

WARS - Gulf War - Demon Stractions Demonstrations are for kids, too

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SANTA CRUZ — Protesters carrying familiar anti-war signs and singing old protest songs made their way through downtown Monday, but their voices were higher than usual.

They were 10-year-old boys in Bart Simpson T-shirts and baseball caps and even younger girls with peace signs painted on their faces.

About 250 elementary school students, parents and grandparents took part in a 1 p.m. march from the Loudon Nelson Center to Mission Plaza to show their opposition to the Persian Gulf war.

"There's been a lot of rallies for adults, high school and junior high students, but not a lot for little kids," said 11-year-old Isaac Klotz-Chamberlin, who helped organize the event.

A sixth grader at Bay View Elementary School in Santa Cruz, Klotz-Chamberlin said the protest was fittingly held Monday, a holiday to honor Martin Luther King Jr.

"It's appropriate because he worked for peace and justice," he explained.

The children carried signs reading "Books not Bombs," "World Peace" and "Honk for Peace" as they slowly made their way through downtown. Patient adults gently helped the children cross the streets.

One woman carried a sign reading "Another Mother for Peace."

City Councilman Scott Kennedy was one of the parents marching alongside their children.

"I think they are definitely aware of



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Children and their parents march down Cedar Street to peace rally.

what's happening," he said. "Parents are watching TV and talking about the war. I think they become anxious."

Several parents said the two-hour event served as a catharsis for children who are have been hearing about Operation Desert Storm, Scud missiles and

prisoners of war during the past week.

"I think it gave children a chance to express themselves," said Peter Klotz-Chamberlin, Isaac's father.

At Mission Plaza, several children stood up and stated their opposition to war and read poems they wrote in school and sang songs.

Several parents stood off to the side, taking photos of their children at their first protest.

Wendy Martyna, who was there with her 11-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son, said the event was completely initiated and organized by children.

"It's not brainwashing or propaganda (by parents)," she said. "It's totally from the kids."

She said she believed youngsters have become active because of their global knowledge. She attributed part of that understanding to the events like the recent Earth Day celebration, which introduced children to more than just their neighborhoods.

"The world is so much smaller now," she said. "I think children identify much more with the world."

The fifth- and sixth-grade co-op class at Bay View Elementary helped initiate the march, which included students from around the county. The Resource Center for Nonviolence also assisted in the organization.

"I think it's important people know that children want peace and that people know other people's feelings about war," said 10-year Makaela Fuller-Pollock. "There were a lot of rallies with grown-ups. I thought it would be good to have one with children."