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Milwaukee Biz Blog

These young people are ready to take on the world

Posted on November 25, 2009 6:23 AM

Each year, I have the privilege of serving as a community leader in the Pebbles of Peace Outweighing Boulders of Violence program. Part of the program includes a luncheon, where each community leader is dispatched to a table of teenagers, most of whom are from Milwaukee's inner city.

By Steve Jagler

Steve Jagler is executive editor of BizTimes Milwaukee....

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The idea is that thousands of "pebbles" of peace can combine to outweigh "boulders" of violence in society.

Pebbles of Peace is sponsored annually by the House of Peace, a Capuchin ministry, in partnership with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Cardinal Stritch University Vocation Development Office.

The community leaders are asked to share their words of wisdom and their insights about the world with the youth.

In reality, I get more value out of the program than I can possibly impart to these young people. Every year, I walk out of the Pebbles of Peace program feeling very optimistic about the next generation.

For the most part, these young people are engaged, they're listening and they're preparing to take on a world that is far more complex and even dangerous than the one I grew up in.

At our table, we discussed how these young people need to take their skill sets and their passions and plug them into the world, providing value to society. So, to get them thinking along these lines, I asked them to focus on their individual attributes. What can they contribute to society?

Here are some of their responses:

Beatriz, 17, Whitefish Bay Dominican High School, plans to be an attorney. "I am very open and nonbiased. I can see situations from all points of view. I am compassionate and care about all others. I always try to do the right thing and get others to do it, too."

Jameela, 16, Salam High School in Milwaukee, plans to be a mechanical engineer. "I am very good at math. I am bilingual. I'm open and accepting of everyone. I'm funny. I'm not afraid to speak my mind."

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Rachel, 14, Milwaukee Learning Laboratory & Institute, plans to attend college in Japan and pursue a career in art. "My skills are knowing different languages, drawing and playing music. I like to be able to know different things and teach myself new things."

Patty, 14, St. Anthony High School in Milwaukee, plans to be a zookeeper. "I am artistic and always happy. I would get a job I love, not just for the money. I love animals so much."

Shanette, 16, Pulaski High School in Milwaukee, plans to be an entrepreneur. "Well, I'm a really nice young lady who is willing to do anything I can to help my community be a better place and safer place."

Benjamin, 16, Messmer High School in Milwaukee, plans to be a writer and play basketball in college. "I'm understanding, compassionate, smart and disciplined. I try my best at whatever I do. I am not a slacker, and I'm respectful."



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In this season of giving thanks, I offer my gratitude to these young folks for recharging my batteries. If you ever need to do the same, reach out to ask how you can serve a local charity. You'll find dozens of options in our BizTimes Nonprofit Directory at www.biztimes.com/nonprofit.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Steve Jagler is executive editor of BizTimes Milwaukee.

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