



The Personal Impact of Being a “Planning Committee Member”


The conference planning committee members are central participants in all major decisions involved in its design, key promoters of the conference (in their school, and others), significant contributors to the tasks of the day itself (behind-the-scenes, and sometimes even in front -- this year, several are co-facilitating workshops), and important advocates for follow-up projects.


But the reasons for joining the committee, and the impact of doing so, go well beyond planning for other students' experiences.

It nourishes their own journey.

	<p>I was fed up with my school and community and how there was nothing I could do about it that I knew of, until I found out about the conference. So I went to the conference, and I decided I wanted to help out and learn more about changing and informing the community. (Caitlin Johnson)</p>
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<p>I want to show the difference that students can make and the impact that our actions have. (Laura Briese)</p>	
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	<p>I've attended the conference the past two years, and loved it. I was inspired by the workshops I went to, and I wanted to get more involved. (Megan Ganje)</p>
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<p>I want to connect more with others who are passionate about social issues. I would also like to equip teachers with skills needed to integrate social justice issues in the classroom, and to be able to assist students with any questions or ways students can take action on social justice issues. (Jenny Schmidt)</p>	
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I want to help give my generation, my peers, and my friends a chance to make a difference in our world. These are the issues that are affecting us and will continue to affect us. By helping to give my peers resources, encouragement, and the confidence to make a change, I have hope for the future. (*Lynae Hemming*)

We continue to hear from previous committee members about the ongoing effects of the conference planning experience.

Sometimes, those effects have been dramatic, such as:

- participation in a "faith and resistance retreat" in Washington, DC (*Jason Chen ['05-'06]; Kassy Podvin ['05-'06]; Micah Bot-Miller ['05-'06]; Erin Bednarz ['06-'07]*)



(L-R) Micah, Jason, Erin and Kassy on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, site of Dr Martin Luther King Jr's "I Have A Dream" speech

- involvement in AmeriCorps (*Anna Boyle ['03-'04] -- see article in Dec, 2006, issue, available on-line; Amanda McConkey ['05-'06], see article in May, 2007, issue, available on-line*)



Anna Boyle



Amanda McConkey

There are other effects which, while less dramatic, are just as significant.

We recently received e-mails from several former committee members. Three of them described how the experience has prompted them to connect with peace and justice organizations on their college campuses. Another wrote to share about recently re-reading the journal she kept while on the committee, and how the perspectives she gained and the memories she has continue to guide and motivate her.

We can only begin to imagine the stories we'll hear from this year's committee members in the months and years ahead.