

EPCC Newsletter



PEACE IN ACTION How does Covid 19 Bring Peace Skills to the Forefront?

BY GABY LITSKY

I have been thinking about how our peace work and trainings are being used during this pandemic. The obvious skill is to create inner peace in your life to be able to cope with fear, loss of control and changing circumstances. EPCC teaches doing this by taking quiet time to go within, or to observe nature and beauty. Use poetry and spiritual writings or music to not feel so alone during this time. Working with your children or elder family members to be able to quiet down, breath and find calmness for coping with feelings they may not understand.

The next skill, basic to EPCC is connection which I have seen in the form of zoom and Face Time. Daily phone calls or text messages. Reaching out to people who may live alone or just may be in need of a friendly "Hello." We talk a lot about positive communication and active listening skills. Now more than ever listening without judgement is important. As a witness, just being there for loved ones and friends who need to talk.

One of our Peace Skills is Collaboration. We use this working together on presentations, workshops or planning for the group's future are collaborative efforts. There are many times when working together to accomplish a goal, even as simple as planning dinner gives people something to focus on, to see mutual success and

shared enjoyment. Generating brainstorm and building off of each other is another EPCC tool. It creates positive energy, communication and excitement.

Sharing stories, supporting each other. Small acts of kindness like friends appearing with an extension cord when I needed one, or my delivering a box of matzah because I had it and I could. Making masks. Calling someone over the phone you don't ordinarily spend time with. All small acts of peace and kindness we talk about so much here at EPCC.

Seeing signs that say "We're all in this together" supports basic EPCC philosophy. We have always promoted inclusivity, sharing power, active listening, promoting group problem solving and making agreements about how we are going to be with one another and face our situation together. We are seeing all this modeled in families that are now taking on added responsibility for guiding their children through this emotionally charged time, trying to fill teacher's shoes and keep their families afloat financially. The lessons we teach and the support materials available on our website give hands-on information on how to implement these ideas. Together we grow a continued vision for a different, kinder and more peaceful world as the light at the end of this tunnel.



Read about the benefits of Peace Camp on Page 4. Then read the success stories of our graduating counselors on Page 5!

How can I get involved?

We are honored that you have opened and perused our quarterly newsletter.

We value your input and support for our peace education work that is so close to our hearts and minds. There are many ways that you can support our work with educators, families and communities across the country.

Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- Share your training or workshop experiences with others.
- Think about what you see on our website (educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org) that you might be interested in organizing for your community or sponsoring/funding or participating in yourself
- Tell others about the training opportunities we offer
- Refer others to our website
- Grant writing support, or leads
- Offer leads for training or speaking opportunities
- Offer leads for funding sources
- Offer leads for marketing our project

Please share this newsletter and refer others to our website, educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org. If you have any questions email us at pambonzvo@gmail.com.

Main image courtesy of jcomp via Freepik.

BOOK REVIEW

"Quiet"

By Tomie dePaola

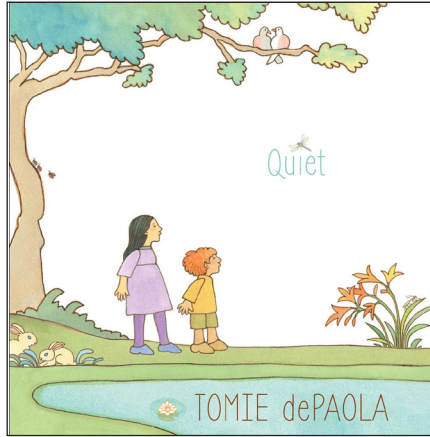
BY SHIRLEY H. CHEN

Quiet, by Tomie dePaola, is a perfect book reminder of the power that is offered in quietness. Here is an excerpt from the book:

"The birds are flying so fast, the dragonfly is zooming over the water—even the trees are waving their leaves. So what if we sit here, you next to me...and we can just be?"

I love how the author places focus on the pace of things that we may not often pay attention to, such as the speed of a dragonfly. Only when you are fully present, and perhaps only when it is very quiet, can you fully experience the sensations of the speed and sounds of a small dragonfly. The illustrations in this book consist of clean, simple lines and drawings, muted colors and a lot of white open space, offering the reader an expanse and openness in the settings in the book.

It was my lovely pleasure to be introduced to this beautiful book in a modern gathering space - an online Zoom meeting! I am fascinated by the different factors that led us to gather together to read this book. Author



Tomie dePaola passed away in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the illustrations of his characters outside has come to have a nostalgic feeling - of places that are hard to access and no longer available to the public as they were before. I loved connecting with a few members of EPCC at the Zoom gathering, sharing this delightful book as well as two other ones from the group. It definitely felt like a safe space to share and speak my peace, and I look forward to more book sharing gatherings to come. I highly recommend this book to people of all ages!

For more information on Tomie dePaola, here is his website: <https://www.tomie.com>

RESOURCE

"Sparklers" Book Lists for Trying Times and Earth Day

BY SUSAN HOPKINS

The book lists following have been created by a group of teachers and others who are passionate about discovering wonderful children's literature and making it readily available. The Sparklers Working Group of FGC (Friends General Conference) is a group of Quakers, all who love quality children's books that help promote peace, respect, simplicity, community, stewardship, and equality. The book lists, including links to YouTube videos of each story, are available on the QREC (Quakers for Religious Education Collaborative) website. Click the buttons below to see the lists and visit the QREC Valiant Together Facebook page for additional resources:

<http://www.quakers4re.org/valiant-together2020>



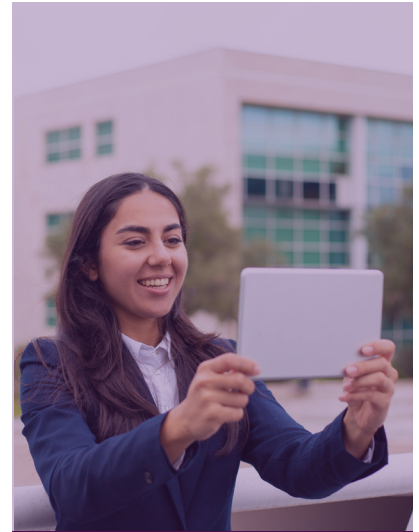
BOOKS FOR THESE TRYING TIMES

<https://bit.ly/3fjyU2O>



BOOKS FOR EARTH DAY AND BEYOND

<https://bit.ly/3fgmZCZ>



In this issue Peace in Action

- 1** PEACE IN ACTION
How COVID 19 brings peace skills to the forefront.
- 2** PEACE CAMPS
How to make the most out of your child's summer.
- 3** BOOK REVIEW
Quiet by Tomie dePaola.
- 4** A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND RESILIENCE
Regarding CAEYC from Cal AEYC Executive Director Deidre Bryant.
- 5** "SPARKLERS" BOOK LISTS
For trying times and Earth Day.
- 6** O.C. PEACE CAMP LEADERS MOVING ON
Congrats to our grads!
- 7** PEACE IN ACTION BOOK LISTS
Titles for young readers ages 4-10.
- 8** 2020 U.S. CENSUS
Resources to teach preschoolers.
- 9** ALUMNI CORNER
Reflections on Levels I & II trainings.

OUR ORGANIZATION

EDUCATORS FOR PEACEFUL CLASSROOMS AND COMMUNITIES

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520 Calabasas Rd.
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FIND US ONLINE

[educatorsforpeacefulclassrooms
andcommunities.org](http://educatorsforpeacefulclassroomsandcommunities.org)

Image courtesy pchvector.com/Freepik.
Icons courtesy of the Noun Project.

LETTER

A Message of Hope and Resilience

BY DEIDRE BRYANT

Dear Members, Supporters, Partners and others,

Sometimes hope feels like the appropriate strategy when you are navigating uncharted territory. At times, I am a hopeless hopeful. It's not that I am not a realist, it just means that I believe in the power of positive energy. And hope is an excellent way in which I channel positive energy to cope, strategize and support others. To quote a former US President, "The Audacity of Hope."

My Dad would also tell us - my siblings and me - that we could do anything if you "put your mind to it." **Put Your Mind to It** was our guiding principle in school work, athletic events, job interviews, career paths, you name it. His message was clear and simple, you can accomplish and be anything you want, but you must do it with integrity and be authentic. And don't waiver in your commitment - be fully committed or don't do it.

As we regularly shift our thinking, almost daily, about our commitment to you, the ECE workforce, we are reminded that this week we would have been traveling to Pasadena for the 2020 Annual Conference and Expo. Instead, we moved our Annual Conference and Expo to June 27-29. Many of you ask, can we be certain about the June 27-29 Annual Conference in Pasadena? No we cannot. We can, however, be certain about how committed we are to supporting your professional learning needs.

Whether the Annual Conference and Expo, June 27-29, is in person or virtual, you can be assured that we will deliver the same quality of professional development workshops you expect, along with an interactive exhibit experience. It may look a bit different, but we are experiencing different times, like no other.

When we announced the change in conferences dates, we reflected on the conference theme: "**Resiliency: Building Lifelong Practices.**" Many of us paused - realizing that the theme could not be more relevant than now. I'll repeat what I shared before - the conference theme reminds us that we have the capacity to bounce back, to stand strong and to stay connected.

We are hearing many stories of resilience - from you - how you are balancing, pivoting, juggling while working to survive and thrive. We commend the work you are doing - remember to pause and give yourself the needed break to do something for yourself.

My message to you, try to embrace the "audacity of hope," and put your mind to it, you just might be amazed at what you can accomplish.

Stay well - you are essential and needed. With warm regard,

Deidre Bryant
Executive Director
California AEYC
caeyc.org | conference.caeyc.org

ALUMNI CORNER Reflections on Training

BY SHIRA COLEMAN

EPCC Level 1 and Level 2 trainings were a wonderful opportunity to evaluate where my world is in relation to peace education. I really saw how much I wanted to be the change I want to see in the world. Besides the inspiration that sitting with others who share my basic values including curiosity and willingness to open myself up to deep investigation, the trainings gave me a million ideas about how peace can come through me into the world. I decided to start my work in my home with my children and with my partner and with my children's father. These are the everyday choices for peace I can make. I can help to grow the next generation, through my two children and everyone they come into contact with, by giving them tools of peace making at an early age and letting them soak it into their way of being like the sponges they are. Modeling peaceful communication, conflict resolution, and respect for differences with my partner, as we live day to day, has not only helped me in my mission to grow healthy children, but has enriched and deepened our love and teamwork. The second step I took was to throw my hat over the fence by letting EPCC know that I wanted to be a part of their mission. I was nervous to commit time and energy as those are two things that were in short supply at the time. But, as usual, the universe welcomed my intention and EPCC members welcomed the time I was able to give and did not ask from me more than I could give. I've had such a great experience working with EPCC to re conceptualize the level 1 training. The members live their mission in deep dedication to inclusiveness and collaboration. I am excited to step into the, train the trainers programs that are upcoming and I have released the fear that I won't have enough time or energy. I know that I can honestly say what I am available for and that that will be okay with the group, that I'll be appreciated for what I can give and accepted for what I cannot. What a brilliant example of peace at work.

2020 United States Census

Starting March 12, people living in the United States will receive by mail a 2020 Census form with details on how to respond. The Census records where people live on a particular date: Census Day, April 1, 2020. So no matter when you respond to the Census, it's asking for where you resided on Census Day. From May through July, census takers will visit homes that haven't responded to help.

The Census Bureau and Child360 (part of Los Angeles Universal Preschool) have resources and activities for preschoolers about the census.



 **TAKE THE CENSUS**
<https://bit.ly/3c7tcPm>

 **PRE-K CENSUS RESOURCES**
<https://bit.ly/2YwGrFk>

 **CENSUS POSTCARDS**
<https://bit.ly/3aYTe61>

 **CENSUS SINGALONG**
<https://bit.ly/3aYHTD6>

 **CENSUS VIDEOS**
<https://bit.ly/2Yu4MvE>

Census Image courtesy of NALEO. Icons in this issue courtesy of The Noun Project.



FEATURE

PEACE CAMPS

More than Your Average Summer Camp

BY ANA PAGE

As the school year sets, the bright mornings awaken for summer activities. Many communities offer summer camps through their community center or other community organizations like the YMCA. As parents strive to find a summer camp to support social skills and promoting independence, there are some summer camps that continually promote life-long learning through a different lens. Educators for Peaceful Classrooms and Communities (EPCC) encourages your family to participate in *Screen-Free Week*, and to continue through the summer. According to the National Institute for Mental Health, their recent study shows how the usage of screen time in children is linked to poor health, lower cognitive development, and poor performance in school. (Dowling, 2018) Children have endless possibilities outdoors. Peace Camps offer children a safe-place to create dialogue about social justice issues and collaboratively create change using a Peace Education model. Children can develop stronger communicative skills and transform conflict (as well as deterring violence).

WHAT IS PEACE CAMP?

Alternative day camps that build social-emotional behaviors are something to look into! There are many camps themed with STEM, providing additional writing or literary support, but we cannot forget the basics of what the possibilities children can gain from attending camps that build trust and talk about hard issues going on in our world. Bullying, and cyber bullying, has become a universal issue that has the potential to affect every child regardless of your background.

There are social pressures based on power in society and a curriculum that offers deeper understanding of societal differences.

From a young age, children begin to notice differences and acknowledge injustices. Peace Camps provide an environment where leaders model how to respectfully acknowledge those differences and walk on the road through tolerance and continue onto the celebration of people with many differences. By attending Peace Camps, children have opportunities to have pride in their own identities and of their families. Throughout the week of camp, many children excitedly express how they are in a blended family, can name the shade of their skin-tone, or feel safe to say their religious background and are not afraid to pray in hiding. Through Peace Education, each individual practices attentive listening of each other's stories which creates a strong sense of community.

TAKING ACTION

True Peace Education uncovers the unlimited potential of a child. Once children experience the bond of relationships at summer camp through their stories, they build a sense of responsibility to stand up for themselves and others. When they identify injustices occurring in their lives, camp leaders facilitate action plan with children to discover how they can create change. One year, children realized that children who were displaced or homeless did not have the benefit of attending summer camp. Children who previously attended Peace Camp raised funds to be able to sponsor children who live in shelters. Peace Camp children thoughtfully planned how to included children from the

shelter as to not be seen as "shelter children" but also provide a safe environment for them to share their story if they wanted to. Their goal was to create an inclusion environment but also intentionally bring children to camp who had different perspectives as their own.

If you would like more information about Peace Camps, visit [our website](#) and click on the PEACE CAMP tab or click the buttons below.



ORANGE COUNTY
PEACE CAMP

www.ocpeacecamp.com



JANE ADDAMS
PEACE CAMP

www.japeacecamp.org

RESOURCES

Dowling, G., MD. (2018). Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study. Retrieved from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/research-funded-by-nimh/research-initiatives/adolescent-brain-cognitive-development-abcd-study.shtml>

Screen Free Week: www.screenfree.org

DISCLAIMER: Peace Camps have moved to a virtual platform this summer due to COVID-19. We understand and acknowledge that during this time, the mission of Peace Camp is needed more than ever. We are a community of peace activists and will continue to create community and teach peace in the safest way possible to all children.

HERE'S TO THE FUTURE!

Orange County Peace Camp Leaders Moving On

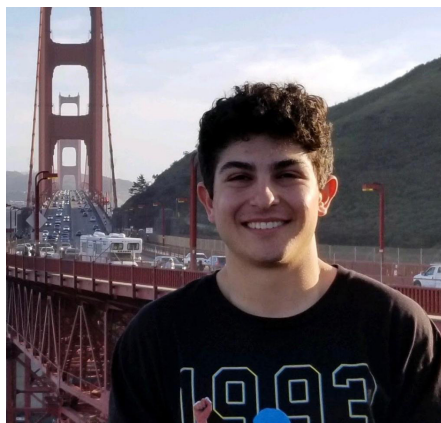
BY PAIGE MAHAFFEY

While everyone is learning how to adapt to the challenges of these times, the staff and youth leaders at Orange County Peace Camp are hard at work planning for camp this year! We've decided to put every effort into making Peace Camp happen this summer as normal, especially with schools closed and families isolated. We want to provide those families and children with some hope and a safe space for life to get back to normal. We are looking forward to rediscovering Irvine Regional Park and sharing our 2020 theme focusing on Resiliency later this summer. We take our responsibilities to our communities and to each other very seriously.

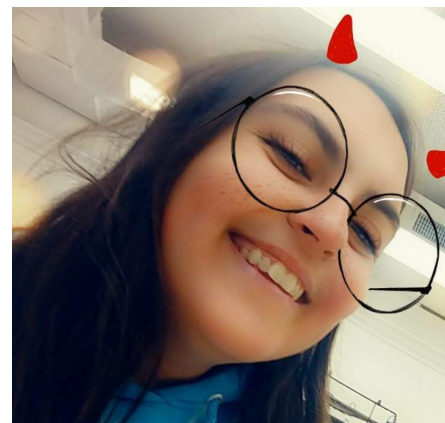
In other Peace Camp news, we are celebrating the upcoming graduation of three Peace Camp high school seniors. They are exemplary leaders and core members of our Peace Camp family. We are so proud of them and are excited to share a little bit about them with you all!



SYDNEY has been a part of Peace Camp for around 10 years. She is planning to attend UCLA. Sydney is an incredibly strong and resilient person, becoming an advocate for mental health through her own struggles with a brain lesion. Because of this, she is thinking of doing something with health and neuroscience. She said that Peace Camp has made her want to help people in their time of need and help shape their view of the world into a positive one. We are thrilled for Sydney and can't wait to see what she does in the future.



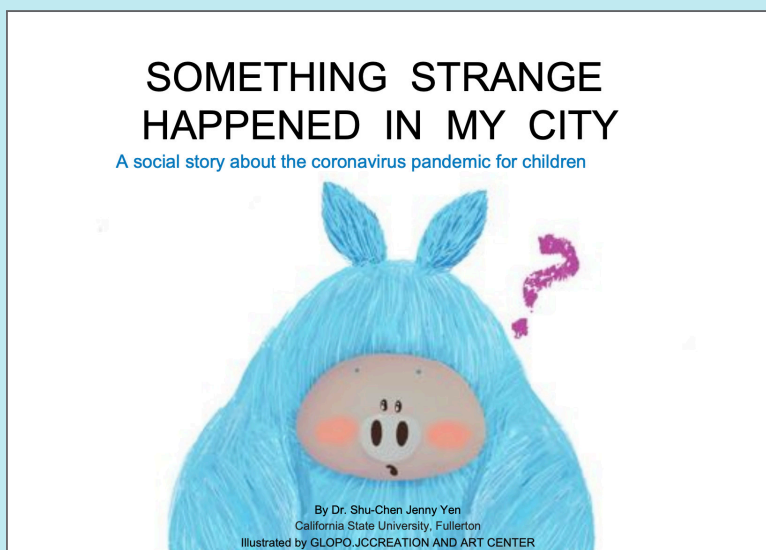
FARAZ has been a part of Peace Camp for 12 years. He is planning to attend UCSB or UCSD in the fall for a pre-med route. He's a dedicated athlete, playing baseball his whole life as well as coaching and refereeing basketball. Faraz exemplifies what it means to be a leader. He has grown into such a smart, capable person who will shine brightly at whatever he sets his mind to doing. His Peace Camp family is so proud of his accomplishments and excited to see him succeed in this next chapter!



LOLA has been a part of Peace Camp for around 7 years. She is a very thoughtful and pragmatic person, never afraid to voice her beliefs and stand up for others. She is fearless, never afraid to be an advocate even when it can be hard. She is committed to the University of La Verne and wants to be a teacher. We wholly support that path for her and know she will be brilliant. We have enjoyed seeing Lola work with campers through the years and can't wait to see how much joy she continues to spread in the world whatever path she chooses!

Finally, we want to shout out the wonderful moms of Peace Camp who are making a huge difference in the world.

JENNY YEN recently wrote a social story about the coronavirus pandemic for children. We highly recommend checking it out at her new site, The Social Story Center. It has been translated into many different languages and read around the world, which is a huge accomplishment. We're proud of the difference that educators and moms like Jenny can make in the world. We would also like to extend a huge thank you and virtual hug to **ATESSA KIANI** for the hard work she is doing at Hoag to research the coronavirus. She is an inspiration to all of us and we are hopeful for the future when moms like Atessa are doing everything they can to make the world a better, safer place. We are grateful for these moms to be a part of our Peace Camp family.



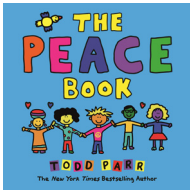
READ JENNY YEN'S BOOK ONLINE

www.socialstorycenter.com/social-stories/

Peace in Action Book List

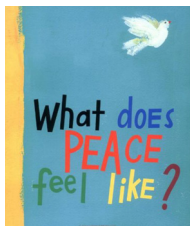
BY VERONICA HERNANDEZ

BOOKS FOR 4-9 YEAR OLDS



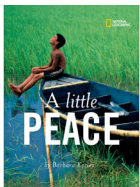
THE PEACE BOOK by Todd Parr.
Ages 3-6 years.

If you enjoy reading Todd Parr books, then you will love this book about Peace. In the book, Todd Parr shares positive and hopeful messages of peace that help young readers understand what peace could look like in our world.



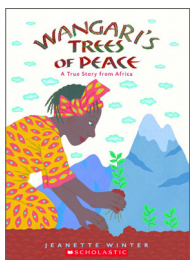
WHAT DOES PEACE FEEL LIKE?
by Vladimir Radunsky. Ages 4-8 years.

Have you ever wondered what Peace could feel like? Or smell like? In *What does Peace Feel Like*, children from around the world describe what peace feels like to them. It is a book truly written by children for children.



A LITTLE PEACE by Barbara Kerley.
Ages 4-8 years.

A Little Peace is told through beautiful photographs and inspiring words that remind us that peace is all over the world if you just stop and take in the view.



WANGARI'S TREES OF PEACE: A TRUE STORY FROM AFRICA by Jeanette Winter.
Ages 5-7 years.

Wangari is a young girl in Kenya that lived surrounded by lush green trees. Years later, she returns home and is shocked to see that the whole forest area near her home, was cut down and destroyed. Feeling hurt, Wangari decides to act and starts to plant nine seedlings in her own backyard. As they grow, people in Kenya begin to see this as an act of rebellion, leading Wangari to journey into the world of activism.



GRETA'S STORY: THE SCHOOLGIRL WHO WENT ON STRIKE TO SAVE THE PLANET by Jeanette Winter. Ages 5-8 years.

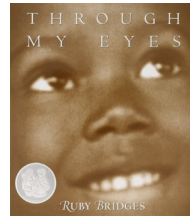
After hearing about climate change in school and watching fires rage across Europe Greta, a Swedish 15-year-old, takes a journey into activism. She finds inspiration in U.S. civil rights activist Rosa Parks and Marjory Stoneman and decides to take a stand for climate change. This is her story.



A PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE by Jane Goodall. Ages 7 and up.

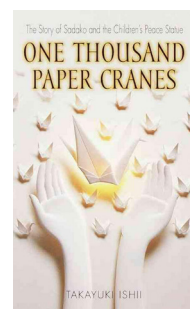
This beautifully poetic book is perfect for children ages 7 years and up. *A Prayer for World Peace* is about Jane Goodall, a renowned naturalist, who wants to shed light on the social injustices in the world and to pray for those who have little to no voice.

BOOKS FOR 10 AND UP



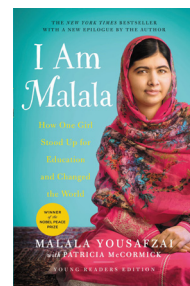
THROUGH MY EYES by Ruby Bridges.
Ages 9-12 years.

In November 1960, a little girl made the whole world gasp as she walked right into her school. This is the story of Ruby Bridges and how she walked through screaming segregationists and became the first black student to attend an all-white school. Through photographs we gain a glimpse into this pivotal moment in her 6-year-old life.



ONE THOUSAND PAPER CRANES: THE STORY OF SADAKO AND THE CHILDREN'S PEACE STATUE by Takayuki Ishii. Ages 10-13 years.

One Thousand Paper Cranes: The story of Sadako and the children's Peace Statue, tells the story of Sadako. A Japanese girl who had Leukemia after the bombings in Hiroshima and was on a mission to make one thousand cranes so that her wish of surviving this disease would come true. Her classmates, friends and family members were inspired by her courage and determination, which led to the accomplishment of one thousand cranes.



I AM MALALA by Malala Yousafzai.
Ages 10 and up.

Meet Malala Yousafzai, now a young woman, shares her story of making change at 10 years. Pakistan a once peaceful place she called home, was overtaken by the Taliban. Which meant, it was a crime to listen to music, women were not allowed to go to the market and girls could not go to school. Malala decided to stand up and act for what she believed. She was going to go to school at any cost.

LOOKING FOR COVID-19 RESOURCES?

We have a roundup of great content for parents and educators!



CLICK TO GET THE GUIDE

<https://bit.ly/2zmuqYw>