

# Peace Gazette

Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center Newsletter  
Winter/Spring 2023



**Solidarity  
with people  
& movements**

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- February 23rd Event  
Black History Month  
Celebration Film  
Screening of  
"The Children's March"
- 25th Annual Art &  
Writing Challenge +  
Youth Activist Grant  
Award for Students of  
Contra Costa County
- Anti-Racist Book Club  
Continues! (Next  
Meeting, March 7th)
- 14th Annual Peace  
Awards Dinner - Photo  
Re-Cap!
- Welcoming New Board  
Members!

### Original artwork by Monica Trinidad

The Justseeds Artists' Cooperative included this print as a part of the "DE-MIL-I-TA-RISE" portfolio and booklet for free use in organizing campaigns, schools, and cultural programming.

## Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center

1035 Carol Lane  
Lafayette, California 94549

Our purpose is to work for a culture of peace through education, advocacy and community building.

The Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

**FOUNDER:** Andy Baltzo, circa 1969

### **PEACE CENTER BOARD:**

Amneh Ma'bad, Bob Spies, Karen Perkins, Michael Stein, Margli Auclair, Thomas Brom, Bob Maxwell, Rick Sterling, Andrew Kodama and Kathleen Barr

### **PEACE GAZETTE**

Established by Arne Westerback, 1969

**EDITOR/LAYOUT:** Andrew Kodama

**PROOF-READER:** Margli Auclair, Thomas Brom

**WEB TEAM:** Margli Auclair/Andrew Kodama

### **PEACE GAZETTE EMAIL:**

[andrew@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:andrew@ourpeacecenter.org)

### **PEACE CENTER ONLINE**

**ACTIVIST ALERTS:** request by email to Andrew Kodama  
[andrew@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:andrew@ourpeacecenter.org)

### **SOCIAL MEDIA:**

[www.facebook.com/MDPJC](https://www.facebook.com/MDPJC)  
[www.twitter.com/MtDiabloPJC](https://www.twitter.com/MtDiabloPJC)

### **PEACE CENTER WEBSITES:**

[www.ourpeacecenter.org](http://www.ourpeacecenter.org)  
[www.creatingpeacefulschools.weebly.com](http://www.creatingpeacefulschools.weebly.com)

*The Peace Gazette is a project of the Communications Committee of MDPJC. The views expressed are the opinions of the writers and do not necessarily speak for all members of the Center or its Board of Directors.*

To get in touch, please email:  
[andrew@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:andrew@ourpeacecenter.org)  
Or call our office: 925 933 7850

## **A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:**

As we emerged from the global COVID pandemic, the Center celebrated its 53rd year with its first in-person Peace Awards Dinner since 2019. In December, we honored Eric Garris of the website antiwar.com and the board members of Rossmoor Advocates for Diversity. (See photos from the event on pages 8 & 9).

This month, we have several events coming up. First, the Rage Against the War Machine demonstration, sponsored by a coalition of anti-war groups, on Feb. 19th in San Francisco. Second, a film screening and discussion on February 23rd celebrating Black History Month (see flyer on opposite page) as well as our monthly Anti-Racist Reading Group meeting taking place on March 7th.

We are also happy to announce the launch of our 2023 Dennis Thomas Art & Writing Challenge for students. This marks the 25th year of the annual contest which invites submissions from middle and high school students throughout Contra Costa County.

This contest will culminate in a community awards showcase at the end of Spring - where we invite award winners along with their friends, families, and teachers to the Peace Center to celebrate. This event is open to the public - and to me, always feels like a refreshing burst of inspiration and restored hope for the future.

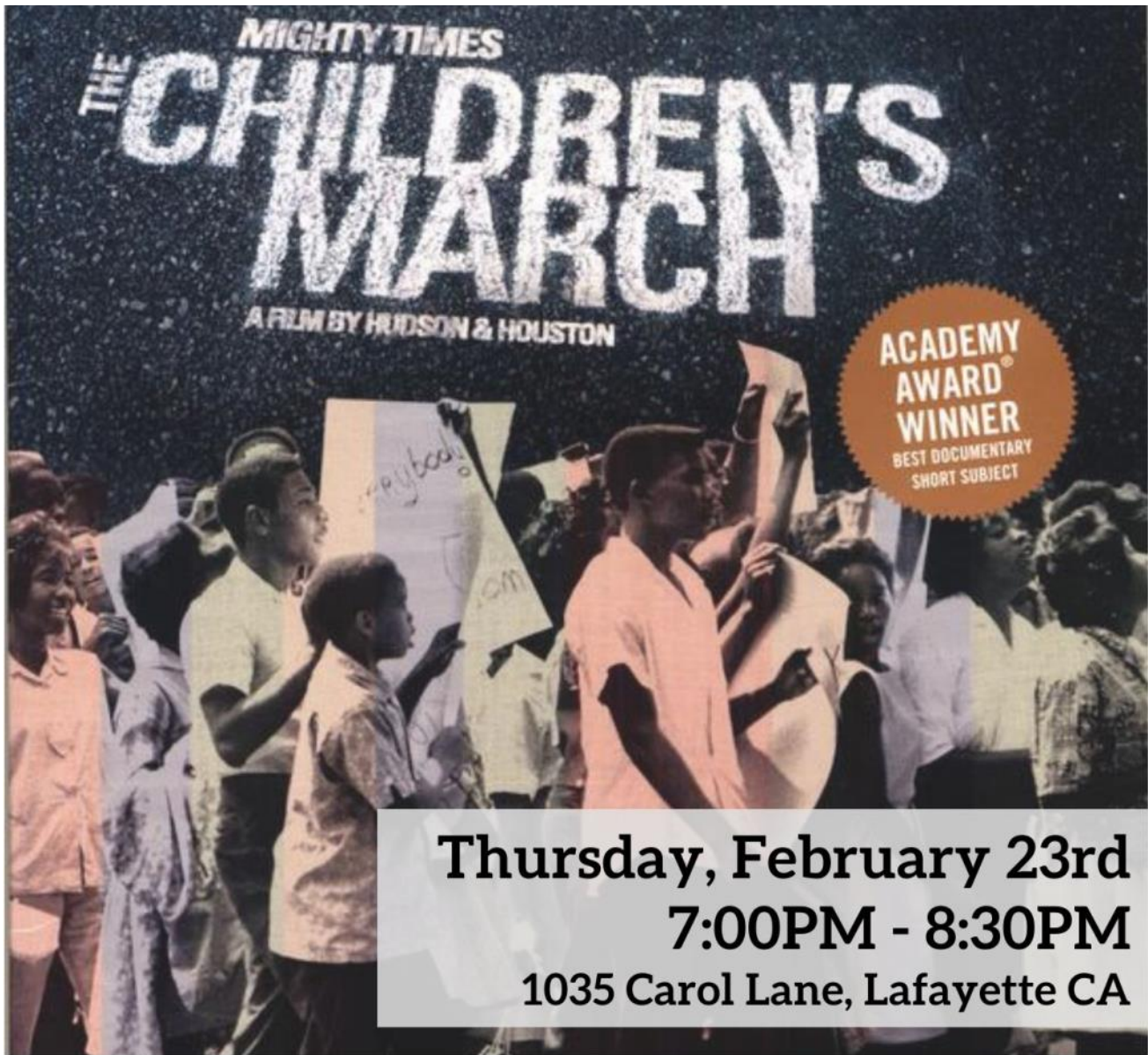
Speaking of fresh energy - we welcome five new board members to the Peace Center! They are Bob Spies, Karen Perkins, Amneh Ma'bad, Michael Stein, and myself! All are longtime friends and members of the Center and we could not be more excited to welcome them aboard! To learn more about our new board members please visit pages 4 & 5 !

As some of you may know—at the start of 2023 I stepped down from my role as Executive Director and transitioned to becoming a board member. I will continue working on the Events + Communications committee as well and look forward to staying closely involved with the Center.

To stay up-to-date with what is happening here at the Center, please visit [www.ourpeacecenter.org](http://www.ourpeacecenter.org) and join our mailing list to receive a weekly newsletter 'Activist Alert' - with recommended readings as well as local peace events. We exist to serve the community so please do not hesitate to reach out.

Let's keep building peace—together!

In peace,  
Andrew Kodama



## **A FILM SCREENING + DISCUSSION CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY!**

*Mighty Times: The Children's March* is a 2004 American short documentary about the Birmingham, Alabama civil rights marches in the 1960s, highlighting the bravery of young activists involved in the Children's Crusade.

*Produced by Learning for Justice + Teaching Tolerance*

Tickets are **FREE!** Donations are greatly appreciated!

Refreshments will be provided.

For tickets + information: [www.ourpeacecenter.org](http://www.ourpeacecenter.org)



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# Meet our Newest Board Members!

*We are excited to announce the addition of new members to our board of directors: Karen Perkins, Michael Stein, Amneh Ma'bad, Bob Spies, and Andrew Kodama. All have been longtime supporters of the Center and volunteers on Center committees.*

*Our board members are essential in keeping the Center thriving by working to develop new programs, fundraising efforts, the recruitment of new members, and connect the Center to like-minded community activists and peace groups.*

If you are interested in learning more about the board / would like to apply—please email: [andrew@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:andrew@ourpeacecenter.org) or call 925-933-7850.

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**Karen Perkins** is a retired bilingual Spanish elementary teacher who taught in the Oakland Public Schools for 17 years and was a Union Representative for the Oakland Education Association.

A political activist from an early age, Karen participated in the anti-Vietnam war, civil rights, women's and LGBTQ rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

After retirement, she served 10 years on the Steering Committee of Parents for a Safer Environment, a group working to reduce and eliminate the use of toxic pesticides in Contra Costa County public schools, buildings, lands and waterways.

She is also a member of the Contra Costa Racial Justice Coalition, based in Richmond, which advocates for racial justice and immigrant rights. In 2020, Karen organized the Seniors for Sanders Club in Rossmoor and is involved in groups working for a livable environment.

Currently, Karen is on the Center's Advocacy Committee.

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**Michael Stein** is a retired neurologist living with his wife, Jeannine in Walnut Creek. He grew up in Chicago and attended the University Of Illinois in Champaign/Urbana and then the University Of Illinois Medical School in Chicago.

He came west to do his internship in 1970 at Highland Hospital in Oakland and has been living in California ever since. Michael started his private neurology practice in Walnut Creek in 1977 and finally retired in 2010 after 33 years. He specialized in the diagnosis and treatment of headache. He was active in the efforts to establish a single payer healthcare system in California.

Since his retirement he has traveled and engaged in his hobby of playing the banjo. He is the proud father of two daughters, Laurel and Jessica, and now the grandfather to Rockwell, Slade, Maya and Anya.



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**Amneh Ma'bad** is a Palestinian born in Jerusalem. She earned a Law degree from Al Quds University and Masters in International Studies from Birzeit University.

Amneh worked at Al Haq, the pre-eminent Palestinian human rights organization, and as a delegate to the Palestinian Legislative Council. She was trained in international humanitarian law and worked at integrating international conventions in Palestinian legislation. She has written numerous reports and articles for Palestinian publications and was editor / coordinator at Al Geshar (The Bridge).

She moved to California in 2006 with her late husband, Hisham Ahmed, a professor at St. Mary's College. Amneh now works as a teacher while raising two teenage children. She maintains very strong connections with her family in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Palestine.

Currently, Amneh serves on the Center's Advocacy Committee.

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**Bob Spies** is a web developer living in Albany. He grew up in Southern California and moved to Northern California and got his MBA from U.C. Berkeley.

After college, he managed public housing programs but was forced to change careers due to the drastic cuts to the public housing budget made by the Reagan Administration. He has spent most of his career in various technical management roles.

Bob lives with his wife Karen, and has two grown sons. In 2016, he joined a volunteer citizen diplomacy effort, including a trip to Russia and Crimea.

Bob serves on the Advocacy Committee and is currently active in various groups focused on de-escalating the Ukrainian conflict and stopping the drift toward a military conflict with China.

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**Andrew Kodama** is an educator, artist, and organizer born and raised in the East Bay. He graduated from Las Lomas High School in 2012 and attended Diablo Valley College before transferring to UC Berkeley, where he graduated with a degree in Sociology.

Andrew's involvement with the Peace Center began with the grassroots youth activist group, Diablo for Peace, in 2017. Through Diablo for Peace, Kodama along with former board members Emmy Akin and Andrea Miralles, worked with local students to put on social justice-themed workshops and events for the community.

Andrew served as the Director from 2019—2022 and is excited to continue working with the Center as a board member. He wants to focus on cultivating intergenerational connections between activists in our area. Currently, Andrew is on the Center's Events & Communications Committees.

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MT. DIABLO PEACE & JUSTICE CENTER

# INTERESTED IN TAKING ACTION AROUND SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES IN OUR COMMUNITY?



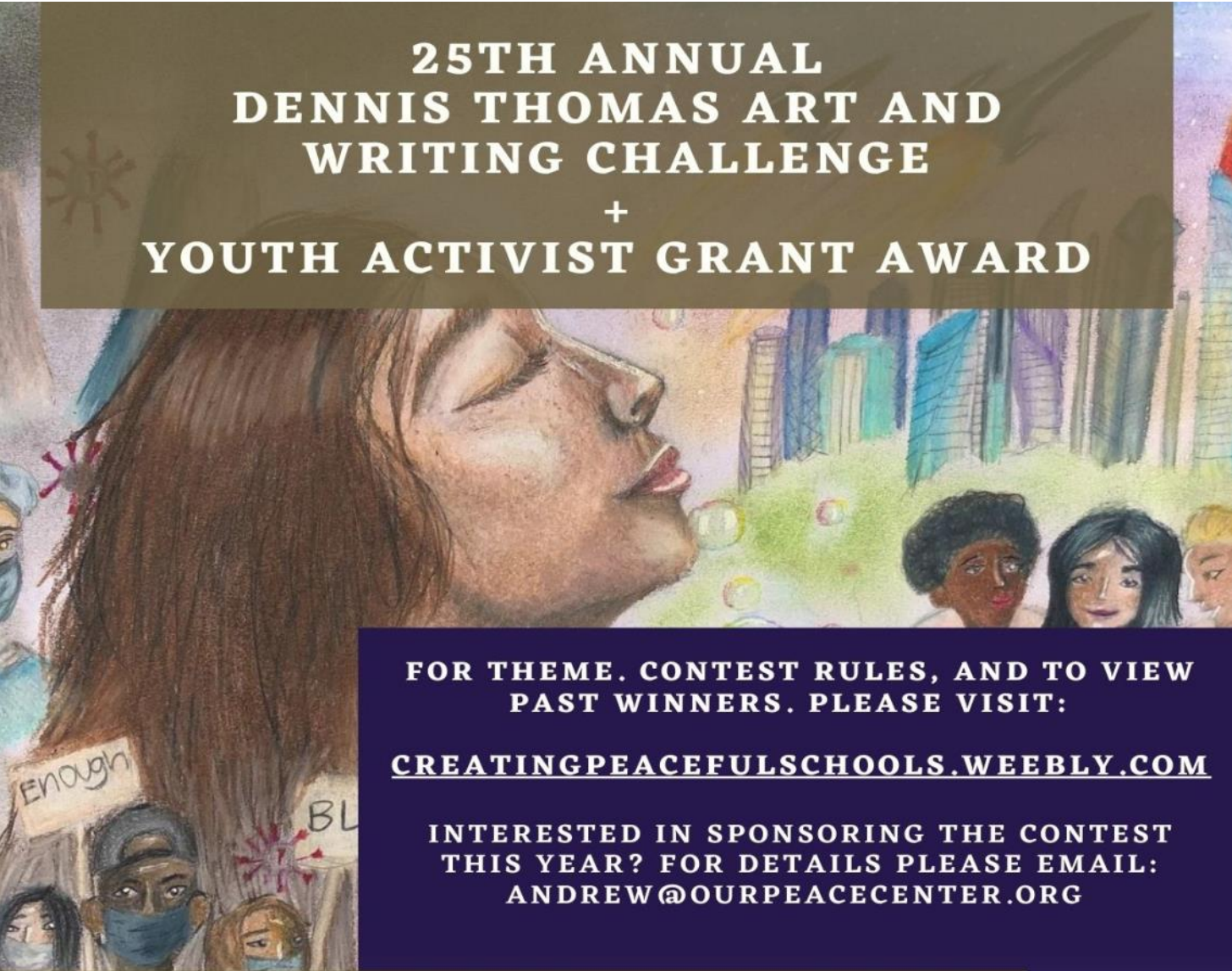
*The Peace Center needs you! Are there issues in our community you would like to bring more awareness around? A grassroots movement you'd like to support? An author / activist you'd like to invite for a discussion? We are seeking committed and conscious community members interested in helping us bring ideas to life! Our goal is to cultivate a more peaceful community through education, advocacy, and action.*



**SINCE 1969, THE PEACE CENTER HAS WORKED TO EDUCATE, ORGANIZE, AND ADVOCATE AROUND ISSUES OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IMPACTING OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD!**

**HELP US KEEP THIS LEGACY ALIVE AND JOIN THE CENTER!**

Visit us online: [www.ourpeacecenter.org](http://www.ourpeacecenter.org) / email: [andrew@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:andrew@ourpeacecenter.org)



# 25TH ANNUAL DENNIS THOMAS ART AND WRITING CHALLENGE + YOUTH ACTIVIST GRANT AWARD

**FOR THEME, CONTEST RULES, AND TO VIEW  
PAST WINNERS. PLEASE VISIT:**

**[CREATINGPEACEFULSCHOOLS.WEEBLY.COM](http://CREATINGPEACEFULSCHOOLS.WEEBLY.COM)**

**INTERESTED IN SPONSORING THE CONTEST  
THIS YEAR? FOR DETAILS PLEASE EMAIL:  
[ANDREW@OURPEACECENTER.ORG](mailto:ANDREW@OURPEACECENTER.ORG)**

Our Art and Writing Challenge was started in 1998 by former Center board member, Dennis Thomas, with the goal of developing and promoting peace in the community through education, community participation and activities that call for using conflict resolution and mediation.

The program provides middle and high school students with a different topic each year, with the intention of stimulating community discussion on issues affecting the lives of young people. Students are encouraged to produce artwork, essays, creative writing of all sorts as well as videos on the topic, with prizes for winners.

In 2019, the Center established our Youth Activist Grant Award as a way to recognize and honor young people in our community organizing around peace and justice. We want students to know that they can be powerful instruments of change and that the actions they take can have a huge impact in creating a more just and equitable world for all.

We want to recognize any young person or group of young people (grades 6-12) who has shown remarkable commitment, creativity, and perseverance in their activism work, despite the constraints of the past years. We welcome nominations from the community!

Since it began, thousands of submissions have been received for the challenge from throughout Contra Costa County. We can't wait to see the submissions we receive this year. Our guiding theme / prompt will be made available via [www.creatingpeacefulschools.weebly.com](http://www.creatingpeacefulschools.weebly.com) at the end of February.

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# Peace Awards Dinner Photo Re-Cap:

On Saturday, December 16th – we held our 14th Annual Peace Awards Dinner at the Peace Center. We spent the evening celebrating community as we honored and recognized TWO groups who have inspired us with their dedication to peace activism and grassroots action. We were joined in person by our Local Hero for Peace Awardee—the Rossmoor Advocates for Diversity (RAD) organizing team! Unfortunately, our International Peace Hero—Eric Garris of Antiwar.com—was unable to join us due to COVID-19. It was lovely to see a room full of both familiar and new faces! Photographs by Bruce Lescher.



*Rossmoor Advocates for Diversity Organizing Committee + Members*



*RAD organizing team members Aki Rasmussen and Juanita Owens accept the award on behalf of the group*





*Peace Center Board Member Amneh Ma'bad with longtime friend of the Center Elicha Gastelumendi volunteering at the check-in table*



*Peace Center Board Member Rick Sterling offers a keynote address on behalf of Eric Garris and antiwar.com*



*Many members of the Rossmoor Advocates for Diversity group attended the Awards Dinner in support of the organizing committee!*

# *Saturday, February 19th: San Francisco “Peace in Ukraine” Rally*

Organized in solidarity with the mass gathering in Washington D.C. planned for the same day—this rally in San Francisco demands an immediate end to the senseless war machine. Peace activists will meet at **Embarcadero Plaza at 12PM** where there will be guest speakers, music, and time to gather before marching through the financial district.

From Cynthia Papermaster (CODEPINK): *“Are you concerned about the threat of nuclear war? How about the humongous Pentagon budget, the bloody war in Ukraine, the outrageous profits of Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, and the torture of publisher Julian Assange?”*

*On Feb. 19 we will Rage Against the ubiquitous War Machine peacefully and joyfully. We will make connections between the threat of nuclear war and the war machine supporting and profiting from the senseless conflicts in Ukraine and around the world. We are calling out the war profiteers and merchants of death who are destroying climate, peace, and the mother of us all.*

*Our Rage will end by delivering our demands to the billionaire financier of the war machine, the San Francisco member of Congress”*

For specific information on the SF Event: [tinyurl.com/feb19thsfrally](http://tinyurl.com/feb19thsfrally)

To learn more about the nationwide action please visit: [rageagainstawar.com](http://rageagainstawar.com)



# **RAGE AGAINST THE WAR MACHINE**

ANTI-WAR RALLY: SAN FRANCISCO EMBARCADERO PLAZA

## **FEBRUARY 19**





Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me the *Peace Gazette* by snail mail  e-mail

I request an Annual Membership in the following category:

- ◇ \$50 Basic Membership
- ◇ \$100 Family Membership (2 or more persons)
- ◇ \$20-\$50 Student/Sliding Scale
- ◇ \$100-\$250 Membership Plus
- ◇ \$250-\$500 Supporting Member
- ◇ \$500-\$1,000 Sustaining Member
- ◇ \$1,000-\$2,000 Peace Giver
- ◇ \$2,000 + Visionary

CHECKS payable to *Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center* and mail to **1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette CA 94549**

**CREDIT or DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS:**

I would prefer to make a pledge **Monthly**  **OR Quarterly**  **OR Annually**  in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

If you would like us to handle the processing of any ongoing pledges, please check here .

I hereby authorize the *Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center* to charge my credit/debit card for the above amount.

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Or, you can donate any amount online at [ourpeacecenter.org](http://ourpeacecenter.org)**

## Did you know about our monthly reading group?

Discussion facilitator Magret Nunes is an experienced social justice activist and public high school teacher. She has been organizing meetings on the topic of racism and prejudice throughout the East Bay for several years.

To learn more or to join our discussion group mailing list please email:

[margli@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:margli@ourpeacecenter.org)



**HOW DO WE CULTIVATE ANTI-RACISM?**  
**JOIN WITH US AND FIND OUT!**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 7th**  
**7:00 - 8:30 PM**  
**Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center**

1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette  
(aka Creekside Commons / Our Savior's Lutheran)

The second in our reading group series is the award winning book:

***THE SUM OF US, WHAT RACISM COSTS EVERYONE AND HOW WE CAN PROSPER TOGETHER***, BY HEATHER MCGHEE



Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center  
 1035 Carol Lane  
 Lafayette, CA 94549

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# Membership Survey Enclosed!

As we continue to grow, we want to be in active communication and dialogue with our members! We would love to hear from you.

This survey is also available on our website: [www.ourpeacecenter.org](http://www.ourpeacecenter.org) on the top menu tab. Please feel free to get in touch if you have any trouble accessing this form.



You may also get in touch with us via email: [andrew@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:andrew@ourpeacecenter.org) / [margli@ourpeacecenter.org](mailto:margli@ourpeacecenter.org) or call our office phone: 925 933 7850.

## Contact Information

*Let your voice be heard!*

**President Joseph Biden**  
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
 Washington, DC 20500  
 (202) 456-1111

[www.whitehouse.gov/contact/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/)

**Senator Alex Padilla**  
 B03 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington DC 20510  
 (202) 224-3553  
 (916) 448-2787

**Senator Dianne Feinstein**  
 331 Hart Senate Office Building  
 Washington DC 20510  
 (202) 224-3841  
 (415) 393-0707

**Congressman Mark DeSaulnier**  
 3100 Oak Rd, Ste. 110  
 Walnut Creek, CA 94597  
 (925) 933-2660

**Congressman John Garamendi**  
 1261 Travis Blvd., Ste. 130  
 Fairfield, CA 94533  
 (707) 438-1822

**Congressman Jerry McNerney**  
 4703 Lone Tree Way  
 Antioch, CA 94531  
 (925) 754-0716

**Congressman Mike Thompson**  
 985 Walnut Ave.  
 Vallejo, CA 94592  
 (707) 645-1888

**Congressman Eric Swalwell**  
 5075 Hopyard Rd., Ste. 220  
 Pleasanton, CA 94588  
 (925) 460-5100