

# 'Walking Together'

*Latin American Mission Program sends P.E.I. youth to the Dominican Republic*

By **Lisa Marie Walsh**  
Post Contributor

A number of P.E.I. youth are beginning orientation for their 2009 Dominican Republic Faith and Justice Experience.

The program is organized by the Latin American Mission Program (LAMP) of the Diocese of Charlottetown and the Diocesan Youth Committee. The young people, accompanied by a LAMP coordinator and two youth animators, will go to the Dominican Republic for the three-week mission in mid-May 2009. As the name of the program implies, it is based on the dynamic unity of faith and social justice. The program is open to all youth, ages 18 to 26, who are interested in a challenging, first-hand experience of how most of the world's population live.

This is the sixth youth mission to the Dominican Republic. The participants say they are changed by their first-hand interaction with people in a developing country.

They see with their own eyes the impoverishment which is the life of the vast majority of the world's population. They come home with a new view of their own lives. Many of them return looking for better ways to live out their experience as they make life choices.

A former participant comments, "I have learned so much about people, justice,

myself and my faith from coming on this experience...I love what is happening to me. The blinders have been lifted."

While in the Dominican Republic the participants spend the first eight days hosted by a wide variety of organizations, both church-based and community-based, involved in work for social justice. The areas of special interest are: sugar cane plantations, community health clinics, Christian base communities, community engagement, and youth group programs with street kids. For ten days, each of the P.E.I. youth will live with a typical socially-involved Dominican family. They will also spend two days living and working with an organic coffee growers' cooperative in the mountains.

A key component to the program is the seven month preparation time, which is already underway. During this time participants learn more about Dominican life and culture through

such topics as: Dominican history, the story roots, and consequences of economic injustice in the Dominican Republic, solutions based on a social justice model rather than on a charity model, theology of liberation and the faith of the Dominican people, cultural expressions and basic Spanish language.

Another important aspect of the experience takes place once participants have returned home. They are challenged to reflect on the so-



*¡ Caminando Juntos/as !*

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 2009  
FAITH & JUSTICE EXPERIENCE**

*Walking Together !*



**Program for Young Adults in the DR  
May 13 – June 3, 2009**

Information session to be held at UPEI

MacDougall Hall, Room 329

12PM, Friday, December 5, 2008

For further information please contact Lisa at [lwalsh@upei.ca](mailto:lwalsh@upei.ca) or  
Cathy at 368-1128 or e-mail [lamp@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:lamp@pei.sympatico.ca)



**Poster for the Dominican Republic Faith and Justice Experience.** Submitted photo

cial justice questions which arose from their experience. They have an opportunity to share their encounters and the effects on their personal lives after sharing the hardships, fears, hopes and joy of the Dominican people. They will also consider the role of Canada in perpetuating or lessening the impoverishment of peoples in the

Dominican Republic and in other parts of the world.

"I would recommend it (this program) to those searching for experiences out of the ordinary," is a comment from a 2007 participant.

There are still available spaces for participants who apply immediately. If you are interested in applying or would like to know more

about the program, an information session is being held Dec. 5, 2008.

This session will be held in MacDougall Hall, Room 329 at 12 p.m. Also feel free to contact Lisa Walsh at [lwalsh@upei.ca](mailto:lwalsh@upei.ca) or Cathy Ronahan at 368-1128 or [lamp@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:lamp@pei.sympatico.ca) with any further questions you may have.