

## SCNY Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation Update –October 2016



**PJIC Graduate Intern, Nikki Bogan, met with Jen Benson from Riverkeeper** on October 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss the ways their organization is protecting a major life source to many, the Hudson River. Since 1972, Riverkeeper has been advocating the necessity of a clean Hudson River for not only the surrounding communities that rely on the water source, but for the many species that live in the river. During this meeting with Riverkeeper, Jen passionately shared her concerns about an important matter that is upon the Hudson River.

There is a proposal to place 43 anchorages along the river, from Yonkers all the way to Kingston. This means that the Hudson River may turn into a parking lot for barges carrying crude oil. This could potentially be catastrophic for the ecosystems of the Hudson River. First, the anchors being dropped to the bottom of the Hudson are destroying habitats to many species of fish, including sturgeon, which are an endangered species. Second, as we saw in 2012 when barges began to park in our river, there was an increasing amount of noise and light pollution from the barges. This will only worsen with 43 more barges. Last, if any of the barges were to leak crude oil into this major life source, there will be irreparable repercussions. There is no way to clean up crude oil if it is spilled into a waterway.

As a community it is important to voice your opinion on this issue, as the loss of the Hudson River will eventually impact the entire globe. A simple conversation about these issues can help spread the word and encourage all communities to take action. There are many ways you can support Riverkeeper in protecting the Hudson. Riverkeeper offers volunteer opportunities for various events throughout the year. On their website ([www.riverkeeper.org](http://www.riverkeeper.org)) you can write letters to your governor to make the right decision in stopping the barges from entering the Hudson River. The Coast Guard is also accepting input on the proposal of new anchorages. Voice your opinion at <https://goo.gl/HEZwez> Together we can protect our life source, our Hudson River!

**Indigenous Peoples Celebration on Randall's Island in New York City.** On October 10<sup>th</sup>, PJIC Graduate Intern Nikki Bogan and fellow cohort members Adria Anderson and Fateema Villani attended. In the picture to the right they are seen with Chief Dwaine Perry of the Ramapough Tribe of New Jersey, who led a sunrise ceremony for hundreds of attendees. After they welcomed



the day, the celebration that followed included live music and song, shared spoken word, and many guest speakers from various Tribes.



Many of the speakers shared experiences of witnessing the Standing Rock injustices in North Dakota. One member of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation shared her struggles as a mother trying to protect her children's futures. If the Dakota Pipeline construction is finished, their water source will be contaminated, and their reservation will be forced to look for sources elsewhere. Through tears, the mother then shared that her children's school on the reservation had been shut down that very day. She then shared her frustrations that their peaceful protests to save their water are being portrayed as violent, when in actuality, that is not the case. The activists are unarmed, standing for their water source.

The Sioux Tribe continues to get support from all over the United States. It is the first time in many years that over 200 tribes have gathered in solidarity to protest an injustice. At the Indigenous Peoples Celebration on Randall's Island we witnessed a similar situation. There were indigenous peoples from Hawaii and all over the United States praying together that the injustices will stop.

**J**oin Pax Christi USA, LCWR and faith communities in prayer, study and action on behalf of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline project which threatens their lands, sacred sites and water. Sign petition at <http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/no-dapl>

**On October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Bread for the World Representative, Margaret Tran, and PJIC Graduate Intern, Nikki Bogan, organized an Offering of Letters event** to celebrate the successes of and to thank the local parishes and NGOs who have organized their communities to write letters to the decision-makers of New York. Bread's Vote to End Hunger Campaign has been pushing Senator Chuck Schumer and Wendy Long to state their proposed plan to eliminate hunger in New York. Many of the letters written to Senator Schumer encourage him to increase funding to \$230 million for the Department of State's Global Health Account. With many partners, including SCNY, Bread's Offering of Letters Campaign has been successful in gathering over 2,000 letters to be presented to Senator Schumer and Wendy Long at a later date.



Fourteen representatives of parishes/organizations around New York, including SCNY, gathered to celebrate our collaboration and successes in the campaign. During the event at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Margaret Tran, the Regional Organizer of Bread, discussed the issues of maternal and child nutrition, and criminal justice reform. The conversations were then followed by an astounding performance by The Peace Poets, who portrayed the injustices of the world through spoken word and hip hop songs. The topics of their performance ranged from hunger and poverty to immigration injustices to environmental issues. A few of the participants at the gathering exclaimed their appreciation for the work that the Peace Poets are doing. Others even stated that they became emotional from the performance. The Peace Poets played an important role in further connecting our community members present at the gathering. It was a way for the organizers to see and hear more about the issues that they have been working towards eliminating.



If you are interested in learning more about Bread for the World, please visit: [www.Bread.org](http://www.Bread.org)  
If you are interested in hearing performances by The Peace Poets, please visit: [www.thepeacepoets.com](http://www.thepeacepoets.com)



**The October 18th Awakening the Dreamer event**, coordinated by Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation, CMSV Campus Ministry and other CMSV groups, was a call for students, faculty and community members to come together and discuss the importance of protecting our Mother Earth. The ATD program was created by the Pachamama Alliance in coordination with the Achuar Tribe in the Ecuadorian Amazon. The program is much more than a movement; it has become a way for people to realize the necessity of making simple every day changes and thinking

about the consequences of our actions on our Mother Earth. The event had a great mix of community members and brought together perspectives from young adults, as well as experience from the older generations. In addition to CMSV students, staff and faculty, members of the Sierra Club Lower Hudson Chapter, SAPE (Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion), Sisters of Charity and Associates, and Daughters of Charity participated. The program heavily emphasizes the importance of collaboration with others in order to successfully make a sustainable change. The conversations among participants at the event were a great way to connect and learn together.

*Nikki Bogan, PJIC Office Graduate Intern*