

NEWS

Bringing home the reality of world hunger

BY MATTHEW MURPHY

The theme of this year's World Food Day, to be held on October 16, is "World Hunger: a local issue".

World Food Day was established in 1979 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in order to draw attention to the tragic reality of world starvation. Since then, over 150 countries have joined in the annual activities.

In Canada alone, more than 250 organizations make up the World Food Day Association of Canada. Dal-Outreach is one such organization.

DAL-Outreach is in its second year of operation. The goal of DAL-Outreach is self-described as a desire "to foster an understanding of, and commitment to, equitable and environmentally-sustainable global development."

The programme, which is funded by CIDA, "provides development education funds to University departments and student groups." It also runs educational activities on campus.

Sean Kelley, development education coordinator for DAL-Outreach, is in charge of the World Food Day activities to be held on Dalhousie campus. The theme of "World Hunger: a local issue" focuses on understanding the dilemma of poverty and hunger in your own community.

In no way does this year's theme undermine efforts to understand the larger global issue, rather it illustrates the universality of world hunger by bringing the problem home.

"Global issues are best understood if local issues are understood," says Kelley, "not one at the expense of the other."

On World Food Day, Kelley plans to emphasize the number and importance of links between hunger in Canada and hunger in the third world.

For instance, he says, economic and social inequality, regional differences and debt are conditions which produce poverty and hunger in both worlds.

The environmental problem is closely tied to food production in developed nations as well as undeveloped nations, he says. Global warming, deforestation, soil erosion and depletion, and the use of pesticides are some problems which farmers and food producers world wide must deal with.

The stereotyping of hunger as a third world problem is invalid. The problem is symptomatic of developed and undeveloped countries alike, he says. "World hunger is truly a local issue... its not just over there in the third world."

Poverty is not a product of the individual; "Poverty is a cycle." This cycle is very difficult to break especially when stereotypes lay the blame on the inability of the individual to control his/her fate, he says.

In the past, helping the poor and hungry in Canada and the third world has meant charity. What is needed is a new method of attack: "solidarity," says Kelley.

Short term food aid is a necessity but long term food aid can have disastrous effects on the recipient country's small farmers who, in better times, feed the nation. The farmer's business can be unintentionally undermined and alienated in its market.

Similarly, while food banks have come to be vital organs of sustenance among poorer Canadians, they are not the solution. Food banks, which began in the early



eighties in response to the recession, have expanded and become fixtures in communities across the country.

This "band aid approach," says Kelley, has been taken for granted by Canadians, thus shifting the problem of poverty and hunger to the proverbial back burner. "The food issue is not about the shortage of food," says Kelley, "therefore the root of the crisis is not changing."

The root of the problem in Canada, according to Kelley, is the relationship between political and

corporate structures. Instead of increasing the taxation of corporations (less the loop holes) the individual has been the brunt of austere budgeting. Kelley says, "Times are tough but we can't take it out on the poor."

On October 16, 1991, World Food Day activities will be held in the Student Union Building at Dalhousie. One of the activities planned is a live teleconference transmitted by satellite where one may phone into the international broadcast and have questions an-

swered by a panel of experts.

A "Jeopardy" style game testing ones knowledge of issues to do with world hunger and poverty will take place. A display of information on World hunger and an abundance of written material dealing with this year's theme of "World Hunger: a local issue" will be presented.

If anyone has questions about World Food Day or other interests of Dal-outreach, Sean Kelley can be found in the Lester B. Pearson Institute at 1321 Edward Street.

Promoting alumni relations

BY LILLI JU

There's a new society at Dal called the Student Alumni Association (SAA). The title may sound a bit contradictory, but it actually isn't according to Shelley Pratt, SAA President. "After your first year of university at Dal, you are considered an alumnus."

The SAA was created at the end of last year. It came as the result of a directed-study by Pam Ross, a student in Recreation under the supervision of Marian Gray of the Dal Alumni Association. Members of the executive were picked at the end of last year.

The goals of the SAA are "to promote relations between on- and

off-campus people from past, present and future and to help promote university and alumni events," said Pratt. "The SAA is a society that can appeal to all students - everyone interested in meeting new people and making new friends."

Upcoming SAA events include Homecoming on Oct. 18-20, participating in the volunteer phonathon, sending a team to the President's Sports Fest, as well as other student/alumni oriented events.

The SAA have already made a number of appearances on campus, attending such events as the Parents' Luncheon (over the summer), Downtown Dalhousie, the Wel-

come Show/Convocation, Shine-rama Pancake breakfast (they helped serve pancakes to hundreds of students), and the Closing Ceremonies of Fall Orientation Week.

Last Wednesday the SAA held its first general meeting for all interested students. Pratt said "it was successful. We introduced the executive, gave a history of the Student Alumni Association and talked about upcoming activities and events throughout the year."

The association plans to form a membership committee, a public relations committee and an events committee. These will collectively help to make the SAA a stronger and more active society.

ED/OP

To the editor:

I am writing in response to two articles published in the Sept. 26 *Gazette* in order to clarify a couple of points. In the article "Science steps out" there is a passage that states that there is an additional increase in fees for all Bsc. students. On the contrary, the Dalhousie Science Society had the option to increase its fee, but opted not to do so in light of the tuition fee increase.

In response to Joey Goodings article "Dalhousie SUB space controversy rages," I believe one point in particular was taken out of context. On page 14 it states that the DSS is critical of the DSU for providing space for the student services. During the interview I said that the Vice President of the Student Services, Eric McKee is a V.P. of the university and as such he should have his office in the A&A like the others. I

did not say that Student Services should not be located in the SUB. As a psychology major, I am well aware of the need for Counselling Services to be accessible to students. I feel however that there are too many spaces allotted to distribute funds in their favour. In a meeting with Hilary Wells she agreed that the bottom-line for getting space in the SUB relies, in part, on how much the DSU receives from that group.

In the future I hope that the editors will ensure that the context of their interviews are maintained so that the articles they publish will be more accurate.

Dennis MacNeil
President, Dalhousie Science Society

To the editor:

"Students will expect high quality support services and efficient administrative practices that reflect a re-

spect for students' convenience and the value of their time."

This impressive statement comes not from SUNS or the DSU but from Dalhousie University's statement of principles regarding students. Any student who has stood in line for hours only to be directed to yet another line may take issue with this statement.

If one deems classrooms as a support service, the present overcrowding would appear to put into question quality.

I was a member of the Board of Governors during the "Great Tuition Debate." One of the reasons, from the university's point of view, for the huge increase in tuition was to improve the quality of the university. They received the increase, now where is the quality? Has our university now taken the philosophy of many governments; charge them more, give them less!

To be fair, there have been some important improvements. The new Dal bursary is now in place. Over 2,000 applications taken in the first

day and a half! The Tiger patrol will shortly start its rounds. Both of these programs are unique and will serve many students at Dal.

A common factor of these programs is that they are paid for directly by students. The Financial Strategy Committee recommended that 25 per cent of any increase go to the Dal bursary program. Through the hard work of your student reps, interested students (thanks Chris and Lara) and with the support from many Board members every penny of that fund is going to help students.

This cooperation should be a lesson to all involved!

What does this have to do with registration problems? Plenty! According to the university's own guidelines we are entitled to better.

However, this requires some work on your part. First, do not accept problems with a shrug! Inform your student representatives of your problems. Contact the registrar Gudrin Currie, be specific. Vice-president Erik McKee (Student Services) is yet another person you should con-

tact. Vice-president Denis Stairs (Academic) is responsible for the academic side of things. Let him know that you are not happy.

Then there is the power of the press. The *Gazette* is always looking for contributors. Write a letter, an article, send pictures!

Now a few pointers. Always be specific, outline your problem concisely and have all relevant documents at hand. Never, never throw any forms away. Never give anything but a photocopy, always keep the original for your records. Always make a note of who you talked to, the date and the time.

To give you an example of how this can work just look at the students that were charged a \$50 late fee even when they first attempted to register in July. These people are now entitled to a refund, but only if they apply.

The moral of the story is don't just accept a problem as a given. Speak up, whimper or shout to be heard!

Don Manson
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