



September 2023 Newsletter



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Want to donate to Ploughshares Calgary? If you haven't yet made your 2023 donation, please consider doing so soon! Email office@ploughshares.ca for more information on how to donate.

PLOUGHSHARES CALGARY SOCIETY PRESENTS:

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION THROUGH EDUCATION

JOIN US FOR AN EDUCATIONAL MEETING FEATURING DR. YVONNE POITRAS-PRATT



JOIN US ON ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH
7:00PM MDT



Contact Us:



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

International Day of Peace, observed on September 21, was established by the UN General Assembly in 1981. Twenty years later, in 2001, the General Assembly voted unanimously to designate the Day as a period of non-violence and cease-fire. This year’s International Day of Peace will focus on “Actions for Peace” and how the Sustainable Development Goals are essential to preventing conflict and maintaining peace. It is a call to action that recognizes our individual and collective responsibility to foster peace. The 2023 observance of the International Day of Peace coincides with the [SDG summit](#) (18 – 19 September) to mark the mid-point milestone.

International Day of Peace, with its focus upon the sustainability goals this year, gives us an opportunity to deepen our understanding of peace, and to recommit to pursuing peace with more conscious intention. Think about one thing that you might be able to do, in your home, workplace, school, neighbourhood, and/or community, to reflect upon and contribute to peace in our world. Here are a few suggestions for your consideration:

- Join with people worldwide to observe one minute of silence, at noon in local time. You can tune into [UN Web TV](#) to view the UN Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, in the Peace Garden at UN headquarters, ring the Peace Bell and observe a minute of silence. Encourage others to tune in as well.
- If you have young people in your life, encourage and help them to tune into the livestreaming of International Day of Peace Youth Event playing on [UN Web TV](#) and [UN YouTube](#) on 14 September 9:30-12:00 pm EST. The event will provide a platform for young people to showcase the actions they have taken, or commit to an action they will take, in their schools and communities to help accelerate progress towards achieving the [SDGs](#) and thereby fostering [peace](#).





INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

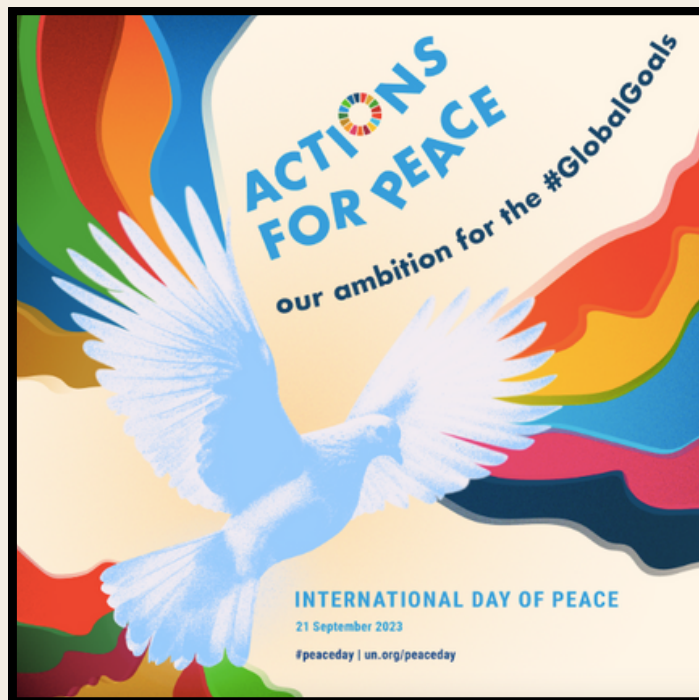
- Help raise awareness about International Day of Peace and/or the Sustainability Goals by posting something on social media.
- Write letters containing messages of peace and send them to relevant recipients.
- Children can create drawings or other artwork expressing their hopes and desires for peace, or depicting their ideas of what peace is and isn't. Share their artwork with a wider audience, and/or send photos of it to PCS so that we can publish it in our upcoming newsletters.
- Come together with friends and family to participate in the international Global Feast for Peace, over for a meal or potluck. This is another UN initiative, celebrated in large and small ways worldwide, to honour those who are working for peace, to encourage the next generation of peacebuilders, to express gratitude for the peace we have, and to commit to actions to foster a culture of peace in the coming year. Share some food you love with people you care about! You can also make it a goal to waste less food, and to support local farmers.
- Learn about the UN's 17 Sustainability Goals and their importance in achieving a peaceful planet. Let others know about them too. Is there one goal that you would like to focus on, learn more about, and act upon? If you chose an action, let PCS know about it, and we'll publish it in an upcoming newsletter. Photos welcome!
- Do a random act of kindness, and encourage others to join in this during this day. Share your stories with others (and with us!) These random acts may be small, but they contribute to building a culture of peace.
- Commit to reading a book related to peace. If you are part of a book club, encourage your group to read a book related to peace. Write a review of the book you choose, and send it to PCS to be published in a future newsletter.
- Learn more about non-violent tactics and the practice of non-violence.
- Gather some friends and do a neighbourhood or park clean-up for peace, recognising the role of a clean and healthy environment in maintaining peace and achieving the SDGs.





INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

- Contact PCS to volunteer, or to make a donation to contribute to peace activities in our community. Share your ideas, creativity, energy and passion for a peaceful world with likeminded people of Ploughshares Calgary Society! We would love to hear from you.
- Create some art, music, poetry, etc. on the theme of peace. Share your creation with us. We would like to publish selected contributions through our newsletter and/or social media.
- Choose a film to watch related to peace, or to one of the Sustainability Goals. Watch it with your friends and/or family, and send PCS a review that we can include in a future newsletter.



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said, “Peace is needed today more than ever. War and conflict are unleashing devastation, poverty, and hunger, and driving tens of millions of people from their homes. Climate chaos is all around. And even peaceful countries are gripped by gaping inequalities and political polarization.”

This September, let’s do more than think about peace. Let’s find and implement new ways to ACT for peace! At this critical time in human history, let’s commit ever more deeply to bringing about a better future for all who dwell on this still beautiful earth!



NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

What is National Day for Truth and Reconciliation?

September 30th marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a designated day honouring the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. This day is an opportunity to continue learning about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and our roles and responsibilities towards reconciliation.

There were 140 federally run residential schools in Canada that operated between 1867 and 1996. Survivors advocated for recognition and reparations and demanded accountability for the intergenerational impacts of harm caused. Their efforts culminated in:

- The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement
- Apologies by the government
- The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- The creation of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

"Reconciliation must support Aboriginal peoples as they heal from the destructive legacies of colonization that have wreaked such havoc in their lives. But it must do even more. Reconciliation must inspire Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to transform Canadian society so that our children and grandchildren can live together in dignity, peace, and prosperity on these lands we now share." (TRC, 2015b, p. 114)

Why Wear Orange?

Both the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day take place on September 30. Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters". The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.





COMMEMORATING THE 1945 ATOMIC BOMBING OF JAPAN

**Canadian Pugwash Group
August 11th, 2023**

Peggy Mason, President of the Rideau Institute and Board Member of Canadian Pugwash Group, was invited to speak at Ottawa’s August 9 commemoration event, marking the 1945 bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

“Now turning to the heightened nuclear risks due to the Ukraine conflict. The 2023 Doomsday Clock statement included the following:

‘Russia’s thinly veiled threats to use nuclear weapons remind the world that escalation of the conflict—by accident, intention, or miscalculation—is a terrible risk. The possibility that the conflict could spin out of anyone’s control remains high.’

This is one reason why the Ceasefire.ca and Rideau Institute weekly blog posts focus so relentlessly on the need for diplomacy to end the horrific conflict in Ukraine and help fashion a just and sustainable peace.”



“This brings me to the recent statements by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively calling on nuclear-armed (and presumably nuclear umbrella) nations to ‘show courage and make the decision to break free from dependence on nuclear deterrence.’

The war in Ukraine has shown the ultimate wisdom of that message.

But the plain fact is that nuclear-armed states and their allies are not going to discard their nuclear weapons – no matter the dangers they pose – without an alternative security paradigm. Otherwise, their fear would be that without nuclear deterrence, the likelihood of war with unbelievably dangerous new hypersonic conventional weapons (enhanced by AI) would be more, not less, likely. To put this another way, our goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons will be futile if we cannot demonstrate to the NWS that it will not lead to a world where devastating conventional war among great powers is more likely in the absence of nuclear weapons to deter them.”

Click [here](#) to read the full presentation.





GUTERRES' NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE IGNORED BY MOST BIG MEDIA

The Hill Times

July 31, 2023

Reported by Douglas Roche

Summarized by Haylie Smith

- On July 20th, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres published his "New Agenda for Peace" which received no media attention
- Roche believes that the pressure to send more weapons to Ukraine is warping public culture into thinking that an increase in militarism is the best way to peace.
- **Guterres' 12 recommendations to action:**
 - i. Eliminate nuclear weapons and commit to never use them before they are eliminated;
 - ii. Boost preventative diplomacy in an era of divisions. Use UN good offices even when states are at war or do not recognize each other;
 - iii. Develop national prevention strategies to address the different drivers and enablers of violence and conflict in societies;
 - iv. Accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to address the underlying causes of violence and insecurity;
 - v. Introduce concrete measures to secure women's full, equal, and meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making on peace and security;
 - vi. Recognize climate, peace, and security as a political priority, and strengthen connections between multilateral bodies to ensure that climate action and peace-building reinforce each other;
 - vii. Reverse the negative impact of unconstrained military spending, and focus on the profound negative societal effects of public resources diverted to military activity rather on sustainable development and gender equality;
 - viii. Strengthen peace operations and partnerships; they are an essential part of the diplomatic toolbox of the Charter of the United Nations;
 - ix. The increasing fragmentation of many conflicts and the proliferation of non-state armed groups have increased the need for multinational peace-enforcement, and counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations;
 - x. Support the African Union and subregional peace operations;
 - xi. Conclude, by 2026, a legally binding instrument to prohibit lethal autonomous weapon systems; and
 - xii. Make urgent progress in the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council to make it more just and representative.





GUTERRES' NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE IGNORED BY MOST BIG MEDIA

- Guterres also accompanied his agenda with some stark warnings:
 - “This new era is already marked by a high level of geopolitical tensions and major power competition in decades.”
 - “Concerns about the possibility of nuclear war have re-emerged.”
 - “New political domains of conflict and weapons of war are creating new wars in which humanity can annihilate itself.”
- Guterres believes that the dangers of further risks of humanity’s annihilation are now so great that only a burst of cooperation among nations will get the world back on track towards peace.
- The responsibility of peace falls on nations rather than just the UN. Nations must step up and re-engage using the UN’s help.
- Global Affairs Canada stated that Canada has already contributed \$70-million to the UN Peace-building Fund over a three-year period.
- Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, co-chairs with Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados the Sustainable Development Goals Advocates group, which promotes:
 - Fighting climate change;
 - Protecting nature; and
 - Empowering women & girls around the world
- These themes are present in Guterres’ agenda.



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres
Photo Credits: Wikimedia Commons





EVENTS

- On Wednesday, September 20th, **Ploughshares Calgary Society will be hosting an educational meeting and discussion titled: Truth and Reconciliation Through Education featuring Dr. Yvonne Poitras-Pratt.** In this session, Yvonne offers a proposed model of reconciliatory education, or reconciliation through education, to explain the hows and whys of this complex work. The model invites educators to move beyond colonial renderings of teaching and learning—those predicated on individualist, competitive, assimilative terms—and instead embrace the powerful potential of teaching and learning that can result when educators are driven by an ethos of truth-telling (Poitras Pratt & Gladue, 2022) and ethical relationality (Donald, 2012). In this session, Yvonne shares what she has learned with and from her students through processes of facing each other as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across truth divides and invites you to step into the space with us. This event starts at 7:00pm and is on Zoom.

 - Meeting ID: 885 3378 0500
 - Passcode: 239797
- On Saturday, September 21st, **Diversecities Community Service Association will be hosting the Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration 2023.** This even will take place at the Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo’s Asia Lawn & Tent (210 St. George’s Drive NE), from 9:00am to 11:30am, Celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival is a tradition in East and Southeast Asian communities. This is a time to celebrate families and community. Our event will feature cultural entertainment, vendor booths, family-oriented games and activities, breakfast, and more. Tickets are available on Eventbrite.ca.





GOOD NEWS

- The Faith and Terry Gabert family have donated a property in central Alberta to the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The 129 hectare property is in the Aspen Parkland region. There is native prairie grassland, with wild flowers and provision of a home for such animals as mule, white-tailed deer, moose, coyotes, beavers, ducks and geese. The donation ensures that the land will remain wild and will not be altered significantly. Commenting on the resilience and interest of the donation, Jeremy Hogan, director of Prairie Grassland Conservation at the Nature Conservancy of Canada, said “Grasslands are for everybody.” (Calgary Herald, September 5, 2023).
- A peace patrol, Philly Truce, in Philadelphia is achieving success as an anti-gun-violence group. Members, mainly adolescent boys, pass out handbills advertising mediation service, follow conflicts through social media, and seek to resolve disputes before they escalate. Their work provides a basis for hope. The group has intervened in about 40 disputes and in all but one they were able to resolve the situation before it escalated to violence. Efforts similar to those of Philly Truce exist in other cities, including Chicago and Camden New Jersey. (Globe and Mail, August 3, 2023)



Philly Truce Patrol

Photo Credits: Adrian Morrow/Globe & Mail



GOOD NEWS

- A 36-foot totem pole carved by the House of Ni'isjoohl in British Columbia a century ago is on a sacred journey back home thanks to National Museums Scotland. The repatriation comes after a year-long discussion with the Nisga'a Lisims Government and marks a historic moment for reconciliation between the museum and the Nisga'a Nation, where the memorial pole was first erected. The 36-foot-tall totem pole has remained in Scotland for nearly a century. It was originally sold to the museum by Canadian anthropologist Marius Barbeau. The art will make its way from Scotland to the Nass Valley in Canada in September. (Good News Network, August 30th, 2023).
- Back in July, Antrim County Animal Control was called to Meadow Brook Medical Care Facility where they found one of their shelter's dogs, Scout, curled up on the couch in the waiting room. Scout had escaped the night before from their shelter just down the road, and somehow managed to scale the 10-foot chain link fence, another 6-foot solid privacy fence, cross a busy highway without being run over, find the nursing home, go in through the front door undeterred and curl up on the couch to sleep. After Scout was brought back to the shelter, he ended up escaping two more times, ending up on that same couch at the nursing home. The nursing home ended up formally adopting Scout, stating that having him around has turned out to be a priceless addition. (Good News Network, September 1st, 2023).



Scout on her couch

Photo Credits: Good News Network

