

Silence for Nonviolence Launch meeting notes

(notes organized by topic.. Be sure to check out the “Help wanted” section at the end!)

Silence for Nonviolence as an organization

Though we have not formed as an official “Non-profit corporation” yet, the name is reserved with the State of Washington. We discussed the articles of incorporation, and the following points that will help keep the organization focused on our mission:

1) No Politics + No Religion = All Politics + All Religions

To reach as many people as possible, Silence for NonViolence must remain a Non-political and Non-religious organization. To do this, we must welcome and recruit people from all political and religious persuasions.

One suggestion to ensure diversity within the organization is if our members and volunteers commit to enrolling people and organizations with which they normally would not agree.\

2) Limit discussions to items directly related to Silence for Nonviolence

This is key, because in most regions (including Seattle), certain political, philosophical and religious paradigms tend to pervade. Our goal is for EVERYONE to participate! Such discussions, which could alienate some people, are a major risk to that goal.

3) Avoid political statements of any kind

The goal of Silence for Nonviolence is to bring consciousness of nonviolent conflict to each and every individual. Our approach is from the ground up. Though it may seem counter-intuitive, our organization will not make direct political statements, including the opposition of specific currently waged wars. Obviously, we will not support them, but the emotions and histories used to rationalize conflicts run much deeper in many individuals than any 5 second snippet we could get on the news. To oppose a conflict some people feel is “needed” will only cost us their much needed participation.

Avoiding political statements also means we will need to be very cautious of what people and organizations with which we align Silence for Nonviolence. If we think it could help to get support from one group, then we must also seek the support of any opposing groups..

We summed up this last section with the following quote by Lao Tzu (500’ish BC)

"If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.

If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.

If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.

If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart."

Execution

The official time each week for our moment of silence will be **Fridays at 1:42PM.**

Why?

1:42 - Well, since our Logo will be sign language for “shhh” “4” “peace”, and if you look at your hands as you sign these, it looks like a 1 a 4 and a 2, hence 1:42PM in each time zone. We thought one minute where the whole world is silent might be more powerful, but the logistics would be a nightmare (people are always sleeping somewhere), and with one simple message everywhere it will be much easier for people to remember.

Friday - It will be on Fridays because both September 11 (our National “Launch” date) and October 2nd (Our Global Launch date, Gandhi’s birthday and World Peace Day) both land on a Friday this year.

When promoting Silence for NonViolence, this will be a “suggested” time and date, and not a hard rule, in order to make it easier on companies and schools to cooperate.

Schools

We also realized a need for a different approach for elementary schools (and possibly middle school?). Since most younger children may not understand many of the quotes, we will design simple questions to help teachers create a short discussion around each weeks message.

Promoting Silence for NonViolence

Logo

As described earlier, our main logo will be sign language for “shhh” “4” “peace”.

Maybe the combined hand movement could become a funky new hand signal greeting or something? I would love to see an ad with influential people making that gesture! :)

Swag

Yup, we will design and sell T-shirts, mugs, hats, etc. Suggestions are welcome!

Targets to enroll in participation

Besides schools, businesses and restaurants, we had some fantastic suggestions:

- Sporting events (little league, minor league AND major league)
- Running events (5Ks and marathons, etc)
- Concerts!
- Political Rallies (picture pro-life/pro-choice uniting for a moment to honor nonviolence!)
- Seattle Pride (it’s coming up soon!)
- Fremont Fair and Solstice Parade (it’s even sooner)
- Create little speakeasy’ish moments of silence around the city
- Starbucks and other national chains!
 - (1:42PM on Fridays all Starbucks hold a moment of silence for nonviolence... they look good, and we get the message to TONS of people)

Other Marketing and Promotional ideas

More Fantastic ideas from the meeting:

- Keep track of total “minutes of silence”, come up with a goal for “minutes of silence” by a certain time, then create a meter or thermometer to show progress

- Create a way for people to pledge a certain number of minutes each week (i.e. a manager could pledge to have her 25 employees participate, thus she would pledge 25 minutes a week). Get people active and committed to signing people up!
- buttons, stickers, etc. that say “I did a moment of silence” or “I do a moment of silence”.. (need to figure out the right wording, but you get the idea).
- Create icon or symbol so companies/groups/schools/etc can advertise that they participate (advertising for us, good company image for them)
- On September 11th (national launch date), or October 2nd (global launch date), I (or we) could take a vow to be silent until we reach some goal of total minutes. (Joel called with this idea after the meeting... thanks!)

Fundraising

Silence for Nonviolence is now registered with the fundraising branch of the State of Washington. We are allowed to raise up to \$20K, and none of that money can go toward anyone’s salary. This was the quickest and easiest way to get started. It can be changed pretty easily.

Cover each state!

A fantastic point was brought up that we should aim to raise money from people in every state as soon as possible. This will help create legitimacy for the organization and our name for any copyright, or other legal concerns.

Question we need to answer: Do we need to register in each state to receive donations from people in that state?

Online Donations

We agreed that on-line donations will be the quickest and most efficient way to build donation funds. Current plan is to start with paypal (quick & easy), then figure out a better answer once the expenses become an issue.

On-line donations can be anonymous, but if someone gives us their information, we can send them a sticker or something. It was suggested to look at how Obama raised money, since his campaign was so successful at generating tons of small donations in a short time.

Other areas for fundraising

- Business sponsorships
- Business matching programs (may need to become a federal 501.3(c) for this)
- Grants
- Fellowships (I would jump on the opportunity to take this on as a research project if any college/university wants to pay me to do it! Anyone who knows people in sociology, political science, or any related departments, please let me know!)

HELP WANTED!

Here is a list of some of the help we can use in various areas (or, you may know of a way you can help that we didn't even think of!):

Non-profit organization

The board can meet as often or rarely as the board decides when we create our articles of incorporation, and these meetings can be done by phone or in person. We need three people to step up for the following positions:

- Chairman of the Board
- Secretary
- Treasurer (would be great to find an interested accountant)
- Other positions can be defined in the articles of incorporation if desired...

Promoting Silence for Nonviolence

Help convince any of the following to participate (either by talking with them, or provide me or another volunteer with the contact info so we can talk to them):

- Political activist organizations (pro-life/pro-choice, gay marriage/DOMA, etc..)
- Starbucks/Boeing/Microsoft/Google/Adobe/whoever you work for!/etc
- Stadium Managers/Sports Teams/Concert managers/any other major events?
- 5K run/walks, marathons, and any other event with many people.
- Bumbershoot/Film festivals/etc..

Marketing & PR

- Need help creating flyers, T-shirts, hats, and other graphic work
- Help us get a story in a local paper, or TV or Radio broadcast!
- Do you know how we can get free advertising?
- Do you want to help create an event for us (maybe biznik/etc)?

Website Help

- Help us figure out a way to have people pledge and track minutes of silence
- Help us create a bulletin board to discuss thoughts from each week's moment of silence
- Create a button for people to be able to donate (we will open a separate bank account)
- Help us figure out and improve how we broadcast the message each week!
- Do you have any other suggestions, or can you help improve the site in other ways?

Volunteer Recruiting and Coordination

- Recruit and manage volunteers on a regional level, then national, then global.

Fundraising

- Work with companies to sponsor us and/or match donations from their employees
- Do you know how to research grants? or write grants? help! :)
- Fellowships.... Do you know anyone in sociology, political science, or other related field? Would they be interested in a project related to Silence for Nonviolence?

First Moment of Silence

This was the quote we used for our first moment of silence:

Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him. - Martin Luther King, Jr.