

Speech for 2014 Peace Roundtable at International
Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana

Preface: I have worked with the United States Forum for the past six years and as such it has been my charge to support and initiate discussions on issues concerning women, children and education. With that in mind, I went in somewhat of a different direction on peace.

Most DKG members are familiar with the song, "Let There be Peace on Earth", written by Jill Jackson Miller and Sy Miller, but the most important line of the song, to me, is: "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." I believe that by encouraging peace through encouraging young women to become part of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program. My master's degree work centered on environmental education but I never would have given it consideration until I went to a four week workshop in Colorado and learned about "outdoor education" which later became part of the environmental movement. I came home filled with excitement and promptly took my students outside in the huge schoolyard with a stream running through the edge of it. I had my first grade students find bugs and other insects and claim some of the real excitement of the outdoors. My school district tried to squash my enthusiasm by not funding a matching "outdoor education" grant from the U. S Government because they had no vision of the future needs of women educated in environmental issues nor did they feel that women needed to have anything to do with science. A women's place was to be at home or maybe teaching, not involving themselves in science or environmental issues. That was in the early 1970's. Now in 2014, women still need to be encouraged to step into STEM fields and become the super scientists, technology geeks, spectacular engineers, and math whizzes.

Rachel Carson, one of the first women STEM environmental pioneers, felt that by respecting the environment and discouraging the use of DDT on crops and generalized use of DDT, that our world would be more PEACEFUL as our food and water supply would be safe! Safe food and water are the necessities of life. Although Rachel Carson died in 1964, her legacy of recognizing a peaceful environment of the inter-connectedness of all species, respect for all forms of life, and keeping the environment free from litter, will live on forever.

Following Rachel Carson's ideas, peace should be encouraging women to be the STEM pioneers of today's technological society. By educating a woman, a family can and will be educated too.

I have taken a few liberties with the Peace on Earth song and now it reads "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin" by encouraging women to be 21th century STEM pioneers.

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