

AGAPE



FINDING HOPE



ISSUE 07
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Hi Friends!

Welcome to our December issue of Agape. We've covered a lot of topics this year: from thinking about "What to Do About Guns" to learning how to be better neighbors.

When there are a lot of big and scary things happening in the world around us, one thing I like to practice is looking for hope.

I name the beautiful things around me, I practice taking deep breathes, or I listen to my favorite song. I find hope in the people around me, who are working to build a better world. I even find hope when I think about everyone who is inspired by these magazines that we create!

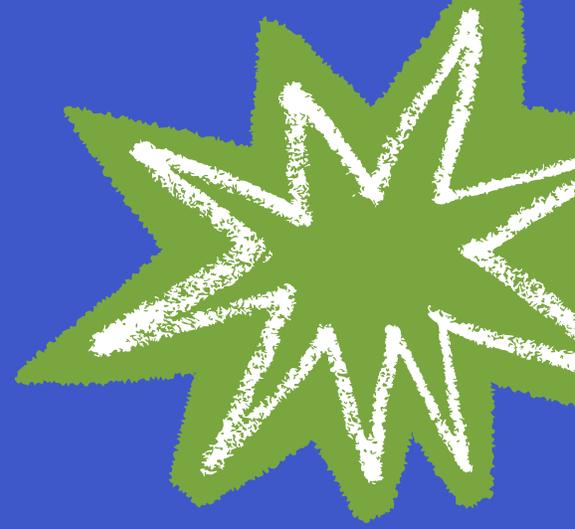
As we enter the time of year where we think about everything that has happened and dream about what we want the world to look like in the coming years, may we all hold onto the things that bring us hope!

Peace, Miriam

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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UNCLE ART'S HOPE

By Amy

Isaiah 9:6

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his
shoulders.*

*And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*



SOMETHING TO DO:

When you are with a grandparent, aunt, or an adult who is really important to you, ask them if you can ask some questions.

Here are the questions:

- 1 WHAT WAS THE HARDEST THING YOU HAVE HAD TO DO?**
- 2 HOW DID YOU GET THROUGH IT?**
- 3 DID YOU FEEL LIKE GOD WAS WITH YOU?**

As a young girl, my favorite uncle was Uncle Art. Not only did he know how to trim my bangs exactly as I asked, but he let me hang out with him.

In all weather, he would go outside and lean against the fender of a very old classic car he owned. I liked to go out, too. I would lean my back up against the fender and mimic him. He was just calm and quiet.

He was thinking about things he couldn't talk about.

When Uncle Art grew very old, he began to relive a very hard time in his life. It was as if it were happening all over again inside of him. He had served in World War II as a soldier. He experienced terrible things that made his heart sad.

When he came back home after the war, he attended a Church of the Brethren where he learned about peacemaking and the way of Jesus. He never told me about the awful things, but his actions showed me that the way of Jesus and peacemaking were important parts of his life.

He was kind, funny, gentle, and a very hard worker. I believe, because of the way he lived and spoke, that **his hope was in God – and in God’s deep, healing love that gets us through the hard times.**

We can simplify Isaiah 9:6 with these words: For to us a child is born... and he will be called....Prince of Peace.

During Advent and Christmastime, we turn to the birth of Jesus as our hope. **The Prince of Peace comes as a way to live through the hard times, and is a living hope full of love.**



LIFE CAN BE HARD, BUT HOPE IN THE HARD TIMES CAN LOOK LIKE:

- ★ When we are sad, we hope someone will notice, and we get a hug with a caring word, and then we can create, sing and dance.
- ★ When our parents are worried, we hope worry won’t last long, and then we make popcorn and eat it all together on the couch.
- ★ When we need to make sense of war, hate, angry neighbors, we can hope it away with our fingers crossed, or we can **hope with action that counters the heaviness with love and kindness.**



FINDING HOPE

A poem by Anesu

There once was a boy named Billy,
who lived near a great big lake.
He had a dream to catch a fish
before the end of summer break.

He owned a bright red and white fishing rod,
a silver hook, and big blue bucket of worms.
He had learnt all about fish from his school,
and wanted to say he'd seen one at the start of term.



He borrowed a brown boat, painted "HOPE" on the side.
Soon enough, whenever there was a sunny day,
Billy would run to the lake to search far and wide.
He would patiently lay on his back,
sometimes just floating in one place for a while,
sometimes daydreaming like drifting clouds,
sometimes humming in a guppy "glup glup" sort of style.



There was once a fish named Finny,
who lived in a great big lake.
He had a dream to catch a glimpse of a human
before the end of the warm water's break.
He had a tail that was bright red and white,
with silver scales and big blue eyes.
He had learnt all about humans from his school,
and wanted to say he'd seen one in its full size.

One day he swam up,
following some worms just floating by.
He found a big brown fish
with a strange guppy humming on top of it looking up at the sky
He swam closer to the surface,
and made tiny bubbles "glup glup" like the song,
and was suddenly starring face to face
with what he'd hoped to see all along.

Billy was surprised to hear his song
going glup glup on the side of his boat.
He looked over and found himself starring
at a red and white-tailed fish with a silver coat.



At first, Billy tried to catch him,
but Finny was faster and would always swim away.
He would only come back to the surface
when Billy's glup glup song would play.
Soon enough, whenever there was a sunny day,
Billy and Finny would meet to sing.
Each day filled with feelings of hope
that seeing each other would bring.



At the end of the summer
when the warm water began to cool,
Billy and Finny didn't see each other much anymore
as they both went back to school.



Billy had fun telling the story of how he caught a fish with a song.
Finny enjoyed telling his friends the tale
about a human who could sing along.
But the best parts of both their stories,
was the hope that brought them together.
Although they came from different parts of the world,
their differences helped them find something they would both cherish forever.



POETRY ACTIVITY

WRITE YOUR OWN ACROSTIC POEM



There are many different ways to write poems, but one of my favorite types is called an **Acrostic**.

In an acrostic poem you write a word vertically (up and down), and then you add a horizontal (across) word or phrase for each letter of your vertical word.

Here's an example:

HOPE IS AN

OVEN FULL OF GOODIES

PRETTY SNOW OUTSIDE AND

EVERYONE I LOVE TOGETHER.

Now, write your own!

H

O

P

E

KINGIAN NONVIOLENCE

PRINCIPLE 6

By Marie

HAVE YOU EVER STARTED
SOMETHING THAT
SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE?

- Maybe a Lego set that had too many pieces *and they were mostly gray*?
- Or a piano piece with sooo many notes on the page *and most were sixteenth notes*?
- Or maybe you went to run a mile but sprinted the first lap and had to walk on the last one?

Working for peace and justice can feel like this sometimes (or most of the time). We know that there is a better way to live together, we can imagine it, we might even be able to see examples of it; but we just aren't sure if we'll get there.

This is when finding hope is part of the strategy. Hope means doing the work. We have hope because you choose to treat people better and others are choosing to do this as well. We find hope when we meet, learn, and act with others.

Dr. Martin Luther King said that **“The universe is on the side of justice.”** He talked about all the world's religions calling us toward justice. It is a faith principle.



Perhaps your parent or coach or teacher regularly reminds you that you'll be able to accomplish the hard things you are trying. That “practice makes possible.” That's also what we do as peacemakers, we practice to make possible.

**WE WORK HARD BECAUSE
WE HAVE FAITH. WE FIND HOPE
WITH THE PEOPLE WHO ARE
WORKING WITH US, AND
THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED
BEFORE US, AND WITH THOSE
WHO CHEER US ON.**

HOLDING ON TO HOPE:

OUR FAMILY'S STORY OF RESILIENCE

By Nubwa, Deitrick, Damian and Stephanie

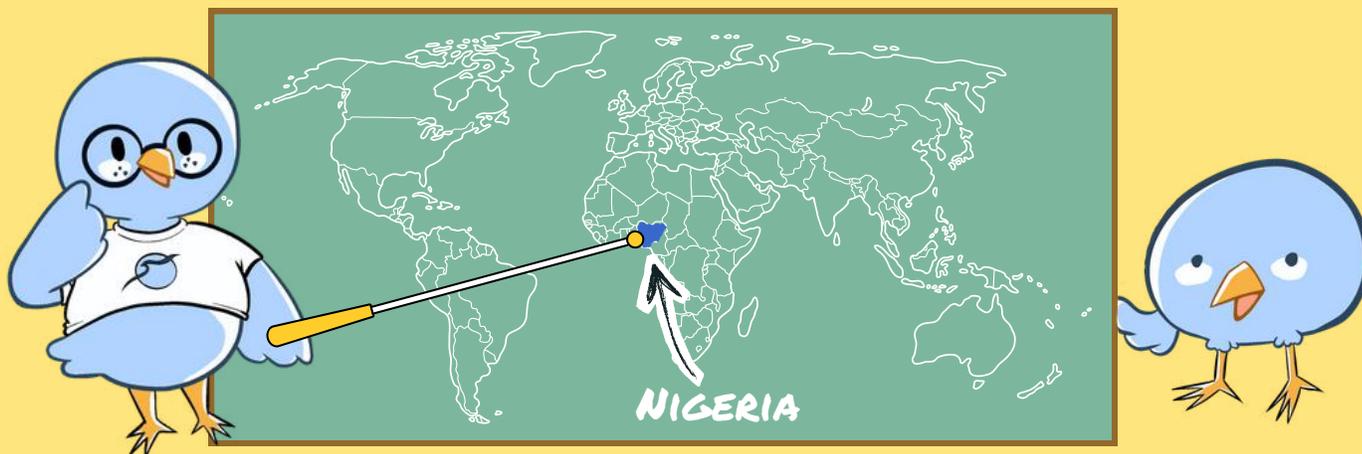
Have you ever had a day that felt scary, but you **still found the strength to keep going?** That's called resilience!



Our family experienced days like that, and it taught us **what it really means to be resilient.** We have had different episodes of insecurities and civil unrest in our community due to a man-made war.

Despite the unrest and insecurities, we have lived through it and are exploring educational opportunities across the borders of our small town and country to the United States.

On December 4th, 2021, in the city of *Maiduguri, Borno State: Nigeria*, where we lived, we woke up to loud booms in the distance. At first, the sounds seemed far away, like a storm rumbling. But soon they grew louder and closer.



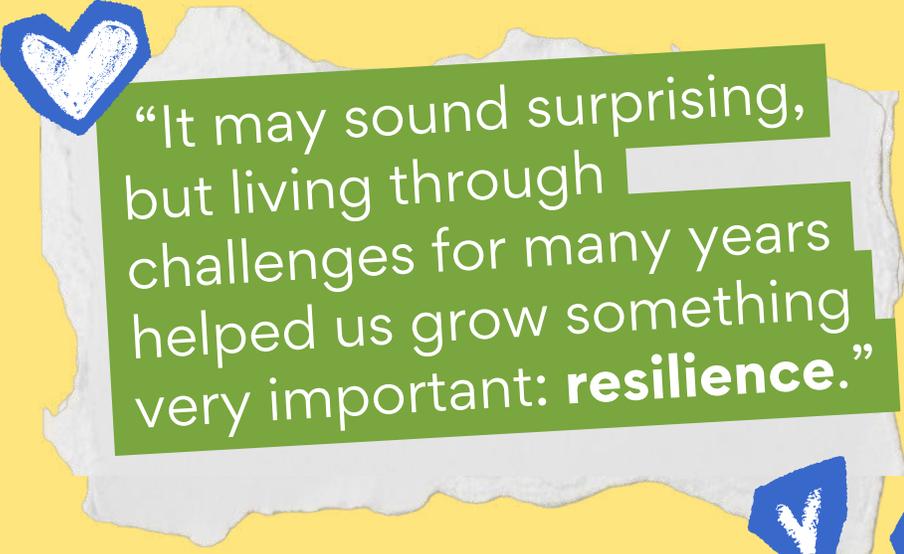
My baby girl was only two weeks old, and my boys rushed into my room because they felt safer with their parents. We all held onto each other tightly. I reminded them that even in hard times, God has always watched over us.

Before I could finish speaking, there was a huge explosion just two blocks away. Our brick house shook so hard that it felt like the ground was trembling beneath us. For a moment, we were all scared.

But even then, we stayed together, hugging closely, praying quietly, and trusting that God was with us. It was unfortunate that an explosive was launched and it destroyed our neighbor's home, it was so sad!

A few hours later, after the noise faded and the city became calm again, we didn't know exactly what to do, but we knew one thing: **life had to go on.**

So together we cooked a meal, ate as a family, cleaned the house, told stories, and even laughed.



“It may sound surprising, but living through challenges for many years helped us grow something very important: **resilience.**”

Resilience means being able to stand strong even when things are tough. It means trusting that God can help us through any storm. It means choosing to hope over fear.

Every morning after that day and even now we wake up grateful for life. We thank God for keeping us safe and giving us another chance to grow, to smile, and to love one another.

We hope our story reminds you that **no matter what you face, you are stronger than you think**, and God is always with you. You can rise again, just like we did.



resilience

GO & DO

Hey friends! Sometimes when I feel really overwhelmed, I find it helpful to **refocus my attention**. A friend of mine who is incredibly wise taught me how to use this activity as a tool to pause and turn my attention to the world around me!

Before I start my countdown, I try to take a deep breath or two. The act of breathing can calm you down! Now: 5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

5 What are 5 things you see?

Are they beautiful? Interesting? Unique? Have you ever seen something like them before?

4 What are 4 things you can feel?

What does the ground feel like underneath you? Can you feel your clothes on your skin? Are you holding anything? What do the tips of your fingers feel like against each other?

3 What are 3 things you can hear?

Are there cars nearby? Do you hear nature? Is there a clock ticking or a bird chirping?

2 What are 2 things you can smell?

Are there fresh flowers? Does your hair smell like your shampoos? Is someone cooking nearby? Do you smell a campfire or fireplace?

1 What is 1 thing you can taste?

Is there a piece of sour candy you can eat? Does your water taste like anything? Do you still taste the toothpaste you brushed your teeth with that morning?

I often find that when I finish my countdown I already feel less anxious. Sometimes, I get distracted and don't finish my countdown at all, or sometimes I count different things. This is just one list of senses you can focus on, can you think of other ways to refocus?

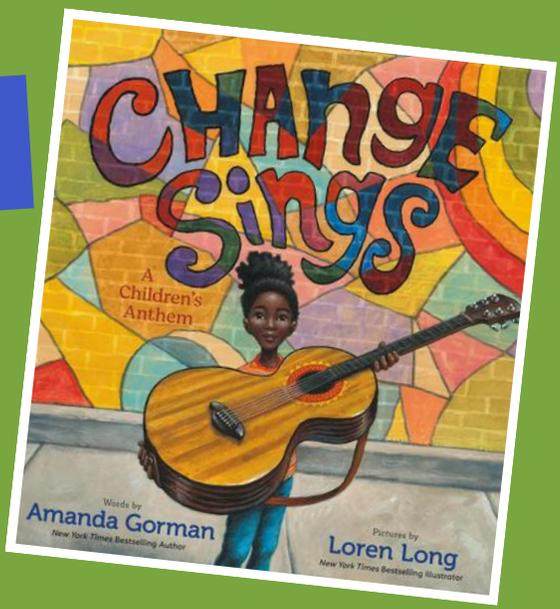
Whether you use this list or you create your own, I hope you remind yourself that you are resilient!

BOOK NOOK

CHANGE SINGS

By Amanda Gorman

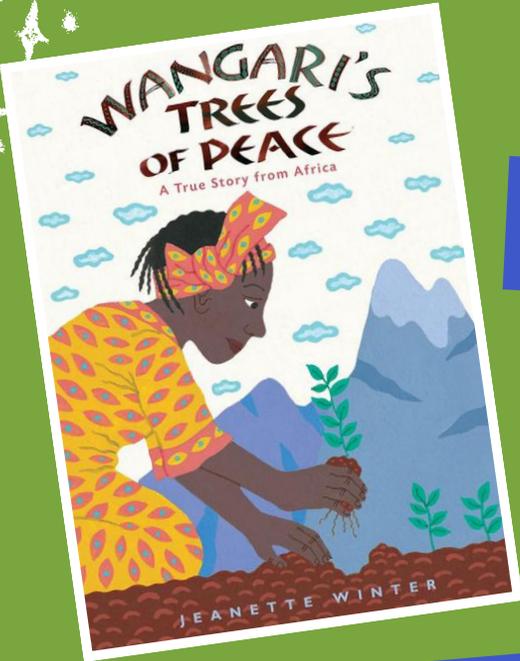
Reading Ages 3-8



WANGARI'S TREES OF PEACE

By Jeanette Winter

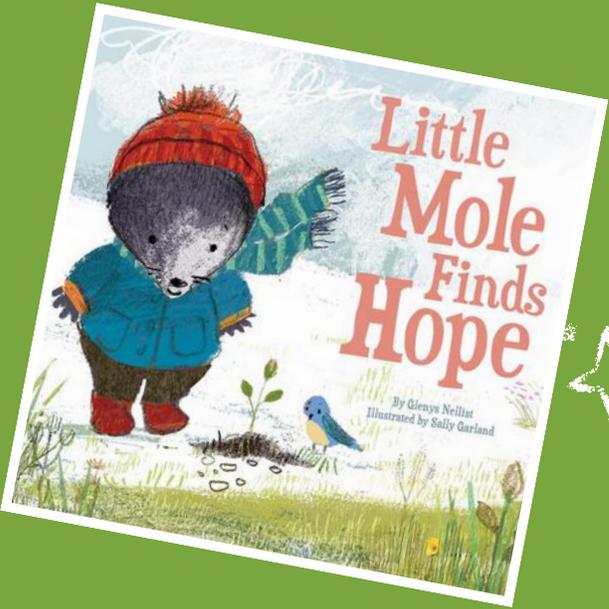
Reading Ages 3-9



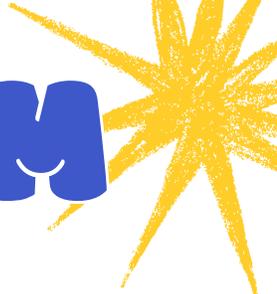
LITTLE MOLE FINDS HOPE

By Glenys Nellist

Reading Ages 3-8



MEET OUR TEAM



MIRIAM

Miriam Erbaugh is the Children and Youth Peace Formation Organizer for On Earth Peace (OEP) and the Editor-in-Chief of Agape Magazine. Outside of her internship, Miriam is a student at Manchester University. She loves to cook, hike, read, and spend time with her friends and family!



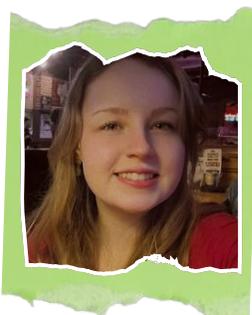
MARIE & MORGAINE

Marie Benner-Rhoades is one of the co-Directors at On Earth Peace and focuses on youth and young adult peace formation. She appreciates the opportunity to have in-depth conversations with her kids based on the articles. Morgaine, age 12, is our child editor. Her favorite part of the magazine is Orby & Sib!



AMY

Amy is a pastor and spiritual director. She loves to think about God, write, and experience happiness with her two dogs.



HANNAH

Hannah Groff is an illustrator and works as a social media organizer for OEP. She works as a preschool teacher and attends West Chester University. Hannah loves art, outdoors, cooking, and playing the piano.



SYDNEY

Sydney is Communications Support for OEP. For several years, she has worked as an educator for children in various programs and schools. In her free time, she enjoys cafe-hopping, traveling and learn new languages.



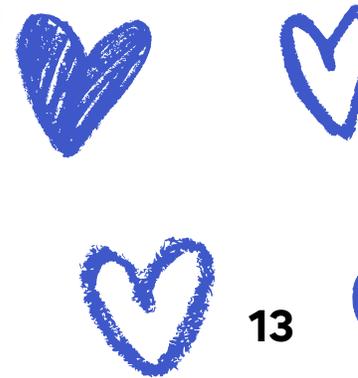
ANESU

Anesu is the Community Organizing Support for OEP. A certified level 1 KNV trainer, he has been with OEP for the past 3 years. He has recently completed his Masters in Social Work. He is a father, a husband, a spoken word poet, and fantasy novel lover.

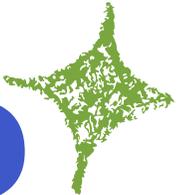


NUBWA, DEITRICK, DAMIAN AND STEPHANIE

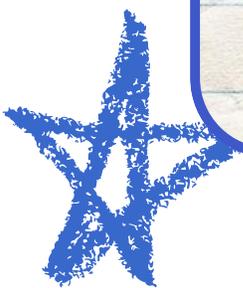
Nubwa is a Nigerian graduate student and advocate. As a parent, Nubwa draws inspiration from raising her three children (Deitrick, Damian, and Stephanie), who continue to demonstrate strength, adaptability, and hope in the face of change. Together, they navigate new environments with courage, learning and growing through shared experiences.



CITATIONS AND DESIGN CREDITS



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AGGAPE

**Thank you for such
a fun reading year!
See you next year!!**

**We wish you a
happy holiday
season!**

