

PLANNING: NOVEMBER 1999 TO FEBRUARY 2000

After October 7, meetings took place with students, teachers and OWAHC staff to refine the direction and outline of the project. It was then that the project expanded into a conference that would take place over two days and include the options for participants of spending the night at St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School.

Over the three and a half months of planning an agenda for the project developed, various local NGOs were contacted to provide resources and support and the logistics of holding the conference were determined. Students identified and contacted people to provide keynote addresses. Topics for workshop sessions were also identified. Several students took on responsibility for conducting workshops. In other cases, people from the wider community were approached about providing workshops.

A conference package was also developed. It included information on the various partners involved in the project, facts about child labour and suggestions for how to find out additional information. Some of this information was produced by the students, while some was provided by NGOs such as *Free the Children* International and World Vision. The conference package also contained a T-shirt which included a logo designed especially for the conference by a student and the list of sponsors. Additional supplies required by students to participate in the conference were also included.

A flyer was developed to promote the conference and provide the necessary information outlining the conference, the various groups supporting it and how to find out more information or register. Students, teachers and the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre worked to register students for the event, contacting students and schools in person and by phone.

The process of planning the conference provided ample opportunities for students, supported by OWAHC staff and teachers, to develop new skills including learning to work effectively as a group and how to begin with an idea and take it through to completion. Twelve students took part in facilitation training provided by the United Way of Burlington, Hamilton-Wentworth.

THE CONFERENCE

The conference itself took place February 11 to 12, 2000. Fifty-nine young people from sixteen different schools took part. [For a list of conference participants see Appendix A, for a complete agenda for the conference, see Appendix B.]

Participants spend Friday evening getting to know one another and being introduced to the complex problem of child labour. Fintan Kilbride spoke about the work he has been involved with in Latin American and the Caribbean helping to set up the infrastructure necessary to provide clean water and the building of schools. Information was provided to students about how they could become involved in similar projects.

The tour of the exhibits on Saturday morning was conducted with the guidance of a group of volunteer exhibit interpreters, a group consisting of graduate students at McMaster