



# VANIER VOICE OF JUSTICE

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**Yes, you too can get involved!**

If you're curious about our work, all you need do is drop us a line with your email and



we'll inform you of the date of our next meeting.

Newcomers are always welcome and you can attend just as a guest to see if our committee is something that you'd like to get involved with. No pressure! Afterwards, once you see all the different projects we have going, you can decide to participate in as many or as few as you'd like.

Just email us at this address:  
socialjustice@vaniercollege.qc.ca

The Vanier Social Justice Committee is made up of faculty, staff and students. We work to end poverty, racial and sexual discrimination, war, human rights abuse, environmental destruction and all forms of injustice. We encourage taking action about these issues by raising awareness, signing petitions, and organizing and participating in events on and off campus. Currently we have sub-committees working on many issues such as:

**The Darfur Crisis**

Villages are burning in Darfur. Women are being raped on a daily basis. Children are starving and dying. Aid workers are



threatened and many are leaving the country. More than 2.5 million Darfurians have been displaced. Civil unrest has led the Sudanese government to commit an ethnic cleansing of certain groups of the Sudanese population. Immediate international action and pressure are needed to stop this ominous genocide.

**Fair Trade**

What is Fair Trade? As its name indicates, fair trade is a form of trade which is both fair and equitable. Most products manufactured in third world countries are made by underpaid workers who are denied decent working conditions and

reasonable salaries. The lives of millions of these workers are risked just so that consumers in the "first world" like Canadians can enjoy cheap shoes, chocolate bars, or a cup of coffee. In many cases the workers are children.

*Can you really enjoy munching on your Mars bar, knowing that many children as young as 8 or 9 years old suffered so that you could "sweeten" your day?*

We say "NO!!!" Fair trade chocolate and other products ensure that workers are receiving guaranteed fair wages and support sustainable development.

The Vanier Social Justice Committee is actively involved in raising awareness and campaigning to support fair trade.

**Women's Issues**

Women's issues are wide ranging and different from group to group depending on factors such as race and religion. Although women have gained in equality, it is not absolute. Women still face prejudices in the work place, and are subjected to the "glass ceiling" in terms of wages and advancement. Much of the population is unaware that gender inequality still exists and the Vanier Social Justice Committee plays an important role in educating the students of Vanier on women's issues. Working closely with the Women's



Studies program, the Vanier Social Justice Committee has participated in and organized

many events, including a student panel on feminism during Women's Week and commemoration services for the Polytechnic victims.

**The Will Power Charity Club**

Since September 2008, the Vanier Social Justice Committee has been in contact with the Will Power Charity Club (WPCC), a group of 100 college-aged youth in Shashemene, Ethiopia, a town 250km south of Addis Ababa. The WPCC (Ethiopia/Montreal) connection allows Vanier College students to connect with young men and women in Ethiopia and builds understanding of another culture as well as making new friends along the way. We have exchanged letters, information, and videos about each other. You can help maintain this connection and learn about social justice and empowerment in Montreal and Ethiopia. Email Erin MacLeod: [macleode@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:macleode@vaniercollege.qc.ca).

**Poverty, AIDS, and Debt Problems of Africa**

Have you ever wondered why African countries never seem to escape their poverty and why AIDS is such a deadly killer there when we rarely hear about it being a problem here? There is a link between the unfair trading relations the rich countries have with the majority world and the problem of accessing the medications that have become the standard in Canada. There is a link between the unfair trading relations the rich countries have with the majority world and the problem of accessing the medications

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that have become the standard in Canada. In his book "Race Against Time", Stephen Lewis denounces the foot-dragging of the major drug companies and the inadequate response of western governments to this pandemic. Learn more and be part of the action to change this by joining the team working on this issue in the Vanier Social Justice Committee.

### Eating at Vanier

Students at Vanier have the right to eat wholesome food at reasonable prices. Everyone complains that the Vanier cafeterias offer very low-quality food at disproportionately high prices. The contract of the current supplier, Sodexo, is up for renewal this year. The Vanier Social Justice Committee has been lobbying to ensure that the concerns of students and other users are an integral part of the negotiations of the new conditions. We want quality, healthy food at lower, more affordable student-friendly prices. We also want environmentally friendly conditions. Please sign the Vanier Social Justice

Committee petition whenever you see a Social Justice information booth.

### NATO Bombing



In 1999, the NATO countries launched a military attack on Serbia in former Yugoslavia and claimed to be on a humanitarian bombing mission to prevent genocide. Propaganda was used to cover up the illegitimate and criminal nature of the campaign. NATO countries thus set the precedent for more military interventions in other countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. On the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event, the Vanier Social Justice Committee invited guest speakers Dr. David Orchard, Ambassador James Bissett, and war correspondent Scot Taylor who revealed the underlying realities and implications of the NATO bombing campaign.

### Social Justice Award

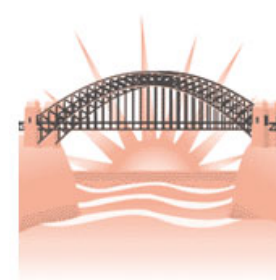
If you know anyone in Vanier who is

actively involved in social justice issues, you can nominate her or him for the **Doug Miller Social Justice Award**. Feel free to submit names to Eric Lamoureux in Room A345 or by email: [lamouree@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:lamouree@vaniercollege.qc.ca)

Your recommendation should be accompanied by a brief resume and a short paragraph explaining why the person is qualified for this award.

### Building Bridges

*Building Bridges* is a Concordia-based project to reintegrate prisoners back into community life. This is achieved through biweekly, candid, AA-style discussions.



Topics have included love, stereotypes, happiness and gender roles. New faces are welcomed to this unique experience! Attend one

of our monthly meetings to find out more about this project.

## EARTH DAY

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009 Vanier celebrated Earth Day. Environmental Justice was the theme and we worked in cooperation with E2O. (Effective Environmental Organization of Vanier College) We want to encourage everyone to do their little bit to save the environment. One small step is to carry a coffee mug with you for that daily caffeine fix. Free, fair trade coffee was available for everybody who brought a mug. No mug? No problem. 200 visitors to our booth received a [free Vanier mug](#).

Velogic Saint-Laurent promoted bicycle transport and the creation of bike corridors and bicycle fleets. Free bike repairs are meant to encourage people to use this environmentally friendly means of trans-

port. Used bikes were collected as part of the support for the Cyclo Nord-Sud programme to ship bikes to 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries for recycling and to create sustainable employment opportunities.

A presentation highlighted the fact that the rich countries are polluting, but the poor countries are paying the price in global warming they didn't create and resource exploitation that they do not benefit from. Come check out the green movement and find out what needs to be done.

Post-cards and letter writing carried the protests of Vanier students to the Canadian minister of International Cooperation. Six of the poorest African countries

have long been on the priority list of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for development assistance. In a covert move announced by way of a discrete press release, Benin, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda and Zambia have been dropped as priority countries from CIDA's bilateral aid. Canada has never matched its promises to the amount of support it must commit and this latest move just punishes the weakest countries.

On line petitions were also available to support many other environmental causes and to allow students to learn about organisations that are taking action on climate change.

Change is possible. You can make it happen.

## One last thing...

The Vanier Social Justice Committee has been involved in many other issues as well: refugee support; animal rights; anti-war and peace; women's issues; native rights; environmental justice and others. Bring your ideas and become part of the process of change.

If you are interested in joining the committee or for information about our regular monthly meetings and other events, contact us at: [socialjustice@vaniercollege.qc.ca](mailto:socialjustice@vaniercollege.qc.ca)

"I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better." Georg C. Lichtenberg