

Donnalynn Scillieri, M.A.

Prior to being a co-founder of Peace in Action, Professor Donnalynn Scillieri conducted a city-wide audit of the New York City public school system, with the purpose of finding funding to implement arts education for at-risk youth. The audit was done in connection with the Town Hall Theatre/Times Square, and the objective was to entwine learning through the arts with mathematics, history, and English classes to help students continue on to trade school or higher education.

Professor Scillieri had been researching and addressing issues of racism and gender discrimination since 2010. Her body of work is extensive and she was recognized and awarded by Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center along with Toni Morrison. In 2004, prior to her work with issues of race and diversity, she presented a Paterson, NJ Gang And Violence Awareness Safety Program together with James Avigliano, the former Prosecutor for Passaic County. The objective was to make parents/guardians aware of the signs their children may have become involved with gangs, how to prevent that involvement and where to find help.

Professor Scillieri has deep experience working with the New Jersey municipalities of Paterson, Union City, Harrison, Passaic, and Newark to mentor children of gang members, gifted students, at-risk youth, and parolees. Since 2002, Professor Scillieri has been appointed to and consulted for the Wayne Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse (NJ). She created professional training workshops and collaborated with law enforcement, EMT, and Straight and Narrow based in Paterson. Professor Scillieri designed and implemented the “Reality Tour: Day in A Life of an Addict” workshop for parents/guardians and their middle school children based in Wayne. The program addressed 900 attendees per session.

Professor Scillieri has been a longtime supporter and volunteer for Be the Change New Jersey, a “non-profit is dedicated to community service and activism projects that help

promote peace and non-violence in urban neighborhoods.” Her activities include homelessness relief, creating peace gardens and playgrounds while addressing non-school hours and food scarcity. She has been able to collect furnishings for families’ first homes and recognized their holiday needs.

Professor Scillieri served on the board of the NJ Coalition to End Domestic Violence and as an ally headed the LGBT Task Force. Alongside the Prosecutor and other members of the prosecutor’s office, Professor Scillieri provided training on domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking awareness and prevention. With Prosecutor Kevin Wronko, she was engaged in gender-based violence workshops, trainings and grant writing in diverse communities. These programs were designed to help meet the cultural needs of the victims as they sheltered in safe houses, often with children. Since 2008, she has been on DVRT and SART and responded with law enforcement to advocate for victims. She has collected and sent or gone underground to bring material supplies (clothing, toiletries, toys, bedding...) to survivors of domestic violence and their children. Professor Scillieri has been able to bring volunteers with her to provide arts and crafts, parties, and sporting events to the children with tea and coffee time visits with the women in the shelter.

When the Super Bowl came to New Jersey in 2014, Professor Scillieri attended workshops with Governor Christie’s office, the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and Women’s Center representatives to create legislation to protect and rescue victims as well as raise awareness and prevent corruption. The resulting legislation, the Human Trafficking Prevention, Protection, and Treatment Act, was signed into law on May 6, 2013.