

Project G

Bringing the story of Hiroshima & Nagasaki to life



Manchester is a Vice President of the international Mayors for Peace organization. It was established in 1982 in response to the atomic bombing attack of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6th August 1945. The movement supports global negotiations towards the elimination of nuclear weapons by 2020.



On 5th November 2014 – the 34th Anniversary of Manchester’s ‘Nuclear Free City’ declaration – a formal ceremony was held with the Lord Mayor of Manchester to celebrate Manchester’s commitment, where the Mayor of Hiroshima donated a number of Ginkgo Tree seeds to the city, marking the launch of ‘Project G’.



In 2015 Project G led to six primary schools - Birchfield's, St. Bernard's, Heald Place, St. Margaret Mary's, Webster and Manley Park – to learn the story of the atomic bombings. It encouraged Manchester children to be creative and innovative and explain how nature can bring new hope and restore life even after the disastrous events in 1945, conveying an overarching message of resilience and peace.



The entries that came in were overwhelming, 240 individual pieces were submitted, demonstrating a wide range of art and poetry, some even utilising traditional Japanese art techniques. The winners were shortlisted, consisting of 3 entries from each school – the standard was just too high! The winning entries were exhibited on the 70th Anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bombing, at a special event held at the Manchester Museum, alongside the ‘Living Worlds – Peace’ exhibition.



For the 70th anniversary event, The Lord Mayor of Manchester headed a civic commemoration on the 6 August 2015, along with councillors, MEPs, faith and community groups, university students, Project G pupils and contributors, and even one of the Ginkgo saplings!

The children had the exciting opportunity to present their work to the Mayor of Hiroshima when he visited Manchester on 14 November 2015, around the 35th anniversary of Manchester’s declaration of being a ‘nuclear weapons free city’.

The influence of Project G has been widespread; it has engaged and informed local school children, facilitated university exchange programmes to Hiroshima, united politicians across international boundaries over a common cause and instilled in everyone involved the importance of remembering the events of August 6th and 9th 1945 and the necessity to positively move forward towards a more peaceful and nuclear weapons free world.

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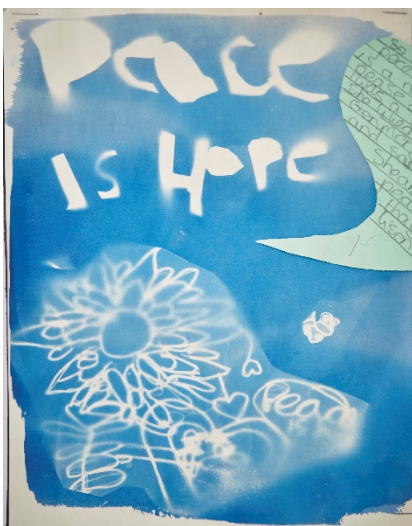


During the spring of 1946 locals gathered in amazement that buds had begun to appear on the tree, even despite its burnt exterior. These trees demonstrated true resilience in the face of disaster, proving it is possible to overcome even the most horrific of events.

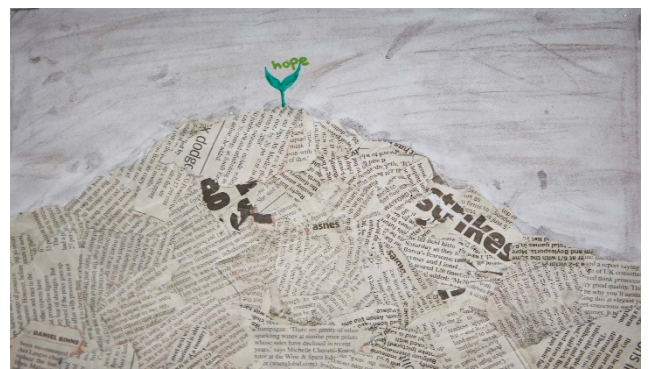
Since then the Ginkgo tree has been revered as a symbol of peace in both Hiroshima, Nagasaki and across the world.

Following the atomic bomb attacks of 6th August 1945 it was feared that the areas close to the hypocentres would lie desolate for decades, if not centuries.

The original Ginkgo tree stood just 1370 metres from the hypocentre of the Hiroshima bomb; it was badly damaged and charred and was thought to be beyond revival.



The Ginkgo tree offered people hope that the land could recover and grow once more, allowing people to return and rebuild the city. The symbolism of the Ginkgo places a great social and cultural value on the distribution of its seeds. Manchester was delighted to be the first city in the UK to be offered seeds and the City Council is currently working with Dunham Massey to ensure their stable growth at the National Trust's Estate.



The aim is to present the 6 participating 'Project G' schools with a Ginkgo sapling, which they can then plant on their grounds providing they commit to the Ginkgo Pledge, protecting their long term security. There the Ginkgo trees can stand as a physical reminder for the children of the power and resilience of nature instilling hope for the future.

Some of the trees will also be planted in the new Manchester Peace Garden being planned at a new site of Lincoln Square in the city centre.