

TPRF Broadcast: September 2017

1. Welcome and Introductions: Michel Klamph and Ron Greenspan

Michel Klamph: Welcome to the September edition the TPRF Broadcast highlighting the global work of The Prem Rawat Foundation. I am Michel Klamph in Toronto, Canada, along with my co-host Ron Greenspan in Virginia Beach, US.

Ron Greenspan: This month we have a full program of interesting and informative features, including a preview of a new TPRF video for Peace Day, the story of how the award-winning documentary Inside Peace will soon be seen by millions of viewers, and stories about the Peace Education Program in the US and Sri Lanka.

For our first segment, Michel will take us to the island of Tasmania in Australia to learn about *Partnerships for Peace*.

2. Partnerships for Peace: Helen Hussey Tasmania Australia

Michel Klamph: It's my pleasure to introduce Helen Hussey from Tasmania, Australia. She is a volunteer with the Peace Education Program. She is a voice for peace in her community. Welcome to the broadcast today, Helen, and thank you for joining us.

Helen Hussey: Thank you very much, Michel. It's a huge honor to be part of this, and it's also very exciting because I'm having a wonderful time here, and I'd love to tell people about it.

Michel: When did you get started?

Helen: Well, about four years ago, I began running the Peace Education Program at the local library with another volunteer, David, and that's how we began. I also thought perhaps we could go to U3A, which is University of the Third Age, and I wondered how I could begin there, and I thought, well, I better go and get to know them. So, I enrolled in their bushwalking course, and I walked up and down hills and all sorts of things for quite some time. I got to know them. And then I ran tai chi as a summer school. After that, they wanted me to run tai chi again, and I said, okay, I'll do that, but I'd also like to run the Peace Education Program. That was 3½ years ago, and I've been running both tai chi and the Peace Education Program continually with them since then.

Michel: You even had people register for the Peace Education Program because they encountered you when you were out walking your pets.

Helen: Yeah, well, I've got two donkeys and I'm afraid I'm a bit passionate about my donkeys too. I live in a country area, and my donkeys are very fat, and so I have to walk them. While I walk them, I meet various neighbors and people along the road. And they say, "Oh, look, this is awful and that's awful." And you begin talking, and then I tell them about the Peace Education Program. And two people from that have actually completed the program. So, that's nice too.

I also have been running the Peace Education Program at a community center. The community center has a wonderful program called Eating with Friends, which is a \$5.00 meal once a month, and lots of people go to that. I started going and just helping wash up, and then people would say “Oh, what are you here for?” And I’d say, “Oh, I run the Peace Education Program.” When our local politicians aren’t sitting in Parliament, quite a lot of them come to Eating with Friends, and over the last 3½ or 4 years, I’ve got to know them all.

Michel: You start planning very early in the year for Peace Day. What kinds of activities do you do?

Helen: Well, actually, I started last year. What happened last year is I thought I would go to the Council and to the local library and ask if they would show PeaceCast.tv on their screens.

PeaceCast.tv is an online media channel using material provided by people and organizations worldwide engaged in making peace visible, and the message of Prem Rawat is about 10 percent. You can get to it by going to www.peacecast.tv. It streams live starting on the 20th of September. They ask for submissions in about 12 different languages. It’s quite wonderful.

You see, I really began planning this seriously back in June when I was working with the school, but I really have to begin after this Peace Day to get lots more happening for next Peace Day.

But even before that, I went to a staff meeting that the principal invited me to. It was a cold, wet, miserable day. The teachers had had a full day of teaching, and then a half hour staff meeting on something else. Then they all trooped into a classroom with a big screen, and there I was. I showed them *Citizens of the Earth* and *The Secret Weapon*. They all had come in quite subdued, and after they’d seen that, they were saying, “Ah, well we could do this and we could do that, and we’d better do something ourselves for the International Day of Peace. Perhaps we could have a special assembly. Stories of peace are very important.” And so that’s how that happened.

I’ve worked so far with two grade 1-2 classes, and it’s been beautiful. I’ve just shown them those clips and read them a little story that Prem tells, “The Pot with the Hole.” Then they’ve gone and done their drawings and writings. We’ve talked about various ways that they can feel peace, how they feel when they feel peace, and what peace might look like, and then I put what they’ve suggested up on the board, to help with their spelling, because we are talking about 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds.

A couple of things they’ve said is:

“Peace is freedom, happy, loved, jolly, more than yourself, free, freedom, peace is your best solution.” That’s a six-year-old.

From a seven-year-old, “Peace feels like sleepy, kind, loving, relaxed, quiet, helpful, grand, calm, peaceful, lovely, nicer than nice.”

Michel: Is there anything else you would like to tell us today about your efforts?

Helen: They're not just my efforts. There have been a lot of people who have been helping. And also, look, I just feel very inspired to do this, because I feel very comfortable just being myself. And being part of the Peace Education Program, and hearing it many times, I'm realizing I'm responsible for myself, and I really have to take that responsibility and fly with it. So that's what I'd like to say. Thank you.

3. TPRF Resources for Peace Day: Jake Frankel

Prem Rawat: "'Medicine for Peace,' sounds good. That's a nice headline. But it has to mean something. That would be nice if there was a pill for peace, so you just take it, and you have peace. Look at this world. People are not behaving as human beings. And with all the advancement in science, as human beings it's taking us backwards. We have more educated people on the face of this earth today than we ever did, and we're missing the key ingredient called "humanity." Maybe the pill to peace lies in you being a human. Isn't it the world that needs the peace? No, you do. If we, the individuals, had the peace, the world peace would be there. Maybe peace is not that impossible, if we can change our way of looking at peace. Because the most beautiful news is this: regardless of religion, regardless of race, regardless of color, regardless of whether they're rich, whether they're poor, whether they're educated, whether they are uneducated, the peace is dancing in the heart of every single human being. Peace has to be discovered, not created. That's the peace that's going to make the difference."

Jake Frankel: That was a clip of Prem Rawat talking about peace taken from a new TPRF video that we are releasing ahead of the International Day of Peace on September 21st.

Known as "Peace Day," the United Nations General Assembly has declared September 21st as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace within and among all peoples and nations.

In support of this international effort, TPRF hopes that the new video helps grow awareness that inner peace is the strongest foundation for world peace, and that peace is possible for everyone.

We hope that you will share this video to help this message reach millions of people.

Last year our peace day video received more than four million views, and we're hoping to top that number this year.

The new video will be readily sharable via Facebook and YouTube. And we will also provide a raw video file for easy download on our website that you can share via other means. It will be included in our partners' global peace day broadcasts, and we're starting to get requests to show it on the big screen at movie theaters.

If you are a member of an organization that would like to partner with us on this sharing campaign, we would love to work with you.

On the website at tprf.org you can see the details of our partnership program, but the gist of it is really simple: if your organization agrees to share the video, TPRF will publicize your participation and express our gratitude.

If you have any questions about any of this you can email us via the contact form on the TPRF website, or you can call us at 1-310-392-5700

Of course, this is just one of the many ways that your support for TPRF helps make every day a peace day for people around the globe, and we thank you very much.

4. Inside Peace Movie: Cynthia Fitzpatrick

Ron: The 2015 documentary film titled *Inside Peace* features TPRF's Peace Education Program in a key supporting role. The movie follows the lives of several men while serving prison sentences in San Antonio, Texas attended a new Peace Education class. After their release from prison, the film shows us how the lessons of this class helped them in their struggle to rebuild their lives. *Inside Peace* has met with critical acclaim and has been shown at many film festivals, garnering 10 top awards. Now, the film will be shown on more than 200 Public Broadcasting television stations throughout the United States over the coming months.

Here's an audio clip from the trailer for *Inside Peace* on PBS television:

"If I wanted something I took it. I poisoned my neighborhood. If you've never been told that you're worth a damn, all of that emotion will come out and will get you into trouble. My mom and my dad were heroin addicts. They can't build prisons and produce a safer society. It is going to take something very different. Welcome to the Peace Education class. I started learning things about myself; that things don't have to be so complicated. There's a lot of things you gotta do when you get out. I've got a target on my back. Everybody is still looking for that old person. They don't believe that somebody can change."

Ron: I'm pleased to be talking now with Cynthia Fitzpatrick, the director and producer of *Inside Peace*. Cynthia is a veteran of the film and television industry with over 30 years of professional experience. Cynthia, thank you for joining us.

Cynthia: Hi, I'm really glad to be here, Ron, thank you for inviting me.

Ron: There have been a lot of prison story films. What was it about this film that has captured the hearts of audiences and judges at these festivals?

Cynthia: Well, I think primarily it was the power of the story itself, because it really broke the stereotypes that people have of those that are incarcerated. The men come across very articulate, very heartfelt, and we witnessed the process of human beings beginning to connect with their hearts. And, really, this is very different from the lock-up-type prison stories we see on television, because it's a human story and it brings a solution to the situation that is pretty dire in the prison system right now. And also, I think the power of the story that grabbed people was the drama that occurred as they tried to reintegrate into society, and the struggles that they went through, because they did not always have arms open to them and 'welcome

home,' and we saw that and also the fact, too, that the film was four years in the making, so it had another depth to it that allowed the viewer to go deeper into their lives. And any film that tracks for that many years is very powerful in and of itself. But again, it was the power of the story itself, and the transformation of these men, and that it was deeply a human story more than just a prison story.

Ron: So now the film is actually going to be shown on national television. This is quite a coup for any film producer, I would think. How did PBS come to pick this up, and what does this mean for the life of the film now?

Cynthia: Well, it was a dream come true for all of us who worked on the film, and let me say that it takes a village, and there were many people involved in working on this film. Primarily, Rosie Lee was my co-producer, and Eve Goldberg was the story consultant, and there were many great cameramen and musicians. I think the expertise of all the people involved in the film caught the eye of a programmer who came to a screening in Michigan. After she saw the film, she said she wanted to show the film on the local PBS station in East Lansing, Michigan. And because it did so well there, the station said they wanted to sponsor it to the national outlet for PBS. That's how you get your film up there if you're not famous. So, this turned out to be the little film that could. From a community screening, it is now up on this platform of PBS, where you said. Millions of people are going to be able to look at it and see it.

Ron: Congratulations on that, and I have to ask, how are the subjects of the film doing today? I assume they're all still out of prison.

Cynthia: That's a big assumption, because the recidivism rate for return to prison is pretty high. But I am happy to say that the subjects of the film, the five main men, are all still out, and they're working, and they're facing the challenges that all people do who have limited resources. Most of the guys in the film spent many, many years in prison, so they didn't have the opportunity to learn the life skills necessary to move ahead in some areas of life. But they decided, and they learned how to decide, and make better choices, by taking the class. And when they come up against the temptation to go back to their old ways, they have a toolbox now, and they do get into their toolbox and use it. I am still in weekly contact with most of the men, and I am completely amazed by their strength, and their resilience, and their dedication to walking the straight and narrow as some of them call it.

It's pretty amazing, and the last card in the film, we say they face their challenges, but they're all still out. And I just said, oh, I hope they all stay out so I don't have to redo that card.

Ron: What plans are in the works for further distribution of *Inside Peace* beyond PBS? Have your original intentions for the film been met?

Cynthia: We just finished putting together a teacher's guide with a 21-page curriculum for them, for classrooms and libraries, and we want to distribute that around the country. Moving forward, once we do our journey through PBS, then we're going to go to syndication and eventually Netflix, Amazon, and iTunes. So, we've been very methodical about our process: film festivals first to get those little laurels, and then try to get it on television, which we did, and now we're going to go through that journey, which will be about two years, and then we'll shift

gears and take it to Netflix, and Amazon, and iTunes, as well as bringing it to the classroom and libraries, and using it as an educational tool.

I always had great hopes for it, and it's been a seven-year journey now, and we're just getting to the place where I was hoping we would get to, and I think that the little film that could is still chugging along down the road and will continue to do so.

It has attracted people to it because of the power of the story. Prison officials, the heads of prisons of states around the country, have been to see the film and have been really touched by it and want to bring it into the system in their whole state. That's another thing that's happening. I just want to give a shout out to all the volunteers and the people at TPRF who are being so great and supportive of the film and helping it to get down the road of exposure. They've done a great job, too, and I appreciate all the work they're doing.

Ron: To conclude this interview, we must point listeners to the official website for *Inside Peace*, which is insidepeacemovie.com. In addition to information and clips from the film, a DVD of the PBS release is available for purchase, along with the educational version you mentioned. The website also has the latest PBS broadcast schedule and a link to the crowdfunding initiative for those who might want to make a financial contribution to help advance the project. Again, the website is insidepeacemovie.com.

Cynthia, thank you for sharing your story today, and for all of the hard work you've put into what is clearly a major labor of love for you.

Cynthia: Oh, it's my pleasure. Thank you, Ron.

5. Correctional Education Association Conference, San Antonio, Texas: Donna Peskin and Sally Weaver

Donna Peskin and Sally Weaver, volunteers with the Peace Education Program, represented The Prem Rawat Foundation at the annual Correctional Education Association Conference in San Antonio Texas on July 30, 31 and August 1, 2017.

Who attended this conference?

Sally: I think it's important for everyone to know the type of audience and the conference, why we attended the conference. And that's a really exciting thing, because this group of people are the correctional educators around the United States. And every year they get together to find out about what's new in the field of education in corrections, what's been working. So, they were very receptive to our presentations this year. And it was a really exciting conference to be at.

Donna: The time in correctional education is really ripe right now. And it's ripe in the sense that they just feel like, if you're involved in correctional education at this point in time, that it's just opening up. The doors are opening up. They just see a much more positive future and growth within it.

The Peace Education Program has been involved with CEA since 2007 and has been attending the annual conference since 2012. This year as a sponsor, TPRF had a booth in the exhibit hall presented the Peace Education Program and the Inside Peace a movie.

Donna: You know, there was a card that showed that we were a sponsor. I believe we were a silver sponsor, on the big banner where everyone walked into the hotel and registered. I did get a picture of that that had the Prem Rawat Foundation logo up on it.

Sally: We had our table there about the Foundation, about the Peace Education Program. And we also this year had information about the movie *Inside Peace*. We brought the new PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) broadcast schedule. They would come to the table, and we could talk to them further about what we offer, and they could leave their card with us or sign up for whatever it is they'd like.

What was the response to the Peace Education Program material you had on display?

Donna: One woman came up and said that everyone needed to have this class, not just correctional. I had one gentleman that said, "I'm showing this." He had some big meeting that he was attending at the end of August and said, "Can I get it? Can I get it before that? I want to show them all this." I had someone else say that really the officers should go through this program as well as the inmates. It's just very positive comments.

Michel: Of the 400 people at the conference who heard about the Peace Education Program, how many people have left their information for you to follow up with?

Sally: Donna and I have been working very hard on getting all the spreadsheets created for all of the interest, and we just finished those yesterday, at least over 100. And these are very interested people. They weren't just like, "Oh, here's my card," you know? They were like, "No, I need this, now!" It was really interested people. I've already got the shipping process started, and we're excited to get it going right away and follow up with everyone.

How did it feel for you to participate at this conference?

Sally: The passion that came from the audience and this group of people wanting this material, I was just like overwhelmed. As soon as I got home I just started typing lists and getting emails together and getting the shipping going. And it's like, no, I really want to get this into their hands because they really want it.

And one of the things I think Donna and I see is that, how can we make this as simple to get the material into their hands? They don't have a lot of time, and some of them don't have internet access. And they have different things that they have to overcome that we sort of all take for granted in our lives. But when you're dealing inside correctional, they have very limited resources. So, we are trying to figure out how best we can help this group of people get the PEP

kits and the materials in a really timely fashion. They could just see the value of the fundamentals of this program in life and how everybody needs it.

6. Opening Doors: How PEP Took Off in Sri Lanka: Manoharan Ramanathan

Thanks to the efforts of Manoharan Ramanathan and other volunteers, PEP has gained the support of high level government officials in Sri Lanka. Their enthusiasm is helping the program grow quickly in prisons and other facilities across the South Asian island country. We talked to Manoharan about the great developments there and how it all started.

Manoharan: I'm really excited about it. The only thing is, basically I'm an architect, and I have been working in the architectural area. But the message is so interesting that I thought, why not I just try out, you know, maybe go to people. I was hesitant at first, I did not want to go and spoil the work. But then there came a point where I just felt like meeting a few people.

Then I talked with some of the senior management guys, and one person was the Sri Lankan ambassador in Australia, and he introduced me to a few people, because I was meeting some top officials in Sri Lanka. At one point, one of the senior management guys connected me to the minister here who is in charge of prison reforms and rehabilitation and reconstitution minister. I met the minister and said, "Can I introduce this subject on peace education?"

And he said, "Let me know in three or four sentences what it is." So, he called the permanent secretary of the ministry, his private secretary, and also his coordinating secretaries, and a few others there, and he wanted me to tell in a few words. And you know what he said? "Why did you not inform us? We could have given you an opening for you to introduce this in the prisons."

Then he asked, "What do you want?" He thought we were trying to sell the PEP or some kind of education system. I said I don't want anything. I just want to see the message go to the prisons and also to the people outright, and the minister said, "Okay, I will connect you."

He had a problem in the north of Sri Lanka where young people are getting into gangs and using violence against people. And he said, "Can you go and talk to these people?" I said, "Definitely, yes. It doesn't matter if it's gangs, or prisoners, or even parliament, or people, anyone." From there, he told the permanent secretary of his ministry to call senior prison officials and have a workshop. They said, "Okay, we are interested in this. Can you come and conduct this program?"

The next one, they called one of the biggest jails in Sri Lanka, which is notorious where so many things happen. They said, "Why don't you come there and have a workshop with senior prison officials and the permanent secretary."

We have PEP supported by the ministry, we had one in eastern part of Sri Lanka, mainly rehabilitating prisoners and drug addicts. Two modules have taken place already in Sinhalese,

and my colleague is handling that. And there is another one that was completed last Monday in Colombo, the western province. We had one program where 141 prisoners attended, and the majority of them are death sentence prisoners. They are actually appealing, and some of them are sentenced to death, so they were there. After the program, it was asked whether they were interested in having another one, and they all put their hands up.

7. Expressions from the Atlanta Transitional Center: Valerie Hamilton

Hi, I'm Valerie Hamilton from Atlanta, and I've been with the Peace Education Program in Atlanta for the last four years. And it has just been so much fun. I never knew being on a team could be this exciting and just fun, just to be a part of that. And over the last four years, we've had wonderful, wonderful expressions from the men at the Atlanta Transitional Center.

I'd like to start with a quote from Jeffrey. And Jeffrey said, "It's simple the way he explains it, but when you visualize what he says, it's profound. Every day we ignore the fact that we have the power to write our own story. At some point, you give up that power. I'm going to leave today with a more focused agenda to write my story day by day."

Somebody else wrote, "I used to walk around here with a chip on my shoulder when things didn't go my way. Now I see my ego got in the way of things and I have no patience. Maybe this class really *is* getting to me."

And Dorsey wrote, "I walk this life differently, and I am a better person for it."

Michael was a former participant in PEP, and he encouraged people to attend the next class by saying, "Hope is a powerful force. I've learned a lot about myself and how to handle conflict better over the last nine weeks. The peace that I felt there was wonderful."

Here's another quote: "I have a burning desire for more. You can never get enough of this."

Robert: "The old me wouldn't have bothered to come down. It wouldn't have mattered. I need, not want, to incorporate this into my life. From the first class, I got something out of it. You've got to incorporate this. After 41 years, I realize I need this."

And John said, "Clarity is the biggest thing I got out of this class. You have to find it for yourself. The facilitators can't help you find it. It will get your mind away from all those distractions. It will give you lots of wisdom. Don't look at the differences. Look at the similarities. It is really a good class. It makes you optimistic. Knowledge of the self is the biggest gift you can have."

And the last quote I want to end with is from Shaun. When he took the class and the class was over, he said that he was going to be getting out soon and moving to another TC, that's a transitional center, and would love to be a facilitator for this class. He said he wanted everyone to know about it, especially the young people. And guess what? Shaun is now a facilitator at the Augusta Men's Transitional Center.

Thank you for listening, and thank you for letting me participate.

8. Conclusion: Michel Klamph and Ron Greenspan

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, talent and passion to this broadcast.

If you would like to post comments, give feedback on this broadcast or to offer suggestions for future stories you can contact us through the link on the broadcast page.

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Until next time we wish you dignity, peace and prosperity.