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December 18, 2013

TO: Chicago Board of Education and Mayor
FROM: Veterans For Peace
SUBJECT: De-Militarize CPS and Help Our Children

Challenging societal norms is difficult. There are enormous pressures to do what has always been done, to do what others are doing and to do what we're told to do. **Jane Addams** was an exception . . . and did the difficult. It would be good for all of us, these 100+ years later, to get acquainted with the work and writings of the Chicago legend Jane Addams.

In April of 1899 Jane Addams gave a talk titled "**Democracy or Militarism**". She said, "We must also remember that peace has come to mean a larger thing. It is no longer merely the absence of war but the unfolding of life processes which are making for a common development." In her book *Newer Ideals of Peace*, published in December of 1906, she said, "when we once surround human life with the same kind of heroism and admiration that we have surrounded war, we can say that this sense is having such an outlet that war will become impossible." She also said, "we constantly tend to drop the newer and less developed ideals for the older ones of warfare, we ignore the fact that war so readily throws back the ideals which the young are nourishing into the mold of those which the old should have outgrown. It lures young men not to develop, but to exploit . . . and leads them to forget that civilization is the substitution of law for war." "War on the one hand – plain destruction. Labor, on the other hand, represents productive effort."

Jane Addams also spoke about economic power when she said the, "unconscious attitude of contempt which . . . economic success always takes toward the weaker and less capable . . . this relation of kindly contempt, of charitable rather than democratic obligation, may lend some explanation to the fact that the United States is sadly in arrears. . . ."

She understood that children need time to develop and, "to force the moral nature of a child and to put tasks upon him beyond his normal growth, is quite as cruel and disastrous as to expect his undeveloped muscle to life huge weights."

Children . . . all children . . . become exceptional when they are given exceptional opportunities. Opera, languages, art, music, libraries, counselors – all the opportunities that are offered in the private, high priced lab schools, should be available to all children, in their neighborhood. Instead CPS closes public schools, opens charter schools and promotes the military. The military, which teaches violence as a solution to conflict, is not an exceptional opportunity.

"Democracy or Militarism". On behalf of the children and the long run future of this city and this country, stand against the culture of violence, set a national example . . . de-militarize CPS.

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Veterans For Peace is a nationwide 501(c)3 organization, founded in 1985. Follow our de-militarization campaign at www.facebook.com/demilitarizeCPS and at www.twitter.com/demilitarizeCPS