

## Parkview students get a lesson in conflict resolution

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— Curt Wells stood in front of a class filled with eighth-grade boys at Parkview Middle School and embarked on a different kind of lesson: Peace.

Wells, program director with the Peace Learning Center, is hoping to teach the students about peace by informing them about valuable character traits and conflict resolution techniques.

Greater Clark County Schools paid the company with grants to come to the corporation's three middle schools and reach out to selected students.

On Wednesday, Wells started the six-week program with a new group of students at Parkview. He began by telling them what to expect and having students play a group juggling game, where they made a circle and threw three balls to each person once with a goal of not dropping them. Though after multiple tries they weren't successful, students said they already learned more about working together.

"It was exciting, because we did a bunch of stuff and nobody was arguing or anything," 13-year-old Robert Brown said.

"It was fun," Hunter Ballard, 13, said. "We got to mess around and not get in trouble."

The two said they are looking forward to learning new conflict resolution techniques.

"Definitely," Ballard said of wanting to learn the techniques. "So we will know how to handle what goes on and [how to] handle the bigger issues."

On Wednesday, the students learned about trustworthiness. Later, they will learn about good citizenship, respect, responsibility and more.

Once this six-week program is complete, a group of students who actively participated will get to travel to Columbus for a camp. There, students will use the team-building skills they learned to play games that simulate those seen on the television show "Survivor."

Wells told the students that the lessons learned in the classroom can help to mold their lives.

"If you can build good character, you're probably going to have a terrific life," he told the class.

About 200 students are participating in the Peace Learning Center at Parkview. The students are divided into three groups: One male, one female and the other is mixed gender.

River Valley and Charlestown middle schools also are participating in the program. Wells said he does some work at Jeffersonville High School, too, reviewing lessons with students who have gone through the program.

### What is the Peace Learning Center?

- Peace Learning Center, or PLC, is an educational institution teaching peace-building and conflict resolution skills to youth and adults. The center demonstrates safe and common ways to deal with conflict and differences.

The Indianapolis-based organization has reached more than 100,000 youth and adults since it started in 1997.

### Getting results

- Completed evaluations of Peace Education and Peace Learning Camp that showed over 88 percent of participants learned at least three new ways to manage conflicts.
- Decreased school suspensions by 68 percent in 12 schools with specialized peace services.
- 83 percent of teachers report witnessing their students using skills learned at Peace Learning Center.
- 71 percent of teachers report a reduction of fouls in their classroom (bossing, blaming, making excuses, name calling, etc.) six to eight weeks after their students attended Peace Education.

- For more information, visit [www.peacelearningcenter.org](http://www.peacelearningcenter.org).  
— Peace Learning Center

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#### Photos



Parkview Middle School eighth-graders, from left, Austin Hamlin, Jay Brown, Robert Brown and Brett Pait played a juggling game emphasizing cooperation with their Peace Learning Center group. Staff photo by C.E. Branham



Curt Wells, program director with the Peace Learning Center, is hoping to teach the students about peace by informing them about valuable character traits and conflict resolution techniques. Staff photo by C.E. Branham