

CREATING EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCES FOR YOUNG CATHOLICS

BY JILL RAUH, USCCB JUSTICE, PEACE & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STAFF

DESMOND DRUMMER is not your traditional seminarian.

He is the coordinator of the Peace and Justice Apostolate at his seminary. He is a former intern for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). He is a Global Fellow with Catholic Relief Services. And when he is invited to give a vocations talk to young people, they are in for a surprise.

He uses a game called “The Scramble,” in which students compete to pick up 100 pennies from the floor—most of them wearing mittens, others using their bare hands, and a few using spoons—to illustrate how systemic inequality is related to poverty. The game, which he learned as a CCHD intern, becomes an entry point for a discussion about poverty and how responding in faith to injustice is an essential part of the Christian vocation.

Desmond’s passion for the intersection of faith and work to address injustice in the world is a flame that was fanned during his CCHD internship in the Archdiocese of Atlanta in 2005-2006. A recent convert to Catholicism at the time, Desmond was floored to discover “this amazing work of the Church, funded by the people” in support of local communities’ efforts to address the causes of poverty. “It was an eye-opening experience to what Church is about,” he says, “and it confirmed my vocation to the priesthood in a very real way.”

Now Desmond is in his third year of study in a six-year program at Mundelein Seminary, and notes that CCHD’s commitment to human life and dignity continues to influence his life and study. For example, as coordinator for the Peace and Justice Apostolate at the seminary, Desmond has taken the group’s work in a new direction, partnering with the Gospel of Life Apostolate to implement education and advocacy projects jointly as a witness to the consistent ethic of life to which all Catholics are called.

Desmond calls himself a future “CCHD priest” and plans to incorporate CCHD into his parish ministry, not only because he believes in CCHD’s work, but because the social mission of the Church has a certain evangelizing quality. “When I talk to people about CCHD, their eyes light up. CCHD is a great example of hope,” he says. ☪



Photo courtesy of Desmond Drummer

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development,

For four decades, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) has worked to address the root causes of poverty in our country. At this time of retrospective reflection and planning for the future, the bishops of the United States have reviewed CCHD. The review addressed concerns raised by critics and those who are close to the Church.

This “Review and Renewal of CCHD” is built around Ten Commitments in the following areas: Catholic Identity; Sharing the Good News of CCHD; Catholic Participation; CCHD and USCCB Priorities; Priority for the Poor; Strategic Grants; Diocesan Partnership; Addressing U.S. Poverty; Ethical Guidance; and The Soul of CCHD.

We translate these Ten Commitments into specific plans to accomplish the following:

- Better ensure that CCHD funds will not be used to support any activity that conflicts with fundamental Catholic moral and social teaching
- Encourage and give priority to the participation of Catholic parishes, parishioners, pastors, religious, and diocesan leaders in the ongoing work of CCHD
- Help CCHD be more focused and strategic in carrying out its mission by addressing emerging issues impacting low-income communities and advancing the priorities of the USCCB, especially as they impact poor communities
- Develop more specific ethical guidance and new structures, including ongoing consultation with moral theologians and a CCHD Review Board to help address issues involving organizational relationships and coalitions seeking to advance common goals
- Initiate broader discussion of the moral and human costs of pervasive poverty in the United States
- Renew and reaffirm commitment as disciples of Jesus and a Catholic community of faith to support CCHD’s biblical mission, Catholic principles, and essential work to help break the cycle of poverty

As reflected in this newsletter’s articles, CCHD has had a profound impact on our country and our Church. With your help and prayers, our hope is to strengthen, support, and adjust as needed to confront the root causes of poverty.

God’s continued blessings,



Ralph McCloud
Director, Catholic Campaign for Human Development



Since it began in 1999, the CCHD Internship Program has sponsored 280 interns in dioceses across the United States. As part of the program, diocesan offices apply annually for funding for a CCHD intern in the summer or fall, or for the entire school year. The national CCHD office funds around 30 diocesan offices for an intern to work anywhere between 8 and 35 hours a week. Interns have gone on to become priests, teachers, parish and diocesan leaders, social workers, religious sisters, lawyers, administrators, and even community organizers.

CAITLIN CRONIN, who served as a CCHD intern in the Diocese of Dayton from 2006-2007, was inspired by her internship experience to enter the field of community organizing full time. She now serves as associate organizer for Leaders for Equality and Action in Dayton (LEAD). During her internship, Caitlin worked under Cori Thibodeau, who once served as a CCHD intern. Part of Caitlin's job was to visit and learn about CCHD-funded groups and then create a resource guide to connect parish volunteers to those groups. Caitlin notes that when she first entered college at the University of Dayton, she was committed to service, but "had a very foggy idea of what faith calls you to do in the world." However, through the CCHD internship and interaction with CCHD-funded groups, "a light bulb went off in my head," Caitlin explains. "I realized that there is a difference between charity and justice, and that I needed to ask questions about systems that were in place." The experience ultimately led Caitlin to seek out a career "where I could do justice, not just charity—address *why* people are in poverty."

But it wasn't just Caitlin's career choice that was affected by her experience. "It really grounded me in my faith as well," she says. "It helped me understand what it really means to 'read the signs of the times' and to help bring about the Kingdom of God." Caitlin works to build relationships and help people develop the skills and leadership to address problems in their own communities. "It's seeing people come together to create the better city we can imagine. It's the Kingdom of God we're working towards," she says. ☪



Photo courtesy of Caitlin Cronin

*The Catholic Campaign for
Human Development's internship
program plants seeds that grow
deep roots and produce good fruit.*





BEN WIEDERHOLT served as a CCHD intern in the Diocese of Springfield almost ten years ago, but even now he can clearly articulate how the experience helped lay the foundation for how he thinks, lives, and works today.

As the Vice President of Mission Integration at two Catholic hospitals, Flaget Memorial Hospital and St. Joseph-Mount Sterling in Kentucky, Ben works to ensure that the hospitals' mission and operation truly reflect Catholic values. These values affect everything from how patients are treated and how employees' rights are recognized to making sure that poor and uninsured people in the community also have access to the hospital's services.

"The internship planted many, many seeds—it was where it all began," Ben explains. "It helped me

get into the depths of what Catholic social teaching really means in practice." As an intern, he worked closely with one CCHD group in the diocese, Central Illinois Organizing Project (CIOP). "It was remarkable," Ben says. "Catholic social teaching went from book knowledge to practice."

Outside of the professional impacts of CCHD, there have been personal ones as well. Ben and his wife, Jessica, are committed to passing on their values to their three sons. Ben says, "We're committed to forming them, helping them develop a world view" that reflects the Catholic values that he and his wife hold dear. ☪

The stories of Desmond, Caitlin, and Ben illustrate how, for many interns, the CCHD experience has sparked new realizations, birthed new hope, and ultimately led to greater commitment to the Church and to living as faithful Christians in the world. Strangely enough, Desmond isn't the only former CCHD intern at his seminary (there are three), Caitlin isn't the only former CCHD intern working at LEAD (there are two), and Ben probably isn't the only administrator who once served as a CCHD intern. Or perhaps it isn't so strange after all. "Once you have gone through the CCHD intern program," Desmond explains, "you can't get it out of your system." Amen to that.

What Is CCHD?

Through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Catholics and friends of CCHD across the country help poor and low-income Americans to help themselves and their communities out of poverty.

Since 1970, the Catholic Campaign has contributed over \$280 million to more than 7,800 low-income-led, community-based projects that strengthen families, create jobs, build affordable housing, fight crime, and improve schools and neighborhoods. CCHD requires that projects develop community leadership and participation so that their solutions to poverty will be long-lasting and effective, and so that CCHD's investment in people will help break the cycle of poverty. CCHD also educates Catholics about the causes of poverty and seeks to build solidarity between impoverished and affluent persons.

Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development/Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Most Reverend Roger P. Morin, Chairman, Bishop of Biloxi
 Most Reverend Michael P. Driscoll, Bishop of Boise
 Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard, Bishop of Albany
 Most Reverend Francis J. Kane, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago
 Most Reverend J. Terry Steib, SVD, Bishop of Memphis
 Most Reverend David A. Zubik, Bishop of Pittsburgh

CONSULTANTS

Rev. Edward Branch, Atlanta, GA
 Ms. Christine Doby, Flint, MI
 Mr. Richard Fowler, Stockton, CA
 Mr. Robert Gorman, ACSW, BCSW, Houma, LA
 Rev. Michael Jacques, SSE, VF, New Orleans, LA
 Mrs. Martina S. O'Sullivan, MSW, Santa Cruz, CA
 Ms. Kerry Robinson, New Haven, CT
 Mr. Richard Wood, Albuquerque, NM

