



# Hands on Productions

Enriching Communication Through Art and Entertainment

## The Handshake Connection

Fall 2006 Newsletter

featuring RESPECT

*Vermont Teacher of the Year Kathleen Sullivan sees the importance of respect in the classroom. When asked,*

**“What’s the secret to teaching?” she replied: “Respect.”**

**“Kids will respond to you if they feel respected.”**

– Burlington Free Press September 20th, 2006

## The Handshake Project™ builds RESPECT by



*Building respect, one handshake at a time*

- ✓ Helping people overcome personal boundaries and reach out
- ✓ Connecting groups in a spirit of collaboration
- ✓ Encouraging people to participate in a group creative process where each person’s contribution is equally valuable

## How Have Others Used The Handshake Project™?

### School Kickoff:

#### Georgia Middle School, Georgia VT

At the beginning of the 2006/2007 school year, Georgia Middle School used The Handshake Project™, a Vermont National Education Association partner, to welcome students in the spirit of fun and collaboration. During orientation, students worked and laughed together while creating sculptures of shaking hands with one another. These became tangible symbols that represent the school year’s “Reaching Out” theme.

The Handshake Project™ proved to be a successful kick-off to the year. As reported in the Georgia Middle School August 23 letter to parents and guardians, students learned “that the handshake is a symbol of tolerance and acceptance and is an act of cooperation”.



*Students “Reach Out” to one another at Georgia Middle School*

**For details** about how The Handshake Project™ can work in your classroom and for funding opportunities, call Maggie Sherman of Hands On Productions at **877-244-2321** or go to <http://www.handsonproduct.com/handshake/educator.htm>



*All the hands of Connecting Youth Mentoring*

## Mentoring: Connecting Youth Mentoring, Williston, VT

Williston Central School celebrated their end of the 2005/2006 year mentoring program with a cookout and The Handshake Project™. Mentors and mentees sealed their partnership with a multi-colored sculpture of their handshake. Each participant received a ribbon to write down what each one learned from the other. The student mentee took home the sculpture, and the grown-up mentor took home the ribbons.

For more information about Connecting Youth Mentoring, check out their website at [www.seewhy.info](http://www.seewhy.info).

## School Celebration: Milton Peace Week, Milton, VT

In celebration of Peace Week 2006 at Milton Middle School, 6th grade students explored community arts involvement using The Handshake Project™. After students experienced the process, they, in turn, led selected elementary classes and school administrators through the same process. Sculptures were a rainbow of colors to represent the participants' diverse backgrounds, and ribbons were added so participants could write their intentions for peace within themselves, within the school, and within the Milton community.

What the teachers said about this project:

*"The project was easy enough to achieve, but still maintained a realistic learning curve." ... "They really enjoyed it, especially the "helping other adults" part." ... "This project was a great one to get people to interact and communicate." ... "The students I have aren't good direction takers; but they did this effectively." ... "You can be the teacher and the learner."*



*Finding common ground with fun*

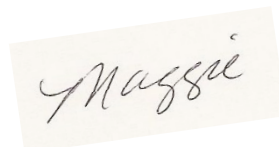
## In Service: Barash Mediation, Craftsbury, VT

The Handshake Project™ partnered with Phoebe Barash of Barash Mediation to promote team building at the Craftsbury Staff In-Service entitled *Coming Together* during the 2004/2005 school year. Ribbons were added to our handshake sculptures, and participants wrote on the ribbons their personal goals for working with their teams. The teams then gathered and participants shared their personal goals and found where there were matches.

When asked what worked, participants had this to say:

*"The handshake/loved it, creative, intimate, fun, art is the best way to bring people together." ... "Fun activity; was a bonding time for me. My time spent with other teachers here usually doesn't lend itself to relaxing and fun activity. Even though the fun activities have an element of seriousness for the sake of the students." ... "Working with people we don't usually work with." ... "physically connecting with everyone" ... "Great opener with the handshake activity"*

For more information about the services offered by Barash Mediation Services, contact Phoebe Barash at [pbarash@sover.net](mailto:pbarash@sover.net) or 802-453-7815



The Handshake Project™ is a Partner with the VT National Education Association <http://www.vtnea.org/partners.htm>  
Maggie Sherman is a Juried Artist with the Vermont Arts Council  
[http://www.vermontartsdirectorv.org/directory/listing.php?id=00493&display\\_name=Maggie Sherman](http://www.vermontartsdirectorv.org/directory/listing.php?id=00493&display_name=Maggie%20Sherman)