

CLC Ontario Region Women's Summer School
Port Elgin, Ontario
Women in Leadership
July 2014

This was the second CLC Summer School that I attended. The course began with an evening plenary on Sunday. Throughout the week we covered various facets of Leadership: Learning about Leadership and Ourselves; The Personal is Political; Conflict Consensus and Communicating; Public Image and Personal Priorities; Reflection and Looking Ahead.

The morning plenary with an exercise that was fuelled through the week continued each day. At the end we figured the spark that started us, our own skills, our accomplishments and where we want to go. Strong women speakers empowered us by sharing their story. We had activist Judy Rebeck; MP Rathika Sitsabaiesan; Barb Byers, Secretary-Treasurer CLC; Nancy Hutchinson, Secretary-Treasurer OFL to name a few speakers. Our days started with high positive energy.

The following were some of the topics we accomplished in the classroom through various conversations, task sheet exercises, digital story-telling and very often our own personal story:

- Explored our ideas around leadership, challenges women leaders face
- Explored women's history
- Power and oppression in our society, union, community and governments
- Learnt group decision-making processes
- Practiced public speaking
- Communication strategies for connecting with members, working with and using social media
- Power and Participation: The Diversity Wheel. The experience of "Advantages" "Disadvantages"
- Our own digital picture story
- Developed our own action plan

Class participation was always very interesting, lively and beneficial. Our instructors, Sandra Pan and Vicki Smallman were very inspiring and committed. Evening camp fires, roasting marshmallows, making spider wieners added to leisure time when we had a chance to mingle and expand our skills. A concert on Wednesday evening when Activist Faith Nolan came in and performed, many of us took to the floor! Class presentations on Thursday evening were phenomenal when each class presented on stage. Later that evening karaoke and social was a hit.

Overall school at the CAW family centre was exceptionally good. The facility rates high in every respect, school course, accommodation, dining, and environment.

I am thankful to my union and employer for providing me such an opportunity.

Keeping in mind the Chinese proverb:

"Teachers open the doors, but you must enter by yourself."

I hope to put into good use the knowledge I've acquired in summer school in all aspects of my life, especially my work within my union.

In solidarity,

Debbie Rebeiro
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