

PROJECT PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY 2015 ACTIVITY REPORT



Karen Huggins
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2015 Activities Report

The Project Ploughshares Calgary office is located in the basement of Parkdale United Church, 2919 8th Avenue NW Calgary (office space shared with Initiatives of Change). The Ploughshares Calgary office is staffed on a half-time basis, ~20 hours per week from January to June and mid August to December. The Program Director for 2015 was Karen Huggins.

Bev Delong is Ploughshares' resource person and serves as our liaison with the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and several other national groups. She keeps Ploughshares Calgary updated on steps being taken to encourage progress on nuclear disarmament.

Executive

Executive board membership throughout the year included: Tracey Braun (Chairperson), Bev Delong, Jean Tollefson, Lena Osman, Terry Brown (Bookkeeper), Ehsan Tarok (Web Designer), Carl Svoboda (Treasurer), Tom Angelakis, Terry Brown (bookkeeper). Joining the board for 2015-16 were Nimra Amjad, Shinobu Apple, John Burgener, Kerry Duncan-McCartney, and Janice Fraser. Karen Huggins attended all Executive meetings as Program Director. Nine executive meetings were held to organize activities during the year (each ~ two hours long).

Newsletter, Website, Facebook

Ten newsletters (six to eight pages each) were printed and distributed during the year. These kept people informed about meetings and special events, and gave updates on issues of interest such as national and global nuclear and peace news, and information on new resources available to members. Each newsletter also included a section informing our members of recent publications from Ploughshares National available on the Ploughshares national's website. Around 21 newsletters are still mailed and ~1000 individuals, and ~90 organizations and churches received the newsletter by email.

The Ploughshares Calgary website served to:

- highlight news and events on the front page
- update and provide more information about current projects/initiatives/resources

Ploughshares Calgary has a Facebook page that has increased its membership throughout 2015. We currently have 274 followers, up from 217 at the end of 2014. Ploughshares Calgary uses Facebook to invite people to attend our events and to share information about topics that we've had public meetings on or that Ploughshares National is working on.

Volunteers

Approximately 1000 hours of volunteer time were spent on administration, financial statements, membership records and recruitments, research, writing, fundraising, hosting displays, publicizing and facilitating general meetings, maintaining the website, helping with special events and looking after resources. Executive members put in a considerable number of volunteer hours.

Continuing Projects

Calgary Community Peace Pole Project

Project Ploughshares Calgary offered the Peace Pole as a gift to the City of Calgary and all Calgarians in 2011. The City of Calgary has officially taken over the Peace Pole and its ongoing maintenance. Project Ploughshares Calgary still holds events at the Peace Pole whenever it is viable – most often to commemorate the International Day of Peace and Remembrance Day.

Nuclear Disarmament

Bev Delong is chairing the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and is on the Board of the Canadian Pugwash Group and shares news of their work regularly at Ploughshares Executive meetings.

Sally Hodges organized a private briefing session that she and Bev offered for lawyer and Liberal electoral candidate Matt Grant on April 19th to provide an update on the current situation and to encourage his support for action toward nuclear disarmament.

In the summer, the General Council of the United Church considered favourably a resolution calling for progress on nuclear disarmament introduced to the church through Parkdale United Church.

On Oct. 24th, Bev accompanied the Hon. Doug Roche to Olympic Plaza for UN 50th Anniversary speeches, and later to the UN 50th Anniversary event at U. of C.

Public Meetings & Events

The following public meetings were held in 2015:

- January **Spirituality and the Environment**
Panel discussion with Dr. Anne White, Rev. Tim Nethercott, Tracey Braun and Salma Mohiuddin. [Attendance 25]
- February **From the Heart: Compassion and Community**
Stories of positive peace, courage in the face of uncertainty with Swati Fernando, Social Worker and David Kotowski, Commander, Calgary Police Services. [Attendance ~ 25]
- March **Women and Peacebuilding: Organizing for Social Change**
What generates effective peacebuilding? Discussion about women organizing for social change and the challenges faced in their peace work. Ronnie Leah Joy and Devan Kublik. [Attendance ~ 12]
- May **Film: Pray the Devil Back to Hell**
Film chronicling the civil war in Liberia. [Attendance ~ 25]
- June **Peace in Mind and Ploughshares' AGM**
We asked people to share their own (or a favourite author or artist) stories, poetry, essays, and art. [Attendance ~ 12]
- September **Peace with the Earth: A Scared Ecology Workshop**
Based on the work of Joanna Macy, this workshop asked participants to draw on their own experiences and knowledge through reflection, journaling, small group discussions and other forms of interactive work. Facilitated by Ronnie Joy Leah and Karen Huggins. [Attendance ~ 25 for Friday night film, 8 for Saturday workshop]
- October **Film: Refugees of the Blue Planet**
A film looking at the plight of environmental refugees from the Maldives, Brazil and Alberta. [Attendance 20]

Special Annual Events

- April **Spring Workshop. Peacing It Together: Calgary Youth Speak Up**
Ronnie Joy Leah & Erwin Blanco
Interactive workshop with focus on exploring social change through drama.
[Attendance ~ 12]
- August **Floating Lantern Festival**
Project Ploughshares, in conjunction with the 2020 Vision for Humanity Network,
presented a moving tribute to all those affected by the bombings of Hiroshima and
Nagasaki. Keynote Speaker was Louise Gallagher. Event took place at Calgary Olympic
Plaza. [Attendance ~ 350]
- September **International Day of Peace – Picnic in the Park**
Event held at the Calgary Peace Pole, music by a local high school jazz band. We handed
out approximately 100 peace buttons to passers-by and engaged people in conversation..
[Attendance ~ 120 including participants and people walking by]
- October **Calgary Toy Audit** – For the third year, Volunteers visited 11 Calgary toy stores,
examining the shelves for violent and non-violent toys and games, books and videos. We
looked for games and toys that encourage the use of weapons (historical and modern) for
solving conflicts; we looked for how the message was communicated on packaging; we
checked the location of toys and games on shelves and in displays; and we checked to
see if video sections were following the Alberta ranking and age appropriate rules. Results
sent to Calgary media.
- November **Remembrance Day**
Event held at the Calgary Community Peace Pole. Tracey Braun developed this year's
program, focusing on people's stories of war and how they were impacted. [Attendance ~ 25]
- Holiday Peace Fair**
The 31th annual Holiday Peace Fair was held November 7th at Parkdale United Church.
26 vendors participated. Ploughshares Calgary made a profit of \$5352.75 from the 2015
Peace Fair. [Attendance ~ 400]
- December **Project Ploughshares Holiday Open House** – Parkdale United Church
Holiday event for all Ploughshares board members and regular members, as well as the
general public. [Attendance ~ 15]

Ploughshares Representation at Conferences and Events

- March **2020 Vision for Humanity Symposium**
Ploughshares staff person and some board members were on the organizing committee for this event. Co-Chairs were Dr. Arthur Clark and Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish.
[Attendance ~ 45]
- April **Calgary Peace Prize Dinner – Consortium for Peace Studies at the University of Calgary and the Calgary Centre for Global Community.**
The recipient of this year's Peace Prize was Romeo Dallaire. [Attendance ~ 500]
- November **Marda Loop Justice Film Festival** – we had a table at this large community event that drew a lot of attention. We displayed Ploughshares information, and also sold cooperative games and books.

Peace Related Connections of Ploughshares executive members and staff

Karen Huggins sits on the **Calgary Peace Prize Committee**, as well as on the organizing committee for the Floating Lantern Festival and the 2020 Vision for Humanity Symposium, and is a board member for a new NGO: Peace Alliance Africa Consulting, Education and Training.

2020 Vision for Humanity Network – This is a new group formed in the spring of 2012 specifically for educating the public around issues of nuclear disarmament and human security. There are several Ploughshares Executive and Ploughshares members involved with this group.

Fundraising

We received funding from the George Weaver Memorial Fund, St. David's United Church Foundation and the Parkdale United Church Foundation, totaling \$700 for the workshop entitled: **Peacing It Together: Calgary Youth Speak Up.**

PPC did a fundraiser selling Spolumbo's sausages during the month of May. Total proceeds from the sales was \$1974.74

Financials

PPC has been encouraging supporters to become monthly donors to PPC through a pre-authorized debit program. Currently there are 6 monthly donors. PPC can now also accept credit card donations (single not monthly) with the help of Ploughshares National, as well as through PayPal via our website. We are also using the Square, which allows us to take credit card payments at events such as the Peace Fair and the Marda Loop Film Festival.

PPC's financial statements for 2015 that go with this activities report will be submitted by our bookkeeper.