

Parenting 4 Non-Violence

Honor the Women in your Life

Mother's Day

May 13, 2018

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Spring 2018 Newsletter

The mission of Parenting for Non-Violence (P4NV) is to educate and support parents to raise their children in emotionally healthy ways so that their children can thrive personally, socially and academically.

In response to youth violence in the city of Chicago, the Office of Peace and Justice and Office of Black Catholics of the Archdiocese of Chicago initiated meetings in 2009/2010 to explore initiatives which have been proven to or promise to minimize violence. As research suggests that the most effective or most promising violence prevention programs are those that are aimed at reducing risk factors by strengthening families and children, Parenting for Non-Violence (P4NV) was formed and initially supported with Catholic Campaign for Human Development grants. Evidence-based programs were identified, facilitators trained, and our first group of parents gathered at St. Agatha Catholic Church, N. Lawndale, in 2012.

Parenting for Non-Violence is currently being taught in neighborhoods in Cook County where families are most vulnerable to violence and have fewer resources to support their family life needs.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO?

Empathy

How can we not? Chicago violence, drugs, poverty and absence of supportive extended families wreak havoc!

All parents have hopes, dreams and fears for their child. Some of us have resources

when problems arise; others do not. Some of us can send our children out to play; others cannot. Some children can walk to school without fear; others are shot on the way home. Some children skip their breakfast; others have no breakfast to eat. Our common bond is loving our children and wanting the best for them. So, we reach out.

Who has raised children and said it was a walk in the park? Parenting has joys and many moments of anxiety – no matter what your education, income or community support. All parents have regrets despite best of intentions. Many of the parents we serve have almost impossible odds to overcome in addition to doing the most difficult job of all which is to raise happy and successful children.

Speaking personally, as the editor of the newsletter, *I thought I knew how to parent. My family was loving, no shouting or hitting. I was the experienced eldest and I had taught elementary school. But there was so much I did NOT know. Not until my children were teenagers did I participate in parent education classes. What a help it would have been 10 years earlier!*

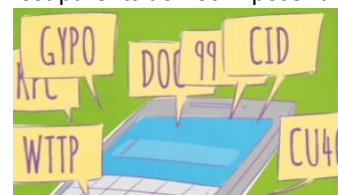
New Challenges



Each generation has new challenges which require new learning. Social media is one

example, which has brought a new social dynamic to parents trying to navigate the complex years of adolescence. Social media and text messages are useful tools in staying connected with our children and

loved ones; **however**, these same tools that have become so integral to teenage life are promoting anxiety and lowering self-esteem and have become a platform for increased violence. Dr. Desmond Patton, PhD., SAFE Lab, Columbia School of Social Work shares that social media has become a contributing factor to the uptick in violence. Conversations between youth move from general conversations to more aggressive conversations. It is a new way of taunting (beyond cyber-bullying) and it's the modern way of gang graffiti – internet banging. Most parents do not impose rules about the media content their children



consume, perhaps in part because they think the research on violence and aggressive behavior applies to other children and not their own. It is vital for every parent to realize that no child is immune from these influences. Parents need to know how to detect and prevent violence on social media.

Research

A page filled with academic support for parenting education could lull you to sleep, but one longitudinal study is recounted as reported in 2013 by Deborah Gorman-Smith, Professor University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and Director of the Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention. She and her colleagues developed a parenting program for parents of first grade children and tracked these children until they entered high school.

They learned that the children of the participating parents were in line to be 50% more likely to graduate and half as likely to have participated in a violent incident in school as compared to children of parents who had not participated. A similar program for parents of at-risk middle school students, focusing on appropriate discipline and communication skills, reduced their aggressive behavior, *and that of other children in the school.*

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO? Collecting firearms or providing jobs we cannot do. Strengthening families we can do! This is one piece of the supportive pie that we understand and which has been shown to make a difference. P4NV's evidence-based parent education programs are available for families to support them in raising their precious children.

Our Parents

Comments from the Parents We Serve

One teenager told his parents he would like to take the class because of changes he is seeing at home.

"My communication with my children is better. We talk more than before. I have attended two different kind of classes they offer



and they have helped me a lot. Please continue to have these classes for parents."

Parents say some of the main strategies they have learned are the importance of staying calm, to listen to their children and work on relationships, to be



consistent with discipline – neither too strict nor too lenient, and to give choices where appropriate to minimize power struggles. They leave sessions uplifted with a sense of hope for a brighter future for their children.

One mother of a child on probation said both her parents died when she was an early teen and, as a parent, she has no family support. Another woman in the class said she, too, had lost her mother when she was a teen and looked at the first mother, and said *"You are not alone. Now - you have me."*

Men who attend our Fatherhood Program at the Department of Corrections were asked, "What gives them motivation to move forward?" The most common answer – *"Our children."*

WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO? We hear their concerns and provide a road map as a guide. We hear stories of desperation and isolation and try to give a hand up and support. As parents, we have a common bond; we listen, we care, and cannot turn our backs.

Be Creative this Mothers' Day. This Mothers' Day honor a special woman in your life by making a gift to P4NV in her name. By honoring someone with a donation, you help us to change lives by providing parents the support they need. **P4NV will mail a card to your honoree and inform them of your gift.**



TELLING OUR STORY

Thanks to the generous underwriting by Pat Werhane, Sheila Mickus, and Evilin McHugh, Big Questions Productions is putting the final touches on 3 five-minute video clips that will help to increase awareness of the value of parenting education and of P4NV. The film clips will be shown to the appropriate audience highlighting the need for parent education, personal narratives, community involvement and P4NV program structure. We want to expand the current filming into a 30 minute documentary. WTTW Prime will be one of the venues for viewing. This documentary supports our goals of combatting stigmas and creating awareness of the value of parenting education for one and all.

**Please support our mission Donate - Volunteer - Network
Together WE can make a difference!**

As we approach our 6th year of operation, we thank all who have made our outreach possible.

Sixty-two individuals have contributed \$19,294.79 since July 1, 2017 this fiscal year.

Small non-profits cannot thrive without you!

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