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# 2022 Annual Report

Domestic Harmonizer Program





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# Introduction

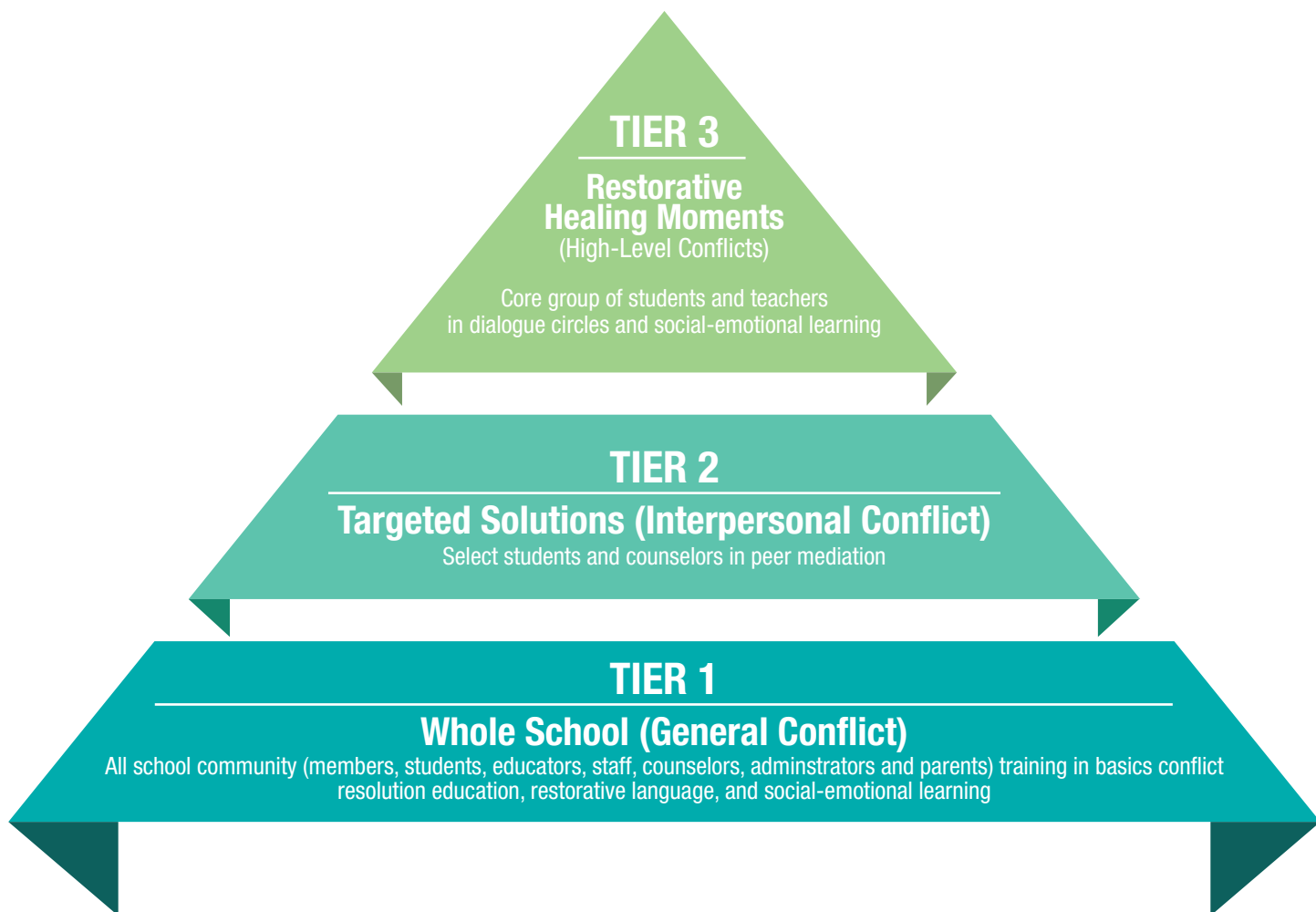
The Domestic Harmonizer Program (DHP) is a one-of-a-kind program launched by the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) in 2016. This peace education program for middle schools works with all stakeholders – students, teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents – to promote restorative practices. Our innovative curriculum integrates conflict resolution principles with California Common Core standards for math, social studies, English, science and physical education.



The DHP seeks to provide transformative tools for the whole school culture. Our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model is focused on helping all members of the school community by learning communication tools centered on restorative practices, such as Conflict Resolution Education, negotiation, peer mediation, social-emotional learning, and empathy. This approach helps schools focus on creating healthy learning environments. It also supports students in conflict to feel understood rather than punished. Punitive measures not only deprive students from the opportunity to grow from their mistakes, but also, as research has repeatedly shown, fails to make schools safer.

Our PBIS model embraces the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to provide general and targeted approaches to conflict resolution and social-emotional learning for all members of the school community. Our approach is grounded in skills, processes, and tools that help create positive learning environments through restorative practices. In Tier 1, we deliver educational workshops to students, parents, and educators in basic conflict resolution skills. In Tier 2, we train small cohorts of students in peer mediation so that they can help disputants resolve their conflicts peacefully. Our Tier 3 approach – currently in development – works with core groups of educators and students to support the school's social-emotional needs with higher levels of skill development for an expert group.





The Domestic Harmonizer Program addresses youth violence, bullying, and conflict, and helps students transform conflicts from negative experiences to opportunities for positive change. We do this by delivering to schools:

- in-person and online classes for students and teachers that curate our curriculum to the academic class;
- tools and resources in restorative practices and trauma-informed healing for students, teachers, and parents;
- peer mediation training for students at all partner schools.

Some of the highlights of this past year include the routine usage of the Domestic Harmonizer Virtual Center in our work, return to in-person instruction, creation of the program's parenting series, and new partnerships with education-based institutions. The educational partnerships were both local and global, allowing for the program to reach partners at new schools and even new school districts in the Greater Los Angeles Area.



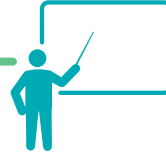
# 2022 Facts and Figures

**3,800**



Students reached through formal collaborations with 6 schools and educational institutions

**508**



Educators reached by the DHP team

**217**



Peer mediators trained across 5 school campuses

**300**



Parents reached through the parenting series

**97%**



of educators “agree” or “strongly agree” that WPDI experts are highly knowledgeable

**87.5%**



of parents “agree” or “strongly agree” that the workshops were personally helpful

## The DHP Way

At the heart of the DHP is a deep focus on resolving and even transforming conflict in a peaceful way. Through this lens, we work with students, educators, and parents to focus on the needs involved in members of the school community, and we offer practical tools to help navigate through interpersonal conflict and broader challenges on school campuses. By adopting this framework, schools begin to transform their school cultures and help students feel more understood. Our core belief – supported by research – is that punitive measures harm students because they do not teach students anything new or encourage them to change their behaviors but instead create distrust, resentment, and more of the same negative behaviors. On the other hand, helping students, teachers, and parents to understand their needs and each other’s needs, and helping create dialogue during challenging times can help break the cycle of conflict, and help members of the school community create better and more constructive relationships, and a better school atmosphere.

Once a school partnership is formed, WPDI works with educators to learn about the program and our restorative practices, and we offer opportunities for collaborations in ways that include building curricula. We work with students to train them to become peer mediators, who can help resolve interpersonal conflicts on campuses.

As of this year, we offer virtual workshops for parents to learn tools to build inner peace and resilience, tools to help communicate with their children, and ways to promote family healing. Now in our 6th year, the DHP is happy to reach all members of the school community through our educational workshops and curricula.

“We are excited about our partnership with the Domestic Harmonizer Program and its training in restorative practices, that address the social-emotional needs of our students and staff. The staff training has brought significant insight into how we present ourselves to students and each other in the areas of communication and empathy. Our students are very excited about the peer mediation program and the opportunity to really make a difference on our campus as peacekeepers.”

**Dr. Linda Jones**

Superintendent  
DNA Prep Academy



# Adapting and Responding in Ever-Changing Times



As we began the calendar year in 2022, we faced another wave of uncertainty with the global rise of the Omicron variant. While this, fortunately, did not result in school closures as it did in the year prior, it did, however, lead to a greater sense of uncertainty for all school communities. In the first half of the year, WPDJ was able to adapt by continuing to offer virtual workshops to students, educators, and parents. During this time, we also offered a 4-part virtual series to educators from the Los Angeles Unified School District, Local District West, reaching 213 teachers, and delivered training about the fundamentals of Conflict Resolution Education to a group of Afghani teachers who had recently fled their homelands and began studying at the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh. We also focused on creating new educational content to put on our Virtual Center, such as finalizing the educational game, and new curricula on restorative practices for elementary, middle, and high schools, and also a new peer mediation manual for elementary schools.

WPDJ was pleased to return to in-person instruction of our experts within partner schools after the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in us adapting our work to virtual instruction. This long hiatus away from in-person facilitation of workshops was welcomed by our experts and also our partner schools. While we experienced success and new opportunities during the all-virtual phase of our program, we are happy to return to face-to-face workshops, particularly with our peer mediators. We remain flexible to the needs of our school partners, and that means that we deliver virtual workshops when they request it, which is the case of our parenting workshops. Part of the success of the DHP is that it remains relevant by adapting to the many social and technological changes that have happened in recent years. This lead us to not only use the latest technologies but to also create our own tools, such as our Virtual Center and game.

One of the changes that we experienced this year compared to our earlier years of the program is greater demand of parenting workshops and peer mediation training compared to educator trainings. Now, as we expand our curriculum to provide some offerings to elementary and high school educators, our focus is more on delivering peer mediation training to parents, and students of course. Part of this shift may be due to the ever-increasing demands on teachers to meet academic standards and also a reduction of time offered by school districts to educators for professional development. In any case, our Virtual Center is there for educators to access at all times. Teachers report to us that they review our materials and implement them as needed. The peer mediation programs are in high demand now, and we have constant inquiries for more training at our pre-existing and new schools.

Our 12-hour peer mediation program served as a strong engine for the DHP in the fall. From September through November, WPDl experts delivered our 12-hour training program to 5 different schools, resulting in the full training of 217 peer mediators in elementary and middle schools. This is certainly encouraging to see such a high uptick in interest in peer mediation from current and new school partners because it shows how schools have embraced restorative practices to the point that they want to put the onus on students themselves to help solve some issues on campus.



“

Students that experience training in peer mediation through Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative's Domestic Harmonizer Program gain invaluable skills that help themselves and those around them. The benefits of this training include the acquisition of strategies and skills for self-reflection and mediation and most importantly the ability to guide others through difficult situations in order to reach a peaceful resolution. This promotes community, peace, and harmony, much needed in today's world. I highly recommend all schools endeavor to have this program in place.

”

**Dolly Chang**

7th Grade Leadership Teacher  
Walker Junior High School





# The Domestic Harmonizer Virtual Center

## THE DOMESTIC HARMONIZER PROGRAM

The Domestic Harmonizer Program (DHP) is a program designed by the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) to provide support in the creation of inclusive and safe learning environments in middle schools. The program's curriculum, workshops, and e-learning tools span all three years of middle school and helps students and teachers build understanding, empathy, and dialogue both inside and outside of the classroom. The program also includes a trauma-informed healing component that helps educators, students and parents address trauma in safe and productive ways.

LEARN MORE



## “Hear Me Out”— the New DHP Game

The Virtual Center is also one of the ways that users can play the Domestic Harmonizer game about peace called “Hear Me Out.” This single and multi-player game is an innovative way for beneficiaries of all ages to have fun and learn how to problem-solve in a variety of conflict scenarios. Hear Me Out offers students opportunities to play games in school-based and community-oriented situations such as dealing with a cyberbully at school or negotiating a price at a repair shop. These are common situations that youth face anywhere, and the games are intended to teach students how to address these issues while learning new skills.

## WHAT IS THE VIRTUAL CENTER?

The Domestic Harmonizer Virtual Center is your gateway to innovative and intriguing content in Conflict Resolution Education for middle school educators, students, and parents. We've created a platform that is fun, youth-friendly, and informative! The educational resources, lesson plans, worksheets, animation videos, and interactive games captivate youths' attention and support educators in delivering the best possible learning tools for students.



Given the growth of the DHP over the past few years and the aim of expanding the program even more, WPDI launched the Domestic Harmonizer Virtual Center last year. The purpose of the Virtual Center is to provide instant access to DHP resources for school communities. The resources cover topics such as Conflict Resolution Education, peer mediation, restorative tools, and social-emotional learning. The Virtual Center also provides lesson plans, educational videos, project ideas, simple 1-pagers, and other resources to help schools implement restorative practices in concrete and practical ways tailored to students, teachers, and parents.

The Virtual Center is a tool that WPDI routinely uses during trainings with professional educators and students. During professional development sessions with educators and counselors at our partner schools. We lean on the interactive contents of the Virtual Center and share it with them and guide them on how to implement some of the lesson plans with their students. Having these resources under one umbrella is a unique offering. While the Virtual Center is a resource primarily for our school partners locally, it is also an engine through which we aim to expand the program across the country. Through the Virtual Center, schools across the United States can benefit from our resources and one-on-one support from our team of conflict resolution experts. The Virtual Center also offers schools anywhere opportunities to receive conflict coaching with DHP experts, school climate planning, and demonstration lessons in any subject area.

# Peer Mediation



"I had a wonderful experience with the Domestic Harmonizer Program. Being able to support and learn about peer mediation alongside students at Lake Center Middle School was awesome. The program offers important strategies for critical thinking and productive problem solving. The hands-on practice aspect of the program really helps students to feel empowered while motivating students to resolve their conflicts collaboratively. As a school counselor, I appreciate that students have a way to resolve conflicts peaceably and are taught the skills to do so on their own which helps to create a more positive school climate."

**Brandon Keim**

School Counselor  
Lake Center Middle School

In the Fall, WPDI graduated 117 students across 5 different schools in the DHP's peer mediation initiatives. The following partner schools participated: Stephen White Middle School and STEAM Magnet, Walker Jr. High School, DNA Prep Academy, Lake Center Middle School, and Cresson Elementary School. These schools are located across the Greater Los Angeles Area and in different school districts. As previously mentioned, three of these schools, DNA Prep Academy, Lake Center Middle School, and Cresson Elementary School are new partnerships for WPDI.

Peer mediation is a process that involves students becoming trained as neutral parties and able to help the disputants of a conflict listen to each other and solve their own problems. The peer mediators work as pairs and go through the process of mediation, which is introducing disputants to the process and setting up ground rules, listening to each side of the conflict, understanding the unmet needs of the parties, and then helping the sides find strategies to meet each other's needs. The final component, if parties are able to come up with solutions, is to write up a contract and close the session.

Peer mediators are chosen by their respective schools through multiple avenues: either self-referral, by the recommendation of a teacher, or even the nomination of a classmate. We always suggest to counselors and school staff administering the program to select students from a wide variety of interests and backgrounds. The number one predictor of a "good" peer mediator is their willingness to commit to our 12-hour training in order to help their campus resolve interpersonal conflicts in a more peaceful way. That commitment to helping their peers and their school community as a whole is what helps the program succeed. It is also important for our school administrators to fully embrace and promote the program, so that the trained peer mediators have opportunities to use their skills on campus.

In the past year, the Domestic Harmonizer Peer Mediation Program has been in high demand with all our partner schools, especially immediately following the COVID-19 lockdowns. The pandemic resulted in many changes in students' social-emotional learning, and one of the impacts of the lockdowns was the lack of exposure to communication and problem-solving with other students. Consequently, schools and students faced an increase in fights and interpersonal conflict. For this reason, schools have asked DHP to implement peer mediation programs to help students address these problems. WPDI's approach to facilitating and implementing peer mediation programs at our school sites is impactful because we are sensitive to the needs and goals of each school site. We are able to adapt our tools to ensure that schools get the tailored coaching and practice that they need. All schools are different, and our team remains flexible in terms of delivering content that is both useful and necessary for our school partners. After students complete our initial training, which varies in length depending on the grade level, they all participate in monthly refresher courses with our experts to continuously grow their skills and confidence so that they can help disputants on their campuses in real conflicts. These monthly check-ins have also become important opportunities in keeping them connected as a community.



"I enjoyed the training because it gave us the opportunity to get a feel of how this whole process works. I learned that big conflicts can be solved with a simple meeting and listening to each other. "

**Arturo C.**

8th Grade Student  
DNA Prep Academy



# Paving the Path for New Partnerships

In 2022, WPDI formalized new partnerships. The first partnership was with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), which serves as the largest regional education agency in the United States, reaching a diverse population of 2 million students across Los Angeles County. LACOE offers educational support to educators and school communities to 80 different school districts. WPDI's collaboration with LACOE is slated to start as a 3-year endeavor, beginning with virtual training of educators, particularly school counselors. We delivered two trainings in the fall of 2022 to over 50 counselors from across Los Angeles County. The first of these sessions focused on an overview of peer mediation in schools, including the critical elements for creating the program at a school, the process itself, and ways to recruit students. The second virtual session we delivered to educators focused on how schools could implement their program in practical steps. We are excited to enter this new partnership with LACOE, and we welcome the opportunities that it could produce.

Thanks to the partnership with LACOE, WPDI became introduced to Little Lake School District (LLSD), the second new institutional partnership formalized this past year. LLSD was established in 1871, and is a suburban elementary school district located in the southeastern portion of Los Angeles County. The district lies within the municipalities of Santa Fe Springs, Norwalk, and Downey, and encompasses 9 schools. In the last few months of 2022, WPDI worked with counselors from two schools in the LLSD, including Cresson Elementary School and Lake Center Middle School, to train and implement their schools new peer mediation programs.



The partnership with Cresson Elementary School marks the first collaboration between the DHP and an elementary school. Our natural expansion to the elementary level is both fruitful and fun, and we are delighted to partner with a school that is so enthusiastic and organized to spearhead this program.



“

The peer mediation program and guidance provided by the Domestic Harmonizer Program (DHP) has been a great opportunity for students at Cresson to enhance their leadership skills. Our select group of peer mediators have been facilitating conflict mediations for their peers with great confidence. Students express feeling comfortable solving conflicts with these peer mediators. Overall, the positive impact DHP has had on our school culture highlights the importance of this program.

**Martha Robles**

School Counselor  
Cresson Elementary School

”

Last but not least, WPDI is pleased to launch this past fall our partnership with DNA Prep Academy, a school in Chatsworth designed for elite student athletes. Our partnership with DNA Prep Academy marks the DHP's first private school partnership, and we had the privilege of working with an all-male group of peer mediators in grades 5-8, who completed the peer mediation program with ease and confidence. These students began the program online with WPDI's trainers, and completed the program with in-person training and practice. In addition to launching our peer mediation program, the DHP also conducted professional development training with the educators at the school.



# The Impact by the Numbers

Dr. Briana Hinga, Associate Professor of Clinical Education at the University of Southern California conducted another independent assessment of the DHP for the 2021-2022 academic year. Her research included quantitative and qualitative data from students, parents, and teachers from partner schools in order to assess the impact of the DHP. Dr. Hinga collects data by interviewing students before and after the launch of peer mediation programs at each school, and also by assessing the anonymous surveys submitted by teachers, parents, and students after the delivery of educational workshops, both in-person and online.

In her most recent report, Dr. Hinga focused on reviewing the impact of WPDI's work at Stephen White Middle School and STEAM Magnet, Walker Jr. High School, the 4-part series delivered virtually to teachers at LAUSD-LDW, and also virtual parenting workshops. In her report, Dr. Hinga assesses the impact of the program in light of the pandemic and other more common stressors on schools.

In her report, Dr. Hinga looks at Stephen White Middle School, and reports that the past academic year saw an increased level of tensions between students, particularly the Hispanic and Black students. Students and faculty members interviewed by for the program assessment all commented on the need for better communication and respect by students and teachers.





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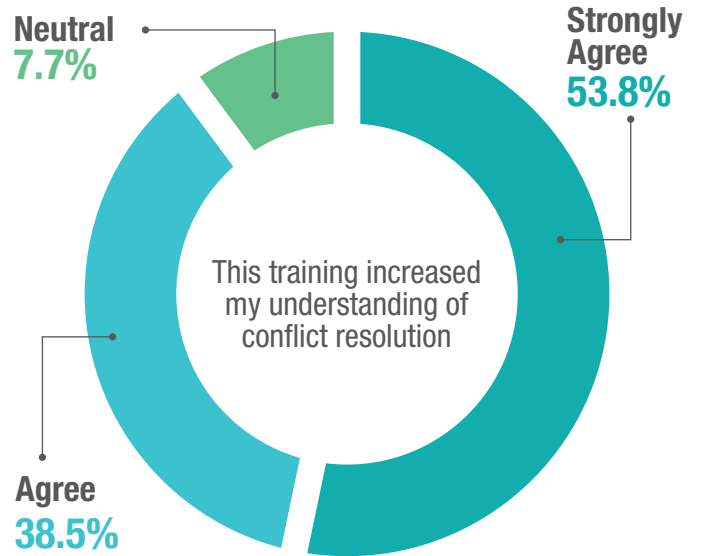
The DHP proves to be one component of a larger systems wide approach to support the school community through this time. Students, faculty, and parents and guardians noticed the ways mindful communication, understanding underlying needs, trauma-informed practices, and conflict mediation tools eased stress on themselves and/or their communities.

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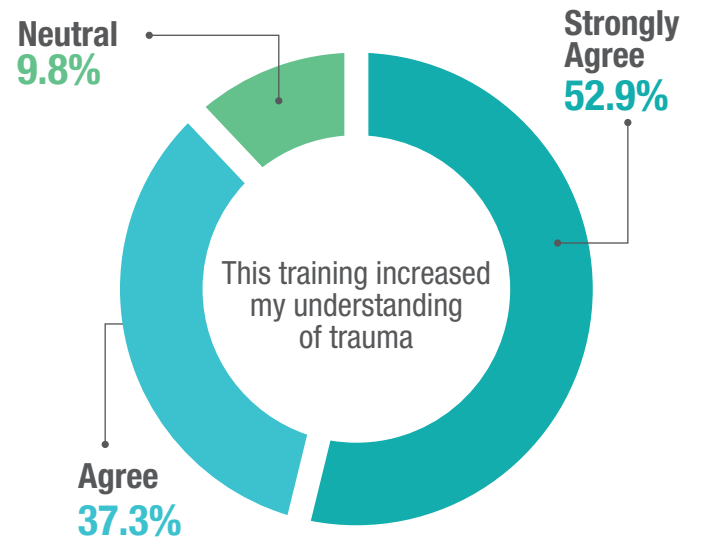
**Dr. Hinga**

As stated in the report by a faculty member, the program has positive impact: “I do notice that our school culture and school climate...it's a lot better than it was at the beginning of the year. I know that our peer mediation program has helped solve a lot of problems before they blossom into bigger problems. The students are doing a lot better at managing themselves. I think that part of that comes from what they've learned through peer mediation processes...And it's just a different campus than it was before.” This is supported by students in the program. In the report, a student states, “I think solving our problems by talking makes it better than just being distant from each other and still mad at each other.” Students saw the value in dialogue to address conflict. They also learned that a mediator, especially when tensions are high, can be very helpful. One student summarized, “I learned that sometimes people just need a middle man [person] between them to help them come to an agreement or to calm down and help them straighten things out.” One faculty member commended the students for skillfully opening space for other students to feel safe and speak confidentially with each other. They explained how the language of conflict mediation has become a natural part of their daily vocabulary.

In her report, Dr. Hinga also collected data from two professional development trainings delivered to teachers at that school during that academic year covering the following topics: communication, basics of conflict resolution, and trauma (social-emotional learning). Below are some data points collected from 51 respondents:



**Understanding of Conflict Resolution Education**



**Understanding of Trauma**

# Testimonials

Below are some of the anonymous testimonials that students and staff members shared with Dr. Hinga during the in-depth focus group interviews that she conducted.

“

If you really take what you learn to heart and say okay I'm going to try this, then you start to open your eyes and see... sometimes the kids not working, it's not because they don't like you, it's not because they don't get it... it's because something else is so overwhelming to them that they can't think of anything else, and so then you have to address that socio emotional stuff before you can get them to care about the course content.

”

**Walker Jr. High School  
Faculty Member**

“

I can see drastic change in the people that we mediate. They even become happier. Because they don't have to deal with drama anymore. They already solved the problem with the person they don't like.

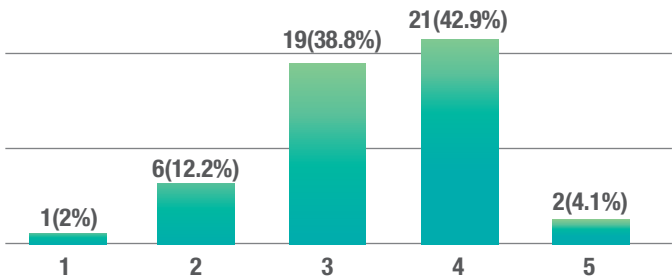
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**Stephen White Middle School and  
STEAM Magnet Student**

At Walker Jr. High School, WPDl offered peer mediation training to two different groups and professional development sessions. Below are some of the comments provided by students in the peer mediation groups:

How engaged did you feel during the peer mediation training, on a scale of 1 to 5?

49  
Responses



## Favorite Component of the Training

Students were asked what they most enjoyed through the training. Forty-nine students' responses are organized by themes and summarized below, starting with the most common responses. Several students named more than one favorite component of training. Table 7 summarizes survey results.

## Favorite Component of the Training

#

Practicing peer mediations through different scenarios	17
Learning how to mediate conflicts to help people get along	14
Group work and communicating with others	12
Improving communication skills (e.g., "I liked that it helped me learn to restate and better understand what people are saying", "learning how to talk in a serious situation")	3
We learned a lot	2
We learned how to make Walker a more accepting place	1
Nice facilitators.	1

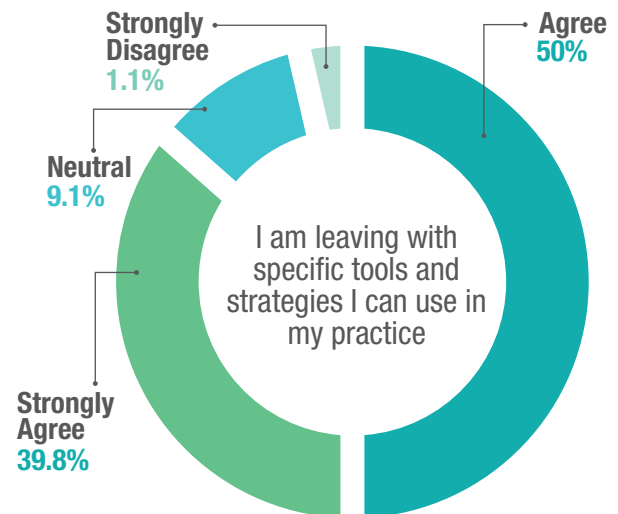
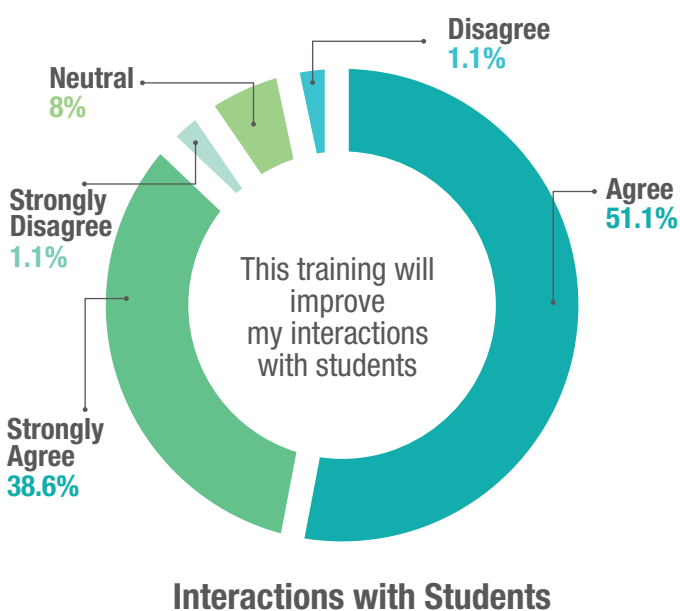


## Suggested Changes to the Training

#

I would not change anything	10
The training took too long, make it shorter	7
More time to practice peer mediation	6
More fun activities (e.g., “make it more engaging/entertaining”, “more fun activities rather than discussions,” “make it more entertaining,” “less boring”)	5
Change online learning to in-person learning	4
Make it more interactive	4
Use real life scenarios and ask students for examples	2
I would like to see a real example of a trained peer mediator	1

Another area that Dr. Hinga assessed of the DHP in 2022 was the 4-part professional development series that WPDI delivered virtually to a total of 213 educators from LAUSD-LDW. Below are some of the anonymous responses provided in post-surveys to Dr. Hinga by 87 educators:



### Tools and Strategies

Based on her report, most participants stated that they would not change anything but some shared specific ways to improve the sessions. For example, some stated that they would have enjoyed more breakout rooms, while others were hoping for content tailored specifically for the elementary or high school level. Others shared specific ideas to improve the training, and a few participants would have enjoyed more time.

This independent assessment also offered some recommendations for improvement of the program as a whole. Some of the students in the peer mediation program mentioned that the program was a little slow and boring, which was partly due to the fact that we were virtual last year for the peer mediation component. We have now moved our program to completely in-person and changing up the flow of the training to allow for more interactive activities. She also recommends that we make greater connections with restorative justice concepts, which is a new manual and component the DHP team is working to enhance.



# 2022 Program Initiatives and Special Opportunities



While the DHP team spent the first half of the year still working with students and teachers through virtual platforms, we were truly pleased to usher in a bit of normalcy by returning to schools for in-person instruction. While the use of virtual platforms were helpful and even indispensable during the early days of the pandemic, we found that students prefer to have in-person learning, specially with interactive content such as peer mediation. Our fall calendar was completely full from our school partners requesting peer mediation training. Below is a more in-depth look at the DHP's core programmatic activities in 2022, with a particular eye on the Fall.





# Parenting Classes

Over the fall, WPDI formally launched the DHP's 3-part parenting series with two partner schools. This parenting series features content that is central to the program's goals of offering education in social-emotional learning and conflict resolution education to entire school communities with the end goal of supporting students. The goal of the program is to support parents, because when parents are supported with the resources to thrive, they can better nurture their own children. The parenting program is offered virtually to WPDI's partner schools at no cost and features outstanding expert speakers.

The first component of the program focuses on understanding of the self. This is led by Mr. Stedman Graham, whose Identity Leadership™ for Parents is highly eye-opening. His 9-step Success Process© is the first component of the series. Mr. Graham is a business advisor, educator and author of numerous best-selling books. Mr. Graham's workshop focuses on Identity leadership, which is Self-Leadership based on the philosophy that you cannot lead anyone else until you first lead yourself. The identity Leadership for Parents 9-step Success Process program is a life and learning management system designed to organize your life around "Who You Are." Mr. Graham gears his process for parents in this series to help find inner strength and resilience, and then pass that on to their children.

"I believe the partnership with WPDI is helping parents to realize that they are not alone. Parents have been very receptive to the Identity Leadership methodology, which helps them to understand that parents need to feel empowered, they enjoy hearing about being self-leaders and self-disciplined. The importance of working on self will best influence and maximize their child's potential."

**Mr. Stedman Graham**

Business advisory, educator, author



The second part of the series is conducted by the DHP's Conflict Resolution Education Trainer, Ms. Karen DeVoogd, who is a seasoned educator, having taught K-12 students and also a highly sought-after professor. Her expertise is both necessary and practical in conflict resolution, communication, and understanding the underlying needs of children. During her sessions, Ms. DeVoogd covers various communication topics and concepts such as understanding needs. She also opens the communication directly with parents, who share openly with her and the group about challenges they face with their children, and together, with Ms. DeVoogd, try to navigate through solutions by looking at the needs of the children and the family unit.

The final component of the series is led by Mr. Anand Chulani, Founder of the Absolute Champion Methodology, a trusted Leadership Advisor & Success Coach to Champions in Business, Sports and Entertainment, International Award-Winning Speaker, and an expert in Mental and Emotional Strength and Well-Being.



Mr. Chulani's session is centered on family healing, and he encourages parents to see their children as they are, not based on parents' own expectations and judgements and allow children to follow their gifts and talents so that they become secure and confident on their own.



WPDI is pleased to offer these parenting components to help reach the entire school community. It is worth noting that parents have immensely appreciated this parenting series. It is our goal to expand this program in 2023 to not only our partner schools but other schools as well through our Virtual Center so that parents have practical and transformative tools that they can implement in their day-to-day lives and with their children. When parents are empowered, children are empowered.

## Professional Development

As previously mentioned, the DHP team conducted a number of short professional development sessions at our partner schools as well as a new opportunity with educators from LAUSD-LDW. The sessions were offered to educators after school for four months and covered the following topics:

- An introduction to Conflict Resolution Education and the Domestic Harmonizer Program (February)
- Understanding Needs and Building Empathy (March)
- Communication and Negotiation Skills (April)
- Conflict Styles Assessment and Skill-Building (May)

Out of this opportunity came short 1-page handouts that we now share with our school partners and on our Virtual Center.

WPDI experts also worked with educators at DNA Prep Academy in the Fall to deliver seven workshops covering topics such as Conflict Resolution Education, the foundations of peer mediation, and restorative tools such as the restorative model as a whole and the dialogue process. We have also worked with DNA Prep Academy educators to show them how to integrate the DHP curriculum into their core subjects.

## Los Angeles County Office of Education

As previously mentioned, WPDI was delighted to formally launch a collaboration with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). In the fall of 2022, DHP experts presented to educators – specifically counselors – from across Los Angeles County two workshops focused on the peer mediation process.

The sessions focused on how school counselors and administrators could implement a peer mediation program from ground up. We offered strategies for establishing the program, such as finding a coordinator, recruiting a diverse group of students who are representative of the student body, ensuring that students are trained by experts in the process and follow the national standards for training, and that all students and teachers understand the process so that referrals for peer mediation are handled swiftly and appropriately.

WPDI is looking forward to continuing this collaboration with LACOE to offer our content to more educators from across Los Angeles County. In the new year, we plan on delivering additional workshops focused on conflict resolution education fundamentals, and social-emotional learning. After this initial year of collaboration, WPDI and LACOE intent to expand our scope of work to include options such as training counselors in the peer mediation process as trainers themselves, and collaborating on parenting workshops.

# Asian University for Women

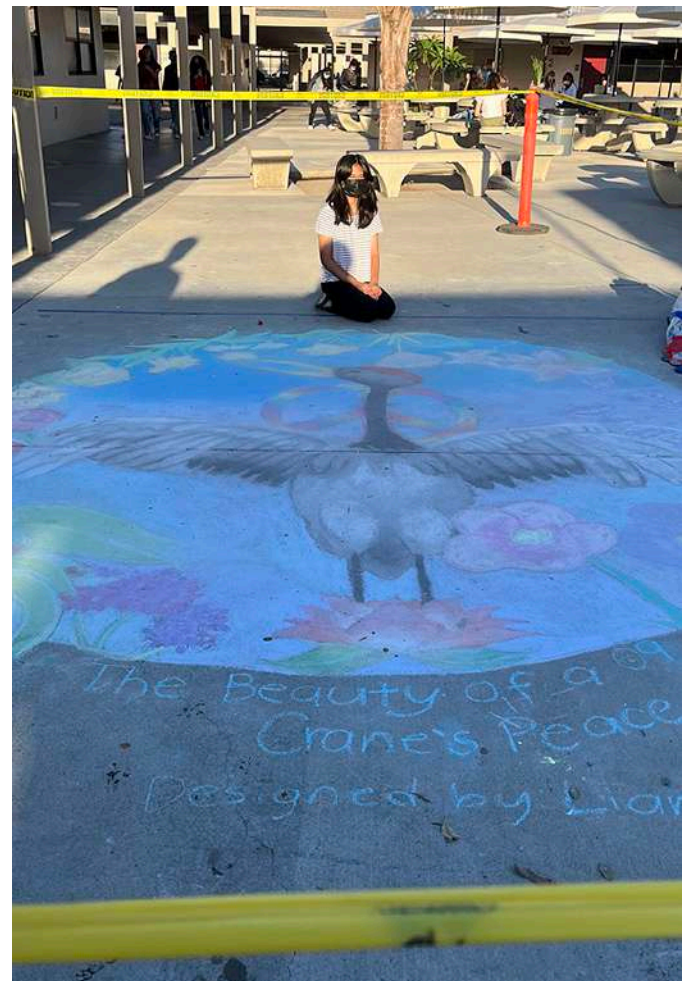
One of the special projects that the DHP was pleased to be a part of in the Spring of 2022 was guest lecturing for a group of future teacher-leaders attending the Asian University for Woman in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Students in the class were Afghan women who had recently left Afghanistan following the recent instability in their country. This class, taught by a professor at California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), focuses on literacy instruction and was designed to support women pursuing a Master's degree in Education so that they can start and support secondary schools for young women in Afghanistan. DHP experts led three classes, focused on conflict resolution education via Zoom, and introduced the DHP curriculum to the women through the Virtual Center. Throughout the three-part series, the female students shared their interest in the topic of conflict, shared their own conflict stories, and told us how the DHP curriculum could help them in their professions as educators and in their lives. It was certainly rewarding to see that the principles and concepts covered in the DHP curriculum could have such broad and global applications.



# Collaboration with the Institute for Theatre & Social Change

WPDJ was pleased to collaborate once again with the University of Southern California's Institute for Theatre & Social Change to work with a group of students at Stephen White Middle School and STEAM Magnet.

The 15 students in the program learned the foundations of Theatre of the Oppressed praxis as a means for performing and presenting embodied storytelling regarding issues that concern them. Three local Theatre of the Oppressed practitioners worked with a group of students for eight weeks in teaching the techniques that led to three scenes of an occurrence where students have experienced less agency and power in their choice making. Students were instructed in concepts of protagonist, will, conflict and need that supported the development of three stories regarding issues of expected perfectionism from parents and teachers, teachers not valuing youth wisdom, and the conflicts with expectations of gender expression. Students presented and performed these three stories as three scenes to several classes in a Forum Theater style presentation where other students were invited into the reality of the story to influence a decision and choice making that would impact the protagonist in what they were striving.





# International Day of Peace

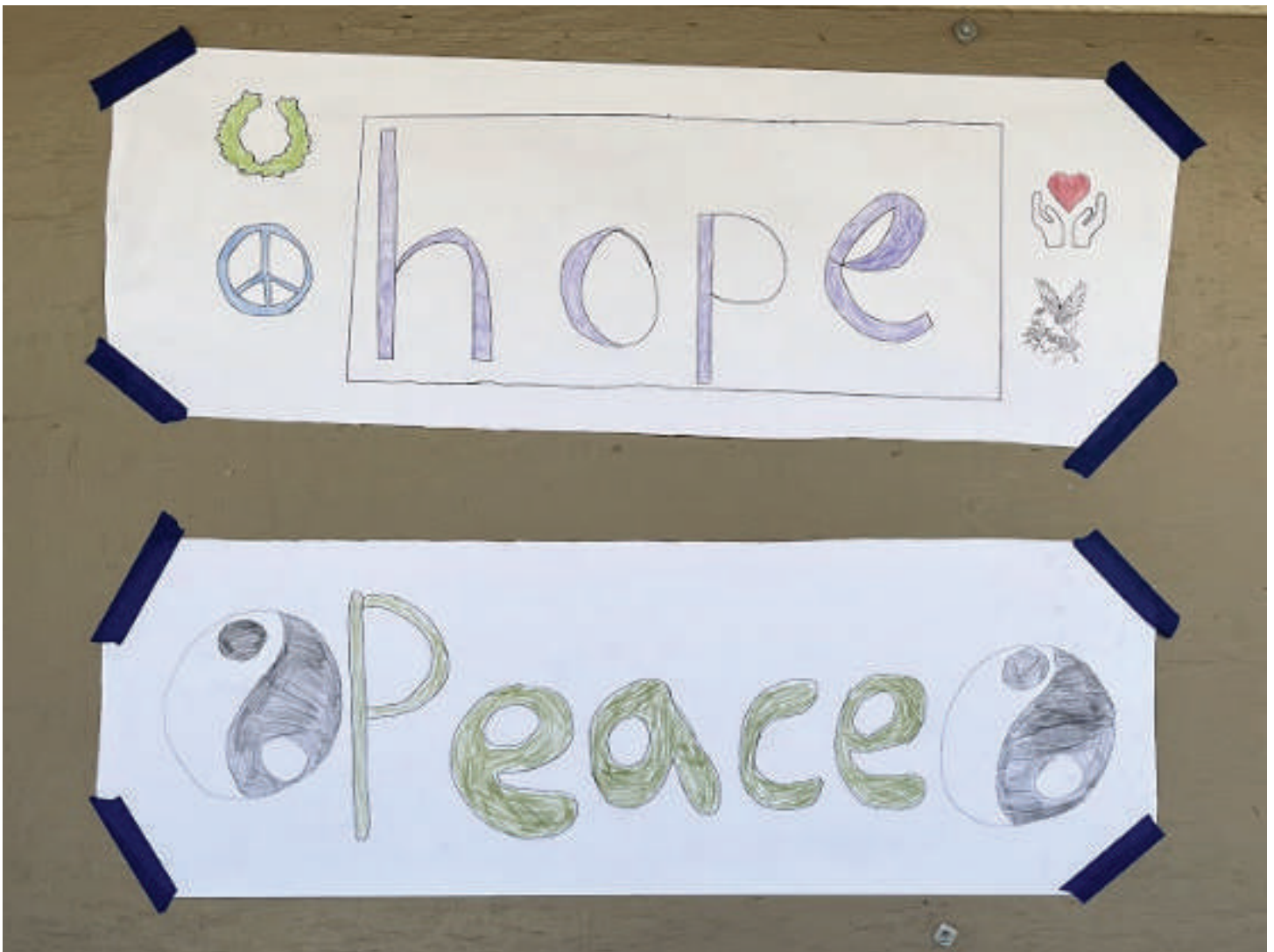


WPDI was pleased to sponsor activities at Stephen White Middle School and STEAM Magnet and Walker Jr. High School for the International Day of Peace on September 21st. At Stephen White in Carson, the entire student population engaged in interactive games and shared messages of peace during their lunch hour on the schools open field. Students were very engaged and delighted to have an opportunity to come together and celebrate a day that they were not used to celebrating. At Walker Jr. High School, the leaderships students read messages of peace during their daily announcements. During that entire week, , they made peace cranes, and one student also drew a beautiful peace dove called “The Beauty of a Crane’s Peace” in collaboration with a few other students.





# New Year, New Beginnings



Looking to 2023, we see a number of exciting opportunities ahead. Firstly, we are eyeing collaborations with high schools, which would be a first for the DHP. Our work with our prospective new high school partners would encompass a wide range of restorative practices opportunities, such as peer mediation for students, training for educators in circle processes, and parenting workshops. One area that we are particularly excited about is in fact developing our parenting program to reach more parents and provide our content on the Virtual Center. Our goal for the new year is also to formally launch a podcast series, which is an initiative that we have begun working on already.

WPDJ always remains committed to supporting schools in adopting and implementing peaceful processes in their day-to-day cultures. We are honored to work with our existing school partners, and our door always remains open to more collaborations. Our world needs stability and peace, and we need to work on building this important kind of security just as we do in establishing other kinds of infrastructure. Without lasting peace, we have nothing. This begins with teaching kids the skills of understanding themselves and their personal needs, working out their problems, and extending this understanding through their relationships. This is how we can build peace in the world – one school at a time, one community at a time.

# Partners



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