

Report of the Diocesan Youth Council to the 220th Diocesan Convention

The year 2003 was a formative one for the youth department. Kep Short began his ministry with the Diocese as the full-time Director of Youth Ministry on February 1, 2003. Work began that spring to bring the different Diocesan youth ministry groups together into one entity. By the summer, the Diocesan Youth Council was formed – molding several youth ministry groups into one that would oversee all Diocesan Youth Events. The 2003-2004 Youth Council consists of twenty-one youth in grades 6-12 and twelve adults – altogether from twenty-three churches representing each of the eight convocations of the Diocese. We met in August to get to know each other, create a mission statement and covenant for all Youth Events, and to commit ourselves to creating and running events that bring young people to safe spaces in order that they may encounter God and build community with one another.

The Youth Council continues to meet during the school year, evaluating the past youth events and preparing for the upcoming ones. It is a diverse group, with young people and adults of all races and cultures and locations working together to run events that are safe, significant, and fun for youth.

In 2003, there were eight Diocesan Youth Events. That number will increase to nine in 2004. Youth Events range in size from thirty to three hundred people. They include overnight and weekend events as well as day and evening events. Young people from the Youth Council and beyond take an active part along with adults in building these events. They serve on Design Teams, help plan and lead worship and program, and via the Youth Council, help define the policies that govern these events.

Information packets on Diocesan Youth Events are mailed to each parochial clergyperson, each congregational youth ministry contact, and each past participant every semester. Information and registration forms are also always available on the Diocesan Youth Website at www.newjerseyyouth.org.

We plan on continued growth in numbers and diversity at youth events in 2004. The young people and adults on Youth Council put an enormous amount of time and work into making these events happen, and hold all events up to the Youth Council's mission statement, which so aptly describes our purpose as we work together:

As the Youth Council of the Diocese of New Jersey,

We express our faith in Jesus Christ by serving others, uplifting diversity, giving and receiving respect, and showing dignity, love, and leadership.

We invite youth to creatively experience the meaning of the Christian faith in a positive atmosphere, and to develop their own faith in Christ.

We claim the place and voices of youth in the church, ministering in this diocese and to the wider church and world.

Respectfully Submitted,
CJ Carlamere – Youth Co-Chair, Youth Council
The Rev. Dr. Raewynne Whiteley – Adult Co-Chair, Youth Council
Kep Short – Diocesan Director of Youth Ministry