

## CARP Grand Rapids, Chicago, and Indianapolis' YSP Peace Designers seminar

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On March 9, CARP Grand Rapids, CARP Chicago, and CARP Indianapolis came together to host a [Youth and Students for Peace \(YSP\)](#) seminar for youth and CARP members at the Chicago Family Church.

Originally, the event was planned for 25-30 people total. The turnout was much greater than expected however, with a total of 45 people. With six from Chicago, eight from Indianapolis, one from Detroit, three from Benton Harbor, and 27 from Grand Rapids.



*Naria Gaarder, Program Coordinator of YSP USA, led the session.*



Naria Gaarder, the Program Coordinator YSP, and also the main speaker of the event, started the event off by explaining YSP as an organization and its goals towards creating a world of peace. She explained the importance of creating peace on three different levels; starting from within the individual, peace could be



spread to the community and to the environment. The participants were able to take the time to reflect on their own lives and develop action plans towards generate peace in their own lives. Naria informed the audience that peace could only be developed when we were able to envision it in our own lives.

The second part of the event was more action oriented. The group was split up into teams of 4-6 within their community's and each team was guided through a series of steps to produce their own plan for a peace project. Each team was given the opportunity to share about their ideas for peace projects. Some of the ideas included projects to address domestic violence, mental health, recycling, lack of life skills, etc.



Lastly, the teams were given 40 minutes to form presentations about their project. Great presentations were given on various topics, and the top three presentations were voted on at the end.



All the participants received certificates acknowledging them as community peace leaders. YSP representatives were appointed for each community with the intention of keeping the organization updated on all the work being done on their campuses.



Aside from the training itself, the CARP members were able to interact and create relationships with those from different communities. Conversations and laughter was shared throughout the event, creating a family- like environment outside of the separate campuses.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to exercise how we can be peace-makers in our community!