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### What Can We Learn from Mahatma Gandhi-ji?

The famous lead singer of a band called U2, Bono once said that “love is bigger than anything in its way.” When Bono says “anything,” he could be referring to the hate that festers in this world, sadness and depression, anger and envy, or all of the above. Mahatma Gandhi understood that the philosophy of love is the universal conqueror of “anything,” which is why he has had so much influence throughout the world. Through Gandhi’s pacifist actions intended solely to keep the peace, our newest generations can learn that maintaining peace should be a priority, at school, at home, and in our communities.

Headlines such as “Fifth-grader dies after physical altercation with another student,” “School Shooting Leaves Long Trail of Trauma,” and “Raped 10-Year-Old Denied Abortion” have been rampant in recent years. These stories show that our youngest generations are impacted by violence at rates faster than ever before. According to the ASCD, The National League of Cities found that ten percent of teachers and nearly one-fourth of students in public schools say that they have been the victim of a violent act in school (Johnson & Johnson). With our children and young adults being victims of such heinous crimes, we must incorporate the peaceful philosophies espoused by Gandhi-ji into our society to prevent violence from being so prevalent in our future. Gandhi-ji urged all to accept differences, to love and live while

maintaining our beliefs--peacefully. He demonstrated and taught through his own non-violent actions, and his efforts were not in vain. They led to a free India, one rid of the clutches of Britain, and his philosophy was adopted by other leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King and the Dalai Lama, both of whom have similarly helped prevent violence. We too need to incorporate non-violence at school, at home, and in our neighborhoods--through education, activism, and personal contribution. As a product of the Howard County school system, while learning about Gandhi-ji's actions, I do not recall learning about how Gandhi's values could be applied to today's world. In school, we are never taught to be nice to one another and keep peace with strangers and peers alike. If we were to include these lessons into our education, younger students will grow up understanding how unnecessary and cruel violence is, which will hopefully lead to a more sympathetic and kind-hearted community. Other ways we can spread this philosophy include activism (e.g., Peace Clubs and free conflict resolution workshops) and personal contribution (e.g., sharing Gandhi-ji's philosophy). When we encourage others and ourselves to be kinder and more trusting, we lessen the possibility of violence and fear in our midst.

Gandhi-ji is a figure that shouldn't be forgotten in the past, but part of our present and our future. His philosophy of non-violence and his loving nature should serve as an example for all and forever--through a conscious focus on peace-building in school, and personal activism that extends beyond.