

The Peace Project
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Many people have a vision of world peace. I know that we probably would all like to see it happen, but that's not the kind of change that's going to happen overnight. My idea for peace is on a much smaller scale. However, that doesn't mean that it isn't as significant. It is a very important issue that would be an amazing step toward peace. That idea is an attempt to stop or at least decrease the number of people joining gangs and growing up in a violent environment.

If I had 50,000 dollars to begin putting my plans into action, I would first recruit volunteers to go with me into a city with a high gang rate. I would then use the money to set up a location with a safe environment that kids can come to. I would call this place The Peace Project. As soon as I had that in place, I would begin going to the local schools and educating them on the dangers of joining a gang. I would be sure to have a few speakers with me that have gone through bad gang situations and have them tell the kids how hard it was to come out of that and turn their lives around. I think that if the kids heard from people that have actually lived through it, it would make more of an impression on them. At the end of the visit to each school, I would invite them all to visit The Peace Project. The Peace Project would be a place where they could come to get help with schoolwork, play games and sports, and do arts and crafts. But most importantly, The Peace Project would give them the opportunity to help out the community, whether it be doing things like visiting nursing homes or picking up trash in the city streets. There would always be something for them to do to give back to the community so they could try to make where they live a better place as well.

We've all heard the saying, "Give and you shall receive." Well, that is exactly the purpose of them doing work in their community. If they are doing things to help others, then it will ultimately help them feel better about themselves. This chain reaction of giving would bring a great amount of peace to the city where they live, giving them a much better place to grow up in.

ICPJ awarded \$75 to Nick Wheatley for his winning essay plus \$75 donated to Liberty Learning Center, an organization with goals similar to those of the initiative Nick proposed in his essay. Liberty Learning Center is a non-profit organization for children and youth of inner city Baltimore. Year-around programs at the Center help to break the cycle of addiction, poverty and crime.