October 2, 2018

Dear 8th Grade Team Leaders for English Language Arts and Social Studies:

Does your school want to prevent violence, reduce aggression and bullying? Given the recent school tragedies, educators are striving to build a more peaceful classroom environment.

The URI Center for Nonviolence & Peace Studies is pleased to invite all 8th grade students in your classes to participate in our annual Rhode Island 8th Grade Gandhi Essay Contest 2018-2019. Our purpose is to encourage youth statewide to learn more about how the principles of peace and nonviolence can actively make their schools, and communities safer. Over the past eight years more than 1,300 8th graders have submitted essays and received recognition from URI. Principals, teachers, and students who have participated in past Gandhi Essay Contests report improved academics, stronger writing skills, and more positive student attitudes and behaviors.

The 750-word essay invites students to reflect and write about Gandhi’s message of nonviolence and relate it to their schools and personal lives. The essay aligns with the Common Core Standards to assist you in helping your students demonstrate proficiency.

Submission deadline is Wednesday, January 30, 2019. Students writing the most impressive essays receive cash prizes and all finalists will be recognized at an award ceremony to be held in May. We invite each teacher to select the three best essays in each of your classes to submit through our online portal or by mail.

Guidelines and Resources can be found on the Contest website: web.uri.edu/gandhiessay/

We ask your assistance in promoting this project:

1. **ENCOURAGE** students to participate in the Gandhi Essay Contest. Many teachers promote the research and study of Gandhi and nonviolence through assignments and classroom contests.

2. **ANNOUNCE** the contest to other English Language Arts and Social Studies 8th grade teachers in the school.

We appreciate your assistance and hope the essay contest will help to create a safer, more peaceful learning environment for all students in your school. If you have questions, feel free to contact our Center by phone 401-874-2875 or email gandhiessay@etal.uri.edu.

In Peace,

Paul Bueno de Mesquita, PhD
Professor and Director

2017-2018 Gandhi Essay Finalists