

2007 PROJECT PEACE TRAINING CONFERENCE

OVERVIEW

Educators and lawyers will be joining together to promote PEACE on November 8th and 9th in King of Prussia at the Dolce Hotel!

Project PEACE (Peaceful Endings through Attorneys, Children and Educators) is the peer mediation training program implemented in Pennsylvania by the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) and the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office with generous support from the Pennsylvania Bar Foundation. Project PEACE combines conflict resolution education and bullying prevention training to provide educators with the materials and strategies to give their students an education in the problem solving skills that are necessary for positive civic participation in our schools and the community beyond. This public-private partnership introduces dispute resolution techniques to students of all ages throughout the Commonwealth, though the primary focus of the November training, and of Project PEACE generally, has always been at the elementary school level where students first learn how to deal with each other.

Originally brought to Pennsylvania by then Attorney General Mike Fisher in 1999 after the tragedy at Columbine High School, the program has continued to flourish under Attorney Generals Jerry Pappert and Thomas Corbett. Nine presidents of the PBA have endorsed the program and over the past eight years Project PEACE has brought peer mediation programming, conflict resolution education and anti-bullying training to 84 Pennsylvania schools directly and another 180 indirectly. All schools, regardless of socioeconomic status, diversity and location, have been forced by the highly publicized outbreaks of school violence to confront the issue of conflict among school students, and to help students address and resolve it before it escalates into violence. That initial look at tackling the problem of violence has led to a broader look at building involved communities, first at the school level, and then beyond. In this era of high stakes testing, when double periods of math and reading are taking the place traditionally reserved for social studies in the early grades, Project PEACE also provides a valuable means of providing civic learning in the schools in keeping with the PBA partnership with Pennsylvania First Lady and Third Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Midge Rendell.

Project PEACE works to reduce conflict and violence in Pennsylvania's schools by teaching students how to discuss and mediate disagreements peacefully. It empowers children, who are still in their formative years, with the important life-skills that promote constructive communication, problem-solving, critical-thinking and self-esteem. Children become active participants in governing behavior in their classrooms by taking on the role of mediator and using the mediation process; they also impact their class and school climate by using the skills of conflict resolution that they learn to work out disputes on their own. With the help of neutral peer mediators, or through the exercise of learned skills by individual students, conflicts can be settled in a positive manner, benefiting the school climate as a whole. Students also learn that certain problems, such as bullying behavior, cannot be mediated and must be confronted by the entire school community.

Project PEACE training will occur November 8th and 9th at the Dolce Hotel (the former Hilton) in King of Prussia. Attorney General Tom Corbett and PBA President Andy Susko will join the educators and law and justice professionals for lunch on November 8th and General Corbett will teach an anti-bullying lesson to the group that afternoon. Nationally known trainers Artemus Carter and Mary Ellen Schaffer will join the PBA's own David Trevaskis and his team of Pennsylvania Project PEACE trainers in conducting the two days of hands on work with the latest materials and methods in the field.

Here is the agenda:

Thursday, 11/8/07

7:00 to 8:15 a.m. Breakfast

7:15-8:15 a.m. Registration

8:15 a.m. Opening Session: Looking at Conflict in the Schools and Beyond

8:45 a.m. Introduction to Project PEACE: From Discipline to Mediation and Beyond

9:30 a.m. Chocolate Bar Conflict Resolution

10:15 a.m. Morning Break

10:30 a.m. New Directions in Learning/Conflict Test/Mennonite Model

11:15 a.m. Rewriting the Scene: Learning How to Diffuse Conflict through Children's Literature

12 noon Lunch/Attorney General Corbett and PBA President Susko Speak

1:15 p.m. The General Tackles Cyber-Bullying

2:00 p.m. Conflict Resolution Showcase: Mediation Role Plays

Press Availability for AG

2:45 p.m. Afternoon Break

3:00 p.m. Beyond Peer Mediation: Afternoon Reflection on PSSAs, NCLB and Why We Teach

3:30 p.m. Day One Wrap-up/Evaluation

3:45 p.m. End

Friday, 11/9/07

7:00 to 8:15 a.m. Breakfast

8:15 a.m. Conflict Resolution Aerobics: Childhood Messages

8:45 a.m. Making Project PEACE Work in Your School: Details, Details, Details!

9:30 a.m. Adult-Directed Mediation, Contracts and More, Oh My!

10:15 a.m. Morning Break

10:30 a.m. Final Mediation Practice

11:30 a.m. Role of the Lawyer in Project PEACE (From the AG to a Law Student)

12:15 p.m. Evaluation/Closing Ceremony/Lunch

Best wishes!