

# SCARBORO MISSIONS

March-April 2010 \$1.00



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

*More and more young people today are seeking volunteer opportunities overseas in a desire to see the world from the perspective of the poor*

# Easter

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**COVER:** Walking with the people of Consuelo. Students at St. Mary's Catholic High School in Kitchener, Ontario, participating in the Dominican Encounter with Faith and Hospitality in Consuelo, Dominican Republic, November 2009. See story on page 12.  
**Credit:** Danielle Johnston.

Dear friend of  
Scarboro Missions,

Please remember us with your prayers and financial support so that we may witness to the Gospel overseas and in Canada. We will continue to be good stewards of all your gifts as we put ourselves at the service of others. Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity.



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The Scarboro Foreign Mission Society (Charitable Reg. #11914 2164 RR0001) is a Roman Catholic missionary community involved in mission overseas and in Canada. Founded in Canada in 1918 by Fr. John Fraser, Scarboro's initial purpose was to train and send missionary priests to China. Forced to leave China after the Second World War, Scarboro began working in the Caribbean, Asia, and Latin America.

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## EDITORIAL



By Kathy Gillis

## An experience of a lifetime

This week I attended a youth forum at the Coady International Institute, an organization that has been doing community-based development and leadership education for the past 50 years. The Institute was named after Fr. Moses Coady, founder of the Antigonish Movement, a people's movement for economic and social justice that began in Nova Scotia in the 1920s. I had the privilege of hearing five students of St. Francis Xavier University speak about their experiences working in Africa this past year. The five interns were part of a Students for Development program sponsored by the Association of Colleges and Universities of Canada.

These five young people just out of their teenage years spoke about working within another culture on issues such as decreasing domestic violence, assisting caregivers of orphans, and helping youth play a bigger role in local governance. Their maturity and insight impressed me, as did how much they learned from their three months in Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana, or Kenya. They spoke of their internship as a life-changing experience.

Matt Chisholm of Antigonish said that before he left Canada he had seen a quote from Nelson Mandela: "As we let our light shine we give other people the permission to do the same." At the time, he said, he didn't know what the words really meant, but after spending three months working with a Family 1st Project in South Africa, he did understand. He began to recognize that in working to achieve our own potential we also give others permission to shine brighter.

He said the experience "profoundly transformed the way I live my life and challenged me to burn my brightest." Such is the power of experiential learning.

In this issue of *Scarboro Missions* you will read about other young people who have been given tremendous opportunities to walk with communities overseas, living out what it means to be missionary: to give a prophetic witness to God's love in the world. These, too, were transformative experiences that will stay with them for the rest of their lives and for most, will affect the choices they make in life.

Also in this issue you will read about people who have spent a lifetime following the call to mission. The Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception recently celebrated 50 years of service in Consuelo, Dominican Republic. And in

Panama, Scarboro Missions this year turned over responsibility of the Interamerican Cooperative Institute (ICI), founded by Fr. Harvey Steele in 1964, to a Latin American Board and staff. Fr. Steele's dream of opening a centre of education for leaders of grassroots and cooperative organizations came out of his experience of growing up in the coal mining area of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and working with the Antigonish Movement as a young priest in the 1920s. Fr. Steele would have been proud of the young people I heard at the Coady this week, nourished by the fruits of the Antigonish Movement.

In a way this issue is about having the courage to set out on an unknown path and discovering that it becomes a lifetime journey.<sup>∞</sup>

### Development and Peace raises \$13.5 million for Haiti

The estimated death toll of the Haiti earthquakes is now more than 222,500 people. The number of homeless people who have moved into spontaneous settlements is estimated at 1.3 million. The images of suffering Haitians has also inspired worldwide generosity. The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace has raised \$13.5 million toward Haiti relief and reconstruction. Most of this will be matched by the Canadian government program for Haiti.

By early March, Caritas Haiti, a Development and Peace partner, had distributed emergency shelter kits to 60,040 people and provided food to 597,989 people. Caritas is also involved in providing health, water, and child protection services in close cooperation with other aid organizations. This month, food distribution programs will gradually be replaced by food-for-work and cash-for-work programs targeting 1.1 million people. Development and Peace partners will also be involved in the reconstruction of Haiti.



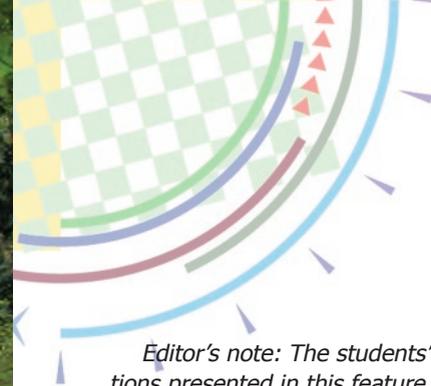
Development and Peace wishes to express its deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to these efforts to support our brothers and sisters in Haiti.



St. Mary Catholic Secondary students from Hamilton, Ontario, taking part in the Dominican Republic Education and Medical Support program (D.R.E.A.M.S.). Parra, Dominican Republic, January 2010. Credit: Paul Roe.

# Dreams are made of this

The Dominican Republic Education and Medical Support program (D.R.E.A.M.S.) began in 1999 at St. Mary Catholic Secondary School in west Hamilton, Ontario. Since then, 350 St. Mary's students have journeyed to the Dominican Republic to build 60 homes, a school, and a teacher's residence in remote mountain villages in San José de Ocoa, the parish that Scarboro missionary Fr. Lou Quinn served for 42 years.



*Editor's note: The students' reflections presented in this feature have been adapted for Scarboro Missions magazine.*

Over the years, D.R.E.A.M.S. has become a symbol of the desire and transformational power of youth to change the world, one family, one home at a time. Working alongside the Dominican people to build homes and schools has enabled our students to experience Catholic Christian community in its purest form. It's an experience that stays with them long after they have returned and allows them, in the words of teacher John Labatte, to "focus on the stars, not on the mud." I am so very proud of our students and all those who support them on their journey of discovery and faith.

**Patricia Amos, Director of Education  
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board**

## Lindsay Helmers

Ever since I was in elementary school, I have had my heart set on D.R.E.A.M.S. I still remember the first presentation I saw about the program and I could not wait to experience it. I was ecstatic when I found out that I was finally chosen to go this year, in Grade 12. After years of waiting and watching the presentations, I felt prepared and thought I knew what to expect.

I was wrong! My experience was so much more than what I expected. I fell in love with every aspect of this trip, especially the children. No matter what we were doing, the children's smiles surrounded us. At the work site they always tried to help and even the ones who were too little to help would sit and watch over our water bottles or just share an encouraging smile that would keep everyone motivated to work. When we had a break, we would take pictures with the kids or play games like London Bridge. When we left the work site, the children followed us. If I was carrying my work gloves and water bottle, they would take them from me and carry them so that I had a free hand to hold one of their hands.

It was incredible how happy the children were with nothing. They were so grateful for anything we gave them and just playing with us brought them joy. These children taught me more than I could have ever given them. I learned to appreciate everything I have and focus less on material things and more on the people I love.



One day, I was sitting with a little boy and he was attempting to teach me Spanish, and I was teaching him English. He would point to an object then say what it was in Spanish. I would repeat the Spanish word and then tell him what it was in English. After I said the correct word in English, he would get this huge smile on his face and exclaim "Si!" because it enforced that I knew what he was saying. The next second, I would forget the Spanish word and I felt so bad because I just could not catch on as quickly as he learned English. I think he gave up trying to teach me and just put his arm around me. Even though I was covered in cement, mosquito bites, and sweat, he looked at me and told me in Spanish that I was "*bonita*, more beautiful than a *princesa*." I repeated it in English just to make sure I had heard correctly, and his face lit up and smiled just as it had when I understood the other words he was teaching me.

Coming into the trip, I did not realize how close I could get to people I couldn't even communicate with, but when we left I felt as though I had left my home and my family. I think that everyone should go on a journey such as D.R.E.A.M.S. because no matter how many stories you hear; it is not the same as actually experiencing it for yourself.

## Albert Van Santvoort

The Dominican people's faces, their graciousness, their appreciation are all things that need to be experienced. It's not just about giving a kid a ball or a bubble bottle; it's about a promise—a promise that people do care, do understand and know their plight; that there are people outside of their close knit community who care about them, pray for them, and are doing all they can to help. It's about 19 individuals who went to make a difference in the lives of the materially less fortunate, and found that the experience made a difference in their own lives and in the lives of their peers back home.

## Stacey Witt

One afternoon we took a walk through the village and got a bit tired so we stopped for a moment. Soon, a little boy and his father came out with lawn chairs for us to sit on. That simple act touched me deeply. The conditions that the people were living in seemed utterly hopeless, yet I felt hope in their presence. As we drove away in the back of a truck, seeing the faces of the community smiling and waving goodbye to us, there was complete silence in our group. Something had changed in all of us on this trip. I left a piece of myself in that little town of Parra, and in turn, will always have a little piece of Parra in my heart.

As you prepare your hearts and minds for this journey, God is entrusting you, like Jeremiah, to be God's Word, God's Good News to the people of San José de Ocoa. You will be God's Good News by going to live with the people in the mountains where they are, ready to work with them side by side, not only building houses but also building friendships. They in turn will be God's Good News to you by sharing with you their warm Dominican hospitality, their homes, their food, their faith, and their love through friendship.

I have always appreciated a quote from our late Fr. Lou Quinn—words that he often used: "The Good News is not just a said word, it has to be a lived word."

When we are those living words, we become Ambassadors of Christ in the world around us, guided by the Spirit of God. What better vocation can one have than that?

**Scarboro missionary Fr. Mike Traher, celebrant at the mass for the St. Mary's D.R.E.A.M.S. group of January 2010**

Paul Roe



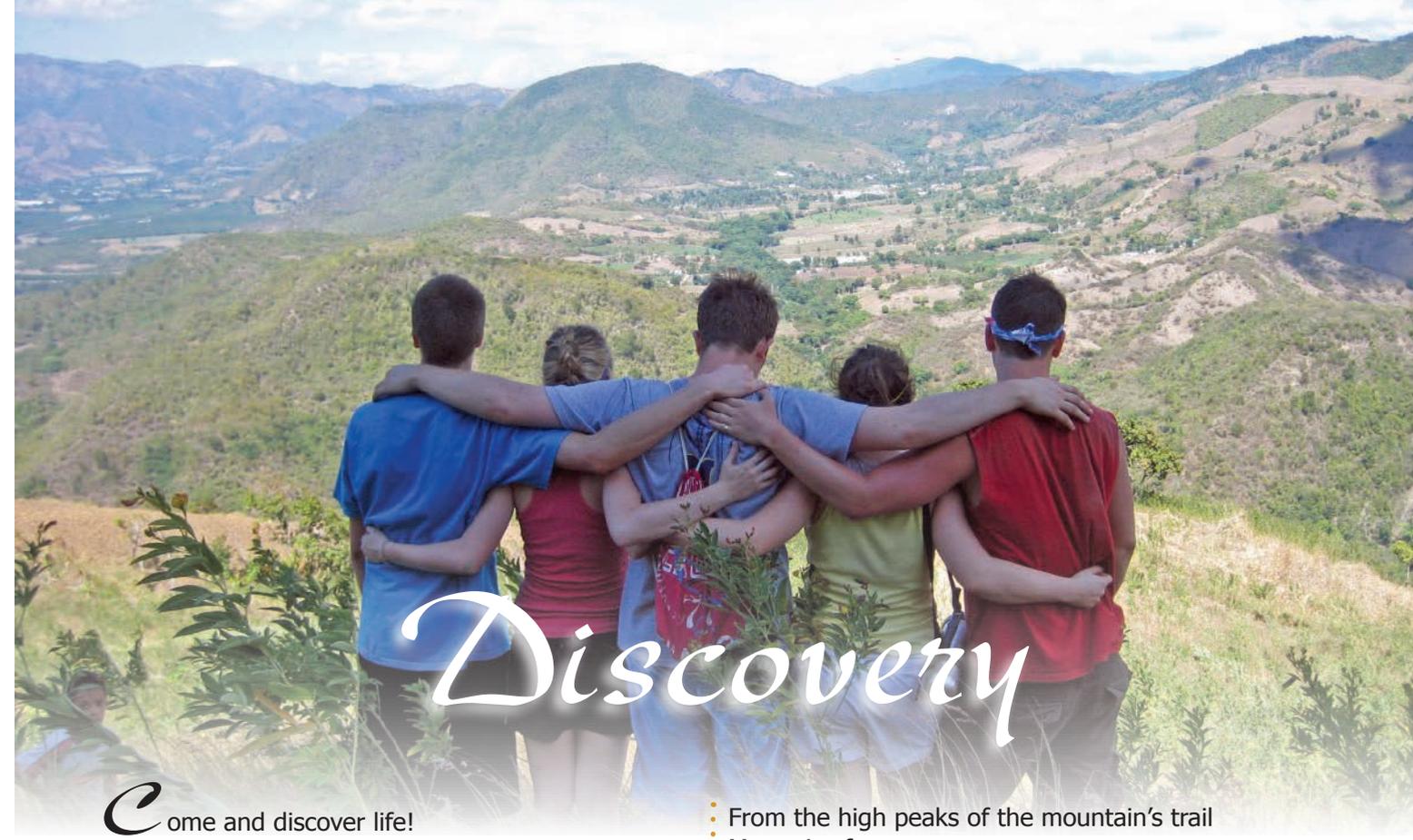
### Kelly Eydt

An incredible bond formed between all of us who were fortunate to be on this trip. We all experienced something together that is irreversible. The memories of waking up at five in the morning to watch the sunrise together, and of climbing a mountain and witnessing the incredible view. We also bonded with the people of Parra and we cannot wait to go back to see the friends we have made for life. We will always remember them and this experience. So thank you D.R.E.A.M.S. for helping me fulfill my dream.

### Kathryn Toner

From the top of a mountain you can see how large the world is and how wide the horizon. On our last day in Parra, a group of us decided to hike up one of the many mountains that surrounded us all week. We did not know how tall the mountain actually was or how we were going to get there. It was very steep. It was exhausting. Yet every time we stopped for a short break, we drank some water and continued on. Every one of us had the determination to get to the top. And when we reached our goal, the sound of success was simply the whistling of the wind. We were all silent for a few minutes while we took the time to absorb what we are normally too busy to see.

We each left something on a fence post at the top of the mountain, whether it was a headband or in Albert's case, a sock. I have every intention of returning to Parra and to the top of that mountain where I stood with people I love. I made new friendships that week. Although some had to stay in the Dominican Republic, 18 others came back with me. We will all be *los amigos para siempre*, friends forever.



Come and discover life!  
 Journey up the mountains  
 And embrace the jolt of the dirt road  
 Take witness.  
 Fresh papaya and pineapples hanging golden  
 See the lush shades of green  
 Flowering shades of purple  
 Both blending  
 Hiding the small colourful huts  
 We've never been exposed to a different life before

Welcome to life in a small village  
 They run towards us and we meet them  
 Embrace them.  
 Crayons and candy  
 Stickers and sticky hands  
 White palms and brown fingers.  
 Take my hand and I'll hold yours.  
 Get lost in our twirling, skipping  
 We've never been trusted before.

Listen and discover life!  
 The gentle rustle of the palm trees  
 Echoes of  
 Laughter  
 Clapping  
 Singing

- From the high peaks of the mountain's trail
- Memorize faces
- Pronounce all names
- We've never heard our names being called before

- Imagine and do
- We build with strong hands
- White dust and breaking rocks
- The ache of burning backs
- Soothed by the warmth of the people
- Fill buckets with our family
- Build for our family
- We've never changed the world before

- Breathe in the night sky
- Scattered in silver patterns across a black canvas
- Proceed
- In the darkness they walk with us
- Inviting us into their homes
- The smiles
- The hugs
- We've never felt so safe before
- This love will never be forgotten
- When we discovered Parra
- We discovered life
- **By Diana Gresku, D.R.E.A.M.S. participant 2010.**





Lauren Hawthorne and Dan Ipema sifting sand in preparation for making cement. Parra, Dominican Republic, January 2010. Photo credit: Paul Roe.

### Daniel Ipema

As soon as we settled in at the library in Parra, everyone went outside to greet people and play with children we had never met. We couldn't communicate, but right away we started a soccer match against the children of the town. I saw true happiness in their faces, in the camaraderie between them.

Several times during the week we were required to move a pile of sand, dirt, or cement bags from one area to another. With our teamwork we were able to move the pile in a matter of minutes. Seeing our devotion to the task, the Dominican children would also offer to help, creating an even deeper bond between us.

Whenever we got the chance we would play baseball with them, a game they loved, and even though we had to use our hands and bodies to communicate there were never any disputes or conflicts. I learned a variety of Spanish words that I still use.

Even with the language barrier there was a deep connection, a connection that made many cry as the truck pulled away for our return home.

This was the greatest experience of my life and I will never forget it or the people I loved along the way.

### Lauren Hawthorne

Every time I look down at my left wrist my eye catches a shoelace bracelet; beads of blue, white, red, yellow, and green stare back at me. There is a catalogue of memories I hold close to my heart from my week in Parra, Dominican Republic. I will always remember the first child I gave a bottle of bubbles to and the beautiful smile I received in return; Ana, the bright little girl whose maturity and kindness forever changed my life; the pictures the children drew for me; playing clapping games with the girls; the mountain we climbed; the house we built; the friends, now family, who returned to Canada with me.

Without a doubt, this trip was the best week of my life. I experienced true compassion, kindness, and community. I learned about my peers—for the first time in our schooling together I got to know who they truly are. I also learned a lot about social change. This trip was about picking up the shovel and changing someone's life in a direct and meaningful way. I am so thankful for the lessons I learned, the sights, and the people who changed my life forever. I will never forget that small town or the people who live there.

D.R.E.A.M.S. is an opportunity for our students and staff to live out God's call to "love thy neighbour" even if that neighbour is unknown to us and cannot speak to us or be easily understood. It is in sharing our humanity with our less fortunate brothers and sisters that we learn more about ourselves and express thankfulness for the many gifts which have been bestowed upon us.

We have seen the growth of D.R.E.A.M.S. from St. Mary Catholic Secondary School to Bishop Tonnos Catholic Secondary School and Cardinal Newman Catholic Secondary School. There are also several schools participating from the Halton Catholic District School Board and from post secondary institutions in Ontario. All this sprang from one student's idea during a class discussion about how we can make a difference in the world.

Our students often state that they receive far more than they could ever give to the Dominican people. For this gift of generosity of spirit and pure love of heart received from the Dominican people by the students and staff of St. Mary Catholic Secondary School we are ever thankful.

**Emidio Piccioni, Principal, St. Mary Catholic Secondary School  
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board**

### Mary Frances

Our last day in Parra came sooner than expected and everyone started to become weepy. I cried for people who have so very little but deserve a better life. They have become my friends. It was hard for me to grasp the idea of leaving them behind. As I said my goodbyes and promised to one day return, I prayed that God would look over our friends and keep them safe and healthy. To this day and forever on, I will remember the people of Parra who taught me so much and took me into their homes. I will remember their glowing faces, their sparkling eyes, their laughs when I would say "no comprendo." I will remember each



child's love for life and each other and their total gratitude for every small gesture. I will remember the mountains, the unforgettable sunrises, the smell of donkeys and the sound of dogs running in packs. But most of all, I will never be able to let go of the special connection I had with each and every person in Parra even if no words were spoken. God bless all my *amigos para siempre* of Parra.

### Meghan Neale

D.R.E.A.M.S. was a journey where every small detail played a vital role in my development as a person. Every amazing moment and feeling was given to me by the community of Parra, a small village with a big heart and a very different lifestyle compared to Canada. Everywhere I went, I was greeted and hugged. I always had a hand to hold or a smiling face looking up at me. Anytime we stepped out for a walk, it would turn into a parade; or a single-person task would become a group project.

On our second day of work, cement had just been made and we needed to transport it up to the house we were building. We assembled into a line and began passing the buckets of cement. After a few minutes some of the local men joined in to help with the heavy lifting; even the children helped by carrying empty buckets back to the front of the line, or dusting the dirt off of us. Everyone pitched in. The sense of togetherness was so strong, and it was as if nothing else mattered unless it linked to our single purpose of rebuilding this house for the extremely deserving couple who would live there. The people and village of Parra will always hold a special place in my heart.



San José de Ocoa, location of the D.R.E.A.M.S. program.

### Ally Dillenburg-Scur

After three days, I met a little boy named Christopher. He was five years old and lived with his Mom a few houses down from the library where we were staying. Christopher followed me wherever I went. He held my hand as we walked up the mountain to the work site. He watched us work for hours under the scorching sun and I carried him down the mountain on my back. We played catch together at the library with a red and white baseball I had given him.

I had hoped to change something in Christopher's life and I hoped that this little boy would remember me, but it was Christopher who truly changed me. He was so happy and carefree all the time, and never asked for anything but a drink of water. I will never forget this five-year-old boy who taught me that life is really not about material goods. It is about how we act and feel towards each other and about relationships.



Ally Dillenburg-Scur with Christopher.

# A Kenyan experience

An opportunity to journey into a new world and learn about a culture and people

By Jackie de Santis

In the summer of 2008, I participated in a three-week volunteer initiative in Kenya to help build a school in a Maasai village and to learn about the people and culture. The trip was organized by Leader's Today ([www.leaderstoday.com](http://www.leaderstoday.com)), started by the Kielburger brothers who also founded Free the Children.

Upon our arrival, we were welcomed by the Maasai community with speeches by the school headmaster and other village elders, thanking us for our help. The women gave each of us a necklace, which was unexpected and heartwarming. After the ceremonies, we met the children who were eager to show us around and play.

For two weeks we slept in a Mobile camp, in canvas tents, five minutes walk from the school where we were helping to build six addi-



Throughout our stay we witnessed the often harsh living conditions of the people and their struggle for accessible clean water.

tional classrooms. We had electricity for a few hours at night.

## The struggle for water

Throughout our stay we witnessed the often harsh living conditions of the people and their struggle for accessible clean water. The village women took us for a water walk to see how and where people obtain their drinking water. The local water source is a stream used by both people and cattle. The women have to boil the water for drinking, which takes a long time. We filled two large jugs and one small jug with water and took turns carrying them back to the village because they were so heavy. Women sometimes travel an hour just to get water, and may have

to make multiple trips.

The community was experiencing a drought, making things even more difficult for them. At our campsite we had no running water and a villager named Maji Moto, whose Swahili name means Hot Water, filled a large barrel with hot water for us to wash. We were all very conscious of the drought and showered every few days to preserve water.

A woman from the community took us for a walk through the village, showing us into several houses. Our Maasai guide translated for us, adding his own stories and information. Their homes were made of dung and sticks, with small circular windows that provide little light. In every house there was a fire going



day and night. In more traditional houses, there were small rooms for keeping goats and cows. The children slept on cow skins on

the floor, while parents slept on beds of sticks. For food, those who could afford it had porridge for breakfast; they ate no lunch, and dinner was always *ugali*, a mix of water and corn maize. Seeing how the people lived gave a deeper meaning to the work we were doing.

On our final night in the community, as a thank you we invited the staff of our mobile camp, our Maasai guides, and the workers who helped us with the school construction for dinner. We all chipped in and bought a goat to eat. The guests arrived into our camp singing and carrying a cake for all to share.

Throughout my stay I built relationships with the children in the village so it was difficult to say my final goodbyes when we headed out for a retreat in a remote Maasai community. We lived in the traditional houses of dung and sticks that we had seen in our work community.

My three week trip to Kenya left me with a lot more knowledge and with a greater appreciation of what I have. I was glad I was able to help the people there and I look forward to returning one day.∞

*Jackie de Santis was a student at Greenwood College School in Toronto when she went to Kenya with 25 other high school students. Members of her parish, Our Lady of Perpetual Help ([www.olphtoronto.com](http://www.olphtoronto.com)), helped to make this journey possible.*



Building schools and building relationships.



## Listen to our voices

*This youth statement is made on behalf of the world's three billion people under the age of 25, and asks governments, citizens and youth to commit to taking action on climate change. Here are some excerpts. For the full text, visit [www.unep.org/tunza](http://www.unep.org/tunza)*

The future needs strong vision and leadership. We, young people—three billion of the world population—are concerned and frustrated that our governments are not doing enough to combat climate change. We feel that radical and holistic measures are needed urgently from us all. We request our governments to:

- have strict laws and enforcement against those who pollute and degrade the environment;
- transition toward a green economy;
- make engaging environmental education mandatory in schools and universities.

We appeal to all citizens of this planet to:

- develop and promote the infrastructure and use of public transportation and ecofriendly alternatives;
- engage in environmental campaigns and education;
- commit to sustainable lifestyles to reduce carbon footprints.

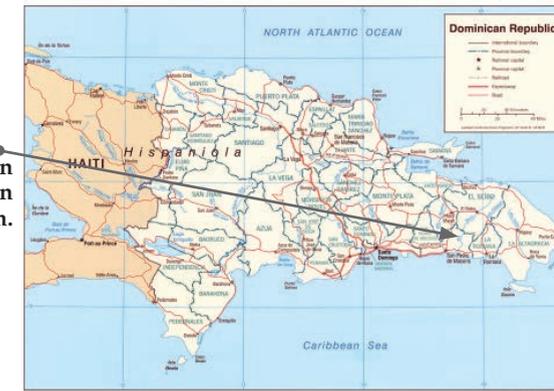
As young people, we will:

- engage in environmentally friendly activities, especially planting, nurturing, and protection of trees;
- communicate environment and climate change through the media and social networks like [uniteforclimate.org](http://uniteforclimate.org), Facebook and Twitter, and develop environmental websites...

The Tunza Youth Strategy, adopted in February 2003 by the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council, is a long-term strategy to engage young people in environmental activities and in the work of UNEP. The word Tunza means to treat with care or affection in Kiswahili.



Students from St. Mary Catholic Secondary School in Kitchener, Ontario, visiting Batey Cachena, Dominican Republic.



Consuelo, location of the Dominican Encounter program.

# Salt of the Earth

The Dominican Encounter with Faith & Hospitality provides Canadian high school students and parish groups with the opportunity to see the world from the perspective of the poor

In 1992 we began welcoming groups of Canadian high school students to Consuelo, Dominican Republic. The program has developed over time into its present form known as *Encuentro Dominicano con Fe y Hospitalidad* (Dominican Encounter with Faith & Hospitality).

It is precisely the opportunity to see the world from the perspective of the poor that transforms our visitors who then desire to participate more fully in the unfolding of the Kingdom of God. We provide opportunities for visitors to gain an initial understanding of the global structures that create and sustain poverty and injustice in the world. Together we identify our roles in these structures and look for ways to change our lives. It must always begin with self. As Gandhi said: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

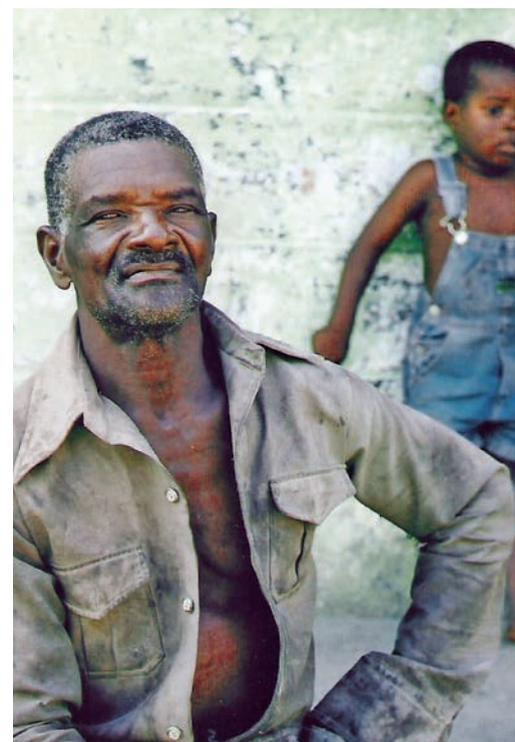
We encourage visitors to insert themselves into justice networks once back at home, to seek out accurate information, continuing to educate themselves on the issues related to poverty and injustice; to begin working for systemic change (becoming practitioners of peace and justice) rather than merely acting as purveyors of charity alone; to become light for the world, to be salt for the Earth.

**Dean Riley, Coordinator of Encuentro Dominicano con Fe y Hospitalidad (Dominican Encounter with Faith & Hospitality)**

**For more information write to: [encuentro.dominicano@gmail.com](mailto:encuentro.dominicano@gmail.com)**



Dean Riley, coordinator of the Dominican Encounter program, is a former Scarborough lay missionary, who has been serving in Consuelo, Dominican Republic, since he was missioned there in 1990.



Haitian cane cutter living on a batey on a sugar cane plantation. Dominican Republic.

Community. Faith. Justice. After a week in the Dominican Republic, these are no longer simply words—they are ropes tied round my heart that tug each time I hear them.

The experience of community came when our team was welcomed into the homes of Dominican families. Without having any Spanish, I could only share hugs, smiles, and exaggerated thumbs ups. They shared their lives through genuine hospitality to strangers and neighbours alike. We visited the *bateyes*, impoverished sugar-cane cutting communities, where I saw poverty that I could never have imagined. I realize now that though we see poverty in the media, the reality of having nothing needs to be seen firsthand to truly be understood.

Michael Morris

When I saw the strength of the communities in the midst of poverty, I saw a strength based on sharing of oneself which my own needs and wants have prevented in me.

With such profound realizations my thoughts always turned to faith, and each encounter with the Dominican people kept leading me to God. We spoke with a man from Haiti who had worked on the sugar cane plantation for 10 years. Now that sugar mill has shut down he has no work. He had nothing when he worked for the sugar company, and he has even less now. Yet, he has a family to support. This man welcomed our questions, and when we asked him about the hardship of his life he said, "Trust God to help you survive your life. Strength comes through believing in Jesus Christ." I was in awe of his faith. He placed his life in God's hands, and even through his losses, his faith stayed fully alive and real. I experienced similar examples of faith in the Grey Nuns in Consuelo who give their lives to better the lives of the Dominicans. I also experienced this faith in the joy of the people at mass. God helps us to overcome the sorrows of this world through love; I now have no doubt of that.

Because of love and faith, we are called to uphold and do justice. I entered into a community of people who have been denied their rights. I learned about the source of their poverty. I witnessed their pain and now I can take action to help change this situation. This is more than charity, because doing justice calls us to use our hearts, hands, and voices to ensure that people have their basic human rights and the tools they need to build their own lives. True fellowship, and faith in God's presence within us, calls us to see the poor as friends.

**Meghan Regier, St. Mary Catholic Secondary School, Kitchener, Ontario**



L-R: Meghan with her host mom, Madina, along with Cindy Smukavich (teacher and team leader) and Jennifer Czekus, both of St. David Catholic Secondary School in Waterloo, Ontario. All three stayed in Madina's home for the week they were in Consuelo.



Danielle Johnston with some of the children of Batey Cachena near the town of Consuelo, Dominican Republic. *Bateyes* are impoverished communities of Haitian migrant workers who harvest sugar cane in season. When the cane cutters are working they are paid with vouchers by the plantation owner (may be state owned or private). The vouchers can then be used to purchase goods only at a store on the *batey* at inflated prices. Life on the *bateyes* is extremely hard.

The family I stayed with in Consuelo was very warm and welcoming and I soon realized that their family extended beyond the walls of their modest home and into the community. Often times their home was filled with visitors who would come to socialize or have a bite to eat. There was always food available. I could not help reflecting on the fact that I don't even know my neighbours' names back in Canada.

Visiting the *bateyes* was unexplainable—to see people, no matter how hard they try to improve their living situation, continue to be victims of injustice by a government that does nothing to help them. Elvio, a teacher who has dedicated his life to educating the children, expressed his gratitude over and over again to Canadians for their support. It really struck me the day we visited Barrio 41. Dean Riley, coordinator of this Dominican Republic Encounter program, explained that this was a new neighborhood where many Haitians reside, yet the government has not even acknowledged the barrio as an area where people are living.

Upon my return, I could not understand why I live in a place of opportunity and so many Haitians are in these terrible situations. I cried whenever I turned on the tap and had water pressure and hot water that the families I lived with did not. I cried when I went to school and all my friends talked about were insignificant dramas, unaware of the real drama that the poor live every day.

As I try to reflect, I live with the unknown role I must play in making some change somewhere. I do know one thing...I will never be the same.

**Judenne Roache, Cardinal Leger Catholic Secondary School  
Brampton, Ontario**

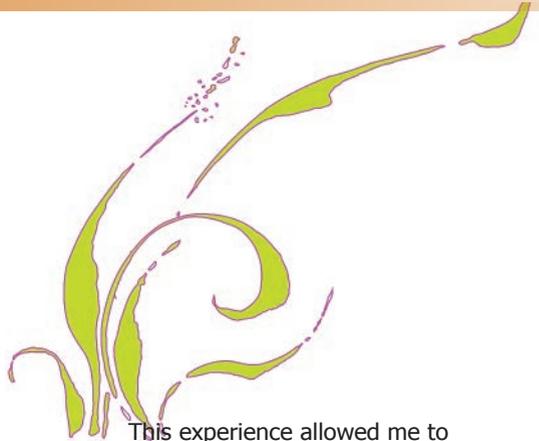


Judenne Roache with her 'extended' family in Consuelo.

Visiting the *bateyes* outside of Consuelo gave poverty a face for me. It really impacted me to see that people really live this way and I remember feeling guilty. I think I felt this way because that morning I was complaining that my feet were hot in running shoes, but then I saw that the children had no shoes.

When I returned to Canada I was really motivated to help people, so after the Haiti earthquake I sponsored a little boy there, and this weekend I am participating in a 24-hour THINKFast, an awareness and fundraising campaign of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. My Dominican Republic Encounter was a life changing experience.

**Danielle Johnston, St. Mary Catholic Secondary School  
Kitchener, Ontario**



This experience allowed me to discover what was really important in life. Education is a major part of my life, but it is not only about classes and homework. Our school is huge for fund-raising and charitable work. I've become so much more involved with Habitat for Humanity, organizing Cuts for Cancer, and I am excited about being able to raise funds for the water pump for the community of Las Pajas in the Dominican Republic. I've never been more inspired than ever to help others. I want to make a difference in the world and I know it can be done, one person at a time.

I have this unbelievable love for Consuelo and I always will. It has a place in my heart and I know that I will return someday. I wish and hope that I can make a difference in someone's life there because they have all given me the best possible gift. They've given me the gift of life and love.

**Lindsey Partridge, St. Paul  
Catholic Secondary School  
Trenton, Ontario**



L-R: Laura Graham with her Consuelo "Mom" Anna, "Dad" Ramon Sr., Ramon Jr., Solanyi, and Laura's roommate, Kelsey Joustra. Last April the Gonzalez family hosted Laura and Kelsey, students of St. Mark's Secondary School in Manotick, Ontario (Ottawa Catholic School Board).

Last April, I was blessed with the opportunity to travel to the Dominican Republic with 19 other students and four teachers to witness first-hand the hardships that many people on this planet go through on a daily basis.

Before our trip, we were encouraged to learn the Our Father (*Padre Nuestro*) in Spanish and I was really looking forward to saying it. At Palm Sunday mass, there were so many people that our group and many Dominicans stood outside. During the mass, an elderly woman needed to sit down, so someone brought her a plastic chair. I was so afraid she was going to faint in the heat.

Because the mass was in Spanish, I wasn't sure when the *Padre Nuestro* was coming, but eventually the time came and I was really proud of myself for being able to say it in the language of the people. Since everyone holds hands when they say this prayer, I held the hand of a mother on my left. I noticed that no one was holding the hand of the elderly woman who was not far from me, so I held her hand. At the end of the prayer, she kissed my hand and I started to cry.

After the mass, another elderly woman and her husband came and hugged me, speaking to me in Spanish. I could make out that they were asking if I liked being in Consuelo and staying with my host family. I smiled and said "Si."

I am forever grateful for the opportunity I was given through my school and the Encuentro Dominicano Program in Consuelo led by Dean Riley and his group of enthusiastic, young Dominicans who were our guides, interpreters, and supporters through the emotional journey. The evening reflections during our short week in Consuelo were only the beginning of a lifetime of reflection.

**Laura Graham, St. Mark Catholic Secondary School, Manotick, Ontario**



# The gift of love

The Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception celebrate 50 years of presence among the people of Consuelo in the Dominican Republic

By Fr. Jack Lynch, S.F.M.

In December of last year, I felt honored to be present at the festivities honoring the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception for their 50 years of service in education and health care in the town of Consuelo, Dominican Republic. Their remarkable service is worthy of the appreciation and gratitude of the people in the area as well as a source of pride and admiration for those of us who have come to know and appreciate their work over the years.

In fact, the collaboration of Scarboro missionaries and the Grey Sisters goes back more than 80 years. Three short years after the foundation of the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Pembroke in 1926, a group of young Sisters was sent by their community to Lishui, China, to join the Scarboro priests already working there.

After the Chinese civil war and the takeover of the nationalist forces by the communists in China, members of both communities were expelled from the country. However, in 1951 the Grey Sisters continued their mission collaboration with Scarboro priests in Shimabara, Japan, and in the town of Yamasa, Dominican Republic. There was also collaboration in the Bahamas with Scarboro's Bishop Kenneth Turner. As Bishop of Lishui, he was unable to return to China after the takeover by the communists and was most appreciative of the Sisters' commitment and charism.

In 1959, on the invitation of

Scarboro Father William Matte, the Sisters began what is now more than 50 years of dedicated service to the people of Consuelo, a company town owned and controlled by the sugar estate Ingenio Consuelo. The employees were paid a minimum wage for the highly seasonal work of harvesting and processing sugar cane.

In those early years, the Scarboro priests and the Grey Sisters lived under the Trujillo dictatorship, one of the most notorious of that period. All of the Scarboro Fathers who were pastors of parishes during that time read aloud at mass the famous pastoral letter written by the Bishops' Conference promoting the freedom of the Dominican people to move around the country without having to pass road blocks and inspection

points. These were difficult times for all Church personnel. I was reminded of their brave stand by Jesuit Father Antonio Lluberres who was also present at the ceremony last December. Fr. Lluberres is the national director of 44 schools affiliated under Fe y Alegria, a nongovernmental organization created by the Jesuits in 1990 in the Dominican Republic.

One of the original decisions taken by the Grey Sisters was very significant. They opted to enter into the public school system rather than create a private Catholic school that often catered to wealthier people who could afford the tuition costs. From day one they set out to work with the poorest in Consuelo and from there they began a 50 year history of building and innovation. One has only to speak with the people of



At the anniversary mass, Sr. Mary Buckley (left), General Councillor of the Grey Sisters, and Sr. Fay Edmonds, General Superior, from the Sisters' mother house in Pembroke, Ontario, carrying a portrait of St. Marguerite d'Youville, their foundress.

Jack Lynch, SFM



Photos from the anniversary celebrations (this page, clockwise from above): Mural at Divine Providence Primary School, commemorating the work of the Grey Sisters in Consuelo. The inscription: "A world of divine love. My life to reveal it." Sr. Lenore Gibb leads a tour of the site of the Sisters' first Primary School in Consuelo, founded by the Grey Sisters in 1959. Sr. Noelia Hernandez with Hector Julio Ramirez and Celeni Valoy, Grey Sisters Associates. Sr. Roberta Mullin of the Sisters of Charity in Bani, Dominican Republic, and Grey Sister Susan Daly. Sr. Mercedes Ramirez and members of the youth group from Yamasa. Doña Altagracia, a parish catechist, Sr. Lenore Gibb, and Mirna Rodriguez, director of Immaculate Conception Technical Training Centre in Consuelo. A Sister of the Scalabrini Congregation and Grey Sister Natividad Rosa who works at the Grey Sisters' health clinic in Consuelo. All photos, credit Jack Lynch, SFM.

Consuelo to get a sense of their overwhelming gratitude.

The Sisters also responded to the needs of the sick and the elderly, establishing a clinic in 1967 and a Seniors Residence in the late 1980s, both of which continue to operate with the assistance and guidance of Sr. Natividad Rosa Cordero, a licenced nurse. Sr. Cordero is one of four Dominican Sisters who have taken final vows with the Grey Sisters and continue their ministries

in health care and pastoral work. While in Consuelo I met other young women who are interested in joining the Grey Sisters' community.

On behalf of Scarboro Missions, I congratulate the Grey Sisters and express to them our sincere gratitude for all they have taught us about selfless commitment and generous service to the Reign of God.∞

Fr. Jack Lynch is Superior General of Scarboro Missions.



# ICI: A new vision for the future

Scarboro Missions turns over responsibility for the Interamerican Cooperative Institute to new leadership who envision a Latin American Centre for Catholic Social Thought

By Fr. Jack Lynch, S.F.M.

For more than 45 years, the Interamerican Cooperative Institute (ICI), which Scarboro missionary Fr. Harvey Steele founded in Panama, has continued to flourish and is now entering a new period of service. In January of this year, Scarboro turned over the buildings, land, and responsibility for ICI to a new Board of Directors with Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of



Fr. Harvey Steele, founder of ICI.

Honduras as President and Carlos Lee, a well-known Panamanian lawyer, as Executive Director.

During the almost 10 years that I served as ICI's Executive Director, I often dreamed about the day that Scarboro would be able to turn ICI over to a board and staff of Latin Americans. I can remember feeling uncomfortable that a Canadian was still in charge of a Latin American Centre when there were so many qualified Latin Americans.

I actually remember sitting alone on the balcony of the house at ICI one Friday evening, wondering how best to implement a transition, when a group of people arrived for a workshop on the pedagogy of Jesus. The next morning I attended the reflection led by a Mexican theologian. We broke into groups, each with a different gospel text, and were asked to identify the qualities and characteristics of Jesus' teachings in the text.

Our group was assigned the pas-

sage of Luke's Gospel in which the disciples meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus. People appreciated how Jesus was patient and helped the disciples to understand the scriptures. After a number of additional comments, the woman sitting beside me said distinctly and clearly, "Jesus knew when to leave. Like a parent he knew when to let go and leave them on their own."

No one in my group was aware of my hopes of implementing a transition for ICI. The woman's words were like a private revelation and encouragement to me to follow through as soon as possible with my



dream. That was in the late 90s and the transition has not been quick, but the end result is wonderful.

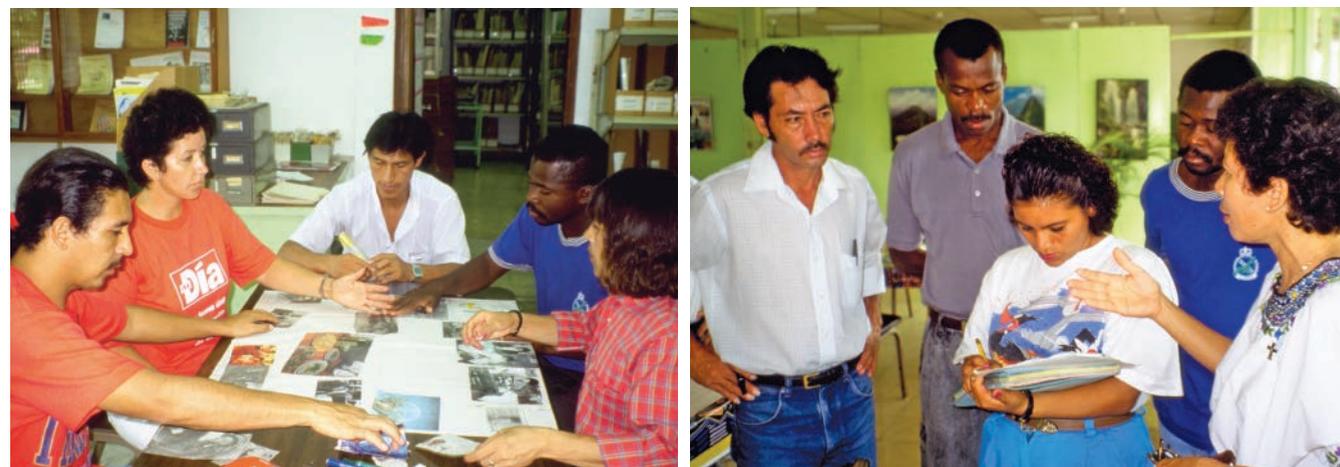
From its beginnings, ICI has experienced many forms of transition. Fr Harvey Steele, better known as Padre Pablo, established ICI to train leaders in the cooperative and credit union movement in



Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez of Honduras, President of the new ICI Board, with Fr. Jack Lynch, signing the transfer of responsibilities at ICI. Below, a meeting of the new Board. Panama. January 2010.



Three former directors of ICI, L-R: Fr. Joe McGuckin, Fr. Harvey Steele, and Scarboro lay missionary Tom Walsh. Circa 1980s. Panama.



Photos above: Course participants—leaders of grassroots and cooperative organizations from Central America, the Caribbean, and the Andean countries of South America—at the Interamerican Cooperative Institute in Panama, 1996. Photos, Hans Eijssenck.

Latin America. In the mid-70s, ICI followed the guidelines of the Latin American Bishops Conference and promoted the option for the poor in its courses and favoured students who were economically disadvantaged. In the 80s, ICI's outreach and course content were diversified to include any grassroots organization that served the interests of the poor and disadvantaged, giving women and their participation greater importance. Over the years the courses and content evolved with time and the changing needs of the organizations.

Throughout the years one dynamic has been constant: with each course a group of approximately 40 participants, leaders of grassroots and cooperative organizations, arrive at ICI. My experience is that on average, the participants have come from 11 or 12 different countries and cultures

in the region, primarily Central America, the Caribbean, and the Andean countries of South America. One of the intangible lessons from the program has been the appreciation of the diversity and richness of Latin America, but above all a sense of pride in all things Latin and solidarity among each group of participants that lasts to this day.

In all of ICI's transitions, its belief in the dignity of the human person and the right to live in dignity as a son and daughter of God has been primary. Secondly, the Institute's essential conviction throughout the years has always been that education is a key component in consolidating and strengthening any organization and its members. Finally, ICI demands that leaders of any organization be men and women of integrity who manifest a harmony between what they say and what they do. "By their works you shall know them."

## Catholic Social Teaching

With the transition this year, I have an additional hope for something new and dynamic. The new Executive Director, Carlos Lee, has outlined a vision for the next few years to create at ICI a Latin American Centre for the teaching and diffusion of the Social Teaching and Thought of the Catholic Church. All the Board members heartily endorse this new vision.

We give thanks to God for a wonderful next step and we look forward to seeing ICI grow in both its capacity and influence. We recognize the vision of Padre Pablo and his determination to create a centre at the service of the poor. We pray that God will continue to bless the new vision and the new team.∞

Fr. Jack Lynch is Superior General of Scarboro Missions.

# A sacred space

**At the Scarborough Mission Centre, retreat organizers are helping teenagers, through prayer and meditation, to get in touch with the Divine presence within**

**K**athy Murtha, Notre Dame Associate and coordinator of Scarborough's Mission Centre, and Lay Spiritan Kate Marshall Flaherty animate high school retreat days at the Mission Centre. Kate explains the importance of the retreats: "Jesus spent 40 days in the desert; the Buddha meditated. In all faith traditions there is this removal in order to be still. A retreat is like a day in the desert—pulling us out of all that keeps us in competition with others and with ourselves in the course of daily living."

Kathy looks back. "When I started giving retreats I had a lot to learn. The students were my best teachers—you just had to look at their



Kathy Murtha

faces to see whether they were with you or not.

"I needed to help create sacred experiences for them where I was more the holder of the environment and less the person doing it all. I needed to create a space, a sacred space."

Kate chimes in. "In that space learning occurs: not just through words, but through prayer and meditation and process and fun and laughter. You have to break it down into these activities before anything can happen on the spiritual level."

"Teenagers have an inner life," says Kathy, "where they can begin to get in touch with the indwelling Divine presence. That is absolutely

radical. The world around them is so outer directed, even at school: 'What's the agenda? When are we finished? Let's get to the point.' The most radical thing is to get the students to think that they can live inner directed. That's been a real change for me."

## Hungry for meditation

Kate, mother of three teenagers, recalls her own assumptions. "I was amazed to see how hungry the students were for meditation. I had assumed my biggest challenge would be to get them to be quiet and suffer through a meditation, hoping they might enjoy it. I assumed some would and some might not. But, from the very beginning, on every evaluation, it was the part they said they really loved. I discovered that young people are hungry to be filled, hungry to get out of their head and into their heart, hungry to have that quiet."

"Having been a drama teacher I thought the fun and the games, the embodiment of the Golden Rule, the skits, the scavenger hunt, the multimedia would turn them on. They do enjoy all these, but they always say the best part of the retreat is the meditation. I find that affirming, exciting, and surprising."

"At the beginning of the day I say, 'Close your eyes and point to yourself.' One or two point to their mouths—we're all about who we say we are. You'd imagine everyone

would point to their head—we are who we think we are: we think we're hot tempered or good at English or bad at Math; we need to lose five pounds.

"But I say to them, 'Where did you all point?'

'Our heart!'

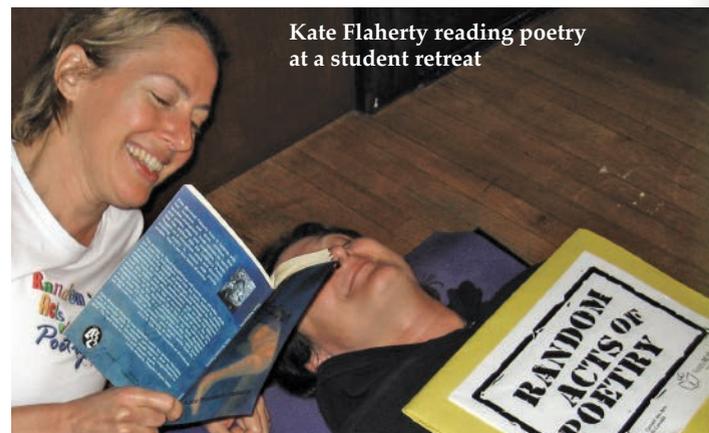
'How is it we all know that our true self is in our heart and not in our head?'

'Oh, that's where we love, Miss. That's where Jesus lives, Miss.'

"At the meditation they get a chance to get out of their head and go into a place of stillness. Often they'll say, 'Could you do that again? Could you do that again?'

Kathy finds that this meditation is new for most of the students. "So we do some visualization, using the imagination. My favourite is one that allows them to imagine themselves resting in the arms of God—which Pope Gregory the Great described as the ultimate prayer.

No words, just imagine yourself as the little child you are, resting in the arms of God, allowing God's arms to embrace you. That, to me, is the highlight of a retreat. Everything else builds up to that. Without that, the day would not be a retreat day."



Kate Flaherty reading poetry at a student retreat

"...young people are hungry to be filled, hungry to get out of their head and into their heart, hungry to have that quiet."

Other meditations include being like water, showing how much more energy it takes to go against the flow than with it; being a channel of peace and being still.

Kathy recalls the ancient understanding of the heart as a place of wholeness. "There was no dualism between head and heart. In a sense the heart is our mind, the core of our whole self. We need to return to that."

Kate puts it this way, "That is what the kids are saying when they point to their heart as their whole self. There you rest in your true self, and in the arms of God: 'Be still and know that I am God.'"

Kathy agrees. "That is what being in the presence of God means. God's first language is silence. Getting this across is what I see as my main role in the retreat."

"You don't start off the day saying, 'Everyone sit down and meditate.' We work towards it."

Kate adds, "We use music as a vehicle to guide them into that transition. That's an important part of the journey. They come in so stiff—

you have to lead them on a process, so getting a game going is very important. They laugh and become like children when they forget themselves. It's magical to watch. You can't remove that from the day."

Both retreat leaders are adamant that the first thing is to have juice, cookies, and hot chocolate ready for the students when they arrive. Feeding their bodies is absolutely important—up to half of them arrive not having had breakfast.

Sometimes teachers ask Kathy and Kate to get rid of the snack and the games and "get right to the point." But the point of a retreat is the students themselves. The kids are the point. And they often say, "I got to know my classmates better in a day than I did all year," or "You know, we need some of this every day," or "This gives me a whole new lease on life."

## Scarborough Bluffs

An after-lunch activity is a walk to the Scarborough Bluffs. Most students have never seen these Bluffs although many might live only a couple of kilometres from them. A simple thing like walking in nature really touches them. And once again, we ask them to be still."

Kathy voices a concern: "I fear for the future of our ministry here. Will there be time and money for this valuable educational experience? Teachers who really value what we're doing have to cut corners to make it happen. And the chaplains have a hard time keeping the program alive."

Kate agrees: "You're fighting



against a mentality that says, 'This is a waste of time.' So, you're fighting to be able to have days like this, to introduce students to the interior world." If, as some psychologists claim, 15 year olds experience an intellectual spiritual surge, it is important that they find a welcoming safe place to explore their own questions and longings. Both retreat animators are of one mind—it would be a shame not to be there for the young at that critical time.∞

*This article has been adapted and reprinted with permission from SPIRITAN magazine.*

# We wrap our arms around children

By Maureen St. Clair

We wrap our arms around children worldwide  
So we can love and protect  
Guide and teach them  
A new path  
A new way to be in this world  
Where they are leaders of Spirit and renewal  
Where they are given the wings to be themselves  
And the roots to their own decisions and destinies

We wrap our arms around children worldwide  
And allow them to teach us  
About unconditional love  
Love without boundaries  
Moment to moment living  
The spirit of presence  
The nowness of today

We wrap our arms around children worldwide  
Creating an environment that supports  
And nourishes their natural ability  
To love and be loved  
To find a sense of power  
Their own power within  
That involves sharing and guiding  
Respecting and receiving

We wrap our arms around children worldwide  
Who live deep within all of us  
Crying, screaming, hurting  
To be seen, heard, loved, respected  
Empowered with goodness

We wrap our arms around children worldwide  
That they may be protected by the cycles  
Of violence and oppression  
That lie deep within our societies, our communities,  
Our leaders, our families, our selves

We wrap our arms around children worldwide  
And commit ourselves to creating  
A new world perspective  
Based on honouring our children  
Where they are the seed  
By which we grow our food, clean up our waters,  
Our Earth, our selves so they can move freely  
Based on getting it right for their future children  
And their children's children

We wrap our arms around children worldwide  
And become their teachers of peace and spirit  
Love and tenderness  
Of renewal and trust  
Of compassion  
And empathy  
Recognizing that all children  
Are our children

We wrap our arms around children worldwide

*Maureen St. Clair is a member of VICS (Volunteer International Christian Service). She shared this reflection at a gathering of VICS members and friends. Antigonish, Nova Scotia.*

**Photo:** Scarboro lay missionary Beverly Trach who accompanies street kids and struggling families in Fortaleza, Brazil.



# The sun in my life

Walking with Thailand's migrants and refugees who seek a better life

By Susan Keays

An article I read in a Thai newspaper more than five years ago has remained lodged in my heart. It described how Thailand's migrant and refugee parents are so desperate for their children to learn English that when they get their hands on the smallest bit of printed English, an adult in the community will contrive to understand what was written, and then gather the entire body of children to teach them the English lessons they were able to deduce from the writing.

I have been teaching English in Thailand since 2003, first at a center for hill tribe children and then at a shelter for mothers in crisis and their children, but after reading that article I was always on the lookout for an opportunity to assist those migrant and refugee parents. About a year ago, my search was rewarded when I found The Migrant Learning Center in Chiang Mai. The Center was established in 2005 after the devastating tsunami. Burmese migrants were among those whose lives were lost or destroyed by the water, and a non-profit organization was founded to assist them. The Migrant Learning Center is only one arm of the organization's work on their behalf.

The migrants in Chiang Mai are often exploited, and if they manage to find a job it is usually what is known as 3D work: Dirty, Dangerous, or Difficult. Most of my students work 10 or more hours a day, seven days a week, and so it amazes me that they find the time and energy to come every day of the week to the Migrant Learning Center for the two-hour classes we offer free



Sai Awn gives Susan Keays, his English teacher, a gift for helping him "walk into the future." Susan went to Thailand as a new Scarboro lay missionary in October 2003.

of charge in Thai, English, and computer training.

Even more amazing is that the students frequently bring work for me to correct that they have done independently in the little free time they have. One such student is named Sai Awn, a sweet-natured 19-year-old man who works as an assistant bus mechanic. Like several of the other students, Sai Awn's ambition in life is to learn English well enough to go back to Shan State in Burma and teach it to the rural children who have little access to education.

## A poetic bent

Unlike the other students, I could detect a poetic bent to Sai Awn's writing. My suspicion was absolutely confirmed last week when I arrived at the centre for our closing day ceremony. Sai Awn was already there,

waiting at the entrance to give me a basket of fruit for which I thanked him sincerely. But then I turned the basket around and saw a note taped to it that he had written. Titled "Sun in Life", the note read:

*In the past, my life was the same as a person who walked in the dark. When I met the teachers, the teachers are the same as the sun in my life.*

*They illuminate me, to see the way to walk into the future.*

*Thanks for every day.*

*From student Sai Awn*

Yes, his gift of fruit refreshed my body, but that slip of writing has energized my spirit beyond measure, not just to teach English but to continue to seek out and walk alongside those who, like Sai Awn, feel they are walking in the dark.∞

# Year of the Priest

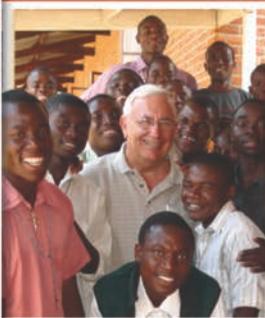


We are the priests of Scarboro Missions and our lives are filled with the unsurpassable joy and contentment of working with the peoples of the world through our commitment to the person, teaching and mission of Jesus Christ.

Over the next decade we look forward to accompanying priesthood candidates and guiding their formation for the new challenges of a global witness to the Gospel.

We invite young men to join us in the exciting challenge of serving Christ in new ministries for global mission, such as Interfaith Dialogue, Conflict Resolution, Justice Ministry for the Poor, and Enculturating the Gospel.

For more information  
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