

Dear Friends,

The past year has been a time of incredible growth and change for CRT. In 2017, we made a commitment to fight for inclusion and equity here at home, while still maintaining our international work. We introduced models for collaborative change and resilience-building, and facilitated local discussions about international issues. We created a vibrant network among young women and girls in CRT projects in Israel, Kenya and the U.S. We built new relationships with religious groups and the LGBTQI+ community. And we strengthened relationships with long-time partners like the United Religions Initiative.

The most important thing we learned is that **to be most effective, we need to work in partnership**. We can't change the world by focusing on one problem at a time, and we can't do it alone. Science has shown us that plants in an ecosystem work actively to benefit neighboring plants, sharing resources and strengthening the entire system. In the same way, our well-being literally depends on the well-being of others.

The most effective action in an interconnected world is collective action. And collective action is more than just strength in numbers; it's the recognition that all of our seemingly disparate issues are really just different sides of the same coin. Putting that knowledge into action requires valuing other organizations' goals as well as your own. CRT's mission is important, but our work is strengthened when we align our energy with groups working for environmental justice, public health, economic equality, and other critical social issues. As Mehrdad Azemun, national field director of *National People's Action* put it: "Who cares about the brand? Who cares whose logo is on top?"

Mystics have known for centuries that underlying our apparent differences there is only unity. It is not a coincidence that in today's world, destructive forces are working by *dividing us*, creating fear and hatred where relationships are most desperately needed. In this newsletter, we have highlighted some of our new partners. We hope you appreciate their work as much as we do.

In peace,
Andrea Blanch, PhD, Director



Peace quilt at United Religions Initiative gathering, August 2018

Upcoming CRT Events

"The Judge." As part of *Campaign for Nonviolence*, CRT and the *Venice Interfaith Community Association* will host a screening of this documentary about the first female judge in a Sharia court in Palestine. Discussion will follow. Sept. 25, Fogartyville, 7 pm.

Trans-Visibility. In partnership with *ALSO Youth*, and in coordination with *National Coming Out Day*, CRT will sponsor a multi-generational panel with members of the local trans and LGBTQIA+ communities. Panelists will share their stories and their thoughts about what we can do as a community to support their journey. Oct 12, Time and place to be determined.

Neighborhood-based Conflict Management Training. Troy Montes and Raymond Ferrier lead monthly discussions about how to prevent and respond to conflict in local communities. Held at the Gillespie Park Police sub-station at 7 pm. For more information, contact Troy Montes troydmontes@gmail.com.

"Changing Violet" one-woman play. Deborah Ortiz, nominated for an IT award for outstanding solo performance, takes the audience on a roller coaster ride as she portrays a young woman's recovery from physical and sexual abuse and from using substances as a way of coping. December 2, Fogartyville, 6 pm.

Marieli De Jesus Joins CRT Staff

In 2018, Marieli joined CRT as our administrative coordinator. She introduces herself here.

My full name is Marieli Aixa De Jesus Gordils. In the United States I am known as Mary De Jesus. I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, where I lived for 22 years. I had never gone outside of the island until my 20's. When I turned 23 I took a leap of faith with two full suitcases and \$500 and fell in Florida. Two days after I arrived I celebrated new beginnings beachside with friends. We made a small list of things to achieve and another of things to leave behind. I wrote under "things I'd like to leave behind" words like "fear" and "self-judgment." My list of things to achieve only said: "Make it here, make it count."

I ended up in Sarasota. At the end of a month, I had found a job and an apartment and I had a car. I had also learned the hard way that speaking English 24/7 is not the same as being bilingual and casually speaking Spanglish with your loved ones. I finished each day with pain in my mouth and my mind. I wasn't used to any of this.

One day I received an e-mail from a former boss. "This seems like a good fit for you!" it read, and a flyer from CRT was attached. I rummaged through every description on the website. See, when I look for a job, I try to visualize what I would bring to the table, how could I learn and better that space, where will it take me, why am I doing it. I want my effort to count, I want to give back love, tolerance, and understanding. Meeting Andy and Anna was a joyful experience, and I immediately knew I needed to be involved. These are the people I want to be around.

In my role as program assistant I expect to make connections, facilitate knowledge, and allow the community to come closer to achieving a tolerant, open and understanding world. I want others to learn from what I've gone through, and I want to share future success with everyone. Open the door and talk to the first person that passes by. Let's get to work!



Marieli Aixa De Jesus Gordils



*Marcella Moraa, Director of Mercy Academy
in Igare, Kenya*

Seeds for Change Takes Next Step

Over the past year, in partnership with *Shin* in Israel, *Mpanzi* and *Mercy Academy* in Kenya, and the *Dayton Early College Academy* in Ohio, CRT explored the feasibility of connecting high school girls from different parts of the world through Skype. The girls were excited to get to know each other, to see how girls in other parts of the world live, and to recognize how much they have in common. All participants expressed eagerness to continue. Starting this fall, we will resume Skype calls every other month. Small grants from the U.S. Embassy in Israel and CRT will support participation at the Israeli and Kenyan sites. Overall, the project will focus on increasing leadership opportunities for young women and girls, with specific topics identified by participants. In a new development, the Kenya site has expanded to include a larger "Leadership Club" so that all interested girls at Mercy Academy can learn from the experience of the few who are able to participate on the calls.

New Partners

Over the past year, CRT has partnered with a growing number of local individuals and organizations to create a just, healthy, and inclusive community. In what we hope will be an ongoing CRT initiative, author and ordained minister Helen Neal-Ali is teaching a series of classes on “Letting Go of a Traumatic Past” at the *Community Bible Church*. Topics include understanding trauma, how we think, the role of emotions, understanding separate realities, putting the past in perspective, and recognizing moods. The response has been extremely positive, with about 15 women coming twice a month to share their own experiences with trauma and healing and to develop new strategies for resilience.

“Sometimes our trauma keeps us from walking in our purpose.”

– Helen Neal-Ali

CRT is also supporting a new community conflict transformation project with the *Gillespie Park Neighborhood Association*. Troy Montes and Raymond Ferrier are leading the group process. The overall goal is to create a community where people are willing to talk with each other when differences arise, and where they have the skills to transform conflict into constructive conversations. The group will determine its own directions, which may include training in community mediation or other conflict management techniques.



Helen Neal-Ali at the Sarasota Community Bible Church



Troy Montes and Raymond Ferrier (on right) discussing conflict with Gillespie Park residents.

Giving Challenge – A Positive Response to Local Activities



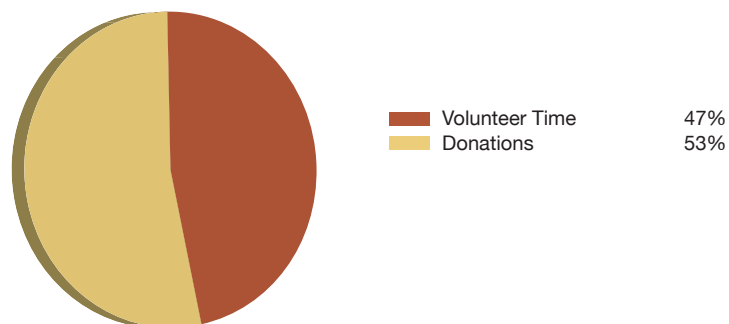
After spending years focusing our outreach to different parts of the world, CRT realized that the local community needed support - now more than ever. In the past year, we have spotlighted inclusive faith communities, created trauma healing conversations, supported peace-centered strategies, sponsored LGBTQIA+ safe spaces, equipped activist communities with the power of de-escalation and problem resolution, and created meaningful and cup-filling conversations. In response, the Patterson Foundation gave us the opportunity to participate for the first time in the Sarasota Giving Partner Challenge. This fundraising event supports local non-profits by matching funds raised during a 24-hour period on a 1:1 basis. Thanks to loyal donors and new community supporters, CRT raised \$5,000!

CRT Financial Report

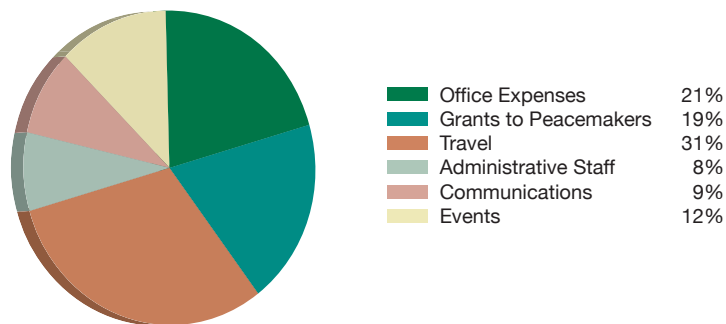
CRT activities are conducted almost exclusively by volunteers and are funded with a combination of donations and grants. Estimated value of volunteer time in 2017 was \$22,000. Contributions from donors

totaled \$24,325. Expenses included direct grants to peacemakers, office expenses, administrative staff, travel, communications and events. Total CRT expenses in 2017 were \$30,153.

CRT Resources



CRT Expenses



Thanks to the following individuals who gave freely of their resources, time and creativity

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Ruth Doehring	Leila Kazimi	
Sally Edwards	Sajida Khudairi	

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Casey and Naraiya Blood	Mark and Cindy Lawton	Martha Stampfer