

Group wants decisions centered on kids' interests

By Kathryn Reed

Putting children first. Ensuring their needs are met. Taking a pledge to do so. Helping shape policy.



Those are the goals of Small World, an organization launched Dec. 1 in South Lake Tahoe. But it's not just about Tahoe – it's about children throughout the country, throughout the world. And it's not just parents uniting to have a voice. It's other relatives and concerned people.

"I'm looking at what decisions we are making as people or collectively through government. What is the impact of those decisions on our children or on children across the globe," John Friedrich said.

Friedrich was thinking about this Small World concept before his daughter was born more than five years ago. Having recently moved back to Tahoe with his family, he believes now is the time to put his idea into action.

The first meeting of like-minded individuals is Dec. 21. More information about it may be obtained by emailing smallworldaction@gmail.com

"The idea is putting the good of all children, the best interest of children at the center of decision-making," Friedrich said.

While there is no hard and fast agenda for the first meeting, there is also no preconceived action plan. Friedrich doesn't see any concern not being able to be tackled.

He wants people to think about their actions – whether it's dropping bombs and knowing whom those deadly devices will hit, to environmental and natural resources policies and their impacts on kids, to access to health care, to the food available to them.

Reinventing what's being done is not the goal. Instead, Small World will bring like-minded people together. From there they may partner with other organizations already working on behalf of children.

What makes this a unifying vision is parents throughout most of the world want the best for their children. Small World intends to give them a voice beyond their home.

In the short time Small World has been active, more than 100 people in 18 states and three countries have signed the online pledge to: "... help create a peaceful, livable, just planet for all children on earth."

As Small World spreads, the idea is community networks will evolve to be a voice in their town, then as a whole to be a louder voice for children on a broader scale.

"The vision would be people speaking out for the interest of all children would collectively have a stronger voice and definitely influence policy decisions," Friedrich said.