JUSTICE & CHARITY
By Dustin Wittenmyer

She had strong hands.
Her fingers were familiar
with knotted, hard cracked wood.

She brought her tools.
Tools that plane, sand, cut,
and strike only where they must.

She worked by Request;
gently sloping roofs
to ease the rain water
into the troughs,
generous rooms
for families to meet,
and doors that glide
into their place.

She was Charity, though
she came not blind
as Justice is said to be.
She saw quite clearly
the need to ask them
how her hands should meet.

She needed them too.
They carried the wood,
held the humming boards
when she cut,
steadied the frames, and braced
the walls upright.

They were Justice.
They watched their own
labors grow, perpetual
hand over hand motion,
like countless pulleys
rousing their force on
load-bearing chain.
When Charity was finished
and Request was gone,
no sterile offspring, statue
withdrew to an empty hall.
Clasped hands
were her progeny.

Justice continued to build.
They touched each
piece of golden timber,
mastered the art themselves;
they raised their hands together,
lifting roofs above them.

*Editor’s note: This poem was written by a student in response to the 2007 McMaster School Symposium theme, “Partnering for Sustainable Communities: The Work of Charity and Justice.”*