

## Whenever you are feeling unhappy, depressed, or unsettled, serve someone

Carol Pobanz  
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*Carol Pobanz with her husband and grandchild*

"Whenever you are feeling unhappy, depressed, or unsettled, serve someone." These are the words spoken to me by my friend Adrienne, an older sister in faith, many years ago. These are words that have guided me even in the most difficult of times, including now.

What does it mean to serve? The first thing that comes to my mind when we say the words "service" or "service project" is cleaning parks or streets. But service is so very much more. Service is absolutely anything which is done for another, whether it is cooking a meal for a child at home or for a group of conference dignitaries. It can be reading a book to better understand the heritage of another race or writing a book to share insights on how to live a better life, caring for a bedridden older person or discovering a cure for Covid-19. Serving is an attitude accompanied by an action.

Absolutely anything can be a service if it is being done for a higher purpose than the self.

The true spirit of service is embodied in love and expressed through acts of selfless service – simply doing something for another.

Regarding what I am doing during this time – which is actually an extension of what I was doing before the pandemic – well I belong to a number of social groups, including the community organization [Nutley Partners for Peace](#). At present, we are meeting virtually once a week (we used to meet in person) to discuss our planned activities. Let me first tell you a little more about the history of our activities and then something about our recent activities and our future plans.



*Carol (center) in Honduras in 2018*

### History

In 2015, I invited a friend from Honduras to bring three Honduran art students to my hometown of Nutley, New Jersey to share a cultural activity with students in our high school. They came and created a street tapestry called an alfombra. It is a colorful sawdust carpet which they traditionally make during the holy week leading up to Easter. The students worked together to design a carpet that depicted the unity and friendship of the two nations.

I invited the United Nations Ambassador to Honduras to our event and she had such a

wonderful time that she invited us two years later to create a similar sawdust carpet on the UN Plaza in New York to celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the UN.

The next year, while I was working in the city of Tela, Honduras to create a peace park there, I introduced city officials to an NGO called [International Cities of Peace](#) that promotes peacebuilding. The mayor of Tela was interested to register his city as a City of Peace and he also sent a letter to my town Nutley inviting us to also register. Thus a group of us who had worked on the tapestries named ourselves the Nutley Partners for Peace and worked hard to make our city an International City of Peace – we registered and were accepted as the 223rd city.

In the meantime, I went to Honduras to follow up on the city of Tela's registration, and after some discussion, planning and organizing they registered as the 241st City of Peace. Our group in Nutley, as well as the group in Tela, is made up of representatives from the Town Hall, from the Clergy association, from the Rotary Club (business), from the Board of Education (two art teachers) and myself representing the Universal Peace Federation, a sister organization to WFPF.



*Honduras rock sculpture with the words "Peace" and "Love" in Spanish*

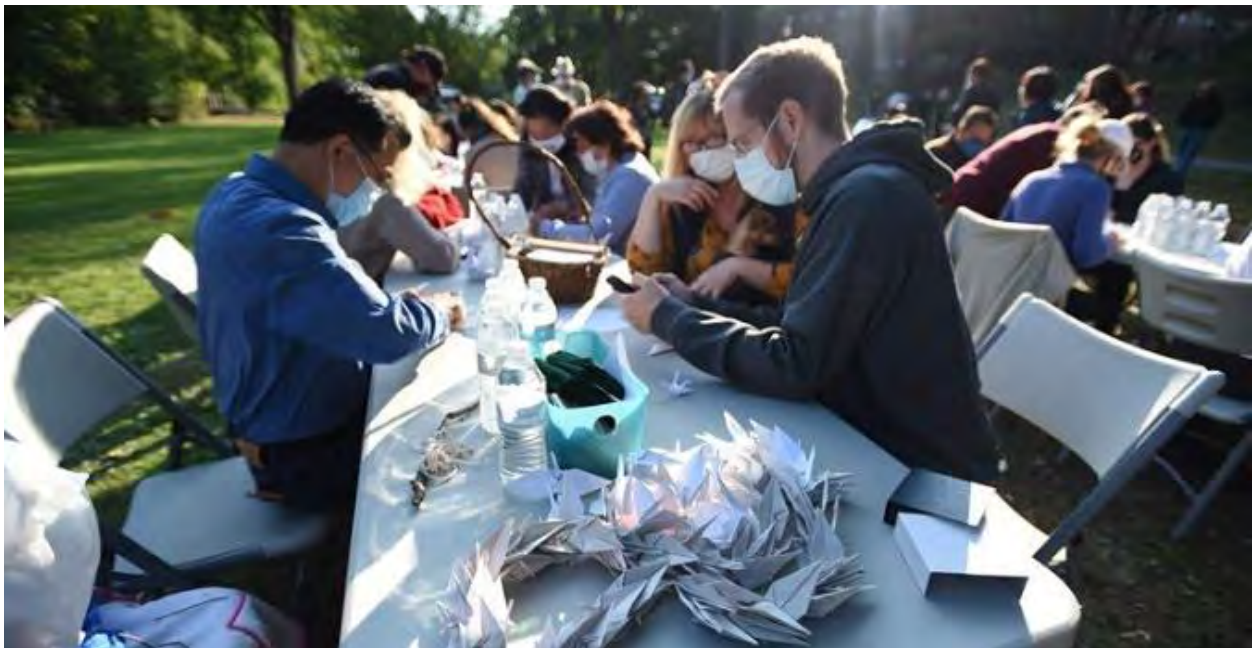
## Recent Activities and Future Plans

Since we have three artists in our group, we decided to use art as the subject of our first project. We decided to create a sculpture in one of our town parks, much like the one I had worked on in Honduras for the peace park. We are making the word UNITY and on the sides of each letter we will mosaic the word Peace. This sculpture will be filled with river rocks much like the one in Honduras (pictured on the right). However, before we fill the sculpture, these stones will be distributed to the children in our school system. Each child will write or illustrate a peace message on the rocks. These will also be made available to church members, members of social organizations and businesses. Then on

a set date in May 2021, we will invite the entire community to make a statement of solidarity and harmony by filling the structure with all the rocks.

We unveiled our plans to the community on September 21, the UN International Day of Peace, and revealed a scale model of the proposed sculpture. We encouraged people to donate to our effort through [the sale of T-shirts](#), designed by a high school art student and printed locally, and to also take part in the making of 1000 paper cranes which will be donated to the Public library very soon. It is said that if you make 1000 origami cranes as you ruminate over a wish, a hope or a prayer, that wish, hope or prayer will become a reality.

Needless to say, our wish is for peace in our community, nation and the world. Because of Covid, the turnout for the event was not as great as we would have hoped – perhaps 120 people showed up. Seven or eight Japanese men and women helped guide people on how to fold the cranes. We supplied some live music, which really added to the experience, and people had a good time. Much to our surprise, five newspapers covered the event and we had one live Facebook review. A commissioner from Paterson, NJ attended our event and she would now like to register Paterson as a City of Peace as well.



*Volunteers making origami cranes on the UN International Day of Peace in Nutley, NJ*

## Conclusion

So in this time of Covid or any time when things look bad, I try to do something for someone else in hopes of creating a better world for everyone (including me and my family).

The American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead offered her insight into the way history is shaped. She shared that we should not be surprised by the impact a small group of dedicated people can have on history. This was the way historic change has always started.

The role of each individual to inspire such a group cannot be overstated; the power of the small group originates in the single person. The beauty of it all is that each of us is that single individual. We carry with us the hope of initiating great and positive changes. Along with that hope is the tremendous challenge of accepting personal responsibility to be that change ourselves by reaching out to serve

another.

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**Editor's Note:**

*On October 16, WFWP Hackensack, New Jersey Chairwoman Cynthia Nakai invited Carol Pobanz to speak on the following topic: "What I do for my personal and physical well-being during this unprecedented time." She shared about her passion for service and her work with the Nutley Partners for Peace.*