



PRESS RELEASE

Aventura City of Excellence School

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PEACE REPRESENTS ACTION AT ACES



Aventura City of Excellence School, ACES students and the City of Aventura celebrated their fourth annual International Peace Day event on Friday 9/19 to honor the United Nations Day of Peace. ACES itself, is a United Nation of sorts with over 23 different countries represented in the student body.



ACES students experience Peace as a special event involving weeks of preparation, filled with activities and projects that express Peace Day in writing, art, music, history, theater, language, video presentations and student directed service learning projects. The Good Samaritan Gift

Project had all 900 K-8 students collecting items for needy children in war torn countries. Students filled colorful gift wrapped shoe boxes with essential items that poor children would appreciate and need. A large Peace Day quilt made by the Kindergarten classes hung proudly on an entry way hall. Art students created a banner to greet students and guests for the Peace Day Ceremony. The 5th grade classes collected new and gently used shoes for poor children in the Dominican Republic and then wrote personal letters to the children in Spanish that were placed in the shoes. Classes displayed beautiful Peace Day bulletin boards for all to enjoy.

On Friday 9/19, ACES students, parents, Aventura city officials and teachers entered the Middle School Media Center, where the Peace Day Ceremony was held. Guests enjoyed the extraordinary display of Middle School Peace Day art and the enchanting musical medley performed by Phillip Lakofsky on guitar and his wife Elissa on flute, professor at FAU, FIU and performer for the Miami City Ballet. The student run AM TV Cast began the show with their daily reports and Living Values messages on Peace. ACES students presented the University Of Miami School Of Medicine with a check for \$1,500 for school fundraising efforts on behalf of the Strides for Safety Walk at the Aventura Mall.

Principal, Julie Alm began the official Peace Day Ceremony welcoming students and guests by sharing a meaningful, heartfelt discussion of the importance of Peace and ACES role in being socially responsible, caring and contributing citizens at school, in the community and in the world. Aventura Mayor Susan Gottlieb read an insightful student essay on Peace and proclaimed it a day of peace in the City of Aventura. The young ACES chorus, led by Choral Director, Philip Lakofsky delighted the audience with their selection of "Peace Day" songs. The Keynote speaker, Brigitte Benchymol, Children's Author of the best selling Jadyn and the Magic Bubbles series, discussed her book, "I Met Gandhi" and the significant role that Gandhi played in influencing world leader's to change the world through civil disobedience and nonviolence. Ms. Benchymol said, "Peace doesn't get much press & War gets all the attention. It all starts with our children. Each one of us must be a messenger for Peace and continue to enlarge our circle of Peace." Vice Principal, Daniel Sandberg invited Middle School Students to present their outstanding essays and poems on Peace. The ceremony ended with a Peace Day video presentation that featured students demonstrating what "Peace Means to ACES students."

After the ceremony, guests were invited to the Middle School Cafeteria to enjoy Peace Day Cake and the author's book signing, where hundreds of colorfully wrapped gift boxes were displayed for the school wide service learning project.

Later assemblies featuring the author were held for ACES students to discuss the topic of Peace and her books. Students created art and writing Peace Day projects to reinforce the lessons.

The entire ACES Caring Community is a role model for all of us to be socially conscious, caring and contributing members of society, where we learn by example that each one of us can make a big difference.

About ACES:

Aventura City of Excellence School (ACES), established in 2003, serves 900 students grades Kindergarten through eighth grade as the first municipal-sponsored school in Miami-Dade County. ACES' Middle School Wing opened in August 2005 and filled to capacity in August 2007. ACES has achieved an A status for the past four years and is considered a Leader in "Educational Best Practices," teaching the "whole child," known for its innovative programming. ACES maintains a low student-teacher ratio, state of the art facilities, advanced technology, a safe environment for students to learn, a values-based Education and a progressive curriculum; including programs for Gifted Students, Exceptional Student Education (ESE), English as a Second Language (ESOL), and Before and After School Care. In addition, ACES offers many unique programs for students and families including; "Special Interest Clubs," After School Sports, Art and Drama Programs, Parenting Workshops and a Middle School Leadership

Speaker Series for students and families featuring leading entrepreneurs and an Authors Series. ACES won first place for the "Best Garden" in the Fairchild Botanical Garden Exchange for two years in a row. In addition, ACES has also won a State Innovation Award, State School of Character Award, ranked as a National Finalist for the prestigious National Schools of Character Awards and has won five National Character Education Promising Practices Awards. ACES has been honored as one of the highest ranking combination schools (i.e. Elementary and Middle School) in the State of Florida and in the district. For more information, visit ACES school Web Site at www.aventuracharter.org or call 305-466-1499.