

The Greening of Loretto College
Press Conference
September 17, 2009-09-13

This day has been almost 8 years in the making and it is with great joy that I welcome all of you here to Loretto College this afternoon.

Our motivation in asking Ameresco to undertake an audit of all of our buildings was driven by two factors. One was the need to replace 50 year old equipment. As we explored, with the help of Ameresco, the array of options open to us we saw that it would be possible to improve the equipment and shell of the building AND to recoup some of our financial investment. We saw this to be in keeping with our responsibility for good stewardship of the Institute's financial resources in order to care for our members and ensure viability for mission.

The second motivation was our increasing awareness of the responsibility every human being shares for taking care of the earth as expressed in the cogent words of the United Nations' Millennium Declaration of the year 2000:

“We must spare no effort to free all of humanity, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities, and whose resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs.”

This echoes our commitment as Loretto, to devote our energy and resources to “showing reverent care for the earth and all of creation”. Loretto, worldwide, takes these words seriously. In 2003 the Directors of Education of Loreto Schools worldwide, meeting in Loyola in Spain; in 2005 the coordinators of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Loreto Provinces and Regions meeting at the UN in New York; and in 2006 elected delegates from 24 countries to the Loreto General Chapter in Lima, Peru; all promised to focus our energy and resources on promoting the implementation of the Earth Charter and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals including MDG #7 which aims to:

“ensure environmental sustainability by integrating the principles of sustainability into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of sustainable resources.”

So here at Loretto College we have put our money where our mouth is. I love to hear the environmental impact of what we have done expressed in terms of being the equivalent of planting 750,000 trees. That puts us in the company of Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize winner from Kenya (and a past pupil of Loreto, Limuru) who with her Green Belt Movement planted a million trees. Wangari is, in fact addressing the United

Nations Summit on Climate Change which opens in New York on September 22. Expressing it this way unites us too with Loreto pupils in all of our schools in India who have planted 400 trees to commemorate the 400th anniversary of our founding. For Loreto Schools in Nairobi the goal is to plant 4000 trees before the 400th anniversary celebrations in Rome take place in October. Students at Loreto Matunda also in Kenya have planted 1000 seedlings ... and we continue our practice of planting a tree at Loreto Maryholme in Keswick in honour of our Jubilarians every year. As we speak the money raised by Loreto for our El Salvador project is being put to work planting Cashew trees that will bear fruit in five years and produce for twenty five years.

Today I would like to thank the Federal and Provincial Governments, Ontario Hydro and Enron etc. The financial incentives you provided enabled us to do more than we would otherwise have been able to do. And, I want to challenge the owners and managers of other facilities on the University of Toronto Campus to do what we have done ... either because it is the right thing to do or because it is in your own self interest to do so.

Minister Gerretson, thank you for coming today and know that when you and your Government take measures to protect our precious natural resources for future generations instead of taking the sometimes more popular and politically expedient short view, Loreto is fully behind you and grateful to you. And remember ... from this very roof top we have a bird's eye view of the Legislature at Queen's Park. We'll be watching to be sure that you do as our founder Mary Ward told us to do ... "Do good and do it well".

Thank you

Evanne Hunter IBVM