

What They're Saying...



"Through Peacebuilders I am learning how I can make a difference in my community. My mentors helped me make connections and remind me that I am not alone. For me that really helps."
Ryan Mroz, St. Viator High School



"[My ministry site] exposed me to people I never knew existed. I learned from the families that they are just trying to make a life for themselves. I know what is really happening now and I have to live in ways that honor their lives."
Hillary Holzer, Trinity High School



"Everyone was singing during the worship times because we all wanted to. It's like this is right, the way it should be... I want my church to be like this."
Richard Falls Jr., St. Rita High School



"This is really the first time anyone in the church took me seriously... they listened."
Katie Meyer, Nazareth Academy

Below: St. Rita High School graduate Andy Taube visits with a resident at his ministry site, Misericordia Home, on Chicago's northside.



Mission Statement

Rooted in the church's mission of peacemaking and reconciliation, and inspired by the vision and passion of Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, the Peacebuilders Initiative at Catholic Theological Union seeks to encourage and mentor youth to awaken their minds and hearts toward ministry within the church as a lifelong vocation.

In a culturally diverse urban setting, this integrated program of study, ministry, prayer, and reflection provides for a deepening and enriching of the faith of the participants, while offering them the opportunity to challenge each other to forge a vision of their future as Christians committed to serving the church and society.

The Bernardin Center for Theology and Ministry

at Catholic Theological Union

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peacebuilders
initiative

A program of the Bernardin Center
at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago

A Sign of Hope

We live in a violent and conflict-ridden world. War, poverty, oppression, and injustice highlight each day's news, and people are increasingly disconnected from their communities in a culture of individualism and consumerism.

Yet there are signs of hope. Young people today express idealism and optimism that stand up against this prevailing negativity. High school youth want to seek meaning in their lives, to deepen their spirituality, "to do good things for others."

Now more than ever, church and society need young people of faith, who are steeped in the traditions and practice of wisdom, peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation... a new generation of young Catholic leaders.

That's where the Peacebuilders Initiative comes in.



"During the Peacebuilders week I learned about different cultures, religions, and a lot about myself. Now I want to put my faith into action, real action."

**Kasey Conrad,
Holy Family Parish**

"Thank you for giving this wonderful experience to [our daughter] Kate. She feels it has made a huge impact on her life, and we can see how it has truly opened her eyes... You are performing a very valuable, life-changing service for our youth, and we are grateful that Kate has been able to be a part of it."

**Regina Kinasz, mother of Kate Kinasz,
St. Viator High School**

Photos by Daniel O'Connell

A Unique Program

The **Peacebuilders Initiative** is an innovative ministry and leadership development program sponsored by Catholic Theological Union, geared for high school youth. Originally funded in 2001 by the Lilly Endowment Inc., Peacebuilders challenges young men and women to explore the theology of peace and deepen their understanding of their faith. High school students chosen to participate in Peacebuilders learn the skills necessary for leadership, conflict resolution, and peacemaking. Guided by dedicated teachers and mentors, the Peacebuilders experience is grounded in prayer, reflection, and faith sharing.

The **Peacebuilders Initiative** employs a holistic, comprehensive approach to open the eyes and hearts of young people to a call to ministry. This unique approach includes:

The Summer Program—a week-long session featuring theology taught by CTU faculty, along with liturgy, and practical, hands-on ministry

The Peace Project—to implement the skills and experience participants gained in the summer session in a project they create to promote peace and justice in their schools and communities.

Follow-up Retreats—keep the participants connected and grounded in their common faith experience, and provide support for their ongoing Peace Projects.



"Building peace is not about us as individuals doing our own good deeds. Building peace is hard work and can only be done with the community and for the community."

Lucy Gamboa, St. Charles Borromeo Parish

Called to Be Peacebuilders

The **Peacebuilders Initiative** was founded by Catholic Theological Union, the largest Catholic graduate school of theology in North America. Since its inception, the tremendous impact of Peacebuilders has been deeply felt by the high school students, their families, their communities, and the church.

We need your help to continue this vital program. To keep the registration fee affordable for the young people, we reach out to others for assistance.

Please consider supporting the Peacebuilders Initiative. With your financial support, Peacebuilders can encourage even more young people each year to bring their gifts of leadership, positive action, and hope to their communities, for the betterment of all.

For more information or to make a gift:

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Give online: Visit www.ctu.edu, go to "Make a gift."
Select "Peacebuilders Initiative" under Gift Information.

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