

POWR Post

October 2010 (Vol. 1, Issue 1)

USCCB/MRS is pleased to announce the creation of a POWR electronic discussion list and publication of our first monthly e-newsletter, the POWR Post. By providing a forum for discussion, the listserv empowers POWR participants to help one another resolve specific programmatic challenges, as well as to share success stories, as you work to develop long-term, sustainable programs.

Source materials will draw from the POWR program's monthly progress reports as well as other updates. To receive more info about specific items of interest, we encourage you to contact your colleagues directly.

Do you have news items, stories or pictures that relate to the successes of your parish program? Contact Daniel at dsturm@usccb.org, if you'd like to submit them for publication in an upcoming POWR Post.

with regards,
~Daniel Sturm, MRS Special Projects Manager

Donations & Volunteer Time

Pre-shop Garage Sales (Des Moines, Iowa)

Two parishes who attend our monthly meetings provided significant in-kind POWR donations by allowing the program to pre-shop at their parish garage sales.

Megan Thibodeau, mthibodeau@dmdiocese.org

Free Dental Work (Amarillo, Texas)

One of the volunteers who responded to a Craigslist ad, and who'd been helping us at ESL classes, started to tell his employer (FedEx) and other businesses about refugees' need to find stable work. He is now meeting regularly with our senior job developer and has been taking brochures around town. I also made calls to ten local school and college religious organizations, asking them to consider us for service projects and volunteer hours. I began a volunteer information spreadsheet. And best of all, we received more than \$21,000 in free dental work for our clients from a local business.

Dena Dyer, ddyer@cfsama.com



Fundraiser Events

Cooking Classes (Portland, Maine)

To create a comfortable atmosphere for local parishioners to mingle with members of the refugee community, we are offering a cooking lesson. Parishioners attend an afternoon cooking class, observing how to prepare a traditional dinner from a refugee's native country. That evening the class and others from the parish community come together with members of the refugee community to enjoy the meal. The community and media feedback has been great. Everyone seems very interested in this program and are asking us if we will be doing these monthly.

Bonnie Bagley, bbagley@cmaine.org

Free Concert (Jacksonville, Florida)

Our Lady of Assumption hosted a free Christian concert and allowed us to give a POWR presentation and display brochures. This allowed us to network with the pastor and other priests as well as raise awareness about refugees. Fifty people were present at this event. Teachers from a local Catholic high school were also present, and have offered us the opportunity to do a presentation at the school.

Shannon Cutler, scutler@ccbjax.org

Barnes and Nobles Book Fair (Amarillo, Texas)

I planned a holiday season book fair at Barnes and Noble Booksellers in Amarillo, Texas (and online, as well). It will serve as a fundraiser and community educational event. Activities will include creative arts performances by refugee groups, a wish list table for our ESL program, a refugee student art exhibit in the bookstore's coffee shop, and gift wrap stations manned by local school groups as a service project.

Dena Dyer, ddyer@cfsama.com

Media Outreach

Arabic Language News Coverage (Arlington, Virginia)

Alhurrah Arabic Broadcasting Network visited us during our World Refugee Celebration and broadcast a positive feature story about MRS assisting refugees. The feature is posted at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kiVxrTVLrVU>.

Rebecca Cormier Ruiz, r.ruiz@arlingtondiocese.org

Facebook Fans (Amarillo, Texas)

I finished a Facebook page—we have 104 monthly users and 64 people who “like” it. We have had 456 visits in the last week of August alone. I also crafted a brief online slide show about refugees and wrote two blog posts about the refugee division, as well as one newsletter (with about 400 personal subscribers). Our facebook page is <http://bit.ly/93ASob>

Dena Dyer, ddyer@cfsama.com

Video Promotion (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)

We are working on a 6-minute video production to demonstrate how refugees can adjust and thrive in a community with the support of a parish or church, through love and personal attention. The video will be shown to Catholic community audiences, including women's groups, men's fellowships, young adult ministry, parish councils, university alumni groups, and student refugee organizations. In Protestant and non-denominational churches, the film will be shown to missions, evangelization, and women's groups.

Cathy Niebel, cniebe@ccpgh.org

Media Trickle Down Effect (San Antonio, Texas)

The Center for Refugee Services was written up in the San Antonio Express News, which had a positive impact on calls, regarding inquiries and in kind donations (<http://tinyurl.com/2bwe5cd>).

Paula Walker, pwalker@ccaosa.org

Innovative Partnerships

Free Direct Mailing (Amarillo, Texas)

I contacted a local marketing firm which allows non-profits to stuff envelopes and add materials to group mailings. This will pay us \$400 and allow us to put book fair vouchers in 9,000 mailboxes.

Dena Dyer, ddyer@cfsama.com

Question of the Month: “Conservative Pastors”

I wonder if you might have any advice about how to address very conservative pastors – on the issue of why MRS helps refugees who are not Catholic. I have had some challenging conversations with pastors who wonder why we are helping Muslim refugees when they think we would do better helping Christian refugees who are also in need of assistance. I know our MRS justification – “we don’t serve because *they* are Catholic, but rather, because *we* are Catholic and are called by Christ to serve.” I tell them that we are giving their parishioners an opportunity to “live out the Corporal Acts of Mercy” and highlight Scriptural support and Pontifical writings in support of the work we do. I also reviewed the answers that Bishop DiMarzio of Brooklyn gave in his book “Brothers and Sisters in Christ: A Catholic Teaching on the Issue of Immigration” but couldn’t find anything that we aren’t already using as support. Still, some pastors are not convinced. Any thoughts or ideas? [Anonymous POWR participant]

Send your ideas to dsturm@usccb.org

Additional Resources

Against All Odds (UNHCR)

Offers online game to increase awareness about refugee situations. Players assume the role of a refugee.

<http://playagainstallodds.com>

How Nonprofits Can Grow in a Tough Economy (The Chronicle of Philanthropy)

Join us on Tuesday Oct. 26, at noon Eastern time for a live online discussion with experts from the Nonprofit Finance Fund and other nonprofit leaders to discuss how nonprofits can grow in a bad economy.

<http://tinyurl.com/24pytsx>

Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees Educational Video (USCCB/MRS 2002)

Will send a free copy of a video produced during the previous program cycle to your POWR program coordinator.

Possible Federal Programs for Refugees (Refugee Council USA)

Refugee Council USA has developed a resource for refugees that highlights possible federal programs from which they could benefit, or from which service agencies could receive funding.

<http://www.usccb.org/mrs/diows/rcuaspossiblefederalprograms.pdf>

Program Development Resource Library (Project Strengthening Organizations Assisting Refugees)

This clearinghouse specializes in helping refugee service organizations with resource development, grant writing, and special events planning. It features a useful volunteer management guidebook.

<http://www.ethniccommunities.org>



October 2010 (Vol. 1, Issue 1)

Daniel Sturm, Special Projects Manager, USCCB/Migration and Refugee Services

3211 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017-1194

Phone: (202)-541-3226

E-Mail: dsturm@usccb.org