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Second annual Social Justice Forum presented through a campus-community partnership

BRANTFORD – The second annual Social Justice Forum will take place in Brantford on Thursday, September 24 and Friday, September 25. Presented through a partnership between Wilfrid Laurier University and the BRAVE committee (Brant Response Against Violence Everywhere), the forum will address social justice, activism and community work. Vancouver-based activist, therapist and professor Vikki Reynolds will be the forum’s featured speaker. Reynolds’ experience includes supervision and therapy with refugees and survivors of torture, sexualized violence counsellors, mental health and substance misuse counsellors, shelter workers, activists and gender and sexually diverse communities.

“Vikki is a tremendous speaker who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience about social justice organizing,” said Rebecca Godderis, associate professor of Community Health, and Society, Culture and Environment. “This is a great opportunity for anyone – including students, community volunteers, social justice workers and interested members of the community to hear an excellent speaker address an important and timely subject.”

Reynolds will present a lecture titled, “Social justice activism and community work: Tensions, points of connection and hopeful skepticism” on Thursday, September 24 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in Room 205 of the Odeon Building at Laurier’s Brantford campus. The event is open to the public, and admission is free. In this talk Reynolds will invite a critique of the tenuous, strained, yet hopeful relationship between social justice activism and community work

In addition to her free public talk, Reynolds will be facilitating a workshop on campus during the afternoon of Sept. 24, and a full-day professional development workshop in the Brantford community on Friday, Sept. 25. The workshops will address matters of concern for those who work with people experiencing poverty, violence and oppression.

“Individuals working in these fields are often told they will ‘burn out’, that their drive to perform compassionate work is naïve, or that their work will leave them feeling defeated,” said Godderis. “The day-long workshop will explore how workers can find strength and hope through their work, honour the resistance and strength we witness in the people we work alongside, and allow the opportunity to use collective accountability to work congruently with our ethics.”

For more information please contact Jennifer Root, assistant professor at 519-756-8228, ext. 5458 or jroot@wlu.ca.

The Social Justice Forum is presented with the support of the Sexual Assaults Centre of Brant, and the following Laurier programs: Society, Culture, and Environment; Social Justice and Community Engagement; Law and Society; Laurier Brantford Grants Program (Office of the Senior Executive); Faculty of Liberal Arts; Women’s Faculty Colleague (Brantford); and Faculty of Social Work.