



A Possumus Newsletter

*Bringing About Change
for the good in:*

Massachusetts

Ireland

El Salvador

Rhode Island

California

Illinois

Wisconsin

*No Pardon,
No Peace ...*

*Know Pardon,
Know Peace!*

Forgiveness is a Choice



These "Forgiveness Cookies" were made by our special needs children upon completion of their curriculum

Christmas Greetings 2012

From all of us at Possumus

Merry Christmas !

So much has happened since the last time we were in touch.

Often this time of year reminds us of the value of every relationship in our lives. If 2012 has had some hurts for you or me, now may just be the best time to consider forgiveness as a way to heal those past wounds.

Thanks to your support last year, Possumus International was able to reach more forgiveness education initiatives than ever before. We hope you will agree that forgiveness is a path to peace on earth. And you are a big part of helping us to make peace!

We are most grateful!

Special Kids learn about forgiveness



Thanks to a big-hearted school teacher named Elena, this year Possumus International saw the introduction of forgiveness education in its first school setting. With a vision of helping her special-needs children in a Massachusetts school, Elena adapted a primary school curriculum to help the students identify instances of unfairness in order to learn the pathways to forgiveness. By using books they could understand, like *Thidwick the Big-Hearted Moose*, students enjoyed learning the lesson: "Neither a doormat nor a Bully be." And with *Stone Soup*, by Heather Forest, students discovered some ingredients for healthy interactions with their families and friends. When confronted by teasing, being left out, or being told "I hate you," letting go of anger and being kind can be tough. In their class art project, the children were able to make a "Goodness Soup" complete with all the "renamed" vegetables to go with it: love, politeness, compassion, caring, all placed into the pot. A healthy mix indeed.

Yes! I want to become a friend of forgiveness education. I understand that becoming friends is easy!

Membership Levels:

Supporter: \$25 - \$99

Friend: \$100 - \$499

Good Friend: \$500 - \$999

Best Friend: > \$1,000

I prefer to contribute:

one-time only

monthly

quarterly

yearly

online

Send checks payable to:
Possumus International
Rosemary Kite, President
344 Palm Trail
Delray Beach, FL 33483

If you wish to contribute by credit card, kindly send your pertinent credit card information to the above address or call for further information: 561-251-7685

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:
www.forgive4peace.org

Partnerships and International News

Reducing Anger in Central City

By supporting an International Forgiveness Institute initiative we were able to help improve children's emotional well-being and academic achievement in Milwaukee's Central-City and surrounding region, one of the most ethnically segregated areas in the US and one characterized by poverty, gangs and violence.

Empowering Women

Working through the Spanish NGO, Fundacion del Valle, we were able to support women in El Salvador, disenfranchised due to social conflict and extreme poverty. Through your help they improved their lives with forgiveness education and job training.

Camperships

Another year of our "Family, Friends and Forgiveness" Campership Awards for the best essays on forgiveness had girls from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, California, Illinois and Wisconsin attending the summer camp of their choice.

Some of the 10-14 year olds had learned something about forgiveness if they could say:

- "Girls, especially, hold grudges."
- "Forgiveness is a virtue that is very hard to master."

A Northern Ireland Legacy

Another grant from Possumus International facilitated a forgiveness education workshop for elementary school teachers in Belfast, where forgiveness education efforts have been improving mental health among children for over a decade. The workshop aims to strengthen ties between Irish Catholic and British Protestant groups who have shared a long history of conflict. As one participant in the discussion said: "*The Gospel contains a profound wisdom about the role a 'forgiving life' plays at the heart of human healing and flourishing.*" We believe that on-going teacher education is a big part of that healing.

One girl who had read: Left to Tell, Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust, by Immaculée Ilibagiza, was deeply moved. "I do not know how she does it, but her example inspires me ... to move past hatred. Her story is amazing.... If everyone in the world would forgive to her extent, then there would be no war."

2013 will mark the 5th Annual "Family, Friends and Forgiveness" Essay Competition. Stay tuned for details.

Forgiveness and Your Health

U.S. News and World Report - Author Angela Haupt reviews some of the latest scientific studies linking forgiveness to positive physical health. According to the article, experts say that forgiving those who have wronged us helps lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and heart rate. One study found that forgiveness is associated with improved sleep quality, which has

a strong effect on health. And Duke University researchers report a strong correlation between forgiveness and strengthened immunity among HIV-positive patients. The benefits aren't just limited to the physical, either: Letting go of old grudges reduces levels of depression, anxiety, and anger. People who forgive tend to have better relationships, feel happier and more optimistic, and overall, enjoy better psychological well-being.