

The Voices of the Children

Dewey Elementary School is located in Evanston, Illinois, a very diverse community both racially and economically. Ms. Pat Cleveland's third grade class uses the talking circle as the foundation for learning in her classroom. The talking circle is a valuable tool for developing respect, listening and patience. In 2002 her students wrote the "Voices of the Children" statement to the adults of the world following a discussion concerning peace. Their statement has been read around the world. In fall 2002, it was read to the 2,000 delegates at the General Forum of the Indigenous Council at the United Nations, in New York. In India, Sir Ajit Telang had it read to thousands of people and children.

To the Leaders of the World

"We the children of the world are asking the adults to listen. We think that you need us to help you find peace in yourselves. If you start from the heart, peace can spread to other adults and it will get bigger. We ask you to forgive and be kind to one another. We are asking you to be respectful and to treat others the way you want to be treated. We want you to try a different way to solve problems. If everybody thought fighting was the only way, then the whole world would be at war. If you don't give peace to others then they won't give it to you.

This is a world we love but we would love it more if all the wars and fighting stopped. We have hope to bring Peace on Earth to the world. We want our loved ones safe. We want our families safe no matter where they are.

If we didn't fight, the grass would be greener, the water would be cleaner, and the animals would be healthier. The world would be the best place. We want you to stop cutting down the trees and hurting living things.

We are saying "ENOUGH!" We want the land mines, the nukes and suicide bombing to stop. We want the judging people to stop and want to know people by who they are on the inside.

We need to try to understand each other and to learn about each other. We want people to come together and share their hearts. We want the adults to be nice and make your voices count. We are asking you to help our families get along. We know that peace starts with a thought. You need to let that thought come out. We are telling you that this is important because peace can change your life, our lives, and someone else's, and eventually the world.

There is a wonderful world waiting for you. We just need to believe in peace and in ourselves. That's the beginning. We can help each other. Peace can go forever. Peace can be so great."

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