

Stories of Speaking, of Silence, and of Action

At the end of the Social Justice Conference in October, 2006, Lynn Hanson, service-learning coordinator for District 742, asked the thirty students from Apollo High School (St Cloud) what they wanted to do next.

Several issues of interest emerged, and each student chose the one on which they would focus.

Lynn reconvened them during a school day every 4-6 weeks, for small-group action-planning and large-group sharing. The majority of the work, very student-led, took place outside of those meetings.

Environmental destruction: This group's learning-and-action began with a focus on water conservation, including consideration of ways of reducing their own water consumption, then expanded to other issues. In April, 2007, they designed and presented a lesson in 9th grade World Geography classes on the negative effects of industrialization on China.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation: This group decided to develop a gay/straight alliance within the school. The GSA, which has two faculty advisors, provides support for students dealing with issues related to sexual orientation, and education of the wider school community. In April, 2007, they coordinated a "Day of Silence", in which group members and other interested students spent a class period, a lunch period, or longer in intentional silence, to represent the ways in which GLBT persons in our society are often silenced in schools and the wider society; over 100 students participated.

(Note: Click here for an article from the student newspaper at Apollo entitled "A New Club Joins Apollo".)

Global poverty/hunger: This group focused on collaborating with Kids Against Hunger/Central MN. They raised over \$500 by asking the students running the SnoDaze Dance to contribute \$1 per ticket sold. Then they coordinated a field trip to KAH/CM in April, to package food; 30 students participated.

