

*"...challenging
students to
think of ways
to respond to
people..."*



URBAN EXPERIENCE

"C.O.R. Urban Experience " Revolving Doors

*Exploring our changing neighborhoods and
how to encourage diversity in a community*

**Saturday, February 26, 2000
10:00a.m. - 4:00p.m.**

*Location: International Conference Center
of the Ecumenical Union in Uptown*

The third C.O.R. event of the year was held at the International Conference Center (ICC) of the Ecumenical Union in the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago on Saturday, February 26, 2000. Uptown is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the country, with over 60 languages spoken in the local high school, no dominant ethnic group, people from all socioeconomic strata and a third of the residents born in countries other than the United States. This neighborhood set the stage for unlocking Doors as C.O.R. focused on providing students with the key of experience in a successfully diverse neighborhood to unlock the revolving doors of White flight and gentrification that cause continual turnover in the neighborhoods of Chicago and that shut the door to integration and diversity in neighborhoods.

The day began with Patty Nolan-Fitzgerald, Principal of Queen of Peace High School and founder of C.O.R., challenging students to think of ways to respond to people when they say "That's just the way it is" when talking about why Chicago continues to be the most-segregated city in the United States.

She then related the students' traveling to Uptown for an urban experience to the tradition of religious pilgrimage. Nolan-Fitzgerald encouraged students to think of themselves as pilgrims and to consider how they should behave when they are pilgrims to a new place or when they encounter a pilgrim in their own communities. The facilitators for the day - Susan Rans and Katy Hogan, both alumna of Queen of Peace High School with long histories of activism around issues of diversity - then gave students the history of Uptown, explaining the many shifts the place has undergone and the community organizing that has sustained the success of Uptown as a very mixed, densely populated neighborhood.

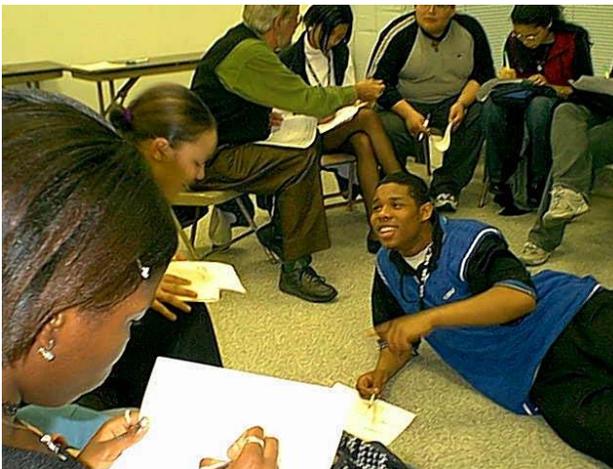
After the introduction to the day, the 90 participants from 14 schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago were divided into three groups, with each group heading for a different combination of experiences. Some of the experiences offered to students were a talk by Jon Schmidt, the Executive Director of the Chicago chapter of Do Something; a conversation with Denice Davis, the Chief of

Staff for Helen Shiller, the Alderwoman for Uptown; a workshop with Eveline Chang, representative of the Chinese Mutual Aid Association and director of the Multi-cultural Youth Project; and a neighborhood walk, during which students observed the



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overwhelming diversity of Uptown and learned about the encroaching gentrification of Uptown and the community organizing currently being done to maintain diversity and to retain affordable housing.



After each group enjoyed two of the above experiences, they returned to the ICC to share their experiences with the other groups during a jigsaw activity. During this time, students identified the motivations of community organizers, the strategies used to organize in a community and the outcomes of such actions. Finally, student groups responded to the prompts "The next time we hear someone in our community say, "That's just the way it is, we will respond by . . . , "The next time we are the pilgrim, we will . . . , and "The next we see a pilgrim, we will . . . , all of which were used during the closing prayer for the day. (see Closing Prayer).

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Closing Prayers

Luke 9:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Jesus called the twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases. Then he sent them out to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick, after saying to them, Take nothing with you for the trip: no walking stick, no beggars bag, no food, no money, not even an extra shirt. Wherever you are welcome, stay in the same house until you leave that town; wherever people don't welcome you, leave that town and shake the dust off your feet. - The disciples left and traveled through all the villages, preaching the Good News and healing people everywhere.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Group #1

The next time we hear someone in our community say, That is just the way it is, we will respond by saying, Maybe for you, but not for me; maybe some day you'll see my perspective.

Response: Lord, unlock our hearts to the pilgrim.

Group #2

The next time we hear someone in our community say, That is just the way it is, we will respond by saying, The only way to change is by listening to each other, by organizing change for the better and by changing the way it is.

Response: Lord, give us the courage to be pilgrims.

Group #3

The next time we hear someone in our community say, That is just the way it is, we will respond by saying, No, that's not the way it is. We can make a difference.

Response: Lord, unlock our hearts to the pilgrim.

Luke 6: 22-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Blessed are you when people hate you, exclude you, insult you, and denounce your name. Be glad when that happens and dance for joy, because a great reward is kept for you in heaven. For their ancestors did the very same things to the prophets.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Group #4

The next time we are the pilgrim, we will stand up for our rights if we are being treated unequally. We will show people that we have feelings, too, and that we are just as important as anyone and everyone else. We will show that we have a voice and that we will not give up despite any challenges we may face. We will show those who are treating us unfairly that it is not right for them to judge us based on race because we are people and as people we will be determined to show our importance and uniqueness.

Response: Lord, give us the courage to be pilgrims.

Group #5

The next time we are the pilgrim, we will not be afraid to ask for help and we will not make assumptions.

Response: Lord, give us the courage to be pilgrims.

Group #6

The next time we are the pilgrim, we will continue to promote cultural diversity with an open mind and heart; be more persistent and understanding if we are turned away. We will also call our Alderman about any concerns we might have!

Response: Lord, give us the courage to be pilgrims.

Luke 6:27-35
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone hits you on one cheek, let him hit the other one too; if someone take your coat, let him have your shirt as well. Give to everyone who asks you for something, and when someone takes what is yours, do not ask for it back.

If you love only the people who love you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners do that! And if you lend only to those from whom you hope to get it back, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount! No! Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Group #7

The next time we see a pilgrim, we will empower them through our welcome and acceptance of their qualities and gifts.

Response: Lord, unlock our hearts to the pilgrim.

Group #8

The next time we see a pilgrim, we will try not to be judgmental towards them, we will make them feel welcomed and we will introduce ourselves and befriend them.

Response: Lord, unlock our hearts to the pilgrim.

Group #9

The next time we see a pilgrim, we will let them know that we are pilgrims as well, by opening our minds and hearts in welcoming them into our lives and into our communities.

Response: Lord, unlock our hearts to the pilgrim.

Group #10

The next time we see a pilgrim, we will make them feel accepted and give them a home away from home.

Response: Lord, unlock our hearts to the pilgrim.

Luke 6:37-38
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Do not judge others, and God will not judge you; do not condemn others, and God will not condemn you; forgive others, and God will forgive you. Give to others, and God will give to you. Indeed, you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Lord, give us the courage to be pilgrims. Lord, unlock our hearts to the pilgrim. Lord, guide us on our journey. Amen