

West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition



**Presents
Peace Essay Contest Winners**

**August 27, 2014
The 86th Anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Pact**

Our Mission Statement:

- Promoting peace and justice in public policy
- Educating ourselves on legislative issues
- Advocating from our faith perspective
- Communicating with our legislators
- Encouraging others to be involved



Who are we?

We are an initiative of faith-based peacemakers from across Chicago's western suburbs. WSFPC includes clergy, congregations, church staff, lay persons, faith-based peace organizations, peace and justice committees, religious communities, and more, spanning from Oak Park to Elgin and Joliet. WSFPC is committed to sustaining work of peace through activities such as prayer vigils, public witness, peace education, lobbying/legislative initiatives, and interfaith dialogue.

Some of our Member Organizations are: Fellowship of Reconciliation, PAX Christi IL, the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, the Lombard Mennonite Church, and the York Center Church of the Brethren.

Where and when do we meet?

The **Legislation Workgroup** meets the first Wednesday of every month at the First United Methodist Church of Downers Grove from Noon to 2:00PM in room #202.

The **Servant Leadership Team** meets the second Thursday of every month at the Lombard Mennonite Church from 7:00PM to 8:30PM.

Our **Educational Forums** take place the third Tuesday of every month at the Lombard Mennonite Church from 7:00PM to 9:00PM.

How does one become a member?

Send a check for \$30 (note: no one is turned away for lack of funds) and your name, email address, and telephone number (please print) to

West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition
c/o Nobuko Kudo
590 S La Londe Ave
Lombard, IL 60148

The West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition has applied to become a Fellowship of Reconciliation (Chicago Chapter) Affiliate. If and when approved, donations to WSFPC may become tax deductible.

West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition

Peace Essay Contest

Award Presentations

August 27, 2014

The 86th Anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Pact

Peace Essay Judges

Leila Bannon, Villa Park, IL

Amira Boctor, Oak Brook, IL

Dave Karcher, Lombard, IL

Nobuko Kudo, Esq., Lombard, IL

Carol Schludecker, Indian Head Park, IL

Carol Urban, Glen Ellyn, IL

Peace Essay Coordinator

Frank Goetz, Wheaton, IL

Keynote Address

Kathy Kelly

Cofounder- Voices for Creative Nonviolence

Thrice Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize

Peace Essay Winners

First Place Awards

James Page, Ph.D., Corinda, Australia
Ghadeer S. Awwad, Richmond, IN

Third Place Award

Jamie Gebara Frost, Salt Lake City, UT

Fourth Place Awards

Laurie Gagne, Ph.D., South Burlington, VT &
John F Reuwer, MD, South Burlington, VT
Poonam Kumari Lalit Kumar, Hampshire, UK



About the Peace Essay Contest



Presented at La Tosca Ristorante Italiano & Pizzeria, Villa Park, IL

First Place Award

Reclaiming the Kellogg-Briand Pact

James Page, Ph.D., Corinda, Australia

The Kellogg-Briand Pact, otherwise known as the General Treaty for the Renunciation of War, or simply the Pact of Paris, is one of the most interesting of all modern treaties. This was a treaty signed in 1928 by most of the nations of the world and by which the signatory nations pledged to renounce war as an official instrument of national policy and to use peaceful means to resolve disputes. One of the interesting facts about this Treaty is that it is still current. There are a number of reasons why I would suggest it is now appropriate to reclaim this Treaty in the popular imagination.

The first reason is that the Treaty coincides with other international commitments. For instance, the 1999 United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, commits the signatories to promoting non-violence and a culture of non-violence. The Preamble to the UN Charter indicates that the basis for the organization is to prevent succeeding generations from experiencing the “scourge of war”, and the constitutional mandate for UNESCO commits that organization to encouraging a culture of peace. The value of the Kellogg-Briand Pact is that this commitment to peace is made a little more concrete and a little more explicit.

The second reason is that the Kellogg-Briand Pact is more relevant than ever, given current international politics. It is arguable that we live in a world where there has been a relative absence of inter-state armed conflict in recent years. However the paradox is that the potential for inter-state violence is more apparent than ever, with growing major power rivalries now evident in the Western Pacific and in Eastern Europe. It is instructive to remember that in 1914 the world had experienced a time of relative peace, but that peace soon came to an end. I contend the ideals of the Kellogg-Briand Pact are now more important than ever.

The third reason is that aspirational goals are important. Goethe once wrote that the potential we identify is the potential we will tend to fulfil. It is true that the Kellogg-Briand Pact did not stop fascist aggression in the 1930s, leading to global war. Yet I would suggest that this only underscores the importance of educating and publicizing why such a Pact is important, that is, why it is important for nations to renounce war as an official instrument of policy, and why it is important for nations to commit to pacific and diplomatic means for the resolving of disputes. Ideals are worth working on.

The fourth reason is practical. The Kellogg-Briand Pact is often criticized as being overly idealist, and yet it was on the basis of this Pact that the Nuremberg Tribunal and the Tokyo Trials prosecuted those who had led the world into yet another world war. It is timely to remind ourselves that using war as an instrument of national policy is contrary to international law, and that those who do so are war criminals. Many would argue that

there are many such contemporary war criminals yet to be prosecuted, although this in itself is yet another reason why the Kellogg-Briand Pact needs to be publicized.

The final reason is cultural. We live in strange times, with a wide recognition of the destructiveness and futility of war, and yet we witness a popular culture which increasingly celebrates participation in violent conflict as the defining mark of courage and identity. Any statement which explicitly rejects the value of war, and in particular which rejects war as an instrument of national policy, is useful in these circumstances. Such statements help undergird a rejection of the culture of violence, which is so pervasive. The Kellogg-Briand Pact is one such public statement.

How do we go about re-claiming the Kellogg-Briand Pact within the popular imagination, or, to put the question another way, how do we obey this law against war? I would suggest what needs to happen is that national and international leaders of opinion ought to be encouraged to speak out on the importance of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and its relevance today. For the United Nations, one practical innovation would be the establishment of an International Day for the Renunciation of War, as a means for raising consciousness. Whatever the means, it is difficult to gainsay the relevance of the Pact, and the need for this to be reclaimed as a pressing one for our times.

Response

This article by Dr. James Page was submitted to the Director-General of UNESCO and was published in the UN authorized *Culture of Peace News Network* on 29/4/14. The full article was also published with the journal *Online Opinion*. Further details appear in the links below.

<http://cpnn-world.org/cgi-bin/read/articlepage.cgi?ViewArticle=1454>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

First Place Award

How Can We Obey the Law Against War?

Ghadeer S. Awwad, Richmond, IN

“Why are your legs so badly injured?” I inquired. Laughing, while trying to hide his pain, my father answered, “I have them because I knew it was going to make you stick around me all day staring at them.” He was right. My fascination with the human body and its ability to take different forms made me gaze at his legs all day. Growing up, I always dreamt of becoming a medical doctor. “I want to be able to play with people’s organs and understand how they really function,” I used to say. Despite my fascination with the sight, I knew that my father’s injuries caused him a lot of discomfort. My mother always repeated the story of the time when he was shot by rubber bullets when he was trying to cross a checkpoint. I was only eleven when I saw my father in this state. It left a long lasting impact. I am still engrossed at the fact we, human beings, are able to harm one another, kill a soul, and initiate wars.

Growing up in the midst of conflict in Palestine, I sometimes got into situations that were not different than my father being shot by a rubber bullet. Having to cross checkpoints from one city to another, and breathing tear gas from clashes between protesters and Israeli troops were part of my daily routine. Oddly enough, I even thought that breathing tear gas was a commonality for people around the world. It was when I left Palestine for the first time in 2010 that I realized that these things were not only foreign to everybody else, but they were also something they would not tolerate.

Encountering these events made me wonder whether one day, we, as humans will be able to challenge our brutal ability of starting wars, and work towards a more peaceful world. If you ask a school child about the year that World War Two started, they are likely to quickly give you the correct answer. However, if you ask the same child about individuals who made an effort to prevent wars, or pacts that were signed to make wars illegal, such as the Kellogg-Briand Pact, they would seldom be able to give you a solid answer.

After the catastrophic death of more than 16 million people during World War I, people around the world became aware of the real cost. It was important to guarantee that such (mis)use of mass power would not take place in the future. Peace advocates, such as Nicholas Murray Butler and James T. Shotwell, assisted the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aristide Briand, who initiated the Pact. Briand signed a bilateral agreement with the United States to outlaw wars between the two nations. The agreement came to be

known as the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact. This April 1927 agreement gained support from President Calvin Coolidge and Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg, who suggested inviting other nations to join them in outlawing war. Initially, fifteen nations signed the pact, and 47 nations soon followed. Among the early signatories were: France, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada. The Kellogg-Briand Pact contains two Articles. Article I states that the contracting parties solemnly declare that "they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another." In Article 2, the contracting countries agree that the settlement of all disputes with each other "shall never be sought except by pacific means."

Despite the initial optimism, the limitations of the Pact quickly became apparent. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria in northern China. The League of Nations did little about this blunt act of aggression. It became clear that there were no mechanisms in place to enforce the articles of the Pact. And when Germany invaded Poland in the fall of 1939, the Kellogg-Briand Pact was all but dead.

Despite its practical failure, one must not completely dismiss the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The spirit behind the Pact remains very alive. History has proven time and again that people have a lot of power to fight for peace. After all, it is the same spirit of the Kellogg-Briand Pact that brought an end to, among other things, wars, slavery, and apartheid.

In order to be able to bring the countries that signed this pact into compliance, the youth should, first, be aware of its existence. Attending a liberal arts college has given me the opportunity to meet a lot of passionate people who aspire to work towards preventing wars. I have been part of various student clubs and organizations whose chapters are working around the world. As an activist, I could work in a much better capacity by fighting against wars if I knew that there is a law that makes war illegal. Without knowing about this Pact, activists could hardly hold their leaders accountable for their decisions to engage in wars. The first step may be to have all the non-governmental human rights movement, such as Amnesty International, spread awareness about the Pact. The second step would be to establish a campaign by the leaders of various non-violent movements to put pressure on the governments who signed the Pact to obey the law against war. This campaign will include boycott, divestment, and political and economic sanction. This movement will take place against the government engaging in wars that are not acts of self defense until they comply with international law and human rights. In order to do so, it is crucial to target citizens, activists, businessmen, political leaders, and government officials that believe in the need to end the war. After all, these governments are more likely to follow our demand when they are pressured by their very own constituencies. This strategy has shown to be successful in the past. Notably, the South African BDS movement mounted enough political and economic pressure to cause the South African government to end its apartheid regime.

“The Kingdom of God is within man” says the 17th Chapter of St. Luke. The Kingdom of God is not within one man, or a group of men, but within all men. We, the people, have the power and responsibility to shape a world without war. Perhaps one day we can live in the world that Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. sacrificed their own lives for.

Response

Ghadeer Awwad, sophomore, International Studies, Earlham College, first submitted this essay to the Amnesty International Secretary General but was rejected: “Unfortunately, this is not something that Secretary General can provide assistance with.” She then sent it to Dr. Sa’ed Atshan, Postdoctoral Fellow in International Studies, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University. Dr. Atshan sent this letter.

Dear Ghadeer,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on taking advantage of this opportunity to share your creative ideas and thoughts on some of the world’s most pressing issues. It was a pleasure to read your essay and to learn more about the Kellogg-Briand Pact. As you indicated, war can be a tremendously destructive force in society, even if it is justified in the name of self-defense. International law provides us with powerful tools to determine the legality of acts of war. Therefore, the fact that the Kellogg-Briand Pact has been signed by more than sixty countries is truly inspiring.

I greatly appreciated learning about your personal narrative and about some of your experiences with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I have much respect for how this has motivated you to help end wars around the world and to increase knowledge of this important Pact. Your ability to articulate your experience so eloquently would resonate with many people around the world who have had to live in conflict zones.

Reading your essay affirmed the commitment I share with you to oppose wars and to expand knowledge of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. I was deeply moved when you contacted me to share that one of the main reasons you wrote this essay was a result of your belief that educating young people about this Pact is the most effective way to fight against wars, and to ensure that the world’s leaders are accountable to the law. The Kellogg-Briand Pact is a spark that with our pressure can place limitations on governments that carry out illegal wars.

Therefore, I would like to inform you that you have inspired me to integrate lessons on the Kellogg-Briand Pact in my classrooms, given my dual appointments at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies and Tufts University’s Peace and Justice Studies program. By introducing this Pact in my curriculum, I hope that my students, as future leaders, will also educate their peers, families, and communities about why they should care about understanding this Pact and its significance. I would love for you to contribute your ideas as well given your own experience as an undergraduate at a Quaker college.

Good luck with this contest and please keep me posted. In the meantime, if you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at atshan@brown.edu or at 617.682.5784.

Sincerely,
Sa’ed Atshan
Postdoctoral Fellow
Watson Institute for
Brown University

Third Place Award

Jamie Gebara Frost, Salt Lake City, UT

To: Samantha Power, United States Ambassador to the United Nations

Ms. Power:

I am writing to urge adoption of the United Nations resolution for an International Day of Remembrance of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. As the number of violent world conflicts continues to increase, leaders and constituents worldwide are calling for peaceful alternatives to war. However, this is not a new development. On August 27, 1928, fifteen countries signed the General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy (Also known as the Pact of Paris, and hereafter to be referred to as the Kellogg-Briand Pact in this letter). By today, 61 countries have joined. [1]

Articles I and II of the Kellogg-Briand Pact state the following:

“The High Contracting Parties solemnly [sic] declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it, as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another....The High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.” [1]

In accordance with the worldwide growing desire for peaceful means of conflict resolution, the Kellogg-Briand Pact can be a powerful tool in helping us transform the future of conflict resolution. However, in the time since it was originally signed, it has sadly failed to have the impact that was intended.

Criticisms of the Kellogg-Briand pact are centered around the fact that it is difficult to enforce. As is the main challenge with most international agreements, sovereign governments choose the extent to which they implement and are committed to the agreed upon resolution. Although unfortunate, this is the reality which restrains the effectiveness of peace agreements.

However, an advantage of our modern global society is that what international governmental organizations cannot enforce, the citizens of individual countries can, even in countries without high levels of public participation in government. This is evidenced by the Arab spring movement in 2011, the current, ongoing Venezuela protests, and countless other political movements instigated by the public in order to

socially pressure governments into observance of public moral opinion. These demonstrations prove that public opinion has the power to enforce their respective ideals.

I submit that The United States should propose and/or support language in a United Nations resolution that would make August 27th (the anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Pact) an International Day of Remembrance of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Additionally, language should be included to invite nations that are not signers of the Kellogg-Briand Pact to ratify it. If an international day of remembrance is recognized in these countries, it would invite the attention of the public to the fact that their governments have agreed to a formal pact against the use of war in resolving conflict. If, then, the issue arises that a government violates the agreement of the pact, the public would have the knowledge and awareness necessary to exercise whatever social pressure they feel would represent the will of the citizens of that nation.

If citizens are empowered with knowledge of what their respective governments have agreed to, they themselves will be able to take on the responsibility of enforcing it according to public opinion. A key method for circulating this knowledge is by establishing an international day of remembrance and recognition. With this international day, media attention will inform people of the peace agreement, internet sites such as google will give a history of the meaning of the day, and tweets and facebook posts relating to the themes of the Kellogg-Briand Pact will become more prevalent. Armed with knowledge, citizens can take on the role of promoting world peace by holding their governments accountable for compliance with their international agreements.

[1] <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/kbpact.htm>

Thank you for your time,

Jamie Gebara Frost
Salt Lake City, Utah

Response

No response was received from this letter, which was disappointing. However, the judges keep in mind the reality that not all public officials respond to letters. This should not deter others from writing. Democracy requires a persistent citizenry to hold public officials accountable.

Fourth Place Award

**Laurie Gagne, Ph.D., South Burlington, VT &
John F Reuwer, MD, South Burlington, VT**

Dear Pope Francis,

As Catholics, our hope for the Church has been re-kindled by the dominant themes of the first year of your papacy. Your call for the faithful to go forth from their churches and into the streets to help those who are poor and oppressed strikes a deep chord in us. All over the world, your message of solidarity with those who suffer has inspired Catholics and non-Catholics alike. We long for you to take an even more prophetic stand by addressing another great cause of human suffering—war.

This year marks the 86th anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand pact, also known as the *General Treaty of Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy*, which was signed by most of the world's nations in Paris in 1928. Instead of being a great boon to mankind, this still binding treaty has been ignored, leading to untold misery from the continuing scourge of state violence. We believe that a major reason nations cling to armed conflict is the belief that there can be a just war. It is time for the Church to make a break with all attempts to justify killing as policy and give her full support to nonviolent means of rectifying injustice.

For centuries, the Church has given her blessing to war. Ever since St. Augustine formulated a Christian version of the just war theory, it has been possible for men (and women) in arms to kill each other believing that it is God's will. As recently as the pontificate of Pius XII, conscientious objection to war was frowned upon by the Church. Yet just a few years later, the Church moved away from its unequivocal support of the just war theory. *The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, from Vatican II, grants conscientious objection equal status with participation in a just war. In St. John Paul II's encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*, written just after the mostly nonviolent overthrow of communism in Eastern Europe, he calls for the adoption of alternative methods in situations of conflict. His support for such nonviolent heroes as Lech Walensa and Oscar Romero is well known. Today, it is our conviction that the Church should go one step further in her endorsement of non-violence. We ask that she publicly reject the just war theory.

Addressing the issue of political violence and war is particularly timely today. Never in history have so many people around the world resisted injustice with nonviolent actions. Current research is finding that, contrary to conventional wisdom, nonviolent action, also called "people power," succeeds more often than violent power in liberating people from repressive regimes. In the last 30 years people power has overthrown dictatorships in the Philippines, the Warsaw Pact countries, Serbia, and elsewhere. African women have been honored with the Nobel Peace Prize for nonviolently ending a civil war in Liberia. Tunisians and Egyptians were able to depose long-time dictators with minimal violence in 2011. Moreover, groups like Christian

Peacemaker Teams and the Nonviolent Peaceforce are placing trained civilian peacekeepers in conflict areas where military forces have failed to bring peace, with remarkable results, all the while operating on budgets that are infinitesimal compared to the 1.75 trillion dollars the world spends annually on preparations for armed conflict.

War and violence are utterly antithetical to the peace of Christ; nonviolence, which is more powerful at effecting positive change, has no such contradiction. It springs from belief in the unity and dignity of humankind. Jesus said, "Love your enemies." How much more force his words would have if the leader of 1.2 billion Catholics were to call on us to return to that visionary moment in Paris and remember that we once renounced war. Over the centuries, the Church has spoken out in opposition to particular wars, like the recent war in Iraq, but her protest has been muted by her continuing acceptance of the just war theory, which has *never* been used to stop a war and is frequently employed to justify immoral military campaigns.

Dear Pope Francis, your words and actions on behalf of the poor have touched the hearts of people of good will everywhere. The time is right to issue another challenge-- that we once again reject war and the preparations for war which the just war theory requires. The business of preparing for war, by bleeding resources from essential goods and services, hurts the poor most of all. As Jesus's teaching suggests, assisting the poor and nonviolence go hand in hand. Please reject the just war theory and call for a redirection of our talents toward nonviolent security and true peace.

Sincerely,

Laurie Gagne, Ph.D., Director, Center for Peace and Justice, St. Michael's College, Vermont

John F. Reuwer, MD, Professor of Nonviolence, St. Michael's College, Vermont

No Response has been received before the judges' review. But who knows what may result?

Fourth Place Award

How Can We Obey the Law Against War?

Poonam Kumari Lalit Kumar, Hampshire, UK

The present times is evident of the increasing number of '**armed conflicts**' taking place around the world causing violent deaths of thousands of innocent lives. To mention a few include: War in Afghanistan (1978-Present), the Somali Civil War 1991, the Islamist insurgency in Nigeria 2001, War in North West Pakistan 2004, Mexican Drug War 2006, Egyptian Crisis (2011-present), Syrian Civil War 2011, Central African Republic Conflict (2012-Present), the South –Sudanese Conflict 2012-2013 and so on and so forth with the list.

This list mentioned above is for the sole purpose of identifying towards which deadly direction- we as a 'human race' are heading and "how can we be called as civilised nations of the World?" An important moment to pause and think as to "what are we doing?"

An awakening as early as in 1928 was made against War by the "**Kellogg –Briand Pact**"- It's an agreement that 'outlaws War'. On August 27, 1928, fifteen nations signed the Peace Pact at Paris realising the need of the hour was to restore peace. Signatories included France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Italy and Japan. Further an additional forty-seven nations signed the treaty making it acceptable by most of the established nations in the world.

Can it be rightly said that "The intention to restore peace was present only for those few moments while signing the treaty by the Heads of different nations and then forgotten, buried and wiped off from their minds?" The Peace Pact was definitely a Milestone Achievement in the revolution to end war in the world. But despite acquiring such a Masterpiece from Sir Aristide Briand and Frank B. Kellogg to say-'No to War just not by Words but by Actions', we are still surrounded by wars, conflicts and terror. Nothing has changed in the field of crimes except the number has been increasing with no stop or full stop.

In such a chaotic situation, it becomes imperative to obey the Law against War for all the Nations of the World. The question is 'How can we obey the Law against War?' From an individual point of view, Peace should start from one's home; the obedience should come from refraining to do any actions that will threaten the peace with in the local community where we live like forming street gangs or rebel groups etc... As individuals, we should take initiative in spreading the importance of Peace all around and to keep reminding one another with 'Let Peace be with you and with all'. By doing these simple practices, we are not only doing our duties as abiding citizens but also setting example for the governments to end conflicts in a peaceful manner.

To achieve obedience globally against war, the onus lies on the Governments of each nation- as without enforceable laws, wars and conflicts cannot be stopped or ceased. Just signing treaties and pacts are not enough as experienced in the past. It needs the force of law as in if we commit a crime, we are jailed and penalised. The same applies here, when a country breaches the very norm of international law that is "to keep peace and not resort to war", it is the duty of other nations to impose stringent sanctions against that country and penalise for instance - by cutting all the foreign relations and supplies to that nation until it restores peace back in order. These implications will strengthen the very foundation of peace as the Governments will be aware of the consequences they will face on breach.

Keeping the Peace Pacts like the **Kellogg –Briand Pact** as the foundation, each nation should encourage friendly relations with one another and share a common spirit to stand together as ONE against the outbreak of mass violence in any part of the world.

Today, we lack this unity and togetherness among nations as each nation thinks that it's not their business to interfere and that's the reason there is prolonged violence in many parts of the world for years together. What's important to analyse is that innocent lives are killed at gunpoint, dying are the common citizens who elect the governments to safeguard them and protect against violence and in turn if governments fail to enforce peace then the very fact of making them as their custodian is in vain.

No doubt, we are divided on the World Map but we need not live as a divided community, we have national boundaries to stick to but there is no need to create boundaries/limitations in our international relations. When each nation thinks the other nation as its friend and share the common spirit of prosperity, peace and development then we will in true sense succeed in obeying the laws against war.

Response

Poonam Kumari Lalit Kumar, with a Law degree and MBA in Finance, directed her essay to world peace leaders with incredible success.

- Arun Ganghi, Grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Father of India, commented: "Your essay is wonderfully written and cogently argued. I wish you success in your competition."
- His Holiness Dr. Vasanth Vijayji Maharaj, who attained Jain Sainthood in 1998, sent this letter to her:

"Dear Poonam

First of all my Hearty Congratulations to you for producing a remarkable essay. It is truly commendable and rewarding. In just 800 words you have summarized the current burning issues surrounding the World and provided clear solutions and most important where the responsibility factor lies. I am amazed to know the talent in today's youngsters. You are the Pillars of the World and True Champions of Peace.

It was also lovely to know about such an event that the West Suburban Faith Based Peace Coalition of United States organize every year and the importance of Kellogg Briand Pact. The very thought of the organizers to send the essay to Affluent People and their actions on Peace Promotion is a very innovative process and the link to involve a wider section of the society in participating and understanding the need of the Hour is to Restore Peace is highly appreciable.

Working for Peace for more than 2 decades now and having conducted thousands of Peace activities, Programs, Workshops, and Events, I am truly delighted to be a part of this as well and also to realize I am not alone in this Peace Promotion Process.

I would definitely encourage such events as you participants are the true messengers of peace and the thought process in your minds is not only revolutionary but also implementable as you are the future leaders of the World. My hearty congratulations once again.

I will definitely carry forward the Peace message of the West Suburban Organization and also promote the KB Pact in all my future events. I am very much inspired by your essay and the thought provoking writing of yours has made me to include few new ideas and methods in my peace promotion process and I should thank you for that. Keep it up and keep writing like this.

Good luck with your competition.

My apologies in replying at the last hour as I had been extremely busy with my schedule but I wanted to convey my thoughts for your rewarding essay.

My Blessings and Best Wishes

His Holiness Dr. Vasanth Vijayaji Maharaj, Krishnagiri, India."

- The response to Poonam's essay has initiated correspondence between WSFPC and His Holiness which has resulted in His Holiness accepting our invitation to come to USA and address the WSFPC Annual Gathering in 2016.

About the Peace Essay Contest

This project was inspired by David Swanson's book, "When the World Outlawed War" and by Kathy Kelly (thrice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize) who gave the book to Frank Goetz.

The West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition (WSFPC, www.faithpeace.org) regards the multinational agreement to outlaw war 86 years ago a major advancement of civilization. It should not be the world's best kept secret.

The WSPFC established the Peace Essay Contest in 2012 to inform the public, particularly students, about this historic event and promised \$1,000.00 to the author of the best essay. A high school girl, Isobel Michaud, won First Place on August 27, 2013. In this second year the Contest Rules were changed requiring entrants to direct their essay to a person of authority and to document the response. Despite worldwide promotion of the contest only 11 Peace Essays were submitted. Six judges, ordinary people who work for peace in their own ways, read all of the essays and the responses to them and provided weighted votes for their top 5 candidates. Their vote tallies resulted in the 5 awards presented.

WSFPC will announce the Rules for the 2015 Peace Essay/Response Contest in September, 2014. No major changes are anticipated. Both the essays submitted and the responses documented will be judged.

The WSPFC appreciates all who participated in this Peace Essay Contest, especially the 11 authors who submitted the essays and the six judges who evaluated them. We would also like to acknowledge all who promoted the Peace Essay Contest, especially Amira Boctar, Nobuko Kudo, Steve and Karen Jackson, Dave Karcher, Rev. Sam Smith, Kay Goetz and David Swanson who posted the essays and responses on www.warisacrime.org and International Peace Organizations including Pax-Christi, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Veterans for Peace who distributed the Rules to its members all over the world. This booklet, the first dealing with international authors, was kindly edited by Marilyn Paretti.

Special thanks go to Kathy Kelly and Rev. William O'Shea for making this Second Annual Awards Luncheon such an inspiring and memorable event. We congratulate the winners! And we invite your comments and suggestions regarding this project.

For more information contact: coordinator Frank Goetz (frankgoetz@comcast.net).