



Training participants. Sunset Park, Brooklyn. May 2023. ©NP

## Snapshots of Safety in the U.S.



### Unleashing Community Strength in Brooklyn

Under the radiant sun, our NY team gathered in Sunset Park to lead a Safety Training.

As they strolled through the park, two Caribbean women noticed NP staff distributing flyers about an upcoming safety training. Intrigued, they approached the staff to learn more about the program. Qaaree McDaniel's pitch on NP's community-led safety work sparked their interest.

In just minutes, the women signed up for the training. Hate crimes against Asian Americans in California and New York have surged, prompting community members to seek ways to enhance their personal safety.

**“ This is exactly what we need! The other day, we witnessed a conflict on the subway and felt helpless. ”**

These women, like many others, desired to be better prepared to handle conflict, but struggled to find appropriate resources. Articulating the necessary tools for community safety can be challenging, which is why our NYC team's awareness-raising efforts and trainings on situational awareness and upstander intervention are crucial.

During de-escalation trainings with the Asian American Federation (AAF) for the Hope Against Hate campaign, we focus on building community members' capacity to intervene and embody mutual protection. Participants learn to identify their instinctive survival responses, recognize potential danger, and utilize de-escalation tactics with care.

Whether in the Philippines, South Sudan, the United States, or elsewhere, attendees report unexpected benefits from our trainings. The safe and open spaces foster vulnerability and connection.

While the NY team has held 90+ similar trainings in the past, this one felt extra special. The attendees left the park with an increased





understanding of de-escalation strategies, situational awareness, and upstander intervention. But they also left with a stronger connection to members of their community and a renewed commitment to keep them safe.

## Students Build Peaceful Schools in Minneapolis

Following a years-long campaign by students and families to remove police from schools, Minneapolis Public Schools broke its contracts with the Minneapolis Police Department in June 2020. The historic split created a moment for reflection and an opening for MPS to take a closer look at how they can cultivate a safe school environment for all.

In 2021, NP began working with MPS on the Building Peaceful Schools Project – a transformative project that centers student voices and supports school administrators with effective strategies to reduce conflict without resorting to punishment or potential criminalization of student behavior.

Together NP and MPS guide a student peace advisory group that meets with school staff, administrators, and NP to voice safety concerns and co-create the school safety and security system. By working together, participating students are engaging in deep conversations about diverse issues that could have previously led to physical altercations. These groups are creating a new vision for school safety – a vision that is not based on the use or threat of force, but rooted in relationships.

**“ Our biggest takeaway has been learning the skills to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner. The training helped me understand myself better. It made me look at situations from a different perspective. ”**



## New Hub of Nonviolence & Healing

NP is renewing our commitment to community by moving our St. Paul office to the heart of North Minneapolis – an area that has suffered from decades of cycles of disinvestment, poverty, and crime.

The new Hub for Nonviolence and Healing is more than just an office space; it’s a vibrant collaborative effort alongside community partners. NP is embracing the opportunity to co-office with like-minded, safety-oriented nonprofits, enhancing collaboration among organizations dedicated to community safety and peace. The 8218 Truce Center, focused on guiding youth to resolve conflicts peacefully, is one of the organizations already on board to share this new space.

This dynamic environment will empower NP’s Community Peacebuilding staff to be fully immersed in the community. They’ll conduct trainings, outreach, Trust Circles, and Community Safety conversations. Protective accompaniment and presence will be provided, fostering trust, safety, and stronger relationships among residents.

With love and passion at the forefront, NP envisions changing the narrative about safety in North Minneapolis. We aim to create a space that celebrates nonviolence and healing, where community members can share their skills and wisdom to reduce violence.

## Resiliency Across Borders



EVER SINCE THE ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE IN SUDAN IN APRIL, NP STAFF HAVE COME TOGETHER TO SUPPORT OUR STAFF AND COMMUNITIES IN DARFUR

In response to the acute stress and trauma related to the recent escalation of violence in Sudan, NP’s Ukraine team is providing virtual psychological first-aid training to our teams across Sudan. Informed by working with communities in the midst of heavy conflict, these staff trainings have in turn enabled NP Sudan’s team to hold 7 sessions with 630 participants in North Darfur.

NP Sudan team after delivering psychological first aid training to community members. North Darfur, May 2023. © NP



“All of my family have been in seriously acute stress and shock,” shared Abualgasim, NP Protection Officer in North Darfur. When one of his daughters experienced panic, Abualgasim tried to support her as all the health clinics were closed – but he didn’t know how. “I received a WhatsApp message from our team in Ukraine offering us training,” Abualgasim remembered. “I was so excited and very prepared to receive the training so as to help myself, my family and my community.”

Delivering and interpreting the psychological first aid training to the North Darfur team online. Ukraine, May 2023. © NP

Since the onset of the civil war in South Sudan in 2013, many South Sudanese nationals sought safety as refugees in Sudan. Now faced with escalating violence in Sudan, these people are returning in significant numbers to South Sudan, with tens of thousands of returnees registering as internally displaced persons since April. NP teams are working in key locations along the border, providing direct action in response to the needs of those arriving daily.



Returnees from Sudan headed toward Bentiu, South Sudan, June 21, 2023. ©NP



# SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT



Beloved Buddhist teacher, author, nun, and mother, Pema Chödrön has inspired millions of people around the world who have been touched by her example and message of practicing peace in our lives and in our communities.

The Pema Chödrön Foundation was created to preserve and share Pema's inspiration and support organizations that promote healing, mindfulness, and peace – including Nonviolent Peaceforce.

**"Every day we think about the aggression in the world... Every day we can ask ourselves, 'Am I going to practice peace, or am I going to war?'" - Pema Chödrön**

Photo by Andrea Roth, sourced from Facebook

**Peace isn't an experience free of challenges, free of rough and smooth, it's an experience that's expansive enough to include all that arises without feeling threatened.**

## August is National Make-A-Will Month!

Go to [bit.ly/NP-MAWM](https://bit.ly/NP-MAWM)



It's the perfect moment to reflect on how you can protect those you love and secure your future. Through our partnership with FreeWill, you can create a legal will to care for those you love and control your assets and future decisions, all in just 20 minutes. You can even include a gift to Nonviolent Peaceforce in your plans to sustain our work of peace, safety, and protection for years to come.

More than 800,000 people throughout the country have used FreeWill to secure their futures – join them before National Make-A-Will month comes to a close.



For more information on ways to give, go to [NonviolentPeaceforce.org](https://NonviolentPeaceforce.org) or call 612-871-0005.