

# Topeka Center for Peace & Justice Pathways to Peace

Spring 2025



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**When:** Saturday, April 26th, from 1pm-3pm

**Where:** J Rock Smokehouse ~ 1003 SE Quincy St.  
Topeka, KS 66612

**Theme:** Catalyst for Peace

Calling all poets, musicians, and spoken word artists!

This open mic welcomes performers of all ages and skill levels to share their original work in a positive and uplifting environment.



We invite you to share pieces that explore:

- How to **advocate for peace**
- What does **peace** mean to you
- How do you **experience peace**
- What actions can we take to **achieve peace**

**How to register:**

**Email** [plattregina@gmail.com](mailto:plattregina@gmail.com) or **register at**

<https://forms.gle/ukEpb3w5xFMSLDGDA>

Topeka Center for Peace and Justice, Inc. on Facebook

*\*Spots will be assigned in the order they are registered*

**Artists Guidelines:**

- All skill levels are welcome!
- Please share an original piece (created by you).
- Keep the language respectful and avoid using profanity and slurs.
- Reply to your confirmation email with the name you would like to be introduced by.

**Remember:** This event will be a positive and uplifting experience for all. We can't wait to hear your voices and celebrate the power of art and peace!

- Regina Platt

## Upcoming Events

- Open Mic Lunch: April 26
- Restorative Kansas 2025: June 26-27
- Peace Camp: July 14-18
- TCPJ Scavenger Hunt for Peace (summer event): TCPJ website and Facebook page will post the date and more details
- TCPJ 40th Anniversary Celebration (Peace Party): October 30



TCPJ Spring 2025



## Letter from Board Chair

The blue skies and blooming flowers of springtime lift my spirits, as does the work of the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice as we leave the cold days of winter behind. After a February Board Retreat, volunteers hit the ground running as they became actively engaged in implementing ideas and plans for 2025.

Each year, TCPJ has incorporated the gifts of staff, board members, and the community in finding new ways to implement peace. This year Regina Platt has taken GirlUp into the schools with some very successful events as TCPJ has partnered with community members to support teenage girls. During March, in collaboration with the Black American Blueprint Collective, “A Catalyst for Peace” event was held at the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library as a way to educate youth and adults about the impact of youth on peacemaking in our world.

This year as we gear up for Peace Camp, TCPJ hopes to invite youth to a Peace Picnic, with activities that will help young people become excited about peace. Those present will be invited to Peace Camp, July 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>, a weeklong immersion into peace for ourselves, others, and the world.

Finally, keep your eyes open for news about the big TCPJ 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration coming up on October 30<sup>th</sup>. This incredible event is being organized by Glenda Washington and will be something you won’t want to miss. Wishing you much peace in April and beyond,

Rev. Donna Gilchrist  
TCPJ Board Chair



## Scavenger Hunt

Be on the lookout this summer for a TCPJ Scavenger Hunt for Peace. Youth across the area are invited to visit designated sites around Topeka. Each site has in some way played a role in creating peace in our city, state or country. A Passport for Peace can be picked up at the TCPJ office toward the end of May. At each site, find the answer to the question(s) listed in your Passport to validate your visit. Once your passport is completed, turn it into the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice office for a chance to win fun prizes. Watch the TCPJ website and Facebook page for upcoming details, including the start of this summer event for youth.

- Donna Gilchrist



## From the Executive Director's Desk:

As the weather warms up, so does our commitment to restorative justice in our community—and we have some exciting news to share! We're proud to announce that we now have an officially approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Topeka Public Schools (USD 501) to bring restorative justice practices to Ross Elementary School, Robinson Middle School, and Avondale Academy.

This is a major step forward in our mission, and we're incredibly grateful to former Topeka Police Chief Bill Cochran for his support in helping make this vision a reality. We look forward to deepening our partnership with the district and making a meaningful impact in the lives of students and families.

We're also entering a critical season: grant writing season. During this time, we plan and secure funding for the programs that will shape our work in the years ahead. While we've been blessed with support in the past, previous funding is never guaranteed, and each new year brings fresh challenges—and opportunities.

Your continued contributions are more important than ever. Whether it's \$25 or \$250, your gift helps us bring restorative justice to schools, support families, and build peace in our community.



### Breaking Bread and Building Peace: TCPJ Lunch Series



I had the pleasure of having lunch with Dr. Robert Kenagy, CEO of Stormont Vail Health—a true leader and visionary in our community. Dr. Kenagy was our keynote speaker at last year's Peace Party, and as he prepares for retirement, I was grateful for the opportunity to sit down and glean wisdom from his incredible journey in leadership.



Over a delicious meal at J Rock Smoked Meats, we shared stories, reflections, and insights on what it means to lead with compassion, strategy, and service. His legacy will continue to inspire, and we're thankful for his contributions to healthcare and community well-being.

Wishing Dr. Kenagy the very best as he enters this next chapter—your impact will be felt for years to come!

I also had a wonderful lunch with my friend and former CEO of the Sunflower Foundation, Billie Hall. Billie is not only an incredible leader, but also a generous soul whose wisdom in the nonprofit world runs deep.

Every time we connect, I walk away with a pocket full of golden nuggets—insights, encouragement, and a renewed sense of purpose. Her legacy in advancing community health and supporting grassroots impact continues to inspire me and so many others.

Grateful for her friendship, mentorship, and the meaningful conversations we always share.





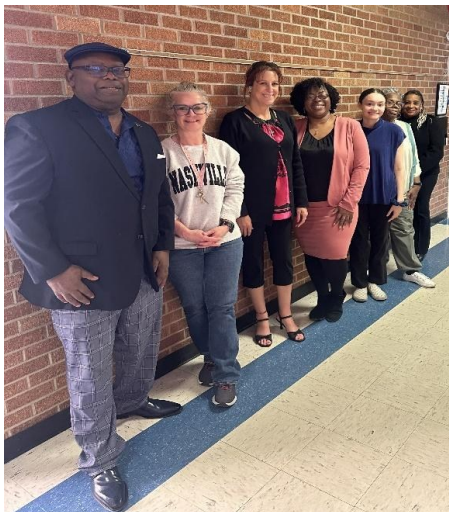
## Exploring New Partnerships for Stronger Families & Youth Support

At The Center for Peace and Justice, we continue to listen and respond to the growing needs of the youth and families we serve. As we deepen our commitment to holistic community care, we recognize that many families are facing additional challenges—particularly around food insecurity, behavioral health, and mental well-being.

That’s why we’re excited about future collaborations with SENT Topeka and The Family Service & Guidance Center. These partnerships represent a powerful step forward in creating more wraparound support for those who need it most.

We recently had the opportunity to tour SENT Topeka’s facility, and we were incredibly impressed by the breadth of services offered—including a well-organized and impactful food bank. A heartfelt thank you to Tricia Sublet for the warm welcome and insightful tour.

Together, we are building bridges of support, compassion, and empowerment for Topeka’s families. More to come!



## The Center for Peace and Justice is Turning 40!

We’re thrilled to celebrate our 40th Anniversary this year—a milestone that marks four decades of impact, advocacy, and community healing.

Leading the charge for this celebration is one of our newest board members, Mrs. Glenda Washington. With her leadership and vision, we’re planning an unforgettable evening!

### **Save the Date**

- **Kay’s Garden at the Topeka Zoo**
- **October 30, 2025**
- **5:30 PM**

We dream big at The Center for Peace and Justice, and this celebration is no exception. We are working to confirm Kansas Governor Laura Kelly as our keynote speaker—stay tuned!

More details to come soon. Mark your calendars and get ready to celebrate with us!

#TCPJ40Years #PeaceInAction

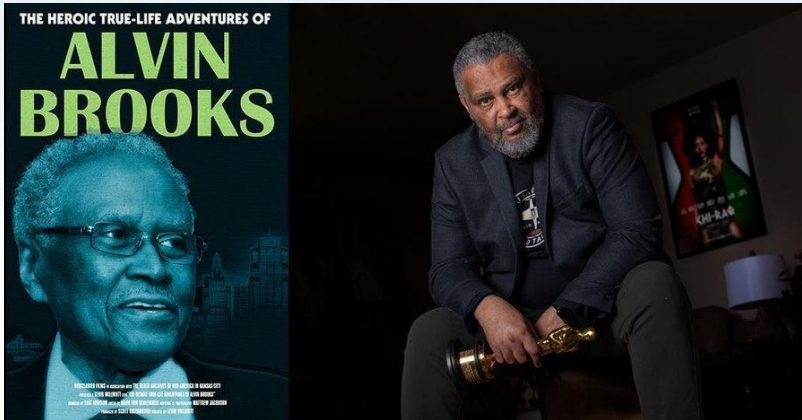
#RestorativeJustice #TopekaStrong



- Carl Frazier



The Heroic True-Life Adventures of Alvin Brooks' Documentary at Washburn University Neese Gray Theater Sponsored by KTWU and Topeka Center for Peace and Justice, Inc.



Director Kevin Willmott presents his documentary about local activist, Alvin Brooks.  
(Photo courtesy of Doug Barrett)

From the visionary mind behind BlackKkKlansman and No Place Like Home, Academy Award-winning filmmaker Kevin Willmott now brings us The Heroic True-Life Adventures of Alvin Brooks, a new documentary about the extraordinary life of a man who has dedicated over six decades to making Kansas City a better place. The film will be shown on Topeka PBS station during the week of Juneteenth.

We are close in finalizing the details with Val Vandersluis, General Manager/Executive Director of KTWU TV station, to bring the legendary Alvin Brooks to Topeka, along with award-winning writer/producer Kevin Willmott, who produced Mr. Brooks' new documentary. There will be an event on May 22, starting with a book-signing by Alvin Brooks at 5:30pm. At 6:00pm, Mr. Brooks and Mr. Willmott will talk on stage about the documentary and answer questions from audience members. We hope this will bring our community out. We need sponsorships and donations. Stay tuned for more information!



Photos: Mr. Alvin Brooks and Pastor Carl Frazier; Pastor Carl Frazier and Kevin Willmott

- Carl Frazier

**Restorative Kansas 2025**

June 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice will sponsor the 2025 Restorative Kansas Conference in Topeka. Pathways to Peace will be the theme for this year's conference. Each year Restorative Kansas draws restorative practitioners from across the state to attend workshops, network, and dialogue with experts in the field. Please save the dates! More information will come soon!

-Donna Gilchrist



## #GIRLUP Summit

TCPJ remains open to serving our community through innovation and partnerships. This continues to be a daily movement of honor. The Topeka Center for Peace and Justice collaborated with Robinson Middle School, Oneheart, and other community partners to host a "#GirlUp Summit" for 39 female students, facilitated by 20 female community partners. The summit was organized in response to a rise in bullying reports and poor hygiene among the female student population. The program addressed these issues through education, provisions, and relationship building.

The #GirlUp Summit focused on empowering young girls to embrace their true selves. Interactive breakout sessions, led by community partners, covered topics such as personal hygiene, hair care, skincare routines, nutrition, and fostering inner beauty through self-love and confidence. The sessions also incorporated positive affirmations to boost daily confidence, and participants and volunteers pledged to support each other in thought, word, and action.

The #GirlUp experience was further enhanced by light refreshments provided by Chef Hall and LHEAT. Swag bags filled with personal care products, hair accessories, and other items that reinforced the event's message of self-love and empowerment were provided by the Topeka Chapter of Links, Heavenly Creations, and others.

The Topeka Center for Peace and Justice continues to serve the community through innovation and partnerships.



## Spotlight of Restorative Leadership Circles at Avondale Academy

TCPJ partners and community welcome Zihindula Vincent Mulegwa. He is a co-facilitator and circle keeper of Restorative Leadership Circles at Avondale Academy, which was added to our list of schools under the MOU with Topeka 501 School District. As a father, minister, attorney, World Civility Ambassador, advocate, and restorative practitioner, he brings a vast level of experience to the team.



- Regina Platt



## TCPJ 40th Anniversary: Silent Auction

This fall the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice (TCPJ) will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The party will take place October 30<sup>th</sup> at the Kay McFarland Japanese Garden and Venue in Topeka. The theme of “Pathways to Peace” will explore the impact of the Center for Peace and Justice in Topeka.

Currently TCPJ offers restorative practices and mediations in many different ways in our area. This summer, the Center will host a Restorative Kansas Conference in Topeka, drawing practitioners from across the state. Mediations through TCPJ offer an alternative to incarceration for youth who are held accountable for their actions, yet also receive support as they move into the future. Safe places are being provided in our schools where kids can be real about what’s going on in their lives and learn effective methods for dealing with stress. Young leaders are being developed as youth learn skills that will serve themselves and their communities. Kids and youth are learning about peace in TCPJ Peace Camps, and adults from a variety of backgrounds are letting their voices be heard in community meetings.

All of this good work needs your support. Would you be willing to make a donation of items that could be sold in the silent auction at 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event? Specifically, we’d be interested in anything that might fit in with the Pathways to Peace theme. We envision artwork, gardening tools or lawn equipment, paving stones, yard art, benches/tables, plants, trees, and fountains, as well as stops one might make for refreshment or entertainment when following a road or pathway.

Here are some other ideas: gift cards, gift certificates, weekend stays, jewelry or wearable art, sporting event tickets, restaurant gift cards, a cooking class or dinner in your venue or home, flowers, a getaway for fishing or just to relax, lawn care, limo services, spa package, beauty or barber shop services.

Of course, these lists are only examples. Please use your imagination as you think of what you might have to offer. We’d be glad to pick up your donation. Please call the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice at (785) 329-6349 to make arrangements.

Thanks in advance for supporting the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice, an organization that is changing the way our young people think and encouraging many pathways to a more peaceful world.

### Catalyst for Peace

Participants at the February 23<sup>rd</sup> Catalyst for Peace event expressed a wide range of emotions after viewing a film documenting the courage of African American teenagers during the Civil Rights Movement. What followed was an engaging intergenerational discussion related to the collaborative leadership of the teens, their parents, and their community as they supported each other in standing up for civil rights. Reports on the actions of these brave youth who faced fire hoses, dogs, and jail eventually made their way to the President of the United States, who signed the Civil Rights Act into law in 1964. Regina Platt, Restorative Justice Manager from the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice, and Sherri Camp, Project Director for the Black American Blueprint Collective, provided co-leadership for the event, skillfully guiding participants through thought-provoking dialogue as they made sure all voices were heard.



- Donna Gilchrist