

JAS Student Report, 2006 – 2007

A. KAIROS

I felt that the KAIROS group was an excellent complement to the JAS student position. KAIROS is involved with so many different justice initiatives that anyone is able to find a specific niche to suit their interests. My personal awareness of global social justice issues has increased tremendously through working with KAIROS and provided me with an opportunity to explore additional areas of social justice. My participation with this group was not only personally fulfilling but provided me with the opportunity to share this information with other students. A more in-depth look at KAIROS activity is included below.

KAIROS AGM Tatamagouche, September, 2006. My first KAIROS experience, this is the best opportunity for anyone to explore the various initiatives in which KAIROS is involved.

KAIROS Halifax Cluster Meetings (monthly). An opportunity to work with the local cluster on justice initiatives. Here we heard updates on the progress of different initiatives as well as a discussion of how to become more directly involved.

KAIROS Ecumenical Service. An annual service that highlights how our faith is one of the most important factors in working on social justice initiatives. The service this year was held at Calvin Presbyterian Church in February and was centred on the KAIROS water initiative.

KAIROS Water Workshop. A workshop put on by the local cluster to promote awareness of the water initiative through keynote speeches, presentations, and discussion.

B. Student Awareness

The main goal of the JAS position is to promote awareness of social justice issues to students. This year I developed a monthly bulletin board at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection to highlight a specific organization involved with social justice who was of personal interest. Most often this focused on local groups and emphasized opportunities to become involved with the organization. As well, on the bulletin board I included a place for volunteer information with social justice organizations. I also made email contact with students to inform them of the JAS position and the various issues I was learning about.

Bulletin Board: Hope Cottage, Dalhousie Women's Centre, Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NSPIRG), KAIROS, and Phoenix Youth Programs.

I feel this is the most important, and similarly, and the most challenging aspect of the JAS position. The potluck events were a good opportunity for student interaction. My suggestion for the future is that the JAS position be something that includes students in the congregation who are of high school age. This will not only include a larger target group but will also inspire these students to be involved in social justice issues once they are in university.

C. Events/Organizations

Part of my interest in the JAS position was to make students aware of the many opportunities within our university community to become involved in social justice. One of the challenges of this position was to sort through the various organizations and events that are taking place to find those of particular interest to students. Below are some of the events and organizations in which I was involved.

World Water Day. On March 22nd small groups assembled in the SUB lobby to promote awareness of water issues to students. Organizations in attendance were Engineers Without Borders, the Halifax Regional Water Commission, People for Water, as well as the chaplain and myself as representatives of KAIROS and Campus Ministry. This was an interesting event and presented information on water from many different angles. Students, as well as faculty, seemed to take an interest in the materials that were available as well as the opportunity for questions.

Trick-or-Eat. Due to the late start with the position it was not possible to form an entire team for this event; however, another student and I volunteered at the drop off location. I would recommend this as a fun opportunity for the person taking the position next year to get together to form a student team for this event.

WaterCAN Dalhousie Chapter. The mission of this group is to implement healthy water systems in the poorest countries of the world. They work mainly with fundraising towards this goal. This ties in nicely with the KAIROS initiative. The group was just getting started in the fall but looks promising.

Dalhousie Meal Exchange. The Trick-or-Eat event is a registered charity who hosts several events throughout the year. Their mission is to address hunger and hunger-related issues through student solutions.

Public Lectures. The universities host many public lectures that are focused on social justice issues. A major guest speaker this year was Stephen Lewis, who is

rumoured to be returning this coming year. As well, these lectures are a free educational event for students who are interested in learning more about global social justice issues including poverty, health, and gender discrimination. Perhaps in the future the JAS student may wish to include public lectures as part of the information that is relayed to students.

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