (CWIT) and other agencies in the St. Louis area working with ex-offenders. Ex-offender facilitators from the VOP program began teaching their SOS Process ("Solving Our Situations") to the CWIT staff and mentors, who in turn have been teaching it to ex-offender women. In collaboration with Project Re-Connect, ARCHS, and Project COPE, IPJ developed several programs for training mentors for ex-offender men.

Resources for educators of children and youth escalated after 9/11 and the War on Iraq, as IPJ was inspired to revisit its anti-war tradition and join both local and national efforts to challenge the rush to war and focus on the roots of terrorism. IPJ's resources for schools, families, and faith communities were all revised. "The Things that Make for Peace" manuals for grades K-8 and 9-12 were co-published with Pax Christi USA to provide critical strategies for "teaching peace after 9/11."

Rediscovering the prophet vision and message of Dr. King, IPJ developed a program for youth and faith communities entitled "Peacemaking and the Powers" and began teaching courses on it at Eden Seminary where IPJ moved its offices in 2006. "Young Artists for Justice & Peace" blossomed in 2008-09, as IPJ collaborated with Gitana Productions and others to inspire youth to create their own artistic performance of Dr. King's message. This will become an hour-long production to inaugurate IPJ's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in January 2010.

Jim McGinnis' book Praying for Peace Around the Globe in 2009 launched a major effort to reach out to people of faith around the world to pray and act for peace in more than 40 countries and around 13 key justice and peace issues, re-igniting IPJ's Faith and Peacemaking program.