

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**September 11, 2015**



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**Launch event will highlight Peace Learning Center's new One Indy initiative**

*Local peace education non-profit announces launch of new peace education initiative at Bankers Life Fieldhouse on Thursday, 9/17*

**Event:** One Indy Launch Party

**Date/Time:** Thursday, September 17, 2015, 5-6 pm

**Location:** Pacers Square – Bankers Life Fieldhouse

**Website:** [peacelearningcenter.org/OneIndy](http://peacelearningcenter.org/OneIndy)

**Social Media:** #Focus2020

**Photo/Interview Opportunities:** Members of the media are invited to shoot and film throughout the event. Speakers will be available for 15 minutes before and after to answer questions. Check-in is required at the One Indy table next to the Entry Pavilion.

**Indianapolis, IN** – Chief Rick Hite, chief of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, Indianapolis Metropolitan Schools, the One Indy committee, and Peace Learning Center, a local non-profit specializing in conflict resolution and diversity training, will host a One Indy launch party from 5-6 pm at Pacers Square at Bankers Life Fieldhouse on Thursday, September 17.

The event is being hosted to highlight school partnerships and programming being implemented this school year as part of Peace Learning Center's new One Indy initiative. The One Indy project is an initiative to connect schools, parents and community members; to educate peacemakers; and to reinforce schools as welcoming places.

To explain the need for One Indy, Kristina Hulvershorn, PLC's director of youth programs, said:

“Teaching children the skills that they will need to be peacemakers must not be an afterthought or a one-time endeavor. It takes work and practice, just like anything else worth learning. It also must be a school-wide effort that includes all teachers, staff, and administrators to really take root.

Children want peaceful environments for learning and living and are fully capable of learning to be peacemakers, if we just give them the tools, modeling, and space to do it.”

One Indy is designed in partnership with Indianapolis Public Schools and the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department to serve school students, parents, and teachers at schools in six focus neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were identified by the Public Safety Dept. as areas in Indianapolis with the highest incidents of crime, code violations and city interventions.

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Children who live in Indy's six focus neighborhoods are **six times more likely** to be victims of crimes than children who live in any other neighborhood in our city. Studies show the resulting psychological stresses caused by this increased exposure to violence can lead to academic challenges, disruptive behaviors, and lifelong challenges which perpetuate cycles of poverty and violence.

The three-year initiative will be implemented in at four IPS schools this year: Schools 51 (Near Northside), 58 (Eastside), 39 (South Eastside), and 15 (Near Eastside). Peace Learning Center plans to expand the initiative to additional schools in the focus areas in following years based on the success of this year's programs.

The biggest focus of the program will be on the youngest students, those in kindergarten and first grade, based on research which indicates prevention is better than intervention and the earlier it happens, the more effective it is. Students, staff and families will participate in classroom training, assemblies, professional development and workshops, and older students will be selected for peer mediator teams.

The One Indy initiative is supported by the Pacers Foundation, Indianapolis Star's Our Children/Our City grant, the Samarian Foundation, Region 10 Prevention Funds, Gordon Flesch Charitable Foundation, and the H.C. Gemmer Christian Charitable Foundation.

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Peace Learning Center (PLC) is an Indianapolis-based non-profit that has impacted the lives of more than 180,000 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](http://www.peacelearningcenter.org).