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## Saint Mary's Fair Trade Festival Focuses on Social Justice

By Sophie Braccini



Saint Mary's administrators, staff and students as well as local community members attended the April 24 Fair Trade and Social Justice Festival at SMC. From left: Program Administrator Cherie Grant, Vice President for Mission Carole Swain, Moraga Councilmember Teresa Onoda, Asst. Director Justice Education and Immersions Nick Van Santen and Professor Caroline Doran Photo Sophie Braccini

community members about the economics and dynamics of fair trade. "The companies that certify fair trade status do a good job," said Doran, who has been studying fair trade in Europe and the U. S. for years. "The big players in this market are not always those you would think about. For example, Starbucks is one of the biggest distributors of fair trade coffee."

Van Santen hinted that the town of Moraga should try to be certified as a fair trade town. Moraga Town Council member Teresa Onoda, who was volunteering at a booth offering fair trade chocolate, thought that was an interesting idea. "I'd like to learn more about it," she said. Onoda invited Van Santen to make a presentation to the town in the future.

The Saint Mary's College Ferrogiarro Hall quad on April 24 was filled with about 20 booths showcasing local vendors and companies that deal in fair trade practices during the SMC Fair Trade and Social Justice Festival.

Fair trade is a practice that began in the 1980s when missionaries decided to act as intermediaries between producers and end-users when they realized the small percentage of the final price the impoverished growers or makers were receiving. Saint Mary's was one of the first colleges in Northern California to earn fair trade status for its practice with its vendors. "This is a great avenue for us at Saint Mary's because we talk a lot about social justice," says Nick Van Santen, the new assistant director of justice education and immersions, "and this is one of those moments when we get to show it tangibly."

Van Santen defines fair trade as an economic system. "The difference here is between free trade and fair trade," he explains. "It does not deal with organics or sustainable practices, even though they often come together."

Professor Caroline Doran, who teaches business ethics and social responsibility in the School of Economics and Business Administration, was at the festival to educate students and

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