



**Be Peace. Choose Peace. Create Peace.**

## PEACE THROUGH ACTION EVENT INFORMATION SHEET

<b>Event Title</b>	<b>Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Cultivating Essential Skills for Life and Wellbeing</b>
<b>Date, Time, Location</b>	04/25/2023, 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm ET
<b>Event Webpage</b>	Here
<b>Event Description</b>	

*Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Cultivating Essential Skills for Life and Wellbeing* explored strategies to support the developmental needs of youth and adults and equipped parents, caretakers, and others with the knowledge about practices used to cultivate emotional awareness and build resilience among youth. The event welcomed two youth-focused organizations to review a range of programs, activities, and experiences related to SEL best practices so participants could leave with tips to model positive coping strategies and lead youth in navigating the social and emotional aspects of their lives. Through this interactive event, participants also developed a better understanding of SEL as an array of activities and methods that foster emotional growth and promote a thriving future.

### Presenter Biographies

**Hunter Thompson**, of Saint Petersburg, Florida, is the co-founder of [SailFuture Academy](#), an education provider doing revolutionary work at the intersection of SEL, foster care, project-based learning, and youth development. SailFuture is an innovative foster care agency, and private school based in St. Petersburg, Florida. They serve children and families across seven different programs throughout the Saint Petersburg community. SailFuture's comprehensive continuum of care is designed to serve Florida's highest-risk teens in foster care, meeting many, if not all, of their needs under one umbrella. The academy is a co-ed tuition-free entrepreneurship high school that teaches students how to think critically and solve real world problems. In tandem with this academic focus, SailFuture provides mental health services and residential programs licensed by the Department of Children and Families rooted in the transformative and therapeutic power of integrated school, therapy, job training, and 60-day international sailing journeys. These sailing expeditions function as adventure-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) capsules that support youth leadership and development.

**Maryanna Lanham**, of Hughesville, Maryland, is the Executive Director of the [Dream Queen Foundation](#). With a strong focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), the Dream Queen Foundation operates programs for women and girls. Their Gals Lead Certified Facilitator Academy trains women to run Gals Lead, their signature teen mentorship program, which teaches teenage girls the importance of responsibility and leadership. The Foundation's Women's Leadership Community was also formed to provide a unique gathering place for purpose-driven women. Maryanna became a facilitator and helped launch the program's site at Leonardtown High School during the 2019-2020 school year. As an active volunteer and frequent public speaker, Maryanna recognizes the value of strong communities. She is a member of the Southern Maryland Women's League, St. Mary's Business Partners, the Calvert Interagency Council, St. Mary's Behavioral Health Action Team, and is an alumnus of Leadership Southern Maryland, class of

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2023. She wrote a chapter for the book *The Extraordinary Makeover: Hidden Expressions of the Every Day Woman* and was profiled in the 2022 and 2023 issues of *Women to Watch*. She has also been featured in several local newspapers for the work she is doing in the community.

[Chris Walonski](#), of Saint Petersburg, Florida, is the director of programs and partnerships development and delivery with [Peace Through Action USA](#). Chris is responsible for designing instruction in civic engagement and social engagement concepts and practices; writing and editing educational and promotional materials; planning and delivering educational activities; implementing performance management procedures; and engaging with organizations and networks aligned with Peace Through Action's mission. Chris's programmatic work has engaged a broad range of community intervention strategies and performance-based teaching methods. Prior to joining Peace Through Action USA, Chris served as a program researcher and professor of public speaking at East Tennessee State University. In this capacity, Chris married his passion for project development with the power of personal narrative to help produce a campus-wide sexual consent training program. Chris' love for crafting educational experiences has taken him from public schools in Thailand to the Amazon rainforest of Peru. Upon returning to the United States as a program manager for the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), Chris designed and delivered a bilingual training program that incorporated an array of community partnerships serving multicultural and multilingual youth. Chris has served as an AmeriCorps member through Teach For America's Colorado Corps. Chris holds a Master of Arts in communication and storytelling studies from East Tennessee State University. As an avid learner, Chris has completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) and holds a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) certification from Cambridge University. Chris is a grateful recipient of the Hemera Foundation's Fellowship for Contemplative Education and is an eager student of Buddhist meditation. In his personal time, Chris has toured the U.S. as a spoken word artist and National Poetry Slam champion.

## Learning Resources

- Event Webpage
- Event Presentation
- Event Recording
- Explore Peace Through Action USA's [Peaceful Leaders Youth Program](#) including year-round clubs, community arts projects, and a weeklong youth leadership summer intensive.
- Learn more about [SailFuture Academy's](#) amazing work with SEL programs and adventure-based sailing expeditions.
- Survey resources from the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#) with real-world applications for educators, caretakers, and community leaders.
- Watch this presentation from Trish Shaffer, the Coordinator for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) discussing the practice and value of social and emotional learning [video](#) (10:49).
- Expand your knowledge base with this [Beginner's Guide to Social-Emotional Learning for Adults](#).
- For educators, consider using one or more of these [SEL Resources for the Classroom](#).

## Resources and Services in Calvert County, Maryland



- Connect with the [Dream Queen Foundation](#) to engage in their activities supporting women and girls through SEL activities.
- Review Calvert County Public Schools' [Parent Toolkit](#) to support youth development at home.
- Implement SEL practices and connect with other parent groups, moms clubs, and support groups with this list of [resources](#) for Southern Maryland.