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## Common Good News

November 2016



Center for  
Ethical Leadership

### From the Executive Director

On this election day, as citizens of the United States of America vote for people to represent them at the federal, state, and local level, I am inspired to share the words and wisdom of the Center for Ethical Leadership's founder, Bill Grace. Here is an open letter he recently penned:



*Dear Friends:*

*We all know this election has been an almost unbearable gauntlet of words and behaviors aimed at the lesser angels of our nature that has worn thin our bonds of affection.*

*Today I am thinking about the American spirit after the election.*

*Tensions are so high that it easy to imagine a deep sense of outrage on November 9th from those whose preferred candidate does not win.*

*Regardless of where we find ourselves on late Tuesday evening – doing a happy dance or mourning a loss -- we all have some important work to do starting Wednesday.*

*In a campaign filled with unusual levels of unconstructive conflict it might be helpful to recall some free choices we have while in conflict.*

*In my early years I was lead to believe that we could either have relationship or we could be in conflict. Like you – later in life – I slowly realized that I could be in conflict with someone and still be in community with them.*

*Honest and mature relationships are often filled with conflict but this conflict exists within a larger promise or covenant of commitment to be there for each other through the good and bad parts of life.*

*Lately two words have become increasingly important to me – gracious*

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*space. Gracious space is a spirit and a setting where strangers are welcome. Strangers in this case are not the people we don't know but the people we do know who bug us. These strangers think differently, act differently and vote differently than us and our first instinct is to estrange them – to turn them into strangers. Most often we'd rather be in relationship with those who think and act like us.*

*September 12 2001, taught us a different lesson. On that day – the day after the terrorist had their say – we said something powerful to each other – “We are one American Family”. That is no less true today!*

*Conflict by its nature is filled with raw energy that can produce both heat and light. In gracious space we can remember that even in the midst of our differences we are joined together in a common bond of national identity. As we recall the spirit of September 12th and offer each other gracious space the heat of our conflicts will decrease and the light will increase. It is that light – the hard earned light born of struggle that help marriages grow stronger that can re-strengthen the bonds of affection needed to live into the promise of E Pluribus Unum (out of many, one).*

*- Bill Grace*

## **Four Year Anniversary of the Peacemaking and Healing Initiative**

by Keiko Ozeki, Director of Peacemaking and Healing Initiative

This picture was taken on July 25th, 2012, when I was formally introduced to the Peacemaking Circle process. In this group, eighteen diverse people spent six intensive days in



the Racial Healing Circle. My personal experience in this circle was life changing. It healed my pain, transformed my life, and transcended my personal boundaries related to culture and race, beginning my peacemaking journey. I appreciate all of the indigenous groups who passed along their wisdom of peacemaking to our communities. I also honor Tagish Tlingit, the first nation in the Yukon Territory in Canada, who allowed us to receive their gift. Moreover, I acknowledge Saroeum Phoung who, at the invitation of Dale Nienow and the Center for Ethical Leadership (CEL), led this first circle and partnered with us to build capacity in the community to use the Peacemaking Circle process. His teaching lives inside me forever.

Since that Racial Healing Circle, CEL has launched the Peacemaking and Healing Initiative (PHI) in the Seattle region. In partnership with many communities and institutions, this initiative is committed to practicing peacemaking principles and using the Peacemaking Circle process to cultivate healthy, just, and inclusive organizations and communities. CEL serves as a hub and backbone organization to develop environments where everyone can feel integrated and accepted. The Peacemaking and Healing Initiative has been dedicated to building peacemaking communities and

developing community leadership for four years. I express deep appreciation to all the individuals, communities, and organizations who support this initiative. We cannot sustain this work without your engagement and commitment to peacemaking and healing.

The concept of community leadership claims that everyone needs to be a leader. Because we live in an era where the world is interconnected, fluid, and fluctuating, it has become difficult to predict the future. In the 21st century, it is impossible for a limited number of people to create a desirable future for this planet. Each individual has a gift to contribute to the world, and at the same time, each individual also has blind spots. Everyone needs to offer their own gift and collaborate with each other to supplement their blind spots. The Native American prophecy of "The Rainbow Warrior" tells us that under the symbol of the rainbow, all diversities such as race, culture, and religion will respect each other and unite to spread the wisdom of harmony. Peacemaking practice is a way to find our own gifts and develop our new muscle to generate synergy for social innovation. We look forward to continuing this work for years to come.

## Keep learning and have hope - Interview with Board member Kwesi Rollins

Interviewed by Shelly Najjar

*Kwesi Rollins, who serves on the board, is this month's spotlight in our interview series, where each of the board members introduce themselves to you and share some of their experiences.*

**Thanks for your time, Kwesi. Why do you support the Center? How did you come to join the board?**

I was introduced to the Center in sort of a shotgun marriage by the Kellogg Foundation. They were both applying for a grant, and the Foundation came down to the IEL and the CEL [Institute for Educational Leadership and the Center for Ethical Leadership]. They asked if we could work together on the initiative and we agreed. I was the one leading from the IEL, and I worked with Dale Nienow and we became good friends. Later he asked if I would join the board, and I've been on the board since then.



**What are some of your other projects, interests, and passions?** I'm the Director of Leadership Programs at the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), so I work across boundaries to address the needs of young people and their families. I coordinate IEL's family and community engagement, early childhood education, and leadership development and support work which includes school and district leadership as well as community-based leadership development. Because we're mostly systems people, we work with school districts, cross-sector leaders and a variety of community stakeholders. We help leaders at all levels make sense of the research and best practice and apply those lessons to their local contexts to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. As someone focused on improving systems, I have the capacity to go deep on certain issues but I think it takes a special kind of leadership to think about the broad connections within systems and focus efforts in ways that really evoke change. I do a lot of work

at the community-wide and district level, with multiple communities in given regions and sometimes at the national level. I'm passionate and interested in that kind of thinking.

**What leadership advice would you give to others?** There's a lot to say about leadership, but for the individual, I think I'd say keep learning. I have this attitude of always learning. I'm often brought on as a consultant but instead of saying "Here are all the answers, I know it all," I say "I want to work with you, let's learn together." It requires an element of humility, I think. And leaders need to believe that things can change, to have optimism, to keep hope. Sometimes it's hard, I struggle with this. It's also important that we're doing things to rest and take care of ourselves so we can have that hope that things will get better, that people can be good. One of the things I'm grateful for the Center for is teaching me about Gracious Space. I learned it in the first meeting with CEL back in 2002. The principles of Gracious Space continue to influence all of my work and offer a more holistic way of imagining systemic change.

**The next question is just for fun: What is your favorite animal, and why?**

I'm a dog person. My breed is the Japanese Akita. I grew up in a house where my mom said I couldn't have a dog, "You can get one when you're grown," so when I was grown, I got a dog and the first dog I got was a Japanese Akita. They're loyal, they're friendly, they have unconditional love, they're a bit stubborn, and they only bark when it's necessary, which is cool. They always have a hug for you. My last Akita died a few years ago and I haven't gotten another one, because I travel too much with my work and you can't really have a puppy when you're frequently on the road. So that's the first thing after retirement: stop travelling as much and get a puppy.

**Is there anything else you want to tell the readers?** We're happy to work again with the Center, which is partnering not at the national level this time, but on the local level. IEL is working with the Road Map Project on improving family and community engagement across the seven school districts in South King County. Being able to include the Center in some of that work has been really neat, as CEL's executive director has been part of the regional conversations to set priorities and plan family and community engagement activities. Lastly, after joining the Twitter-verse somewhat late, I've found it to be an incredible tool for our work. Follow me on Twitter (@Kwesibaby58). It's a funny handle but people always smile when they hear it.

**Thanks for your time and service on the Board, Kwesi!**

*Readers, if you are committed to the Center's mission and interested in supporting and growing the organization, please email Steve Stapleton for more information about board membership.*

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## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### Post Election Circle evening Tuesday November 15, 2016

The 2016 election cycle is unlike any other that Americans have experienced. The impact, stakes and the stress have moved us all to an uncomfortable and difficult place. There is expressed concern over candidate behavior, rancor within the electorate, fear and deep uncertainty as to the future of the nation.

The Post Election Circle is an opportunity to openly reflect and share in an atmosphere of acceptance, love and forgiveness. Mindfully, we can begin reconnecting the fractured pieces and begin the process of healing, together.

Join keepers Melanie Roper, Mark Sideman and Paula Clements at Seattle University, 5pm -8:30pm.

There is no cost to attend, however, space is limited so registration is

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required.

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## Introductory Peacemaking Circle

**December 2-3, 2016.**

Experience the Peacemaking Circle and learn leadership practices that promote healing, as well as individual and community health. We need healthy leaders to create healthy change. Registration fee is \$275.

Contact [Keiko Ozeki](#) for more information, or [REGISTER HERE](#)

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