

## It's Not About the Pieces, But How They Work Together

Carol Pobanz  
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Carol Pobanz is on a life path where she fuses art and religion. She says, “Having degrees in both art and religious education it has always been my desire to develop activities combining the two fields of interest.” Carol Pobanz earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) at the Philadelphia College of Art (currently the University of the Arts) and her Master of Religious Education (MRE) at Unification Theological Seminary (UTS).

Carol concurs with Rev. Moon’s words: “People often think that politics moves the world, but that is not the case. It is culture and the arts that move the world. It is emotion, not reason that strikes people in the innermost part of their hearts. When hearts change and are able to receive new things, ideologies and social regimes changes as a result.”

In early January, 2014, twenty-four intergenerational participants from the USA and Honduras linked up in a project themed “It’s not about the pieces, but how they work together.” Ten New Jersey participants funded 75% of the 9 day project, including their own flights and the financial needs of all 24 participants. The Honduran Dept. of Education and local Municipality sponsored housing and transportation. North American team members stayed in local homes for part of the time; and families in the community cooked and served meals, all at a very minimal expense.



The team served two local schools in Honduras, Central America, and created a mosaic in which more than 100 community members also took part. Group or “community art” is a joyful and inspiring way to create openness and friendship. Some might ask, with all the problems found in developing nations why would the service project choose to make a mosaic? Though building repairs were made in two of the schools in the city during the short stay, the mosaic created on the main boulevard in the historic City of Comayagua became the zenith of the service experience.

Back in August 2000 Rev. Sun Myung Moon had introduced the idea of Peace Zones. He said, “These peace zones would be havens that exist for the sake of peace, prosperity, and reconciliation. They would be free of racial and sexual discrimination, human rights violations, and war. These areas would also be ecological and environmental havens for the entire natural world.” He suggested that they be created between, and on the borders of all nations.

When Carol heard about the concept of Peace Zones, she began to think how difficult it might be to create an entire zone of peace, but maybe as an initial step a “peace park” could be constructed. She began asking questions: “How can art be a service to humanity? How can art be used for the sake of peace? She began to see the arts: visual art, cooking arts, music, dance and sports as languages that go beyond national and even the religious spheres.

### What Is a “Peace Park”?

A park (or garden) built in a place of conflict, yet reflecting the potential harmony of the conflicting peoples

A place where art is used as a vehicle to express universal ideals of peace and harmony

A place built by our future, youth with world youth.

An identifiable place reflecting universal ideals of the world family or community—the joint vision of the Religious Council and the United Nations.

A living art work, in which the people, the materials, space and all subsequent relationships created in building the park and appreciating the park are all part of the artistic event

**Purpose:**

- To go beyond interreligious dialogue to engage in interreligious action.
- To create a working model of interreligious and international cooperation.
- To create substantial reflections of peace and harmony.
- To provide an opportunity for young artists to develop a future art movement toward a “Culture of Peace” or “Art for Humanity’s Sake”
- To begin the work of creating Peace Zones, by building “Peace Parks”.

**Goals:**

- To create a transforming learning experience through the process of building a Peace Park.
- To create a park which reflects the individual beauty as well as collective potential of the conflicting peoples – A park which reflects Peace through its design.
- To build a park as a seed for Peace Zones.
- To bring youth who adhere to different beliefs, customs and perspectives together in cooperation, thus creating a sense of possibility and hope for the future.

While working with the Religious Youth Service (RYS) from 2003 to 2009 Carol was able to organize mosaic art projects in England, the Netherlands, New Jersey and Honduras. In each case the design for the project was made cooperatively by a group of young people (and in some cases, a composite design was made incorporating the work of young children).



The mosaic done in Honduras was designed by two young North Americans and two Hondurans; the final piece, therefore, reflected the unity of the two nations. The Honduran mosaic (below) depicts a troubled world, symbolized by a tree in arid soil, trapped in a bubble, and surrounded by a radiant ideal world of peace. Breaking the bubble is a drop melted from a composite symbol of peace and true love nourishing the arid world, and consequently bringing the world to new life.

To really understand this project one needs to understand mosaics as an art form. Mosaics are made up of many small pieces of tile, glass, stone, or beans, just about anything arranged harmoniously in a scheme. In order to make the mosaic, three major things are needed: the design, the pieces you are using to create the design, and the grout or cement that holds the whole thing together.

In the deeper understanding of a religious principle, while we were creating this one mosaic on a wall in the city, there was “another mosaic” that was being created simultaneously. The designers of that mosaic were a Honduran colleague, Mario Salinas and myself; the mosaic pieces were not tiles but the 24 participants, local and international volunteers. Other pieces included the folks back in the USA who gave donations for the project, and the 100+ people in the community whom we stopped on the street and invited to put a piece of tile into our mosaic design. The ladies who cooked for us, and their families who surrounded us with love, were pieces in this mosaic also. And all the home stay families who cared for us, the city workers from the municipality who supported our activities, the dances who entertained us and the people from the city who will see or have heard our message “It’s not about the pieces, but how they work together”; these were all pieces of that mosaic. In that mosaic, the grout that held us together was our friendships, the relationships of love we developed with all of these people.

A mosaic is a strong metaphor for cooperation and harmony. As with all art forms those involved in the creative work glean lessons about creatorship, ownership, balance, harmony, dissonance, positive and negative use of tension, reconciliation, beauty, expression, communication and love. One learns through

the mosaic that no one piece is more important than another, every piece maintains its own integrity while at the same time maintaining a responsibility to the harmony of the whole.

For myself, the most important thing I have been able to contribute was to initiate the project. Together with the inspiration God gives each of us, there is an equivalent amount of discouraging self-talk that convinces us to give up on our ideas. Breaking through the discouragement and launching the project was my greatest battle and victory which became the seed for something to develop a life of its own.

Rev. Carol Pobanz and Mario Salinas have continued to work together, organizing the activities, also creating friends and partners in the local governments and communities. "I believe that we now have the necessary foundation to create a "park [with our Honduran friends and partners]," she said.

From November 4 to 11, 2015, Rev. Pobanz visited Honduras to look for a location where a park could be built, as well as to hand over the key to the city of Nutley, New Jersey that was granted to the mayor of Comayagua, Mr. Carlos Miranda, by the municipality of Nutley, and its mayor, Mr. Alphonse Petracco.

### **The Park Plan**

The actual construction of this park, envisioned to include a wall mosaic, mosaic seating, landscaping, and a central sculpture, is planned to be completed in three phases:

1. RYS invites aspiring architects and engineers, half from North America and half from Central America, to design the park together. This team will be composed of 4-6 individuals, who will engage in a discussion and plan their work, over one week. Later, blueprints will be produced in the team members' home countries.
2. Then, a group of 18-20 individuals, half from North America and half from Central America, including builders, masons and landscape artists, will clear areas, build structures and prepare surfaces for mosaics.
3. A group of 20-24 individuals, half from North America and half from Central America, including art students and other interested individuals, will create and assemble the mosaic, and invite community members to assist in the making of the mosaic portion of the park.

### **Sharing the Vision for the Park with Interested Partners**



In each of the three cities that Mr. Salinas and Rev. Pobanz visited, they presented the vision for the park to government leaders and representatives and received positive responses. In Tela, a city on the Caribbean coast, they shared this vision with the mayor of the city, Mr. Mario Fuentes, and his planning board; in the colonial city of Comayagua, the mayor of the city, Mr. Carlos Miranda, and his staff; in the capital city of Tegucigalpa, Dr. Ramiro Colindres, an Ambassador for Peace and a diplomat to the Central American Parliament, and former president of Honduras (1998-2002), Carlos

Flores.

When Mr. Salinas and Rev. Pobanz described what the park's central sculpture would look like, depicting individuals representing the participating nations creatively chiseling one another into existence from a concrete block, each of these people became enlivened. The sculpture is meant to represent mutual co-creation through the sharing of national cultures and strengths in the development of cooperative friendships, yielding a co-prosperous union of people.

### **The Results:**

President Carlos Flores, warmly greeted Mr. Salinas and Rev. Pobanz. He encouraged them to develop the park project and suggested they contact the director of a children's museum, which was established by his US-born wife, Mary Flores. President Flores is the publisher and owner of the newspaper La Tribuna, and offered to interview RYS and run an article on its activities. An article on Mr. Salinas and Rev. Pobanz's meeting appeared the next day in the newspaper, and can be accessed online at:

[www.latribuna.hn/2015/11/10/embajadores-de-paz-se-reunen-con-el-expresidente-carlos-flores](http://www.latribuna.hn/2015/11/10/embajadores-de-paz-se-reunen-con-el-expresidente-carlos-flores)