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[Parents](#) [Alumni](#) [Site Map](#) [Media Library](#)

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▶ NEWS

« Back

On the Jericho Road
 10/28/2005
 On the Jericho Road
 Evening Chapel: October 21, 2005

As Middlesex has explored the theme of social justice through its Chapel Program over the past year, speakers from fields such as education, law, and public health have encouraged students to find ways to improve the lives of others, to work toward equity for all in the provision of schooling, health care, and legal services. While their focus has largely been national or international in scope, the School's most recent guest discussed making a difference at the local level, sharing skills and resources with people just miles away from Middlesex.

During evening chapel on Friday, October 21, Dan Holin talked about the program in Concord that he directs, the Jericho Road Project (JRP), which matches volunteers who have various professional skills with community-based organizations and small businesses in Lowell that help individuals and families become economically self-sustaining. An organization that supports Lowell teenagers, for example, but cannot afford to pay for advice regarding its own accounting procedures, can turn to JRP to find a volunteer who can provide this assistance. As Mr. Holin summed up, "JRP takes what are usually separate and often opposing poles – social justice and power – and reconciles them, putting volunteer power in the service of social justice."

Founded five years ago at the First Parish Church in Concord, JRP was originally the creation of a small, passionate community of successful venture capitalists, bankers, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and ministers who sought to create an alternative, participatory, and high-impact form of volunteerism. Mr. Holin became Jericho's first executive director in 2003 and has since seen the program grow to involve 110 volunteers who serve 48 non-profit clients in Lowell, providing nearly 5000 hours of free professional consultation to these organizations that, in turn, help people in need.

Turning to the question of how Middlesex students might make a difference in the world, Mr. Holin suggested that they first think about their own unique strengths, interests, and time constraints. When it comes to finding a rewarding volunteer experience that will have an impact on social justice, he said, "The search begins, ironically and selfishly, with you." To illustrate his point further, Mr. Holin introduced two JRP volunteers, each of whom spoke briefly about their own volunteer experiences and the great satisfaction that has come from using their financial and management skills to help others.

"Your Middlesex education is a great launching pad into a career where you, too, may acquire a skill – a power," concluded Mr. Holin. "As you move through Middlesex and out into the world, remember that volunteering this power

is an incredibly rewarding thing to do. If done correctly, it can change someone's world: yours."

[« Back](#)