



Green Ribbon Initiatives AWARD

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Green Ribbon Initiatives, a non-profit corporation founded in the spring of 2013 is pleased to announce recognition of a significant community partnership. Recognition is being given to a partnership between PeaceMaker Minnesota and Glacier Hills School of Arts and Science for partnering in a way that enhances the lives of community residents.

In 1998 five households started PeaceMaker with just over \$8,000 in contributions. Incorporated as Peace Maker Foundation, scholarships were provided to college students conducting international research related to peacemaking. During 2011 PeaceMaker opened an office and in 2012 changed its name to PeaceMaker Minnesota to more clearly communicate that it is not a foundation – but a public charity relying on broad community support to fulfill its mission. The first school to receive support was in 2000 with a grant of \$400 to purchase classroom supplies. Soon after the organization's sole focus became strengthening school-based violence prevention efforts.

Peacemaker's mission is to give schools tools to stop violence. The vision is for every school to be a safe place where students can learn and develop positive relational skills. Peacemaker's role is help schools to implement a framework for preventing violence, to develop community support for their work, and to celebrate success. This is done because people and relationships matter.

PeaceMaker provides schools committed to teaching social emotional skills and ensuring a safe learning environment a framework for success and support in developing greater resources for their work. PeaceMaker provides individuals and organizations opportunities for helping kids in their communities learn things like cooperation, kindness, respect, and positive conflict resolution skills.

In 2015, Twenty-seven schools received more than \$91,000 in PeaceMaker Minnesota financial assistance to support their efforts to reduce bullying and to teach youth positive relational skills. Sixteen schools received a total of \$16,635 in evaluation grants to cover the costs of surveying their students about bullying and a report on survey results by The Improve Group, an independent evaluation company. "Measuring results each year allows us to see what is working," said Dan McNeil, PeaceMaker Minnesota's Executive Director. "The surveys also give schools information that they can use for improving their efforts, such as where bullying is happening and in what form."

Glacier Hills was established in 1993 as the 17th elementary school in District 196. It serves children in grades Kindergarten-5th. Glacier Hills is a school where educational dreams come true, offering a rigorous curriculum that focuses on creativity, curiosity and innovation. Dedicated teachers are well versed in best practices for all curricular areas. The staff is filled with caring competent professionals who have one goal: to help each child to reach their full potential. Staff members have been extensively trained in Responsive Classroom and Restitution. They are adept at creating respectful collaborative learning environments.

Glacier Hills is an International Peace Site committed to the five principles of International

Peace Sites which are: to protect the environment; to promote intercultural understanding and celebrate diversity; to seek peace within yourself and others; to reach out in service; and to be a responsible citizen of the world.

Principal Scott Thomas spoke to the effectiveness of the program on the Glacier Hills' culture and students when he reported that middle school teachers and principals report that they can always tell a Glacier Hills' student because "they can work with anyone and they ask good questions." Many students wrote positive testimonials regarding their participation in the program. One student wrote, "When I make good choices I feel happy and proud. My mom and dad and my teacher are some people I can talk to and my brother."

Glacier Hills improved its bullying prevention survey results in 8 out of 10 indicators. "These awards are a good way to highlight that schools can reduce bullying and that kids can learn to treat each other with kindness and to stand up for one another," said McNeil.

Healthy partnerships that engage the community help build community. The PeaceMaker Minnesota and the Glacier Hills School of Arts and Science partnership is an excellent example of the benefits of such partnerships illustrating the truth that by working together great things can be accomplished.

Green Ribbon Initiatives desires to see community engagement awards that:

- Increase the sense of community in Eagan.
- Increase the ability to improve the community at all levels.
- Increase the utilization of volunteers, especially the aging in place.
- Increase awareness of community engagement by a wider circle of persons.
- Recognize community engagement by increasing volunteerism and voter turn out.

Green Ribbon Initiatives was formed for the purpose of identifying and celebrating significant community engagement initiatives and partnerships in Eagan. Awards will be presented to exemplary initiatives in Eagan which build relationships and a collective sense of community in Eagan while promoting sustainable action that strengthens community engagement.

- The recognition process is meant to support and encourage the cultivation, motivation and coordination of multiple levels of community resources available to strengthen community.
- Community engagement is understood as individuals and organizations working together on common interests for mutual benefit and in the interest of the larger community.
- Green Ribbon Initiatives seeks to weave engagement into the community fabric and address barriers to engagement when they are identified.

This partnership is exemplary and significant and meets all selection criteria; we are pleased and excited to make this award.

Green Ribbon Leadership Team

Jim Borgschatz (president), Gene VanOverbeke, Tom Hedges, Brenda Johnson, Dave Unmacht, Paula Forbes, Don Hoeft

More information about Green Ribbon Initiatives Awards, nomination forms, application forms, and ways to help can all be found at www.greenribbon.info.

Green Ribbon Initiatives continues to solicit community partnerships to recognize as well as friends who are interested in being financial partners and in providing other support.



