

**Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project
in St. James Town and Regent Park
(Toronto, Canada)
Phase Two: January 30, 2005-June 30, 2006**

Evaluation Report

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Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project for the communities of St. James Town and Regent Park, (Toronto, Canada), Phase Two: January 30, 2005-June 30, 2006, submitted to The Law Foundation of Ontario by Peacebuilders International Inc., a project of the Agora Foundation, September 6, 2006. © All Rights Reserved to Peacebuilders International Inc. Permission to refer to, use, or copy may be obtained from email@peacebuilders.ca or by calling (416) 960-0105.

Executive Summary

Peacemaking Circles have been used in Canada and other countries for centuries to empower the parties and community to find holistic solutions to crime and conflict. Peacemaking Circles address the underlying causes of violence and conflicts. Peacemaking Circles consider the needs of victims, offenders, families and communities within a re-integrative context. The connections forged in circles provide the basis for the partnerships necessary to carry out integrated solutions to the immediate and underlying causes of conflict. Circle processes aspire to encompass the interests of all participants.

This report provides findings from a process evaluation of the Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project in the St. James Town and Regent Park communities from January 30, 2005 to June 30, 2006. A previous evaluation was completed on the first year of the implementation of the project. The report begins with the historical context of the initiative, an overview and description of Peacemaking Circles, the goals and objectives of the initiative, its structure and the design of the evaluation and a summary of the findings of the evaluation. The remainder of the report focuses upon findings from the evaluation related to both the implementation process and outcomes.

It should be noted that there were several challenges encountered in undertaking the evaluation. The timelines were short for the evaluation and the response rate to the various self-administered questionnaires could have been higher. It was difficult in following up with several of the youth who participated in the Pilot Project as several of them had moved or had changed their telephone numbers. In addition, the evaluation was undertaken in June and July when most people are on vacation. Notwithstanding the challenges, the responses from staff, volunteers and youth provided invaluable insight into the evaluation and lessons learned of the project.

The results of this evaluation have demonstrated that staff and volunteers are dedicated to using Peacemaking Circle as a means to resolving conflict and crime within the community. Respondents to the various self-administered questionnaires and telephone interviews with youth were very positive. Respondents were appreciative that something is being done to address youth violence issues and that such a resource was available to them. There was also a high level of satisfaction amongst the youth that were interviewed who participated in the Pilot Project. In addition, staff and volunteers demonstrated a deep commitment to restorative justice processes.

Feedback from participants suggests that the project has assisted youth to form positive relationships with their families and peers, an understanding of how to deal with conflict as it arises, and contributed to their own well-being. Furthermore, several respondents noted the project has assisted youth with additional community support and opportunities that enabled youth to meet their needs and build competencies.

The community has also been very supportive of the project through referrals to the project and volunteering as Steering Committee members and Circle Keepers. The Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project addressed most of its original mandate. However, it is unrealistic and beyond the capacity of the organization to continue without ongoing sustaining funding. In addition, it would not be feasible to expand the Pilot Project or to organize the required training without increasing the present complement of full-time staff to meet the needs of the community

Most restorative justice programs rely heavily on the use of volunteers. This can pose a serious problem to any pilot project if there are not enough volunteers and the existing base of volunteers is over-used. The Executive Director and Founder of Peacebuilders International has volunteered her services to the Pilot Project for the past three years. There is a need for this position to become a full-time, paid position.

The knowledge gained from the Pilot Project should be shared with other community-based organizations that work with youth. The Peacebuilders' website can be enhanced to include training materials on Peacemaking Circles, lessons learned and references to other relevant research materials. The website can also be enhanced as a source for referral from other community justice programs.

There remain a number of key challenges that have been identified through the evaluation that need to be addressed:

- Delivering the initiative within challenging staffing and fiscal constraints.
- Broadening the scope of networking and visibility of the program across Toronto.
- Increasing the training capacity and fostering growth for the program to become self-sustaining within the community.

I. Background

Peacebuilders International Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that works locally and networks globally. The decision to establish Peacebuilders International was made at meetings of international delegates held in Port Royal, Jamaica, in July, 2002. Participants and supporters work in peacebuilding initiatives in specific high conflict regions around the world and have significant expertise in fields such as conflict resolution, law, psychology, youth empowerment and community development.

Origins of Peacebuilders International

Peacebuilders International Inc. is an outcome of the Action Plans of the third International YouCAN! Conference on Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution held in Toronto in February, 2002. It provides an organizational home for older youth who want to continue their work in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Following meetings in Jamaica in July, 2002, during which the vision, mission, values and decision-making principles were agreed upon, Peacebuilders established an international Council of Advisors and a local Board of Directors. Peacebuilders International is currently conducting trainings abroad and investigating the possibilities of initiating projects abroad.

Peacebuilders' strategy provides a concrete example of the dictum: "Act locally, think globally". Circles act as an invaluable process, developing understanding, bridging differences and giving every single group participant a voice. The application of common, positive values within Circle processes serves to build relationships and community among diverse individuals thereby providing opportunities for governance and decision-making. If used appropriately, Circles can be instrumental in reducing the need for social and other criminal justice services as they become a relationship and community building tool.

In Toronto, Peacebuilders International is focused on the use of circle processes for the purposes of establishing models for the use of circle dialogues, decision-making and consensus building circles as well as governance circles in collaboration with existing community-based organizations. These organizations primarily work in the fields of conflict resolution and community building. Peacebuilders' programs are focused upon building capacity by conducting Circle Process training sessions for circle participants, facilitators and trainers. In addition, the Peacemaking Circle Project focuses on diverting youth who come into conflict with the law from the criminal justice system.

Organizational Values, Vision and Mission

Values:

Peacebuilders International is based upon the following organizational values: Respect, Honesty, Humility, Sharing, Inclusivity, Empathy, Courage, Forgiveness, Love and Trust.

Vision:

Diverse peoples and cultures committed to building peace.

Mission:

To create cross-cultural partnerships amongst youth and adults through capacity building for peaceful and sustainable communities.

II. Introduction

Peacemaking Circles have been used in Canada and other countries for centuries to empower the parties and community to find holistic solutions to crime and conflict. Peacemaking Circles address the underlying causes of violence and conflicts. Peacemaking Circles consider the needs of victims, offenders, families and communities within a re-integrative context. The connections forged in circles provide the basis for the partnerships necessary to carry out integrated solutions to the immediate and underlying causes of conflict. Circle processes aspire to encompass the interests of all participants.

Circles in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities have been adapted to meet the special conditions of each community. Sentencing Circles have been used within communities to respond to adult and juvenile crime. Healing Circles have been used by different groups to cope with healing journeys. Peacemaking Circles have been used for resolving conflicts with families, the workplace, schools, corporations, and communities.

Peacemaking Circles build communities and assist the community in preventing future conflicts. Circles foster respect and understanding among the participants and within the community. In addition, circles build conflict resolution and participatory skills amongst participants in the circle. Circles empower communities and individuals to share responsibility for the conflict. Circles offer a re-integration ceremony for everyone involved in the conflict. Circles emphasize the importance of shared responsibilities and the strengths of everyone. They gather community resources and serve to heal the entire community.

“Circles are designed to help us access our common humanity and from this basis to forge a healing response to conflict. In so doing, Circles present a radical shift in how we respond to hurts and create social order. Specifically, Circles invite a paradigm shift:

1. From Coercion to healing;
2. From solely individual, to individual and collective accountability;
3. From primary dependence on the state, to greater self-reliance in the community;
4. From “justice as getting even to justice getting well”.¹

The peacebuilding process is predicated on the belief that the means of dealing with conflict in communities can be found within those communities, through the personal strengths, assets and skills of people

¹ Pranis, Kay, Stuart, Barry, and Wedge, Mark. Peacemaking Circles From Crime to Community. Living Justice Press. 2003.

who live and work there. The process initially identifies individuals with inherent competencies within every community: capacity to lead, to negotiate, to facilitate discussion. The process then uses a mechanism called the Peacemaking Circle for community building and partnership development, originally developed by Aboriginal communities as a restorative justice process. The approach requires long-term support to integrate a changed conflict management culture into the community. It also builds on the specific competence of individuals, who may be trained as Keepers or Trainers in the Circle process. Individuals may be residents or staff working in community agencies.

The Peacemaking Circle is a group dialogue process with two highly trained Facilitators. During a Peacemaking Circle, participants are encouraged to listen to others, step into their shoes, share their experiences, and work towards a common goal. The Circle is an effective tool that creates a safe space for people to have difficult but respectful conversations. The Circle process can also support communities to:

- Facilitate resolution of differences among diverse community members.
- Examine options and develop consensus related to community issues.
- Help those at-risk to accept responsibility and move towards personal change.
- Make group decisions, brainstorm and build community.

Peace Circles have the potential to:

- Strengthen communities and schools by expanding local ownership and control.
- Assist youth and adults who come into conflict with the law.
- Ensure the development of healthy and responsible youth.
- Support families by recognizing them as the basic institution for developing and nurturing children.
- Recognize that all people matter and fostering respect for diversity.
- Foster and support violence-free relationships.
- Increase the capacity of communities to deal with criminal and social justice issues.²

² Pranis, Kay. The Little Book of Circle Processes. A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking. Good Books. 2005.

1. Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project in St James Town and Regent Park

The initiative focuses on supporting youth in conflict with the law in the St. James Town and Regent Park communities. The Peacemaking Circle process is individualized for each client. Facilitators take a holistic approach, getting to know the youth and their supports within the community and understanding the factors that may be contributing to the youth's behaviour. Unlike other restorative justice programs, this program does not focus solely on the offence. The process is often transformational for young people and supports them beyond court involvement, by engaging their family members, community mentors and community elders. The Project has extensive linkages to schools, police, community-based agencies, and members of the business and professional community. The program also involves and supports victims, but will work with youth even if the victim chooses not to participate. If victims are not present in the Circle, the program ensures that there is representation around the victim's issues, so that the victim's voice is still heard in the restorative process.

Peacebuilders International provides a detailed recruitment and training program for staff of community agencies and residents who facilitates Peacemaking Circles for the community related to specific conflict situations or on broader issues. The initial training program included workshops on the 'Fundamentals of Peacemaking Circles' as well as 'Becoming a Circle Keeper.' However, because the approach is non-hierarchical and thus, fundamentally different from other conflict resolution methods such as arbitration or mediation, communities require ongoing support until the community has enough trained Circle Keepers and residents familiar with the method to ensure that the process is integrated into the community culture. Participants in the training workshops have been diverse in racial, cultural, age, gender and socio-economic diversity. The project is committed to a holistic, individualized and community oriented approach to each case.

Peacemaking Circles can assist youth at risk in a variety of settings. Circles can be used in a school setting to identify barriers between the youth and education. Circles can also be used in a family setting to dialogue and resolve conflicts between parents and teens and between siblings. Finally, Circles can be used in a community setting to identify community support agencies.

Peacemaking Circles assist youth charged under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA). A Peacemaking Circle can be designed to assist youth who have accepted responsibility for their actions and want to move towards rehabilitation and reintegration back into their communities in a positive manner. Peacemaking Circles for YCJA cases are based on the voluntary participation of the youth and the optional participation of those

most harmed by the offence. Other participants are identified in efforts to ensure that the outcome of the Circle is beneficial to the rehabilitation of the youth. The other participants may include probation officers, parents/guardians, siblings, teachers/coaches or other professionals. The facilitators (Circle Keepers) are required to complete over thirty hours of intense training in the Peacemaking Circle Process and have extensive academic and professional experience with youth and conflict resolution.

2. Objective of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA)

One of the key objectives of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) is to increase the use of extrajudicial measures for youth who come into conflict with the law or who have the potential to come into conflict with the law. Extrajudicial measures provide meaningful consequences, such as requiring the young person to repair the harm done to the victim. They also allow early intervention with young people and provide the opportunity for the community to play an important role in developing community-based responses to youth crime. Increasing the use of extrajudicial measures not only improves the response to less serious youth crime, it also enables the courts to focus on more serious cases. Section 4 of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* sets out the following principles:

- (a) extrajudicial measures are often the most appropriate and effective way to address youth crime;
- (b) extrajudicial measures allow for effective and timely interventions focused on correcting offending behaviour;
- (c) extrajudicial measures are presumed to be adequate to hold a young person accountable for his or her offending behaviour if the young person has committed a non-violent offence and has not previously been found guilty of an offence; and
- (d) extrajudicial measures should be used if they are adequate to hold a young person accountable for his or her offending behaviour and, if the use of extrajudicial measures is consistent with the principles set out in this section, nothing in this Act precludes their use in respect of a young person who:
 - (i) has previously been dealt with by the use of extrajudicial measures, or
 - (ii) has previously been found guilty of an offence.

The principles of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* are based on holding young offenders accountable and responsible for their actions. The YCJA focuses upon:

- Increasing the use of non-court measures for less serious cases.
- Reducing the use of youth courts for less serious cases.

- Enabling the youth courts to focus on more serious cases; and
- Providing support to police in their exercise of discretion.

The *YCJA* authorizes and encourages the use of conferences, defined as a group of people brought together to give advice to a police officer, judge, justice of the peace, prosecutor, provincial director or youth worker who is required to make a decision under the Act, to help the decision makers in the youth justice system. The group of people can include the parents, the victim(s), others who know the young offender, professionals, community representatives, and others who may have expertise or information that is relevant to developing proposals that are designed to redress the harm done to the victim, or help the young person come to terms with the offending behaviour. Furthermore, the *YCJA* encourages community involvement in the delivery of alternative measures.

Extrajudicial measures are established programs that provide an alternative to the formal criminal justice processing of youth. These programs also offer an opportunity for the criminal justice system to use innovative alternatives to custody for youth who come into conflict with the law. These programs have the potential to involve the young offender, their families, the victims and other members of the community to address the needs of youth within the community.

The rationale for delivering services and programs at the community level for both youth and adults who come into conflict with the law is based on the premise that the community is best suited to address its own problems. The community also benefits because community members become empowered by dealing with minor criminal offences in their own jurisdiction and by reducing the costs associated with court time. The victim benefits by becoming involved in the decision-making process. In addition, if the young person agrees to participate in an alternative to going to court, the youth may avoid court proceedings. The youth also assumes responsibility for the offence and gains an understanding of the effects of the offence on the victim.

3. The Peacemaking Circle Process

The Peacemaking Circle is a group dialogue process with two highly trained Facilitators. During a Peacemaking Circle, participants are encouraged to listen to others, step into their shoes, share their experiences, and work towards a common goal. The Circle creates a safe space for people to have difficult but respectful conversations. The Circle can also be used as a tool to make group decisions, brainstorm and build community. Through these shared personal experiences, acceptance of responsibility and reconciliation are possible.

The following stages are used in the Peacemaking Circle process:

Stage One: Circle Intake

- Case is referred to Peacemaking Circle Project
- Case is reviewed for eligibility or disqualification
- Case assignment to facilitators

Stage Two: Preparation Circles

- Overview of Peacemaking Circle process
- Youth may be recommended for other community agency programs
- Preparation Circles take place to include areas such as family issues, facts of the offence, its impact, alternatives for restitution, reconciliation, reparation and reintegration
- Date for Final Restorative Justice Circle is Determined

Stage Three: Final Restorative Justice Circle

- Final Restorative Justice Circle with/without victim
- Circle members collectively decide on an appropriate and meaningful restitution and action plan including youth

Stage Four: Follow-Up

- Restitution may include any one or more of the following as well as any other solutions approved by the circle:
 - Written essays or letters of apology
 - Community service work
 - Financial restitution
 - Anger management training
 - Restrictions in association with co-offenders or movement related to the offence
 - Restrictions upon the association of the youth/offender with any one or more of the victim(s)
 - Other measures deemed appropriate by the Circle participants
 - Participation in special programs such as anger management, sexism, etc.
- Follow-up meetings are held.
- Report is made to the court, referring individual or agency
- Completed file is returned to the Case Coordinator

4. Evaluation Design and Methodology

The timeline for the focus of this evaluation was on Phase II of the Pilot Project, which began in February, 2005 and ended in June, 2006. The evaluation focused on undertaking a process evaluation. A process evaluation focuses on what services were provided to whom and how. Its purpose is to describe how the program was implemented, who was involved and what problems were experienced. A process evaluation is useful for monitoring program implementation, for identifying changes to make the program operate as planned, and, generally, for program improvement. A process evaluation can answer questions regarding program effort; identify processes or procedures used to carry out the functions of the program and address program operation and performance. Reach, frequency, awareness, and reactions of the target audience are generally measured for all program delivery efforts. This type of evaluation is useful for monitoring project implementation, for identifying changes to make the project operate as planned, and to generally improve the project.

Objectives of Evaluation

The primary objectives of evaluating the Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project are:

- i) To document the development and implementation of the program.
- ii) To learn what works and how to support the future development of the project.
- iii) To assess the degree to which the project has met its stated objectives from February 2005 until June 2006.
- iv) To assess the level of satisfaction of participants including youth, Circle Keepers, Steering Committee members and staff.

Evaluation Methodology

The methodology used for this evaluation report involved a combination of methods and data sources:

- A self-administered questionnaire was sent to Peacebuilders staff, Circle Keepers (Facilitators) and Steering Committee members.
- Telephone interviews were held with youth who participated in the Circle process.
- A review of program and administrative case files.
- Exit surveys of youth and circle participants
- A review of quarterly and annual reports submitted to the Law Foundation of Ontario.
- Independent review of literature on Peace Circles.

**5. Objectives of Peacemaking Circle Pilot project in 2005
(Phase I, Feb. 2004 to Jan. 30, 2005)**

The following were the objectives of the initiative in Phase I:

1. Identify the lead community organizations that will be eager, long-term partners in the development of the capacity of these communities to address differences and challenges through Circle dialogues.
2. Identify and engage individuals, such as police officers, parole and probation officers, youth workers, teachers, attendance officers, social workers and others who live and/or work in these communities, who will be prepared to take leadership and exercise innovation by integrating the use of Peacemaking Circles into their regular day-to-day work in these communities.
3. Provide the Peacemaking Circles training and community outreach work that will prepare leaders (both youth and adults) and other individuals in the St. James Town and Regent Park communities to participate in circles to begin to use the circle methodology to address issues of youth crime, to resolve disputes, manage conflicts and build relationships.
4. Train a core group of suitable candidates to know how to participate in circles and how to facilitate in circles.
5. Train a core group of suitable candidates to become trainers of circle participants and circle facilitators.
6. To support the establishment of the Peacebuilders Circles Training Institute for the purpose of developing guidelines, procedures, protocols and safeguards for the training and practice of circle processes within the provisions of the new *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
7. To develop strategies to embed the circle process in existing community service delivery organizations.

**6. Objectives of Peacemaking Circle Pilot project in 2006
(Phase II, Feb. 2005 to July 2006)**

The following identify the objectives of the initiative in Phase II:

1. Managing cases in Circle as a restorative justice process for youth.
2. To further the development of a Peacebuilders Training Institute, including training standards, guidelines, procedures, and protocols, articulate skill sets and competencies for Circle Keepers, research and examine accreditation processes, provide Circle Keepers with training, experience and practicum, and ensure that partners at all levels are readily able to embrace Circle processes.
3. To further embed the process in existing community service organizations by assessing the suitability of current partners,

identifying appropriate new partners, and engaging recognized, respected community leaders in the process.

4. To provide education and outreach in Peacemaking Circles, in order to enhance public awareness in the use of Circle methodology to address issues of youth crime, to resolve disputes, manage conflicts and build relationships.
5. To ensure sustainability of the Pilot project by developing organizational capacity, evaluation and diversifying and stabilizing funding sources.

Description of Second Year of Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project

The overall goal of the Peacemaking Circle Pilot project was to develop capacity in governmental agencies, justice related services, community-based organizations and individuals of St. James Town and Regent Park to use Peacemaking Circle processes with youth between the ages of 12 and 24. The first priority of the project was accepting referrals of youth who were charged or are about to be charged under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. The second focus of the project was on youth who were impacted by the *Safe Schools Act*.

7. Referral Process

A youth between the ages of 13-25 could be referred for consideration to the Peacemaking Circle by a school, community agency, police, court, parent/guardian, the victim or anyone else with an interest in the matter. In addition, youth could also self-refer to the project. The principal admission criterion for participants to the project was based upon an intake assessment undertaken by a Case Support Worker. The intake assessment determined if the youth was willing to consider the consequences of his/her behaviour, take responsibility for their behaviour, take responsibility for any damage, and be willing to make a determined effort to make amends. Each referral is assessed individually for appropriateness for a Circle process. Youth who are charged with murder or attempted murder are not considered for referral.

8. Staffing and Management Model

The Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project was managed under the auspices of Peacebuilders International. Phase II staffing consisted of a Volunteer Executive Director, a Project Director, a part-time Program Development Officer, two part-time Case Support Workers, a full-time Office Administrator and a part-time Bookkeeper. The project office was located at Ontario Street and Gerrard Street East in the project catchment area of St. James Town and Regent Park and has recently moved to Adelaide Street. The project consisted of two major phases. The first phase of the project focused on training Peacemaking Circle facilitators (Circle Keepers). The second phase focused on the implementation of the Peacemaking Circle process and accepting referrals of youth.

9. Community Consultation and Public Education

One indicator of the success of a project is community involvement. The participation of community members and organizations reflects trust and ownership in the project. It is important that the project is perceived to be offering fair, safe, accessible, culturally relevant services. This “buy-in” from the community builds trust and leads to increased accountability and support. It is equally important that the project undertake a public education campaign to raise awareness of the goals and objectives of the project. This can be achieved through public forums, pamphlets or newsletters, local television or radio interviews, conducting workshops, etc. They can also share information with the community about their program at Board meetings of other community-based organizations.

A program can also assist a greater sense of ownership of a project by bringing together volunteers and committee members. These individuals should represent a broad section of the community including youth, business people, visible minorities, school employees, Elders, local Councillors, social and criminal justice personnel, victim services, etc. The Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project has had considerable success in terms of the level of community support and interest in the program. Presentations about the Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project were made throughout the City of Toronto to community-based agencies, schools, youth and government officials.

A Community Steering Committee met monthly to review issues that arose with the youth cases. It also discussed any community events and or issues that were relevant to the project. A highly successful Community Appreciation BBQ was held at the Wellesley Community Centre on July 26th, 2006 and was attended by the Honourable George Smitherman, the Executive Director of the Law Foundation of Ontario, many members of the Steering Committee and many community members, children and youth. Press also attended and a report of the event was broadcast on CFRB that afternoon. See Appendix E for a copy of the BBQ Event brochure.

10. Summary of Youth Profiles

The following tables represent a summary of the profiles of the youth who participated in the Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project.

Table 1 – Case Files

Total Case Files	49
Male	41
Female	8

There were a total of forty-nine youth who participated in the Peacemaking Circle process. Forty-one of the participants were male and eight were female.

Table 2 - Age Demographics

12 years old	1
13 years old	2
14 years old	7
15 years old	8
16 years old	5
17 years old	14
18 years old	6
19 years old	2
21 years old	1
Not complete	3
TOTAL	49

The majority of participants in the circle process were between fourteen and eighteen years of age.

Table 3 - Community Demographics

St. James Town	7
Regent Park	15
Catchment other than those above	4
Other	19
Not complete	4
TOTAL	49

Other refers to youth who were being dealt with by the police, the Courts, probation officers or schools in the project catchment area.

Table 4 - Race Demographics

White/Caucasian	10
Aboriginal	0
Black	11
South Asian	11
South-East/East Asian	4
Arabic	0
Mixed	7
Other	3
Not complete	3
TOTAL	49

Table 5 - Preferred Language

Total Preferred Language	49
English	46
Spanish	1
Not Complete	2

The majority of participants indicated that their preferred language was English.

Table 6 – Parents’ Language Demographics

English	23
Somali	1
Filipino	1
Chinese	1
Tamil	2
Bengali	3
Spanish	1
Urdu	1
France	1
Italian	1
Portuguese	1
Vietnamese	2
Jamaican	1
Korean	1
Nepali	1
Not Complete	8
TOTAL	49

Table 7 - Referring Source

Crown attorney	0
Judge	2
Probation Services	17
School	1
Police Services	3
Operation Springboard	0
Defense lawyer	3
Family	1
Community agency	7
Youth	6
Victim	0
Other (community member)	2
No Answer	8
TOTAL	49

Seventeen youth were referred to the project by probation services and the remainder from a community agency, a Judge, school, a family member, other youth and a defense lawyer,

Table 8 – Substance Use

Yes	16
No	26
No Answer	7

Sixteen youth indicated that they had used a substance prior to entering the project.

Table 9 – Prior Charges

Prior Charges	49
Yes	15
No	29
No Answer	5

Fifteen youth had criminal charges laid against them prior to being referred to the program.

Table 10 – Nature of Prior Charges

n/a	30
Physical Harm	4
Property damage	0
Threats	0
Theft	2
Weapons offense	1
Drug offense	1
Other	3
No Answer	6
TOTAL	49

Four youth had a prior charge of physical harm laid against them and two youth had a prior charge of theft laid against them.

Table 11 - Outcome of Prior Charges

n/a	30
Charges dropped	8
Not guilty	0
Convicted/probation	3
Convicted/institutionalized	0
Diversion program	1
In process	1
No answer	6
TOTAL	49

Eight of the youth had the prior charges dropped against them and three were either convicted or were placed on probation.

Table 12 - Outcome of Prior Charges

Charged under YCJA	29
Arrested but not charged	1
On probation	2
Suspended from school	5
Expelled from school	1
No formal status	-
Other	-
Charged under Criminal Code	3
Multiple charges	14
TOTAL	49

Twenty-nine of the youth referred to the project were charged under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and fourteen of the youth had multiple charges laid against them.

Table 13 - Completed Circle Process

Total Completed Circle Process	49
Yes	34
No	14
No – Ongoing	1

Table 14 - Outcome of Circle Process

Issue resolved through a circle process	27
Issue not resolved through a circle process	17
Ongoing	1
No answer	4

11. Summary of Survey of Peacemaking Circle Participants

Participants in the circle process filled out evaluation forms after the conclusion of each circle. Participant feedback was very positive on the project. Respondents stated that they were appreciative of such a service and found it to be quite empowering. The following is a summary of exit surveys that were completed by sixty-two circle participants.

Over the duration of the Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project, several circles were held. Of these, exit surveys were provided for eight main Circles. A total of 62 individuals completed the survey in the eight circles. Surveys were received from the following individuals:

- Injured Party/victim: 8
- A parent/guardian of the injured party: 2
- A friend/other relative of the injured party: 2
- Youth: 13
- A parent/guardian of the youth: 7
- A friend/other relative of the youth: 15
- A professional: (2 Youth Workers; 2 tutors or mentors from Pathways to Education; 1 Lawyer; 1 Community Mediator; 1 Police Officer; 1 person from Conflict Resolution Services; 1 Leave Out Violence Everywhere (LOVE) Program Coordinator; 1 Student Parent Support Worker; 1 Principal; 1 Teacher; 1 Children’s Aid Society worker
- Other: (1 Elder; 1 Intern) 2

It should be noted that several of the respondents also took part in one or more smaller preparatory circles.

The following table shows a high level of satisfaction amongst the sixty-two respondents who participated in the Circles. The evaluation is based on a 5-point Likert scale of nine items with “5” being Strongly Agree. (Please see Appendix A - Survey of Peacemaking Circle Participants.)

Table 15 - Circle Participant Responses (n=62)

I knew the purpose of the circle.	4.6/5
There was enough time devoted to this process. (n=61)	4.8/5
It felt like a safe process.	4.9/5
I think everyone had the opportunity to speak (n=61)	4.9/5
I think people listened to each other.	4.9/5
I felt that my views contributed to decisions.	4.7/5
The circle keepers helped the process. (n=61)	4.9/5
I felt the circle was a helpful process.	4.9/5
I would suggest this process to others. (n=61)	4.9/5

12. Feedback from Participants:

- Several participants commented on the success of the Circle Keepers in maintaining focus in the group and effectively facilitating and encouraging dialogue.
- Participants acknowledged the contribution of everyone in the circle for looking at their past to see how it affects the present in order to change their future.
- One participant commented on the educational nature of the process.
- Many participants felt that the circle keepers maintained a safe and respectful environment and were adept at ensuring the adherence to ground rules and circle values.
- Respondents noted that the Circle process was very emotional and the injured parties felt honoured and respected.
- Participants felt that the circle process was efficient in confronting the issues of the young people directly and helping them to understand the consequences of their actions.
- Participants felt they were able to participate openly and generally commented on an appreciation for the talking piece.

Items for consideration:

- Some participants felt that others should have been present in the main circles including police officers, teachers, school administrators, and the injured party.
- Some participants in one of the circles felt that the process went on too long.
- One person suggested that there was too much participation from the Circle Keeper and another participant recommended putting down the talking piece for a moment to allow for open dialogue.

General Comments:

- Overall agreement by participants that more restorative justice programs are needed and that financial resources should be made available to organizations such as Peacebuilders to continue their work
- “This process has changed my life and the lives of many others for the better” (Circle participant).

The community has also shown their support by volunteering as Circle Keepers and volunteering to sit on the Steering Committee. There have also been several positive letters of support written by community-based organizations, Judges, Crown Attorneys and individuals who have participated in the circle process.

13. Summary of Youth Interviews

The following is a summary of telephone interviews with youth selected at random who participated in the Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project. A total of ten youth were interviewed. It should be noted that another twenty-five youth were contacted to participate in an interview. The majority of youth had either moved, refused to participate or their phone was disconnected.

1. Why did you choose to go through the Peacemaking Circle process?

Out of 10 respondents, youth chose to go through the peacemaking circle process due to a recommendation from the following individuals: four by their lawyer, two by their probation officer, one as an extra-judicial measure, one from the youth court and one from a community-based organization.

2. In general how did you feel about the Circle process?

All of the respondents felt very positive about the circle process experience. One respondent specified that he or she appreciated the fact that every circle participant had an opportunity to speak. One participant preferred the circle process to the court process and one participant liked the circle process because the charges were dropped.

3. What did you like about it?

Seventy-five per cent of respondents articulated that they appreciated the fact that everyone in a Circle process had an opportunity to share their opinions and concerns openly while being heard and listened to. Twenty-five per cent of respondents specified their appreciation of the Circle Keepers and/or staff.

4. What did you not like about it?

Twenty-five per cent of respondents indicated that the process was good and had nothing to add. The other 75% of respondents stated the following comments:

- Time consuming though very meaningful,
- Scheduling was not convenient for everyone,
- People changed their stories in order to get sympathy from circle people,
- Process was too long,
- I feel judged and that accusations are thrown at me

5. What was missing?

Ninety per cent of respondents indicated that the process was good and felt nothing was missing. One respondent felt there was a lack of resources and another respondent noted there was not enough space for the circle.

6. Have you have experienced formal youth justice dispositions before?

Seven of the ten respondents had experienced other formal youth justice dispositions prior to being referred to the program.

7. If yes, how does the Circle process compare?

The seven youth who had experienced formal youth dispositions in court prior to being referred to the Circle process stated:

- The circles were a much better process than the court system.
- There were no comparisons due to very different situations.
- Less people, and no judges, no one to sentence you.
- Circle was better.
- It was more personal.
- It was better.
- They had an opportunity to talk whereby in the court system they do not.

8. In what ways was it better or helpful? What positive things did it offer?

Ninety per cent of respondents felt that Circles were better and more helpful than the formal criminal justice system. One respondent noted, “it was not better; there was nothing positive about that situation”. The positive aspects mentioned in interviews included:

- It taught me more about the consequences of my actions,
- I felt more comfortable in circle process, because in court it goes for very long time,
- In my other case the judge just sentenced me, but in the Circle, I got a chance to talk,
- It helped me understand the people who were affected by my actions,
- I got to hear everyone’s points of view while in court it was different,
- Everyone had a chance to sit and talk,
- It was more helpful than in court, we get to talk about what happened in the past and how it is now.

9. In what way was it worse? What was missing?

Most respondents felt the challenge with the court system was that they did not get an opportunity to voice their opinion. All of the respondents felt that with the Peacebuilders’ Peacemaking Circles the most valuable aspect was that all of them had an equal opportunity to speak and share their opinion. Other comments included:

- In court I did not get on opportunity to voice my opinion, but at the Circle everyone had equal opportunity to speak and share his or her opinion.
- You had no one to listen to you.
- Court system took a long period of time and the circle was much faster and more meaningful.
- Court system was worse because I did six months for a crime that I did not commit. After six months, they told me I was wrongfully accused.
- The amount of time and circle process took a few months.
- Nothing was missing or worse.

10. Would you recommend the Circle process to others?

Ninety per cent of respondents felt that they would recommend the circle process to others. Comments included the following:

- Because I know a lot of other youth who have been through the court system and it did not help them.
- I believe Peacebuilders would have been a better alternative.
- It's a good experience, everyone had the opportunity to voice their opinions, it's not only the circle process, it is also the community service program that allows you to gain work experience.
- Because the process helped me and I had some serious issues, so I think it would help anyone.
- Another noted that it would depend on the person.

11. Do you think the Circle process would be beneficial (would you recommend it) for other youth, and if so, why?

All of the respondents indicated that the circle process would be beneficial for other youth. They noted the following:

- Because I know a lot of other youth who have been through the court system and it did not help them.
- I believe Peacebuilders would have been a better alternative.
- It's a good experience, everyone had an opportunity to voice his or her opinions, it's not only the circle process, and it is also the community service program that allows you to gain work experience.
- The process helped me and I had some serious issues-so I think it would help anyone.
- Because you get the chance to speak about the incident and what you would have done differently.
- Because it gives you a better chance to see what you have done wrong and how to correct your mistakes.
- The circle would give youth a voice.
- It gives youth a chance to fix what you have done wrong.
- It helps you explain their feelings and what you think about other people.

12. Are there some youth (or cases) that you think it would not be suitable for? (if not, why not?)

Most respondents felt the Circle process would be beneficial to other youth. They noted:

- No, I think it would be suitable for anyone who would be willing to change their behaviour.
- No, I think it is suitable for everyone.
- No, all youth needs some kind of helping hand like Peacebuilders.
- Yes. It's not for everyone. Only people who are willing to learn from their mistakes. It should not be used for murderers or those who committed serious crimes.
- No, because it gives all youth a chance to share their views.
- Yes, only for people who are willing to change.
- Yes, people who are a real danger to society.

13. What did the Circle Keepers do that was helpful?

All of the respondents indicated that the Circle Keepers assisted them in effective listening and made them aware of the consequences of their actions. Other comments included:

- They helped me to understand the consequences of my actions and that my actions affect others seriously.
- They were able to provide me with much needed guidance.
- They listen.
- They made me laugh... and it was ok to cry.
- They set convenient time so everyone could attend the circles, and they would calm me down when I got mad about people in the circle who were lying.
- They show support regardless of your crime.
- They look at your past problems with family, school and/or drugs to find what caused you to commit the crime.
- They listened to everyone else and they tried to help out.
- They helped us to understand the questions they wanted the answer to and kept control of the circle.

14. What did the Circle Keepers do that was less helpful? What might they have done differently?

Most of the comments from the participants focused on the duration of the Circle process. Several respondents indicated that they thought the Circle process took too long. Other comments included:

- I think they took too much time in the introductory process because after a few circles you already know everyone.
- Better scheduling.
- Everything was okay.

- They could have made the information about the circle process simpler. My parents didn't speak English-so it was hard for them to understand, they could have the info in different languages.
- Time between circles was too long.
- Everything was good but it should be a longer process.
- They need to have more role models attend the Circle sessions.
- They could have stepped in when I was being judged instead of me doing it myself.

15. How do you feel about the resolution or disposition of your case?

All of the respondents were very satisfied with the outcome of the disposition of their case. Other comments included:

- I feel relief that it was over because it took a long time.
- I feel good. I started pursuing things I could not do before - like working.
- I feel good, because charges were dropped.
- I feel good, I never stepped in 311 Jarvis (youth court) I feel free.
- I feel good, because there is an easier and better way for youth to get help.
- I feel good because I am on probation.
- I feel good, because the charges were dropped and I turned my life around when it could have been ruined.
- It was good. They had other people come in and talk about better things to do with my life.

16. Has the Circle changed the way you think of dealing with conflict in general?

All of the respondents indicated that they learned how to deal with conflict when it arises, through the Circle process. Comments included:

- Yes. I try to calm myself and walk away before the problem escalates into something bigger.
- Yes, because I have a daughter now, so that helps me to make right decisions, because if I don't they will take her away from me.
- Yes, it made me realize that I have to show more respect to people and cannot judge a book by its cover.
- It helped me a lot. I always think twice before I say or do anything and I always refer back to what I learned about conflict in the circle.

- Yes. It helped me to think before I act. It also taught me to think about the results of my actions.
- I think more, I have more options on what to do.
- I will try to talk about the problems with people first.

17. What might you do differently next time a similar situation comes up?

All of the respondents indicated that they would walk away from the situation or attempt to resolve the conflict if a similar situation occurred. Other comments included:

- I would think of my daughter and make a right decision to walk away from whatever situation.
- I would walk away because there is nothing to gain from conflicts.
- Think about the consequences of my action before I act.
- I would think before I act.
- I would walk away or try to talk about things first to resolve it.
- Take a minute to think first.

18. Are there any issues that are unresolved?

All of the respondents indicated there were no unresolved issues following the Circle process. One respondent indicated that he became friends with the victim.

19. Is there anything else you'd like to share that I haven't asked about?

All of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the Circle process and were very supportive of Peacebuilders. Comments included:

- It's a good organization they did a better job than I expected.
- I learned a lot about myself. It was a good experience.
- The organization is doing a good job. I thank them for helping me.
- The organization brings people together. It is multicultural and there is no racism at Peacebuilders. They accept everyone and show love and kindness.
- It's a good program and Government needs to give them funding because it helps youth to express their hidden feelings and learn from their mistakes.
- The process was good, it helped me get through a lot of personal and court problems.
- The friend that I was able to bring to my circle benefited from the process. I liked the staff who worked on my case, it takes good staff to make the process successful.

14. Summary of Staff Feedback

A total of seven staff responded to the self-administered questionnaire and in-depth telephone interviews were held with the Executive Director of Peacebuilders International. “It takes a village to raise a child.” This well-known proverb comes into play and was quoted in the feedback from staff of the Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project initiative.

The dedication and commitment to the work of the Project and belief in the impact and further potential impact of Circles was very evident in responses from staff. Respondents’ feedback reflects commitment to the concept of Peacemaking Circles as a viable way to making crime a community issue that is dealt with in a respective way that moves towards a resolution for communities. The shortcomings of the traditional criminal justice system are reiterated yet there was experiential recognition that it holds the largest proportion of resources and status when it comes to dealing with offenders.

Respondents indicated that victims, almost completely left out of a criminal justice response, are given options and a role that responds to their needs within Circles. Considering they are the recipients of harm done, that can only be considered positive and holds promise to address their grief, pain and fear. They noted the need to lead and work with little resources, sometimes feeling inadequately trained but bolstered by the feedback and apparent help being provided to all involved, including offender, victim and community.

Respondents indicated that opposition from the formal justice system was apparent during the implementation phase of the project. Several respondents noted a few organizations perceived circles to be competition or simply finding it difficult to integrate circles meaningfully within the existing system. As noted by one respondent: “The Justice System as a whole has little room for alternatives”. Most felt the will was there to find ways to better process and become involved but follow-through was not always present.

Several respondents felt the Circle training was adequate and others had a desire for more in-depth training, often reflecting the intensity of their role and involvement. It was noted by one respondent: “The program was about changing the way people relate to each other - Circles are significantly different than all other methods of communication.” It was noted that building such skills are needed often and over time.

Most respondents indicated that the project was under-resourced, needed more community involvement and gaps became apparent due to the great diversity of the communities involved and the many and varied issues being faced by participants. To a large extent, respondents noted the project depended on volunteers and too few staff. The project also needed

more time to access and integrate professionals that could participate, contribute to and support the process. Yet, all of the respondents indicated a great deal was accomplished given the resources, support and time available. One respondent noted: “In reality, we did very well considering that people knew very little - if anything - about Circles, Peacebuilders International was an unknown organization, key staff were not known and recognized members of the community - Taking all that into account, I think we did very well to make the progress that we did make in the time period allotted with inadequate resources”.

Overall, respondents noted a very positive experience in working as part of the project and felt there was success. They emphasized and consistently noted two key highlights:

- Circles provide all those involved with a significant and meaningful role - a role that is usually non-existent and unsatisfactory in the traditional response to crime. Circles provide restoration and work towards finding positive outcomes on what is otherwise a wholly negative situation.
- The Peacebuilders initiative needs to be ‘institutionalized’ within the system if it is to be given the status and opportunity needed to provide real alternatives for victims and offenders and be utilized and resourced appropriately.

Both commitment and levels of frustration were apparent in the feedback. Respondents indicated they experienced first hand the positive potential of the initiative while being implemented in less than ideal circumstances. They noted that the dominance and density of the traditional criminal justice response made the implementation of the Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project more challenging.

15. Summary of Steering Committee Survey

Over twenty Steering Committee members from the community provided overall guidance to the Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project. A total of nine Steering Committee members provided their feedback via a self-administered questionnaire. Respondents noted a good understanding of the program and were very positive about their experience with the project. They emphasized the benefit of the project provided to participants – including offender, victim and the community.

Overall, respondents emphasized the value of the program and its work. Those that had received feedback from participants or others connected to the program noted the positive nature of the intervention and its value in providing a viable alternative that seemed restorative to both victim and offender alike. Several Committee Members commented on the initiative

being more positive than what would otherwise be a revolving door for youth offenders within a more typical criminal justice response.

This recognition of the limits of the traditional criminal justice response was further cemented by the outcomes demonstrated by those that participated in this initiative. It was noted that it was difficult to discuss long-term impacts, as that will only be apparent over time. There was a strong interest and desire by respondents to see the project continue in the community for immediate benefits and to learn about and track longer-term outcomes.

All of the feedback from respondents emphasized the need for such programming to be adequately funded and supported for the best possible results. Respondents consistently recognized the efforts of project staff working well beyond limited resources. In many ways, the initiative is short-changed when it is inadequately supported and not providing a real opportunity to demonstrate its potential and long-term benefit. Yet, most respondents did feel, even within a short timeframe, the initiative met the needs of the community and for everyone involved in the project. Given limited resources and the intensity of the initiative for the number of staff involved, there was little time available for broader promotion to the community. Respondents indicated that this meant the broader community was somewhat unaware of the initiative. Such community support is important to securing both ongoing and more stable funding as well as providing an opportunity for more diverse involvement and buy-in. Both time and resources become critical to broader and more diverse engagement.

Respondents stressed the importance of long-term financial support for the project to be successful. Training of community members and organizations was also identified as a crucial aspect for ensuring the effective transfer of the project to another organization. Respondents indicated that the training plan needs to strive for a balance between community needs while allowing flexibility for the community to implement creative and innovative diversion initiatives.

Several respondents defined success of the project as an increase in the demand for services by agencies and professionals who see the value of the Peacemaking Circle process as a rehabilitative intervention for young people who needed help to turn their lives around. Other respondents defined success as the project's ability to make a difference in the lives of families who take part in circle and hear about the pain, pressure and stress their children and victims encounter. Several respondents who observed and/or participated in Circles noted the circle process to be an extremely effective intervention for both the offender and victim. A few Respondents noted that there seemed to be limited local community resident representation with respect to the governance structure of the

project. They also suggested that the project could have engaged more individuals from the community of St. James Town and Regent Park.

In spite of these challenges, the respondents suggested the value of staff building relationships wherever and whenever they could. A solid foundation was being built within the community. Respondents suggested that relationships were strengthened, social service interagency efforts improved and the work generated agency commitment to the effort.

In summary, the following highlights key points gleaned from the feedback of Steering Committee members:

- Support for the continuation of initiative and interest in learning about longer-term effects.
- Recognition of positive impacts of project despite limited resources and a need to secure more stable, adequate funding for the initiative to grow and have broader impact.
- Interest in ensuring a promotional component to engage community and stakeholder groups including the business community.
- Demonstrated benefit to offender, victim and community as a viable alternative and improvement versus a traditional criminal justice response.

16. Summary of Circle Keeper Questionnaire

Six Circle Keepers provided detailed feedback on their experience in the Peacemaking Circle Pilot Project via a self-administered survey. All of the respondents fully understood the process and were very supportive of the initiative. They were satisfied with the level of training they received and commented on the support from the Executive Director and staff of Peacebuilders International when they were unsure or needed clarification. The positive impact of the project was noted as a unique and distinct contribution to the community.

Respondents indicated that the Peacemaking Circles process encompasses more participants than a traditional response to crime and therefore has a widespread healing effect on the community as a whole. Investment by all involved is much higher than other processes. They suggested that this is bound to have a more lasting and positive outcome. The experience of participating in a circle process is very empowering for youth. It teaches an alternative way to resolve conflict and proves that there is a community of people who care about them and the outcomes of their lives. Circles gave families an opportunity to really hear each other and be involved.

Respondents consistently pointed out the benefits and need for Peacemaking Circles as a valuable resource and also as a viable alternative to the criminal justice system. They also pointed out key areas that required improvement. They noted the need for an agency or key group of supporters to lead and own the project. While volunteers have introduced and demonstrated the value of the initiative, future stability and ongoing support will only be achieved if Peacemaking Circles become the responsibility of an established agency or high profile group of individuals that includes funders.

Respondents noted the training provided by Peacebuilders International was beneficial. However, it was noted that given the intensity and depth of skills needed to successfully facilitate a Circle, the Circles went smoother when a more experienced staff from Peacebuilders International was present. It can be inferred that ongoing training and interaction with experienced Circle Keepers is required to ensure continued skill building and effectiveness. Ideally, skill building and liaison with others involved will be a permanent and funded part of such work.

Overall, the feedback from respondents revealed a very intense and encouraging experience that called on the need for a strong community network to move towards embedding Peace Circles as a way of life when dealing with conflict and youth crime. All of the respondents spoke of the profound impact of the initiative and the importance of moving it within the infrastructure of communities to ensure its further development, status and support.

III. Conclusion

A review of the information collected suggests a successful project that fulfilled a variety of goals and needs in a very short period of time. These needs are continuing supporting the recommendation of continuation of the project. The Project has demonstrated the potential to divert more youth from the criminal justice system. The Executive Director of Peacebuilders International has held several consultations with community-based agencies with regards to “housing” the Pilot Project within their organization. Peacebuilders International would focus on training staff, individuals and interested organizations on Peacemaking Circles. There has been a strong interest from several organizations in administering the Project.

The major value demonstrated by the Project was one of providing support to youth who came into conflict with the law from high need communities. In addition, the Project demonstrated value in educating individuals and organizations on the value of using a restorative justice approach to conflict. The use of Circles seems to have spread across Toronto and is being used in many different contexts from conflict to crime. As a result, it appears that several schools and organizations are now using Peacemaking Circles as a tool to dealing with conflict.

The project also supported greater use of conflict resolution processes and diverted youth from the criminal justice system. These goals reflect the primary intent of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Feedback from participants suggests that the Project has assisted youth to form positive relationships with their families and peers, an understanding of how to deal with conflict as it arises and contributed to their own well-being. Furthermore, several respondents noted the project has assisted youth with additional community support and opportunities that enabled youth to meet their needs and build competencies.

This evaluation has revealed that both staff and volunteers are dedicated to restorative justice processes and using Peacemaking Circles to resolve conflict and crime. The surveys suggest that all of the stakeholders involved in the project have an in-depth understanding of the goals and objectives of the project and a common vision.

IV. Recommendations

1. There is a need to seek out ongoing sustaining and diverse funding for the delivery of Peacemaking Circles to youth.
2. That the present complement of full-time staff be increased to enable Peacebuilders to develop the service delivery model so that it has the capacity to meet the needs of the communities.
3. That the Executive Director’s position become a full-time paid employee.
4. That the Executive Director continue consultations with community-based organizations on “housing” the administration of the Pilot Project.
5. That the Peacebuilders International website be enhanced to include training materials on Peacemaking Circles, lessons learned and references to other relevant research materials.
6. That, as this work progresses, an outcome evaluation be undertaken which would include analyzing recidivism rates of youth who complete the Circle process.
7. That a logic model and an evaluation framework be developed to ensure that data is captured on an ongoing basis throughout the duration of such a Project.
8. That a review be undertaken of the data collection forms and procedures currently being used within the Project.
9. That Staff be trained on the specific data collection requirements, data definitions and categories that need to be collected throughout the duration of the project.
10. That ongoing data be collected that can provide the basis for a cost-benefit analysis of the project. (i.e., staff time per case, other direct costs per case, volunteer time, etc.) .
11. That ongoing training support, such as refresher courses, are provided to Circle Keepers and Circle volunteers.
12. There is a need to recruit the wider participation of community members in the project to reflect the demographics of the community.
13. That youth volunteers be recruited to act as both Circle Keepers and Steering Committee members. In addition, youth volunteers could also act as mentors for youth who are referred to the program.
14. That a protocol be developed to ensure that youth are followed-up on at the end of a Circle process and that that funding be made available to support such follow up work.
15. That funding be made available to enable staff to undertake post-session assessments of youth participants following the completion of the Circle process and identify follow-up needs in consultation with Circle participants, family members and community groups.
16. That funding be provided to enable staff and Steering Committee members to initiate a consultation process with the broader community. Aimed at reviewing this Project, its mandate, goals and objectives and considering the options for further embedding.

17. That funding be provided to enable staff and volunteers to promote the visibility of the Peacemaking Circle Pilot project and to enable the embedding of Peacemaking Circles within the community and youth service delivery models.
18. That Peacebuilders International continue its public education component of supporting Circles as a conflict resolution process to address crime and conflict within the community.
19. That funding be provided for an outcome evaluation to be undertaken which would include analyzing recidivism rates of youth who complete the Circle process.
20. That a comprehensive training strategy be developed to fully prepare staff and volunteers to participate in Circles.
21. That the Law Foundation of Ontario consider funding the continuation of the Peacemaking Circles Project for three years to ensure it is embedded within the Community.
22. That the respective federal and provincial government departments responsible for the funding of restorative justice programs consider funding the Peacemaking Circles Project.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Steering Committee Members

1. Please describe your involvement with the Peacebuilders' Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project in St. James Town and Regent Park.

2. What was the duration and nature of your involvement with this Project? Would you consider your organization/agency to have a partnership with the project?

3. How was it decided that you or your agency to become involved with the project?

4. Do you know what the goals and objectives were for the project? (If yes) What are/were they?

5. Are/were you a referral source for the project (either referring participants to the project or receiving referrals from the project)?

6. Have you had any feedback from project participants? (If yes) What has the response been?

7. Have you been involved in programming decisions? Please explain.

8. How do you know if the project is/was achieving its goals and objectives?

9. How would you define success of the project? How would you determine that the project is/was successful?
10. In your opinion, has the community been affected by the project? (If yes) In what ways? (If no) why not?
11. In your opinion, has the project increased public awareness of and support for the use of Peacemaking Circles?
12. In your opinion, is there a need in the community for this type of a project, and if so, why?
13. What is your perception with regard to the extent of partnerships with the program, and their value?
14. Does the Project governance structure ensure adequate representation and involvement by target groups/community in project planning and implementation?
15. Would your agency be interested in or able to provide this type of service?
16. To what extent has the project increased the community's capacity to deal with young offenders?

APPENDIX B

Telephone Survey of Youth Involved in Peacemaking Circle Process

PART I:

1. Youth name _____

2. Please circle any of the following as applicable:

The youth: Lives In | Goes to school in | Works in | Uses
community services in St. James Town | Regent Park | Other

3. Interview: Telephone

4. Interviewer's name: _____

PART II – The Process:

These questions are about the Peacemaking Circle process you have gone through.

5. Why did you choose to go through the Peacemaking Circle process?
6. In general how did you feel about the circle process?
7. What did you like about it?
8. What did you not like about it?
9. What was missing?
10. Have you have experienced formal youth justice dispositions before?
11. If Yes, how does the circle process compare?
12. In what ways was it better or helpful? What positive things did it offer?
13. In what ways was it worse? What was missing?
14. Would you recommend the circle process to others?

15. Do you think the circle process would be beneficial (would you recommend it) for other youth, and if so, why?
16. Are there some youth (or cases) that you think it would not be suitable for? (if not, why not?)

PART III – The Circle Facilitators/Keepers:

17. What did the circle keepers do that was helpful?
18. What did the circle keepers do that was less helpful? What might they have done differently?

PART IV:

Now I want to ask you about any impact the circle had on you.

19. How do you feel about the resolution or disposition of your case?
20. Has the circle changed the way you think of dealing with conflict in general? How?
21. Has the circle changed the way you look at the conflicts that brought you to the Circle?
22. What might you do differently next time a similar situation comes up?
23. Are there any issues that are unresolved? If so, can you tell us what types of issues these might be?
24. Is there anything else you'd like to share that I haven't asked about?
25. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the project?

Thank you for taking the time to talk to us and help us evaluate the benefits and challenges of the Peacemaking Circles Pilot Project

APPENDIX C

Circle Keeper Self-administered Questionnaire

- 1. What was your main reason or purpose in becoming a Circle Keeper? Please check the box that best describes how you feel after each statement.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) I had enough training to function as a Circle keeper					
b) I had enough support from the project staff					
c) I felt competent as a circle keeper					
d) I think circles are an important community resource					
e) The circles promote communication					
f) Preparatory circles are important to the success of the main circles					
g) Follow-up circles are important to the success of the process					
h) I learned a lot as a Circle keeper					
i) I will use the circle process in other situations					
j) I would like to continue as a Circle keeper					

Any comments about the above statements?

- 2. Now that you have functioned as a Circle Keeper, how effective was the training you received?**

Very | Somewhat | Not at all

3. What was most helpful from the training you received?
4. What additional training would be helpful?
5. What suggestions do you have for project staff to improve any part of the Peacemaking Circles process?
6. What do you think needs to happen to embed Peacemaking Circles within the communities of Regent Park and St James Town and ensure sustainability?
7. Is there anything else you'd like to say related to your participation in Peacemaking Circles?

APPENDIX D

Survey of Peacemaking Circle Participants

Date this main circle was held:

dd	mm	yyyy

1) I attended the circle as (please check one box):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Injured party/victim

<input type="checkbox"/> A parent/guardian of the injured party

<input type="checkbox"/> A friend/ other relative of the injured party

<input type="checkbox"/> A professional (please specify)

<input type="checkbox"/> _____

_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth

<input type="checkbox"/> A parent/guardian of the youth

<input type="checkbox"/> A friend/other relative of the youth

<input type="checkbox"/> _____

_____ |
|--|--|

2) Please check the box that best describes how you feel after each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
a) I knew the purpose of the circle.					
b) There was enough time devoted to this process.					
c) It felt like a safe process.					
d) I think everyone had the opportunity to speak					
e) I think people listened to each other.					
f) I felt that my views contributed to decisions.					
g) The circle keepers helped the process.					
h) I felt the circle was a helpful process.					
i) I would suggest this process to others.					

3) What did the circle keeper do that was MOST helpful?

4) What might the circle keeper have done differently?

5) Was the number of people in the circle:

About right Too few Too many

6) Were there others who you think should have been there?

Yes No

If Yes, who are they?

7) Were there people at the circle that you think should not have been there?

Yes No -----If Yes, who were they?

8) Did you attend any of the preparation circles that were held before this main circle? Yes No

9) (If Yes) How helpful was that preparation?

Very Somewhat Not at all

10) What worked well during the whole circle process?

11) What did not work well during the whole circle process?

12) Any other comments you'd like to make about anything related to the Peacemaking Circle?

APPENDIX E

Peacebuilders International Community Appreciation Barbeque

Wednesday, July 26th 2006
12:00 noon to 2:00pm
Wellesley Community Centre
495 Sherbourne Street
Toronto, ON
416-392-0227

If you want to solve a problem,
you cannot solve it if you
continue to think the same way
you were thinking when you created it.
--Albert Einstein

PRESENTATIONS

By: Peacebuilders International
By: The Hon. George Smitherman

To: Law Foundation of Ontario (Hon. George Smitherman to award)
Agora Foundation (Hon. George Smitherman to award)

Natalie Sarjeant – Project Co-ordinator
Zahra Dhanani – Project Director

- 311 Jarvis Youth Court
(Judge Weagant)
- 51 Division (Detective Hug
Wong)
- Annie Simpson
- Barbora Sabova
- Central Neighbourhood
House (Chezlie Alexander)
- Chloe Leonard
- Clementine Grant
- Dixon Hall
- Ikem Opara
- Imara Rolston
- Jarvis Collegiate (David
Sovran)
- Jenn Errico
- Joyce Young
- L.O.V.E. (Leave Out
Violence)
- Melissa Abramovitz
- Miriam Zachariah
- OISE (Anne Goodman)
- Operation Springboard
(Barak Raz and Irene
Marynowicz)
- Pathways (Norman
Rowen)
- Probation Services (Mary
Ferreira, Nancy Peters)
- Regent Park Community
Centre
- Robert Pidgeon
- Rose Thivy
- Sean Isaacs
- St. Stephens (Peter Bruer,
Lorna Richards)
- Toronto City Parks and
Recreation (Shawn Dwyer)

- Toronto Community Housing Corporation (Kemi Jacobs and Vinod Sharma)
- Toronto Council Fire
- Toronto Police Service (Diana Korn-Hassani)
- Parents for Better Beginnings (Gene Lincoln)
- Turning Point (Jenny Katz)
- Wellesley Community Centre (Lucky Boothe)

Thank you to:

City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Law Foundation of Ontario

Maple Lodge Farms

North York Chevrolet

Salvation Army, 614 Regent Park

Steve's Music Store

Summerhill Market

Vince's No Frills

Wellesley Central Place
(a division of the Drs. Paul and John Re kai Centre)

Wellesley Community Centre

Weston Bakeries