



USA/Toronto Region  
The Planning Team for the  
Lasallian Student Convocation at the United Nations

3 September 2009

*“Christian education has an extremely important role to play in our current reality...  
a type of education that is human and personal and which plays a critical role  
that makes possible the creation of a new society...  
an education that is participatory and fraternal.”*

- 2004 Pastoral Letter, Brother Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría FSC

Dear Lasallian Educator:

The Regional Conference of Christian Brothers (RCCB), the Brothers Visitor, has endorsed a Regional Education Board (REB) proposal to have the USA/Toronto Region undertake an educational and advocacy initiative on the Rights of the Child, an exciting opportunity to give witness of evangelization and catechesis, the principal purposes of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Lasallian educational mission. For the 2009-10 academic year, the principal event will be the *Lasallian Student Convocation at the United Nations, 25-28 April 2010*.

Your chief administrator has identified you as the principal contact person with whom the Planning Team will communicate. Our primary aim is to help support the local effort 1) begin raising awareness about the rights of the child initiative and, 2) to initiate an effort to invite and prepare a select number of students to participate in the Convocation.

On behalf of the Region and your local Lasallian community, the Planning Team expresses gratitude for your willingness to help move our Region of the Institute towards achieving the Convocation.

If you have any questions, please contact one of the Planning Team members.

Thank you for this investment of time and energy for the beginning of this Regional initiative on the Rights of the Child. Through our joint efforts to make the Lasallian Student Convocation at the United Nations a source of education and inspiration, we will continue to foster a spirit of association in the educational communities throughout our Region.

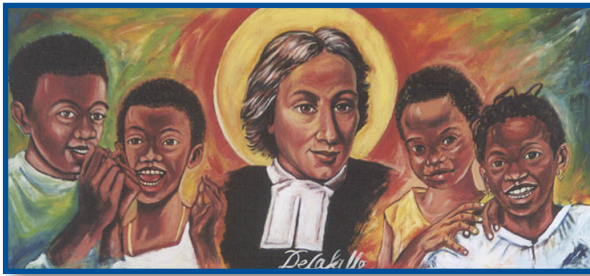
In Saint La Salle,

*The Planning Team*

## Context

In 1989, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The International Catholic Child Bureau, or BICE, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) of which the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a founding member, played a significant role during the 1980s in drafting this treaty. Nine years ago, in May 2000, the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Chapter directed that the defense and promotion of the rights of children be “a major focus of concern” for the Catholic Lasallian educational mission.

With the approaching 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC on 20 November, and the launch of BICE’s World Appeal for a new mobilization on behalf of children, the USA/Toronto Region aims to respond to the call of the Church and the Institute to open our eyes wide and SEE children as Jesus and Saint John Baptist de La Salle did. Like them, we have to feel indignation when injustice blocks children from being children. Because of the numerical power the Lasallian community has in the USA and around the world (nearly 67,000 students over 9,000 educators), observes Brother John Johnston FSC, former Superior General, we have an enormous potential to take maximum advantage of the possibilities for significant educational service. Brother Superior General, Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría FSC, echoes the significance of this cause in his 2008 Pastoral Letter when he writes, “... thanks to the efforts of Brother John Johnston, we have made the defense of the rights of children as one of our flagship causes.”



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You should look upon the children you are charged to teach as poor, abandoned orphans ...

This is the reason God places them as if under your guardianship. [God] looks on them with compassion and takes care of them as being their protector, their support and their father, and it is you that he entrusts this care. This God of goodness places them in your hands.

*Meditations for the Time of Retreat 37.3*

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## Plan for Action

The 44<sup>th</sup> General Chapter gives us this directive: “establish, promote, adapt, or create pedagogical, pastoral and catechetical projects that are realistic responses to the situations of poverty today.” *Thus, the Planning Team foresees the 2009-10 academic year as the beginning of a three year catechetical effort on the intersection of the Lasallian educational mission and social justice promotion and advocacy.* (The hope in the NGO network is that US Senate will take up a resolution for ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2011-12). With the rights of children as the major focus of concern, this regional initiative aims to integrate the educational, formational, and transformational aspects of evangelization and catechesis in a Lasallian context. In turn, this critical pedagogy leads to interiorizing “a culture of action on behalf of the rights of the children and youth,” Brother John Johnston states, “a culture that will shape the way we see, the way we think, the way we judge, the way we decide, the way we act as individuals, as educational communities, as Districts, as Regions, as International Lasallian Association.”

Envisioned as a participatory event, the Convocation will include dynamic speakers and discussions with officials from UN agencies, world ambassadors (Apostolic Nuncio among them), and US and International NGOs; interactive workshops on global issues; a leadership and social justice advocacy seminar; UN Tour; cross-cultural exchange; building connections among fellow Lasallians.

### *Timeline:*

- *Planning for Action* information package disseminated to local contacts
  - 3 September 2009
- First payment for convocation participants
  - Due: 16 November 2009
- Official launch of USA/Toronto Rights of the Child Initiative
  - Huether Lasallian Conference, 19-21 November 2009, Cincinnati OH
- Second payment for convocation participants
  - Due: 15 February 2010
- Lasallian Student Convocation at the United Nations, New York NY
  - 25-29 April 2010

Because the Lasallian community has an opportunity to offer significant educational service and witness to the wider Church and larger public, the Convocation has received the endorsement of Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Apostolic Nuncio, the Permanent Observer to the Holy See (Vatican) to the UN.

## Audience

Secondary and higher education students and teachers are the primary audience for the Convocation. Different in design and content from the Lasallian Youth Assembly, the Planning Team encourages extending an invitation to those students who can potentially serve as a leaven in the school community. Those students who are capable of taking up servant leadership towards assisting the school community in promoting awareness about and advocacy for the social justice concerns, especially rights of the child issues.

## Cost & Registration Process

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation (FAF), a UN-affiliated NGO, our partner for the Convocation, will oversee logistics—registration, hotel accommodations, meals, the use of UN and other facilities. The Convocation’s activities will be held at the United Nations headquarters and neighboring facilities in New York City.

FAF has arranged a three-day or four-day package for a school group to select. The four-day option is for those groups who may wish to stay another whole day and night for sightseeing purposes as planned by the faculty member(s) providing accompaniment. Otherwise, the three-day option is sufficient for the Convocation.

The FAF package comprises the following from Sunday, 25 April to Wednesday, 28 April 2010:

<i>One person per room for three nights</i>	<i>Two persons per room for three nights</i>	<i>Three persons per room for three nights</i>
\$XXX per person plus 2 lunches and 3 dinners	\$XXX per person plus 2 lunches and 3 dinners	\$XXX per person plus 2 lunches and 3 dinners
<i>One person per room for four nights</i>	<i>Two persons per room for four nights</i>	<i>Three persons per room for four nights</i>
\$XXX per person plus 2 lunches and 3 dinners	\$XXX per person plus 2 lunches and 3 dinners	\$XXX per person plus 2 lunches and 3 dinners

Note:

- The meals begin with Sunday dinner through Tuesday dinner. Breakfast is on your own.
- The charge per person also accounts for our collective use of meeting room at the UN and other neighboring facilities, namelt the Church of the Holy Family; comprehensive travel insurance and the UN Tour.
- Accommodations: Grand Hyatt Hotel on 42nd Street, adjacent to Grand Central Station, and in walking distance to the UN.

## Fundraising Possibilities

Equal Exchange, a fair trade company in partnership with Catholic Relief Services, has provided materials school groups to voluntarily consider using to aid in covering the costs for the Convocation. This form of fundraising represents a wonderful opportunity to educate on fair trade issues, raise money, and enjoy good chocolate. In addition to printed information, a power-point presentation, created by Equal Exchange specifically for our purposes, is included in the packet.

[For Details and Registration Information - Click Here](#)