

January 8, 2015



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Focus 2020 Celebration and Grant Award Ceremony

Indianapolis, IN – Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, the Focus 2020 Leadership Council, and Peace Learning Center, a local non-profit specializing in conflict resolution and diversity training, will host a Focus 2020 event from 10:30 am-11:45 am at The Platform in the City Market to celebrate the accomplishments of the Focus 2020 community education initiative and projects completed by Focus 2020 graduates and grantees.

Eight local volunteers will also be recognized tomorrow for receiving grants ranging from \$900-\$5,000 to support projects designed to create a more welcoming and engaged greater Indianapolis community

Focus 2020 Community Action Grant Awardees:

- **David Durica: #bereconciled - \$5,000 grant**
Dialogue will be facilitated within diverse groups, featuring a storytelling presentation teaching reconciliation. Participants will be invited to identify/photograph their "Claim to Change" to contribute to the art installation, a collage.
- **Michelle Winkelman: Beyond Perceptions: Immigration - \$3,805**
Youth artists and foreign-born adults will be paired to exchange stories and thoughts on the topic of immigration and will create art based on that exchange. The project will culminate in an exhibit at the Indianapolis Art Center.
- **Stephanie Putt: Children's International Folk Dance Festival - \$900**
Will provide scholarships to allow Indiana children to learn and perform international folk dances.
- **Vanessa Gibbs: GGMBBC Summer Youth Academy - \$1,410 grant**
In partnership with Indy Parks, will enlighten, engage, instruct and transform youth on the aspect of how much bigger communal life is than we are as individuals.
- **Karen Harper: Indy Sun Circle Initiative - \$2,700 grant**
Will create a weekly circle experience with a group of local participants so each 1) feels the impact of their own authenticity, worthiness and wisdom, 2) discovers similar appreciation for others, and 3) build trust with others through mutual respect & accountability.
- **Tuane Hearn: Inside Out: Beyond the 4th Wall - \$4,250 grant**
Producing a video that will communicate to at-risk youth the power of their own decision-making by connecting them to the stories of incarcerated youth sharing stories of what they wish they had done differently.
- **Darren Chittick: Sharing Our Stories: Life at war and life at home after war - \$1,889 grant**
Will create a more welcoming home for future returning veterans by recording their stories of living through war to allow Hoosiers to better understand their experiences.
- **Karlisha Russell: The Good Hustle Project - \$5,000 grant**
An urban youth entrepreneurship initiative. It is designed to help youth identify and explore their own natural gifts and teach them how to parlay these gifts into a successful and legal entrepreneurial endeavor.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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To be eligible to receive the awards, all applicants are required to be Focus 2020 graduates – a significant achievement which requires attending at least four Focus 2020 workshops. The grants were awarded to support new projects that were aimed at creating more communication between groups in our community, developing an awareness and appreciation of Indianapolis’ diversity, and helping to achieve a synergy of strengths.

“These FOCUS 2020 participants are taking the message of embracing diversity to all corners of our community, to immigrants and veterans, to the hungry, the scared, and the lonely, to the families of the disadvantaged,” said John McShane, Peace Learning Center’s director of community programs, *“These individuals are demonstrating that, with just a little help, they have it within themselves to help build a more welcoming and inclusive community.”*

Focus 2020 is a community education initiative led by Peace Learning Center with support from more than 57 other local organizations and businesses. Their goal is to create a more welcoming greater Indianapolis community by the year 2020. The initiative includes a series of public forums, free workshops, and grants for community action projects. Focus 2020 was sponsored by Citizens Energy Group, the Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate, the Samarian Foundation, and the Efroymsen Family Fund, a CICF affiliate

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Peace Learning Center (PLC) is an Indianapolis-based non-profit that has impacted the lives of more than 175,000 people locally and internationally since it first began in 1997. Its mission is to educate, inspire and empower people to live peacefully. As a community educational institution, PLC promotes healthy learning, workplace and community environments by establishing safe and common ways to address differences and teaches processes to help build community and healthy communication for youth, parents, adults, and professionals. To learn more, visit www.peacelearningcenter.org.