



Project Agreement Between Honduran YMCA and YMCA Canada East Signed in Marcala

The YMCA of Honduras chose the community of Marcala as the location where they officially signed the Project Agreement with the YMCAs and YMCA-YWCAs of Canada East. The signing took place in a small ceremony on April 1.

In the Project Agreement, the Canadian Ys agree to provide financial support for the Citizenship Formation Program that is being offered not only in the capital city, Tegucigalpa, but also in a number of rural communities such as Marcala

The Citizenship Formation Program provides participants with training in three areas: social responsibility, political engagement, and appropriate technologies. The program teaches young people, who often live in isolated and impoverished communities, that they are not powerless and that they can contribute to societal change in Honduras.



José Vasquez (representative of the municipal government), Edgard Hernández (Coordinator, "Comite de Incidencia Política"), Lorena Pérez (Coordinator of the Marcala ACJ), and Tomás Argueta (Citizenship Formation Program facilitator)

Program participants are shown how to develop public proposals and led through the process of presenting those proposals to local officials. Several participants mentioned that one of the most valuable things they acquired was the self-confidence to approach people in authority. The confidence of the participants is further strengthened each time a proposal is acted upon, for example the development of a composting program to produce organic fertilizer in Marcala.



Ada Hernández, Facilitator of the Citizenship Formation Program in San José de Pané.

Another location where the program is offered is the village of San José de Pané, high in the coffee-growing mountains outside Comayagua in central Honduras. The steep unpaved roads leading to this village are only passable during the dry season. In the rainy season, when the roads turn to rivers of mud, the village can be cut off from its neighbors for days at a time. The coordinator of the Formation Program in San José is a young woman, Ada Hernández, who also offers the program in two other isolated communities which she travels to on foot.

What strikes visitors about the programs the Honduras Y offers is the optimism they are able to engender in young people. As a display at one of the YMCA Centers put it, they are confident that "Young People Uniting Their Efforts [can make] a Better Country."

HUMBER COUNTY YMCA PEACE WEEK SPEAK OFF

A central part of the Humber County YMCA's Peace Week activities every year is the David Elliot Memorial YMCA Peace Week Speak Off, an innovative program which involves city schools and local service clubs.

David Elliot had been a volunteer at the YMCA who shared his love of public speaking in a program designed to help people gain self-confidence. Humber County CEO, Christine Young, says that "David brought energy and infectious enthusiasm to these programs."

In honor of David Elliot's "passion for the spoken word," elementary schools in Humber are invited to participate in a "Speak Off" during Peace Week each year. This year the students were asked to speak on the 2008 Peace Week theme, "The Power of Peace / The Power of People."

Four schools in Corner Brook held oratorical contests, and, as a result, during Peace Week nine finalists took part in the Speak Off held in an auditorium at the College of the North Atlantic. The local Toast Master's Club provided the judges for the event.

The Speak Off also provides a venue for the presentation of the annual Peace Medallion. The 2008 medallion was presented to Mary Martin Cashin, in recognition of her volunteer effort on behalf of the Corner Brook Status of Women Council, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, St. Mary's Anglican Church and The Sexual Assault Response Team.



Rick McDaniel, originator of the YMCA Peace Medallion, and Humber County recipient, Mary Martin Cashin

2008 Peace Week Activities in Atlantic Canada



Karen and Dave Hardy receive Peace Medallion from Dale Knox, President of Saint John YMCA-YWCA



Gordon Rothwill receives Peace Medallion in Yarmouth

Reg Springer and Marie Price accept Fred-ericton Peace Medallion on behalf of the Epsilon Y's Men and Y's Menettes Clubs



Janet King and Jason Brown, CEO at the YMCA-YWCA of Northeast Avalon YMCA present the Peace Medallion to Edward Batten (center).



The Cookie Simulation

While Canadians are understandably worried about the impact of the current recession on our country, it is important to remember that it is developing countries which are going to bear the greatest burden in these hard economic times. The following activity can be used with groups of all ages (small children up to adult) to demonstrate the way in which the world's resources are distributed.

The activity requires a means for dividing the group into "countries." For example, a stack of file cards can be prepared, one for each participant. 20% of the cards are marked "China" (for a group of 30, six cards would be marked China); a little less than 10% are "least developed" countries (for a group of 30, two cards marked, for example "Haiti" and "Honduras"); 20% are industrially developed countries (Canada, the United States, etc.) The remainder are "developing countries" (countries might include most of those in Latin America, the stronger African nations, or nations of Southeast Asia).

Make a point of shuffling the cards thoroughly and then passing them out at random. Once the participants have their cards, they should be seated in their appropriate groupings - Industrially Developed countries in one space, China in another, etc.

On a platter, have a quantity of cookies large enough to give each participant three. Explain that there are enough cookies to go around, but that you are going to use the cookies to show how the world's wealth is distributed.

Although the Southern nations are nearly 80% of the world's population, they only have access to between 15% and 20% of the world's wealth. So you will share among the "developing" countries and China 20% of the cookies less one (for a group of thirty, you will need 90 cookies; 20% less one is 17 cookies shared among 22 participants). Break one cookie into crumbs to give the least developed countries. Share the remaining cookies among the "developed" countries (72 cookies among six participants in a group of thirty).

When the participants complain that the situation is unfair, ask why those who received the majority of the cookies were given them. Did they earn them because they were "smarter" than everyone else? Did they earn them because they were "nicer" than everyone else? If the participants respond that they got them because they are "richer" than everyone else, explain that they are only "rich" in the demonstration because they got the right card. Why did they get the right card?

The point to make is that the "rich" participants did not earn their cookies; they were simply lucky enough to draw a card that made them rich. In the same way, we are lucky to live in a "rich" country like Canada. Most people are not necessarily poor because they are not smart or don't work hard; often they are poor simply because of the country they were born in.