

Global Peace Roundtable:

July 31, 2014

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

~Judy Fox Jackson/U. S. Forum

As I read the recent "Curriculum of Hope Newsletter", several key words and phrases "caught my eye" as cooperation, empathy, compassion, self-respect, tolerance, intercultural understanding, and respect for human dignity and difference.

This past May, I was fortunate to "see" these words and phrases "in action" as the First Annual Unity Day Program was presented and celebrated at my former school, Liberty Elementary, in the Franklin Special School District, in Franklin, Tennessee.

With the belief that world peace begins with our children, the adults of the future, a wonderful "kaleidoscope" - if you will - of performances by kindergarten through fourth grade students - led by teacher, Pam Volk, and by parent volunteers - began with the "Parade of Flags" and concluded with the song, "We Are One", for the entire school.

In addition to the "Unity Day" program, parents were invited to prepare a display about a country to which they had a connection. Parents from 15 different countries eagerly responded with artifacts, with pictures, with iPads, and with samplings of foods from the respective countries represented!

In the classroom, students had made and decorated posters about cultural diversity and they made signs for the display.

Each child in the school had a passport to bring to the displays in the multi-purpose room. Their "entry visas" were stamped at each country. Each grade had 30 minutes to view the displays, to talk with parents, to sample foods, and to "try on" articles of clothing from different countries.

Students, parents, grandparents, teachers, and administrators enjoyed the event as they embraced and respected cultural differences! They all learned from each other!

Plans are already being discussed for the second annual Unity Day!

To promote world peace, we know that it is easier to instill an accepting attitude toward others in a young mind!

Some children's books that I've found to promote intercultural understanding include:

ONE OF US by Peggy Moss with the closing lines, "But we aren't the same - That's the best part."

WHOEVER YOU ARE by Mem Fox saying "Little one  
whoever you are,  
wherever you are,  
there are little ones  
just like you  
all over the world."

SEEDS OF CHANGE by Jen Cullerton Johnson speaking of "respecting all living things" and saying "young people, you are our hope and our future."

and

ONE WORLD, ONE DAY by Barbara Kerley stating that "all of us around the world have much in common, and that the more we can embrace our commonality, the more tolerant we can be of our differences."