

**LIVE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE!
COMMUNITY JUSTICE CAMP
HOSTED BY THE DIOCESE OF NIAGARA MAY 9 – 14, 2010**

Community Justice Camp; Live the Change You Want to See has come and gone but the impact continues to reverberate across Canada as well as abroad. Eighty campers spent a week resting their weary bones at the Mary Keyes Residence at McMaster University after days filled with outstanding plenary speakers, experience-oriented site visits in their immersion groups, reflection groups, and worship. The highlights campers identified were the relationships they developed amongst themselves; the experiences at various sites across the Diocese as well as Toronto and the Kitchener area; the engagement with people who ‘get’ the integration between charity, justice and community; and a growing sense of the significance of partnering with people in order to change our world. Many campers commented on the depth and breadth of the new knowledge they had acquired as well as the advocacy and community development skills they were taking home.

The Diocese of Niagara shone that week! While campers breakfasted at McMaster, they were fueled on the rest of their justice journey thanks to the gracious volunteers of the following parishes; St. Luke’s, Burlington; St. John’s, Ancaster; St. Christopher’s, Burlington; St. Paul’s, Westdale; Christ Church Cathedral; St. Alban’s, Hamilton; St. Paul’s, Fort Erie; and St. James, Dundas as well as The Mother’s Union. Volunteers from our parishes chauffeured Camp participants to and from airports, train and bus stations in the wee hours of the morning and the late hours of the evening. Finally, many of the Immersion Groups and Reflection Groups were led by home-grown facilitators who worked with community partners to provide what many campers called a life changing experience.

They headed home enriched through connecting and learning with those with lived experience of social injustice, those who advocate for justice, and those who reflected with them. Those enlightening experiences coupled with Friday’s reflections on next steps have sent campers, ranging in age from 19 to 71, home to engage their communities and partner organizations in justice work; home to Cuba, Charlottetown, Burundi, Montreal, Beamsville, Winnipeg, Peterborough, Halifax, Fonthill, Ottawa, Corner Brook, Nepean, Rockwood, Lachine, Ancaster, Waswanipi, Oakville, Kentville, Toronto, Georgetown, Mississauga, Burlington, Terra Cotta, Toronto and other communities across Canada.

The goal of the planning team for Community Justice Camp was to enable individuals and communities of faith to become agents of transformation and reconciliation. The Rev. Bill Mous (co-leader of the Environment Immersion Group) observes, “Not only have we equipped and inspired 80 participants from across Canada and the world to do justice in their local communities, but we’ve also laid the groundwork for establishing a strong reputation for the Diocese of Niagara as a leader in social justice issues by engaging with somewhere between 80-100 social justice organizations in southern Ontario through our immersion experiences.” We have planted the seeds – may the harvest transform our world!

Respectfully submitted,
Ms. Christyn Perkons
Project Manager for Community Justice Camp