

Carol Pobanz's home town, Nutley, NJ declared an International City of Peace

Robin James Graham
November 15, 2018



Youth volunteers "carpet" the United Nations plaza.

Four women representing the town government, clergy, family services, education and Carol Pobanz representing [Universal Peace Federation](#) "peace projects" met almost weekly, developing the initial plan and preparing the application to be recognized as an [International City of Peace](#) (ICP). Carol was asked to create the initial proposal, then the women worked collaboratively to generate the final document outlining the vision, purpose, mission and goals. For Carol this has been a godsend; Nutley is her hometown.

The "ladies team" was delighted to receive the following note on October 31 announcing that [Nutley, NJ](#) was accepted as a City of Peace.

NEW JERSEY PEACE CITY! Nutley, New Jersey is today our 223rd International City of Peace thanks to Sandra (Sam) Carella and the very active citizens of this U.S. city. The town experienced an extraordinary peace building project called Carpeting the Town duplicated in New York in conjunction with United Nations in Peace. Themed "Peace is not simply the absence of war, but the development of friendships" the projects saw Nutley and Honduran students creating a traditional sawdust street tapestry, or alfombra ("carpet") – patterned after the "alfombras" created on the streets of Comayuga, Honduras each year. Details on the ICP website: www.internationalcitiesofpeace.org. They are already committed to the Fearless Challenge, working with their sister city to create another city of peace! Please give them a rousing welcome.

Carol explained, "International Cities of Peace is a network of leaders and citizens from around the world who have chosen to make peace the spirit of their city's agenda. Since cities play a strategic role in the culture of war, mayors and local governments have the influence to spread the opposite message, and this means that cities can become the starting point for a culture of peace. This is called city diplomacy. ICP encourages cities worldwide to become cities of peace not because they hate war and violence, but simply because they love peace, concord and hospitality.



"The group of ladies I am working with are all amazing women and mothers. They all love our town very much. We became friends through the [PeaceIN](#) street project "[Pathways to Peace](#)" which took place on the main street of our town in 2015. Sandra, our civic representative still talks about that project today as her favorite project ever done in our town because besides being fun it was extremely meaningful. I feel blessed to have developed this group of associates and to be able to share principles of peace with my town through the thing I love most, Art."

How did the idea for Nutley becoming a City of Peace emerge? Carol explained, "I became interested in the International Cities of Peace after being introduced to the network by [Laurent Ladouce](#), one of the editors of [True Peace](#) magazine. Laurent had read an article by Mario Salinas, UPF Director in Honduras and myself about our cooperative work in Mario's country and my hometown, Nutley, NJ. He expressed interest in our peace activities and suggested that we become a part of ICP as a means of sharing our best practices with other cities worldwide.

"Laurent also provided a letter of explanation to the mayor of [Tela, Honduras](#), where we have been building a Peace Park, helping share the importance of joining the ICP network. The Tela mayor accepted the challenge and appointed Mario and me to facilitate their application. The mayor of Tela, being aware

that our peace project also took place in Nutley, NJ invited the Nutley leadership to join together in a "sisterhood" city relationship with Tela, especially sharing in a cultural exchange. The leadership of Nutley having already been charmed by the Honduran culture through our two previous projects embraced the possibility wholeheartedly.

"The main goal of the ICP organization is to establish 1000 Cities of Peace worldwide. I personally feel that every city where a [Unification Seminary](#) (UTS) graduate lives or works is a potential city of peace. Together with [UPF Ambassadors for Peace](#) friends and associates we can become a force for good."



A traditional sawdust street tapestry (alfombra) created on Nutley's Franklin Avenue

About her UTS experience, Carol had this to say: "My UTS education has certainly been helpful in my peace work. My seminary thesis, titled "The Creator and the creator," was the development of a curriculum for teaching peaceful behavior through communal art-making." I am thankful for my seminary education because it has given me a great circle of like-minded friends to share ideas with. I personally enjoy brainstorming concepts with others to gain inspiration and I appreciate peer dialog to help me develop my ideas.

"I graduated from UTS in 1980 and though my husband and I were raising our family of four boys, most of my work has been in active mission e.g. [Family Federation](#) (FFWPU) city leader in Poughkeepsie and Newburgh, NY, and FFWPU state leader of New Jersey. I later became a project director for [Religious Youth Service](#) and the [Interreligious Peace Sports Festival](#), and then the Community Care Coordinator for the [Family Church in Clifton, NJ](#). During that time, I also held the position of chaplain, for 4 years, as a Spiritual Care Coordinator for Hospice of America.

"I was very fortunate to work with John Gehring, Director of [Religious Youth Service](#) from 2003 – 2011. Working with John, I had the freedom to create communal art projects which eventually became the foundation for [PeaceIN](#). As destiny would have it, Honduras became my international mission nation for FFWPU and the location of the first major project of PeaceIN. We are creating an art park in Tela, Honduras themed "Only One America" – an art park designed and built by young adults from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean."



Carol with fellow UTS graduate, John Gehring. Notice the paint on her fingers -- Carol in her element.

Carol tells us, "I am committed to continue the PeaceIN work and develop the International Cities of Peace projects in both Nutley and in Honduras. It is voluntary work so any financial support is most welcome."