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As we strive to be *Women of Peace and Hope*, the community life standing committee reminds us that we are never alone, that our lives are lived in and for the community,

whether that community be family, our social network, workplace, neighbourhood, city, province, country, world. Above all we are people of God, beloved sons and daughters of a loving Creator, brothers and sisters of and in Christ, inspired and united by the love and wisdom of the Spirit. So, how do we live and model that community in this standing committee?

First and foremost is prayer, which can take many forms from a simple alleluia of praise or, this is my personal favourite and one I use a lot, a simple heartfelt plea, "Help!" Or there are more formal and extensive prayer practices. For some simple suggestions for prayer related to this standing committee, I refer you to the *CWL Day of Peace & Hope Activities Kit*. Some scripture passages that are particularly fruitful for this committee are the Beatitudes or the judgement story of the separation of the sheep and the goats, both of which are based on our actions towards others.

Second: care. Each of us is a member of a League community, an ever-widening community... from parish to diocesan to provincial to national and, through the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, international. To care for others, we must experience care ourselves, and who better to care for us than our League sisters? Now, I have four sisters in my family and I know that sisters do not always agree, nor do we always get along. But I do know that I can always, always count on my sisters when I need them. So too, should we count on our League sisters. One small instance: a League sister passed by while I was on the phone receiving some rather sad news. When I hung up and came around the corner, there she was, sitting patiently waiting for me, ready to say, "You could use a hug." As Fr. Mark Miller pointed out, sometimes care is simply being there.

From prayer and care for each other comes action. I was pleased and encouraged to see in the annual reports the many, many good works of councils across the country. May God bless you in your continuing service to the poor, the disadvantaged, refugees, the abused and the voiceless.

In communiqués I have stressed the idea of the two feet of social justice, the two feet being charity and justice. As the reports show we are doing quite well in terms of providing practical help and care to our brothers and sisters in need, whether it be in terms of our treasure or our time. Councils

are a little less involved in seeking to eliminate the root causes of poverty and injustice, and granted this is a far more difficult and time-consuming task, but many are making efforts by studying issues, taking action in communities, and writing to government. Two issues of particular concern are human trafficking, especially in light of the 2010 Olympics, and child poverty.

Pope Benedict's message for January 1, 2009, "Fighting Poverty to Build *Peace*" is good reading. Some areas of concern that he raises fit very nicely with community life responsibilities and resolutions such as child poverty, the relationship between disarmament and development, the food crisis, and ethical approaches to economics, politics and participation. As for human trafficking, many councils wrote to government in support of government bills and efforts to combat trafficking and held or attended awareness meetings. Just a note: Victor Malarek, author of *The Natashas* has a new book, *The Johns: Sex for Sale and The Men Who Buy It*. Please keep up the good work as these two issues are not disappearing any time soon.

Support for Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and *Peace* (CCODP) is an integral part of this standing committee. From July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009, councils collected \$75,883.16, which will be forwarded following convention. Sadly, that amount is \$1,278 less than the previous year's contribution. Given that contributions to other national voluntary funds have risen, this decline is particularly disappointing.

Unfortunately, allegations this spring called into question some of CCODP's work. These allegations have been thoroughly investigated by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) and as a result the bishops have affirmed support for CCODP. The League's national spiritual advisor was one of the investigating bishops. Together with Bishop François Lapierre of Saint-Hyacinthe, he submitted a report which can be accessed on the CCCCB Web site. I urge all concerned members to read the report, noting particularly the recommendations.

League involvement with CCODP goes back many years and we have all seen the good that it does in reaching out to people in developing countries, as our brochure indicates. We need to support CCODP and we need to go to reliable sources for information, e.g. the CCCCB or CCODP themselves. In these times of economic uncertainty, developing countries need League support more than ever and CCODP has a proven means of delivering that support effectively and efficiently. Its programs affirm life and bring *hope* and practical help to communities that struggle in developing countries.

As *Women of Peace and Hope*, League contributions to CCODP will enable women and their families in less fortunate parts of the world to live lives that are rooted in justice, that soar on the wings of *hope* and that blossom in *peace*. I have a dream that next year at convention I will stand before you and announce that the League's contribution has topped the \$80,000 mark. My sisters in the League, let us make that dream

a reality for our brothers and sisters in less advantaged parts of our world community!

I would like to close with a short prayer from Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie's *Northern Nuggets and Southern Sage*:

Lord, we believe in You,
help us to believe in one another.
Strengthen not only our faith in You,
but also our faith in each other.
Help us to realize that we come to You best
through one another.
Grant that we might put flesh
to Your inner spirit of love,
By our trust in others and
our acceptance of others as they are.
Grant us new life through faith and fellowship.
Amen. †

EDUCATION AND HEALTH



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“Through service to the people of God” – so ends our mission statement. The education and health standing committee provides members

with many opportunities to serve others. One way in which the national executive meets the second object of the League “to promote the teachings of the Catholic church” is through the National Bursary Fund.

In 1990, the League established an endowment fund with money received in 1988 from two generous donations. Since 1991, the interest earned on that money has been used for bursaries for members needing financial assistance to pursue studies in adult faith formation and/or youth ministry. In the past 19 years, 549 members received bursaries, and the total amount paid for 18 of those years was \$181,733.20.

This year, 29 members applied, and 24 bursaries ranging from \$195.00 to \$500.00 were awarded. Five applicants did not meet the criteria: three did not have the required number of years of service; one planned to enroll in a U.S. college course; and one failed to meet the criterion of an adult faith formation course/program. The total value of bursaries awarded this year was \$11,128.45. The national executive is pleased to offer this support to members so they can learn more about their faith, and then, pass on what they have learned to others.

The national voluntary fund for the Coady International Institute provides bursaries, usually three but sometimes four, to support women taking the diploma in community-based development at the institute. Today, these women, and other

graduates along with partners, are working with millions of people to build a fair, prosperous and secure world, one community at a time.

In 1961, the League made its first donation of \$1,000 to support women who came to study at the institute. Since that time, the money donated has increased, and the total this year is \$30,479.66, an increase of eight percent from 2008.

Donations to the MaterCare International national voluntary fund were up as well. The total is \$38,444.39, an increase of five percent. Thank you for your donations to these two funds.

Have you used the *CWL Day of Peace & Hope Activities Kit* in your council? One of the activities under education and health is a workshop on palliative care. I *hope* some of you have used it. If you have not, I encourage you to do so.

Have you completed the palliative care survey in your council? If you have not, get a copy from your president or from the Web site under Education and Health. You will find it in my second communiqué. Some provincial councils have sent in the results of the survey, but unfortunately, some have not. It is important that all provincial councils respond so the overall picture of palliative care in Canada will be more complete. I thank councils that have sent in the results already.

I encourage you to become involved in palliative care in your communities. You might not feel that you can be a palliative care volunteer, but there are other ways you can offer your help and support. We can help nurture a culture of life through our work in promoting and supporting palliative care. What a service that is!

In light of the threat of the H1N1 virus, I urge you to take good care of yourselves. Wash your hands often and well. Eat healthy foods, exercise and get plenty of rest.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel pray for us as we strive to answer the call to holiness “through service to the people of God.” †

COMMUNICATIONS



Betty Anne Brown
Wellington, Ontario

As *Women of Peace and Hope*, the lyrics of Diana Ross, “Reach out and touch somebody’s hand, make this world a better place, if you can...” could be our mantra.

The image of a colony of bees springs to mind. The colony is actively and harmoniously clustered close together around its queen. In our case, we are clustered enthusiastically around the

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