

## 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."*