



# EP Newsgram

Promoting Cultural Understanding Through Communication

## Empower Peace Building a Worldwide Network

Message from  
Founder,  
Rick Rendon

**“We need to build a network of teachers worldwide committed to exposing their students to this ‘virtual cultural exchange’ at every turn.”**



It’s hard to believe, but this fall marks two years since the creation of Empower Peace. We’ve connected over 4,000 high school students from over 25 countries on six continents, and this is just the beginning!

The Empower Peace mission is to promote cultural relations and understanding through better communication. Our video-conferences and on-line broadcasts have served to connect students in the United States with their peers in the Middle East and from around the world. Our most recent broadcast in May brought students together from New York and Jordan and was nothing short of spectacular, featuring cultural presentations of dance and music.

However, we can not rest on our laurels. We need to continue to build upon the momentum of this awesome program. We must continue to build a foundation of educational, governmental, and corporate support. We need to build a network of teachers worldwide committed to exposing their students to this “virtual cultural exchange” at every turn. We need to secure the support of governmental officials like Dr. Khalid Touqan, Jordan’s Minister of Education, who spoke during our last broadcast, and encourage his colleagues across the world to join in our efforts. We need to find the corporate commitment of companies like Converse, who back up their words with action, so someday the world can truly “Imagine Peace.”

A special thanks to those companies big and small, like communications giant Polycom, who has stepped up to make our video-conferences happen, and to the web design firm of Hunt & Gather, whose dedicated staff help build and maintain our “portal of peace” at: [www.empowerpeace.com](http://www.empowerpeace.com).

As the saying goes, “dare to dream and dare to do.” With your support and help we will continue to dream of a peaceful world and will endeavor to do all we can to empower the next generation to make it so.



Rick Rendon  
Founder

Educators Worldwide - Join Empower Peace TODAY! Log on to: [www.empowerpeace.com](http://www.empowerpeace.com)

## Converse Declares Day of World Peace and Honors Empower Peace

At the Converse worldwide launch of the Chuck Taylor® All Star® Peace Collection, Empower Peace was honored for its strides worldwide in breaking down cultural barriers through communication.

The New York City event included Converse officials, Mos Def, a youth choir from New Jersey, and NY Empower Peace students declaring August 12 a “Day of World Peace.”

Featuring artwork by the late John Lennon, the Peace Chuck launch included the recreation of Lennon’s 1968 balloon release, a rendition of “Imagine” by Mos Def and the choir, and the reading of the “Peace Pledge” from the students.

“Each of us is accountable for peace,” said Jack Boys, Converse chief executive officer. “And as long as there is a need to educate people about their basic human responsi-

bility to pursue peace in our world, a Peace Chuck will permanently be offered. We are doing this because we have in our hands a global icon and blank canvas capable of unifying people in the universal pursuit of what is imaginable and possible: peace.”

Converse will sponsor an Empower Peace awards program to recognize students that embrace the spirit of mutual respect and civility. Students will be nominated by their teachers and an independent panel will aid in the judging and selection process. Winners will be recognized during future broadcasts and included in the “Hall of Fame” section of the web site.

“We are honored to be singled out by a world leader like Converse,” said Wendy Mejia, Empower Peace director. “We look forward to working with Converse to achieve our goal: cultural understanding and world peace.”



EP New York students read their pledge of peace at the Imagine Peace event.

### STUDENTS CAN PRODUCE A “PSA FOR PEACE”

Empower Peace is looking for aspiring video and movie producers to produce a 30 second public service announcement for peace.

We are asking high school students to create their own message of peace for the world to see. The PSAs will be broadcast on local TV stations in your country.

Students should script and videotape a message of exactly 30 seconds promoting mutual respect and cultural relations and encouraging world peace.

Submit your tape to Empower Peace and we will work to have your “PSA for Peace” placed on your local television station. For more information check out the “PSA for Peace” contest at: [www.empowerpeace.com](http://www.empowerpeace.com).

# Empower Peace Conducts Second World Wide Video-Conference Exchange Between Students in Jordan and New York

On May 11, the second Empower Peace video-conference exchange took place between students from Long Beach High School in Long Island, New York, and students from five different schools in Amman, Jordan.

More than 500 students took part in the 90 minute video-conference to openly discuss the importance of promoting peace locally as well as internationally. Another 2000 students viewed the live broadcast via the Empower Peace web site.

Along with the students from New York and Jordan, students from the first Empower Peace video-conference exchange between Boston and

Students in Jordan prepare for the second Empower Peace broadcast.



Bahrain also participated.

Students spoke candidly with one another about their daily lives, cultures and customs. The New York and Jordanians students each produced a four minute video, "A Day in the Life," which chronicled the students' daily lives.



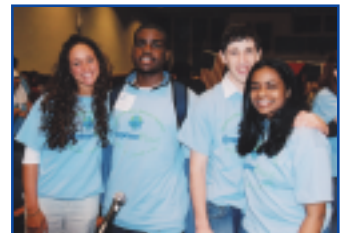
▲ Jordanian Minister of Education Dr. Khalid Touqan addresses the worldwide audience.

The broadcast also featured performances by Arab Idol winner and internationally known singer Diana Karazon, the Long Beach High School Drama Club, the Queen Noor Al Hussein Performing Arts Center, and the NY Battery Dance Company. Jordan's Minister of Education, Dr. Khalid Touqan, spoke from the Jordan site and addressed the importance of promoting world peace.



▲ Painting by students at Long Beach High School Art Department.

"Today was an amazing day," said Michael Richez, Director of Technology and Information Services for the Long Beach Public Schools. "Young people on opposite sides of the world realized all of the things they have in common and developed a genuine understanding that, although their cultures are very different, those differences can be celebrated."



▲ New York student ambassadors (L to R) Esperanza, Alterrel, Alex and Veena.

## My Experience with the Empower Peace Project

By Amani Mustafa

Amer-English Language Teacher, Khawla Secondary School, Kingdom of Bahrain



Participating in a grandiose project such as Empower Peace is a rewarding experience for both students and teachers.

Working in a collaborative setting with peers around the world gives students a wider perspective on issues that concern them and a greater understanding of similarities and differences. Also, the Empower Peace Project gives students the opportunity to make new friends, to represent their countries in a positive way in order to eliminate any stereotypes reinforced by recent world events

and to promote an appreciation for cultural diversity. Finally, participating in the Empower Peace Project has helped my students build personal skills in preparation for future leadership roles, such as self-reliance, team work and communication.

For teachers, the Empower Peace Project develops working relationships with teachers all over the globe. It also allows teachers to discover what their students are capable of doing.

For example, I was impressed to learn that some of my students

were able to edit video films and are aware of other video production techniques.

Overall, the Empower Peace Project is really exciting, innovative, fun and above all educational. My students and I enjoyed preparing for the first worldwide broadcast between Bahrain and Boston students. It was one of the best moments in my life to see how our persistent effort has paid off.

In the end, I'd like to thank everyone in Boston and Bahrain who has helped to make this event a success.

Empower Peace  
44 Bromfield Street, 8th Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108 USA

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