

# on the MOW

# A PLEA FOR



"My generation has made a mess of this world because we didn't pay attention to you (young) people. You don't have to do that."

Arun Gandhi

# PEACE

Arun Gandhi speaks at McQuaid Jesuit High School, Rochester, on April 28 about world peace and the part the students play in it. The speaker is the grandson of the Hindu leader Mohandas K. "Mahatma" Gandhi, assassinated in 1948 following years of working for India's self-rule.

The shock was still fresh in people's minds from a deadly shooting rampage by two teens in Colorado April 20. An ugly ethnic war continued to rage in eastern Europe.

Against the backdrop of these tragedies, the grandson of one of history's most noted nonviolence advocates came to Rochester last week, imploring youths to turn the tide toward peace.

STORY BY  
MIKE LATONA

Arun Gandhi, grandson of Hindu leader and social reformer Mohandas K. "Mahatma" Gandhi, spoke bluntly about our violent culture. He noted that the 1900s have yielded more murders than any other century.

"My generation has made a mess of this world," he said, "because we didn't pay attention to you (young) people. You don't have to do that."

Gandhi made that statement at the 10th annual Education for Peace Conference, held April 27 at Rochester Institute of Technology. The event drew approximately 1,200 students from 40 elementary, middle and high schools in the Rochester area.

Gandhi said that anger is a natural emotion, but gives way to violence when not controlled properly.

"I learned from grandfather that we cannot have peace unless we learn to live nonviolence," said Gandhi, founder and director of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence in Memphis, Tenn. His grandfather, subject of the 1982 movie *Gandhi*, is renowned for convincing Hindu followers to overcome British military oppression by *not* physically retaliating.

Arun Gandhi told the peace conference at RIT that many young people who had otherwise led good lives are in jail because a fit of anger spurred them to commit a violent crime.

"Eighty-five percent of all cases of violence begin because of anger," Gandhi remarked. "We just lose it, and when we lose our minds we do something that changes the course of our lives completely."

One day after the Education for Peace Conference, Gandhi repeated his stance on nonviolence during an assembly at McQuaid Jesuit High School. Though he said anger can be useful in spurring us to action, it must always be held in check.

Angry people should resist the urge to seek revenge, he said, and instead find a solution to the problem that caused the anger. Otherwise, "if you don't solve the issue, it will happen again."

Gandhi also noted that lashing out against people does not fix the problem but instead "instills anger in the victim."

Uncontrolled anger, Gandhi said, drove Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris to kill 12 students and one teacher — before they



Greg Benenati/Photo Intern

Tom DeBlase of McQuaid Jesuit High School thanks Arun Gandhi for speaking April 28 at McQuaid and asks him about his current campaign for peace.

took their own lives — in Littleton, Colo. According to reports, the teens told their victims during the massacre at Columbine High School they were retaliating for having been taunted.

"In a moment of madness, they destroyed themselves and destroyed their whole school," Gandhi said.

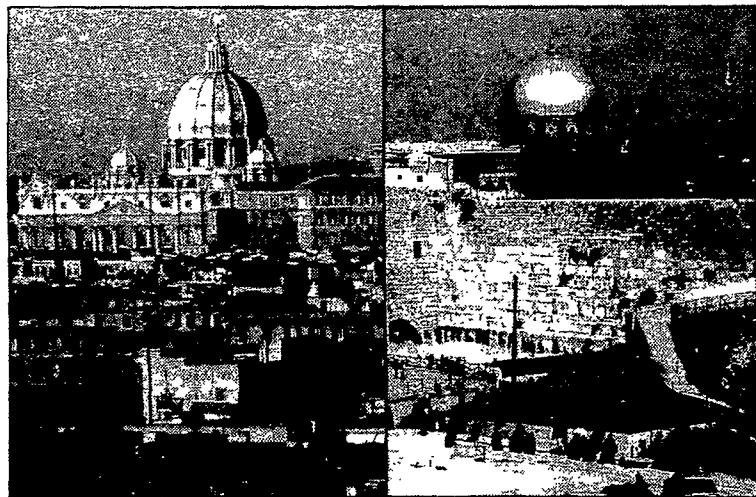
Trey Stone and Joel Buckman, both McQuaid Jesuit freshmen, served as "peace ambassador" delegates at the April 27 conference and also attended Gandhi's lecture at their own school. Joel said Gandhi's words helped him realize that violence can be curbed if teens learn peaceful attitudes in everyday life.

"The little things — avoiding fights and confrontations," said Joel, 15, a parishioner at St. Joseph's Church in Penfield. One way to make this possible, he said, is to try to understand your opponent's anger, rather than be consumed with your own.

Trey said he hopes the Littleton tragedy will compel teens everywhere to be more alert when their peers appear on the verge of violence.

"We're going to have to, in order to prevent this from happening again," remarked Trey, 15. "Now, when we see the little warning signs that these people give, we can learn to listen to them when they reach out with their problems — take it to heart, not just laugh it off."

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