

# The Peace Post



Dear Friends,

As we step into 2025, we begin a year that demands renewed commitment to civic responsibility, sustainability and actionable peace. In a time of global conflict and division, our collective resolve is more critical than ever. Our responsibility extends across all levels - personal, community, national, and global - requiring us to embrace peace as an active duty, not just an aspiration. This is the year to deepen our dedication—to each other, to our cities, and to the future we are building together.

Sustainable Development Goal 11 reminds us that peace is built not just in negotiation rooms but in the very streets, homes, and public spaces where communities thrive. Cities are more than concrete and steel—they are living systems shaped by the people within them. Community-driven action, especially in times of crisis, is what transforms urban spaces from places of survival into spaces of wellbeing and shared prosperity.

To build sustainable cities, we must design environments that foster social cohesion, service, and international understanding. Art and storytelling—tools our ancestors have used since the beginning of time—play a pivotal role in preserving cultural heritage and passing down generations of wisdom. They remind us of our shared history and allow us to imagine a collective future where peace is not just an ideal but a lived reality.

The cities of tomorrow must be engines of clean energy, where cross-industry collaboration fuels affordable, sustainable solutions that power our communities. Innovation in urban design, architecture, and intelligent infrastructure is pushing the boundaries of what is possible. As we rethink how we sustain our cities, we must not just reflect on the products and services of the past but also celebrate those who are redefining the future—creatives, architects, and bold thinkers who are willing to do things differently.

At the heart of sustainability is our relationship with the natural world. We must slow down and truly see each living creature as a soul with intelligence and feeling. Whether large or small, each deserves our respect and protection. The health of our cities and communities is intertwined with the health of our planet, and it is our responsibility to protect both.

As we embark on this new year, let us recommit ourselves to building sustainable and inclusive communities. Let us recognize that peace is not accidental; it is embedded in the DNA of societies that prioritize civic responsibility, ethical leadership, and inclusive decision-making. Let us reimagine our cities not as obstacles to peace, but as the very foundation upon which peace is built. And above all, let us approach this work with creativity, urgency, and the unwavering belief that a better world is within our reach.

In the spirit of peace and unity,  
Barbara Winston, President and Co-Founder  
Gordon Winston, Co-Founder

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## Want to help fire victims? The best way to support LA in the short and long term.

The recent Los Angeles wildfires have sparked a remarkable display of community-driven action and service, highlighting the resilience and solidarity of the city's residents. As the fires and their aftermath affect the region, local organizations and volunteers have mobilized swiftly to provide crucial support. By prioritizing emergency action alongside long-term community regrowth, residents are facing this devastating crisis with tremendous courage and commitment to collective wellbeing. As relief groups offer food, shelter, healthcare, and financial assistance to displaced individuals in the days ahead, donating to trusted organizations, volunteering time, or providing essential supplies will continue to be crucial to support their recovery efforts and construct pathways for sustainable development.

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## How 'Superblocks' can create People-Centered Cities

Barcelona's Superblocks initiative is revolutionizing urban spaces. By repurposing city blocks into pedestrian-friendly zones, the project reclaims streets from cars and transforms them into vibrant public spaces. This innovative approach not only reduces traffic and pollution but also creates opportunities for residents to interact, play, and build stronger social connections. As cities worldwide grapple with challenges of urbanization and social fragmentation, Barcelona's example demonstrates how thoughtful urban design can cultivate more inclusive and sustainable communities. By reimagining city spaces to put human needs first, the Superblocks initiative offers a blueprint for creating urban environments that nurture fellowship, international understanding, and ultimately contribute to a more peaceful society.

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## How an Unlikely Coalition of Climate Activists and a Gas Utility Are Weaning a Boston Suburb Off Fossil Fuels

A groundbreaking collaboration in Massachusetts has led to the development of the first utility-operated geothermal heating system, marking a significant step towards sustainable urban energy solutions. Eversource Energy, a gas utility, partnered with climate activists to create this innovative system, which taps into underground thermal energy to efficiently heat and cool buildings. This project not only provides an energy-efficient, fossil-free alternative for homes but also demonstrates how cross-industry partnerships can drive urban sustainability. By retooling existing infrastructure rather than replacing it entirely, the initiative preserves utility jobs while advancing towards decarbonization goals. The success of this project has sparked interest nationwide, with 20 similar pilot projects proposed, showcasing the potential for cities to transform their energy systems through collaborative efforts that prioritize both affordability and environmental sustainability.

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## 5 ways to build resilient cities in the age of disruption

Urban resilience in an era of disruption demands innovative strategies that integrate ethical community development with adaptive infrastructure design. By reimagining city landscapes through various techniques like integration of green spaces, heat-resistant cool pavements, and adaptive building techniques, cities can mitigate environmental risks while enhancing community well-being. Collaborative approaches that prioritize nature-based solutions and technological innovation will be absolutely critical in developing urban environments capable of withstanding future challenges and promoting inclusive, sustainable growth. At PII, our team and partners firmly believe these efforts are made possible through cross-industry and cross-sectoral dialogue, preventative future-minded thinking, and investment in educational training initiatives. By embracing these strategies, cities can enhance their ability to survive and thrive amidst various disruptions, fostering sustainable growth and innovation.

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