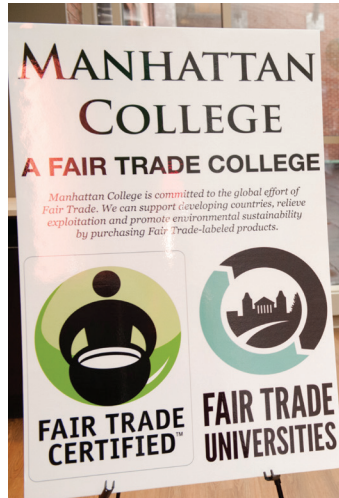




★LASALLIANLOOK★

Celebrating Fair Trade Month in October



As New York City's first Fair Trade College, Manhattan has been dedicated to bringing awareness to these practices and offering fair trade products throughout campus, including its bookstore and dining halls. This past October, the College established Fair Trade Month and showcased a number of events promoting social justice and responsibility.

EACH SCHOOL YEAR, Lois Harr, director of Manhattan's Campus Ministry and Social Action (CMSA) department, and her cohort of social justice advocates gear up to educate a new crop of students on the importance of purchasing fair trade goods.

According to Harr, asking them to buy these items, which are produced by farmers and workers who receive adequate pay and can perform their duties in a safe environment, is not a tough sell. It just makes sense.

"The nature of the college environment is that students come and go, so it's a constant commitment on our part to inform students on social justice, of which fair trade practices are a concrete example," Harr says.

Throughout October, CMSA hosted a number of Fair Trade Month events that raised awareness of the ideals of Fair Trade USA, a nonprofit organization that regulates transactions between U.S. companies and international suppliers. Its efforts go toward ensuring that as many workers as possible receive the tools, training and resources to live and produce goods sustainably.

In February 2012, Manhattan became the first Fair Trade College in New York City. As such, Fair Trade USA required that the campus carry fair trade goods within all campus dining halls, restaurants, cafes and the bookstore.

According to Harr, celebrating Fair Trade Month in October — the time-frame designated by the nonprofit — is an opportunity to promote social justice and responsibility. Although, she and other faculty members encourage students to adhere to these principles throughout the year, as they are integral to the College's Lasallian heritage.

The Fair Trade Month events at the College included: bracelet-making using fair trade beads that are made by Ugandan women living in extreme poverty; breakfast and dessert items made with fair trade bananas, including banana bread, banana pancakes and bananas foster, offered in Locke's Loft; a coffee break featuring java produced through socially responsible labor practices in countries including Ethiopia, Nicaragua and Peru; and an ice cream social to discuss the processes through which ingredients in this sugary treat are produced and transported to our grocery stores and ice cream parlors.

