



## A Time for Compassion — and Courage

As 2025 began, Mattie's Peace Foundation embraced the theme, ***"A Time for Compassion."***

Early on, we launched a new interactive website and partnered with the Muhammad Ali Foundation to promote compassion as an *attitude that leads to action*.

As spring arrived, we were busy designing new educational materials on compassion and peace; exploring Mattie's *"For Our World"* passage line by line; and facilitating in-person and virtual *Mama Peace Chat* sessions, *Pathways2Peace* workshops, and collaborative *Partners4Peace* meetings.

During the summer, we celebrated what would have been Mattie's 35th birthday with an international *Toast2Peace on Peace Day*. Hundreds who gathered in Maryland and on Prince Edward Island were joined by people in 20 countries online, who all chose to *"raise a glass or grateful hands and connect with purpose"* – together, for peace.

As we moved into autumn, we re-launched our Peace Club and Peace Certification programs with new community forums – that will be facilitated by Peace Guides who participated in our Train-the-Trainer P2P workshop.

In every season, we have connected youth and adults around the globe with Mattie's timeless and universal messages – that hope is real, and that peace grows through purposeful, compassionate choices.

But with every passing season this year, we have also recognized that global challenges are intensifying.

As we begin looking forward to 2026, our new theme – ***"A Time for Courage"*** – will build on the spirit of compassion.

People need compassion now more than ever – and now more than ever, compassion needs courage.

It takes courage to choose positivity, to believe in humanity's goodness, and to commit to compassionate action – especially in challenging times that interrupt personal and community peace.

Our 2026 planning includes new materials and interactive resources, a Foundation podcast series, developing *Mama Peace Master Classes*, and advancing our *Mattie's Virtual Museum* project.

We'll also strengthen our Foundation by diversifying funding and expanding both our Board of Directors and our Coordinators and Ambassador teams to sustain our *Pathways2Peace* mission.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who supported us in 2025 with time, talent, and treasure. Every grant, every sponsor, every partner, and every volunteer matters — to us, and to the many lives touched by our work.

And we thank you in advance for continuing to support our work, and for choosing compassion, and courage — and for believing in peace.

**Peace matters, and so do you.**

Jeni Stepanek, PhD ("Mama Peace" - President & Founding Chair)

Stacey MacKinnon, PhD (Vice President) Jim "JJ" Jackson (Secretary)

Timothy Bellavia, PhD (Director) Christopher Meyers (Director) Noah Striker (Director)



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**Peace. Purpose. Play.**



## **Mattie Stepanek Peace Foundation Strategic Plan for Years 2026-2030**

### **Our Mission**

**Continue Mattie's work of cultivating "pathways to peace" by engaging, equipping, and empowering youth and adults as they:**

- **explore and choose peace,**
- **embrace and follow purpose, and**
- **enjoy shared conversation and play.**

### **Goal 1 → Ensure Foundation Infrastructure and Stability**

- **Objective 1** – Strengthen Board of Directors & Core Team membership.
- **Objective 2** – Diversify funding and income resources to ensure fiscal stability.
- **Objective 3** – Seek endowment benefactor(s) for long-term sustainability

### **Goal 2 → Engage & Equip Individuals & Communities**

- **Objective 1** – Continue creating meaningful educational and recreational materials and activities.
- **Objective 2** – Enhance social media activities and increase virtual interaction opportunities.
- **Objective 3** – Advance partnerships and replicate Foundation activities in more locations.

### **Goal 3 → Expand Capabilities & Outreach**

- **Objective 1** – Develop and launch an audio/video "Peace Matters" podcast series.
- **Objective 2** – Develop a "Peace Matters" Master Class program.
- **Objective 3** – Develop the "Mattie's Virtual Peace Museum" Project.

***"Peace is possible... choose peace!"***  
Mattie J.T. Stepanek

Learn more about the late teen poet and peace ambassador Mattie J.T. Stepanek:  
[www.MattiesPeaceFoundation.org](http://www.MattiesPeaceFoundation.org)

# Mattie Stepanek Peace Foundation

## Mission, Vision, Values, Mottos

### Our Mission

**To continue Mattie's work of cultivating "pathways to peace" by engaging and empowering youth and adults as they:**

- ♥ explore and choose peace,
- ♥ embrace and follow purpose, and
- ♥ enjoy shared conversation and play.

### Our Vision

- ♥ **Inspire** → Connect ongoing generations with Mattie's messages of hope and peace.
- ♥ **Inform** → Spread understanding of what peace is and how it can begin and grow.
- ♥ **Nurture** → Encourage awareness of "Heartsongs" – or purpose within and with others.
- ♥ **Educate** → Support youth and adults in practicing peaceful characteristics and choices.
- ♥ **Motivate** → Move individuals and communities from attitude to action with peace.
- ♥ **Connect** → Create opportunities for people to celebrate peace in community.
- ♥ **Cultivate** → Facilitate conversations that promote inner and community peace and wellness.

### Our Values

- ♥ **Peace:** Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of harmony and cooperation. Violence – which is unhealthy – interrupts peace and does not resolve issues. Mattie's Foundation helps people explore "pathways to peace" so that we can be with others – in kind, nonjudgmental, support ways – even if we disagree with others.
- ♥ **Purpose:** Purpose within and with others – or "Heartsongs" – correlates with contentment, gratitude, and success and promotes feelings of validation and belonging. Regardless of challenges and differences, we need to be "okay" with who and how we are and with who and how others are – as unique individuals in the "mosaic of humanity."
- ♥ **Play:** Play is a global aspect of human development and well-being that fosters growth and creativity, social connections and happiness, resilience, and collaboration. Coping with challenges and "storms" – and celebrating life – personally and in community – strengthens our ability to envision and shape a peaceful and purposeful future.

### Our Mottos

"We have, we are a mosaic of gifts - to nurture, to offer, to accept."

- Mattie J.T. Stepanek

"Think gently, speak gently, live gently, and the world will be touched gently by the essence of your existence."

- Mattie J.T. Stepanek

**"Remember to play after every storm!"**

- Mattie J.T. Stepanek

### Our Pathways2Peace®

#### Mattie's Three Choices for Peace®

Reflect... make peace an attitude – want it. Be a peace seeker!

Respond... make peace a habit – live it. Be a peace maker!

Reach out... make peace a reality – share it. Be a peace bringer!



Learn more about Mattie J.T. Stepanek and Mattie's Peace Foundation  
[www.MattiesPeaceFoundation.org](http://www.MattiesPeaceFoundation.org)

**The Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation is a volunteer-based 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization created in 2005 to continue the work of the late teen poet and peace activist, Mattie J.T. Stepanek.**

During Mattie's "almost 14 years," he penned seven NY Times Bestselling books of *Heartsongs* poetry and *Just Peace* essays and served as an ambassador for many peace and disability organizations. Mattie died in 2004 due to complications of a rare neuromuscular disease, but his timeless and universal messages continue to inspire millions of local and global neighbors.

**We engage, educate, and empower youth and adults to:**

- **explore and choose peace,**
- **embrace and follow purpose, and**
- **enjoy shared conversation and play.**

We develop and offer educational and recreational resources, programs, activities, and events that encourage peacemaking as a deliberate choice for individuals and for our world.

**Our Pathways2Peace program includes (a few samples):**

- **Resources** – books, Mattie's Message cards, Peace Tips Guide, interaction website, social media, Mama Peace Posts, podcast (in development)...
- **Activities** – Mama Peace Chats, For Our World Campaign, Kindness Campaign, #PeaceRocks, December Prayer Project, Virtual/Global Peace Trees...
- **Events** – Peace Day celebrations, Toast2Peace gatherings (in person and virtual), Heartsongs2Mosaics workshops, webinars, Peace Matters Masterclass...
- **Clubs & Networks** – Chat & "VIP" club levels and Certification networks – various benefits



**Mattie's Peace Foundation is a volunteer-based non-profit organization.**

We really on the generosity of local and global neighbors who choose to share their "time, talent, or treasure" with us to further our mission of continuing Mattie's "pathways to peace."

**Our strengths:**

- **Loyalty** – a dedicated Core Team of Peace Certified Directors, Coordinators, Ambassadors
- **Perseverance** – 20+ years of continuing Mattie's peace mission even during challenging times
- **Resilience** – team members who weather storms and programs with sustained global relevance
- **Creativity** – transform Mattie's messages into meaningful programs that support diverse groups
- **Integrity** – high-profile reputation endorsements and excellent Program Expense Ratio ratings

**Our needs:**

- **Fiscal Diversity/Support** – shifting from transactional fundraising to sustainable income streams
- **Accounting Support** – a Treasurer with ability to ensure legal compliance and a sound budget
- **Administrative Support** – assistance with correspondence and other organizational tasks
- **Social Media** – consistent, engaging sharing of Mattie's messages and Foundation programs
- **Technical Support** – maintaining website and developing podcast and other virtual activities

**Do you have a strength and skill that meets our needs?  
We would love to hear from you!**

[www.MattiesPeaceFoundation.org](http://www.MattiesPeaceFoundation.org) [INFO@MattiesPeaceFoundation.org](mailto:INFO@MattiesPeaceFoundation.org)



The Mattie Stepanek Peace Foundation  
OVERVIEW & HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE OFFER  
**Pathways2Peace (P2P)**



**PROGRAMS & NETWORKS – free or for fee**

- **Mattie's Peace Network** – free registry – receive e-Peace Updates
- **Peace Clubs** – fee – (“Chat” & “VIP” levels with various benefits)
- **Peace Certification Program & Network** – fee – includes mentored journey
- **Partners4Peace (P4P)** – collaborative activities (businesses & groups – mutual benefits)
- **Foundation Peace Ambassadors** – representative activities with mutual benefits

**ACTIVITIES – free**

- **For Our World Campaign** – fall outreach – virtual
- **December Prayer Project** – early winter outreach – virtual
- **Peace Trees** – early spring outreach – virtual
- **Poetry Contests** – spring/summer outreach – virtual
- **Kindness Campaign** – summer outreach – virtual
- **#MakePeaceTheNews** – year-round – virtual
- **#PeaceRocks** – year-round – in-person (or independent activity)  
#MeghanRocks – February // #KindnessDragonRocks – June-August

**EVENTS – free or for fee**

**Club members & Certification participants receive 2-6 free passes (varies per level)**

- **Mama Peace Chats** – many topics virtual and in-person – for youth & adults
- **Morning Coffee Chats** – many topics – virtual gatherings
- **Afternoon Tea Chats** – many topics – virtual gatherings
- **Book Chats** – about Jeni's book and/or about Mattie's books – virtual & in-person
- **Poetry Chats** – about specific Mattie poems / themes – virtual and in-person
- **Toast2Peace** – virtual and in-person (several times a year in various locations or Zoom)
- **Keynotes** – Mama Peace / Dr. Jeni Stepanek – virtual and in-person
- **School (or Group / Community) Visits** – virtual and in-person
- **Poetry Contests** – Foundation events in partnership with My Hero Foundation - virtual
- **Heartsongs2Mosaics** – workshops & sessions – virtual and in-person
- **Pathways2Peace** – workshops & sessions – virtual and in-person
- **P2P Train-the-Trainer Workshops** – various topics – virtual and in-person
- **Peace Certification** – virtual and in-person – mentored journey in a peace theme
- **Peace Day - #PartyWithAPurpose** (in person only / multiple locations)
- **P4P Activities** – co-hosted events in various locations – virtual and in-person

**RESOURCES – free & fee items (Club & Certification folks get some freebies or discounts)**

- **Website** – inspiration, information, videos, photos, “In the Room” interactive
- **e-Peace Update** (free monthly mailer – information & inspiration)
- **Books** (Mattie's & Jeni's – for sale)
- **Mattie's Message Cards** – about 30 topical/thematic peace cards; 3 new ones each year
- **Peace Tips Guide** – for Peace Certification Journey
- **Peace Tips Supplements** – for Peace Certification and/or workshops
- **Teacher Tips & Lesson Plans** – for Peace Certification participants & Club members
- **Poetry Links & Templates** – for Peace Certification participants & Club members
- **Peace Activity Certificates** – available on request for participation in seasonal activities
- **Peace Plan Template** – for Peace Certification participants
- **Mama Peace Messages** – social media, e-Peace Updates, virtual chats
- **Foundation social media platforms** – Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram
- **Mama Peace Posts** – social media, e-Peace Updates, virtual chats
- **Foundation Podcast** – hosted by Mama Peace – in development
- **“Peace Matters” Master Class** – in development – will link to Peace Certification Program
- **Peace Shop** – shirts, cups, message cards, quote boxes, posters, bookmarks, rocks, etc...