



POWR Post

April 2011 (Vol. 2, Issue 4)



The POWR Post is a monthly e-newsletter sharing success stories of the USCCB/MRS Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees program. Do you have any news items, stories or pictures relating to your parish program that you would like to share? If so, please contact Daniel Sturm at dsturm@usccb.org.

~Daniel Sturm, MRS Special Projects Manager

POWR Beyond June 30th, 2011

USCCB/MRS will grant a no cost extension of POWR (through Sept. 30th, 2011) to agencies with unspent funds. We will inform you shortly about further plans to extend the POWR program.

Donations

Storage Units Packed with Donations (Cleveland, Ohio)

We have been able to focus on a lot of outreach lately. Our storage unit is completely full of donations and we have only had to purchase two beds in the last month, because we had everything else we needed at our storage unit.

Stacy Dever, sdever@clevelandcatholiccharities.org

Store Donates Items for Fitness Club (Chicago, Illinois)

Through a partnership with a local sporting goods store, Erehwon, we secured pedometers for our walking club, which will start next month.

mjochum@catholiccharities.net



Employment

Volunteers Prepare for Sewing Classes (Buffalo, New York)

One of our new volunteers from Buffalo State College has prepared the sewing room and is about to begin sewing classes for several of our clients.

Becky Mischler, b.mischler@ccwny.org

Agency Secures \$11,000 High School Scholarship (Cleveland, Ohio)

We were able to get a full tuition scholarship (\$11,000) for an African refugee to attend a private all girls Catholic high school. The community feedback is currently good.

Stacy Dever, sdebver@clevelandcatholiccharities.org

Employment Team Grows in Size and Power (San Jose, California)

Our excellent team of employment specialists has grown to seven people. They continue to help with applications, resumes, and interviewing skills, and this month 11 refugees were placed into jobs.

ccollins@catholiccharitiesscc.org

Program Attracts Teachers (Hartford, Connecticut)

We recruited more volunteer teachers for the International Threads Program, where we teach sewing skills to prepare clients for work in tailoring positions. We advertised the need for sewing machines and fabric and received donations of two sewing machines and 50 yards of fabric, along with trims and sewing supplies. This provides supplies for the sewing class, and increases the number of students who can practice sewing in every class.

Alice Noyes, anoyes@ccaoh.org

Media

Resettlement Workers Publish Video Podcasts (Nashville, Tennessee)

We completed our first of several podcasts highlighting refugee lives and customs. It has been uploaded to YouTube. This short video was filmed, narrated, and edited by Refugee Services staff, with the help of equipment and training donated by Nashville Public Television.

Kelley Branson, kbranson@cctenn.org

www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPBhwm1j1aA&

Positive Fallout from Radio Interview (Jacksonville, Florida)

Queen of Peace Radio rebroadcast our one-hour POWR interview that was done several months ago. This station's listening audience is several thousand. As a result, a boy scout working on his Eagle Scout Project has stepped forward to collect refurbished and donated bicycles for refugees and will be creating a storage space in one of our warehouses to store the bikes collected. Another listener has begun looking for refugee employment opportunities, through a known employer. A "Job Search Orientation and Employment Practices" training session was held in March for fifteen refugees in the following languages: English, Nepali, Burmese, Arabic, and Spanish. Shannon Cutler, scutler@cbbjjax.org

POWR Coordinator Sees the "Lights Come On" (Amarillo, Texas)

As I engage more in the community it is interesting to see the "lights come on," as they start to understand what refugees go through. I feel privileged to help educate and spread awareness, because there is a lot of misinformation. It's exciting to see the seeds beginning to sprout. Churches are starting to have a vision for engaging with our programs and the people we resettle. I am including a link to a recent article I wrote on *The High Calling*, which received about 90,000 hits a month.

Dena Dyer, denadyer@gmail.com

www.thehighcalling.org/work/work-community-liaison

E-Newsletter Produces Results (St. Paul, Minnesota)

Our team began a simple monthly e-newsletter to keep parishes connected and informed. It includes a "spotlight on success" section that highlights a volunteer action or donation with photos and a narrative. Also included is an update on arrivals, cultural orientation classes, donations distribution and urgent needs of the program. It answers questions like "How do I get other people in the parish to volunteer with me?" and "Who are the Karen people?" The aim is to increase parish involvement in refugee resettlement. The newsletter is proving to be an effective tool, as we begin to hold more volunteer events. After sending out the newsletter Friday, just today someone contacted me about getting involved.

megan.kenknightburman@cctwincities.org



Fundraising Tip: Dress Down Days

We intend to request "Dress Down Days" to benefit MRS. On these days, students are permitted to dress "out of uniform" for a small fee of \$1 to \$5. This is a very promising funding source. Following just a small investment of time educating the schools about our services, an average dress down day at a school yields between \$500-\$1,500. Our diocese has 38 elementary schools, two diocesan high schools and two

independent Catholic high schools, with 17,548 students and 1,394 school personnel. If we could get one "Dress Down Day" at each of the schools, and each school raised only \$1,000 that would be \$42,000 in funding for MRS services! It seems like a "win-win" situation so we will prepare well for our meeting with the superintendent.

Rebecca Cormier Ruiz, r.ruiz@arlingtondiocese.org

Outreach

Catholic Schools: An Untapped Fundraising Source (Arlington, Virginia)

Both the POWR webinar last month, and a more recent CCUSA webinar about parish social ministry, reminded us of the yet untapped funding/other support we have in our Diocesan Catholic schools. We have started to gather materials to present at a meeting with our Diocesan schools superintendent, with the hope of getting permission to contact all of our diocesan schools with information on how to fulfill service hour requirements.

Rebecca Cormier Ruiz, r.ruiz@arlingtondiocese.org

Match Making in Full Flux (Amarillo, Texas)

I spoke twice at a local parish, attended a mass and two meals there, and have developed a wonderful relationship with the church and its members. Their confirmation class of 30 students, along with the parents and teachers, has adopted two of our Burmese families through FOR (Friends of Refugees). I also matched a college student who wanted to tutor kids with a Burmese family with several school-aged children. And I spoke with a small group at a local Christian church about adopting a family or group of refugees.

Dena Dyer, denadyer@gmail.com

Promising African Parish Connection (St. Paul, Minnesota)

We've recruited a new parish, whose primary parish contact is an African immigrant. Because of her greater understanding of cultural barriers, she will be a great asset as this parish begins to welcome and support clients.

megan.kenknightburman@cctwincities.org

Russian Refugee Dinner Best Ever Event (Portland, Maine)

St. Patrick's Church hosted a Russian Cooking Demonstration & Dinner. It was the most successful event we have thus far held. Parishioners were really interested in learning more about the refugee population. Our furniture "Wish List" was distributed to all of the participants.

Bonnie Bagley, bbagley@ccmaine.org

http://www.portlanddiocese.net/calendar_detail.php?cid=30&id=3325

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/Page.aspx?pid=1315&cid=9&ceid=137&cerid=0&cdt=3%2F18%2F2011>

<http://ulocal.wmtw.com/service/displayDiscussionThreads.kickAction?as=62923&w=317320&d=649728>

<http://www.theforecaster.net/content/pnms-comcal-206>



More Outreach and More Donations (Des Moines, Iowa)

Through increased outreach, the volunteer specialist is now receiving significantly more calls per day from parishioners, and donation pick-ups on Mondays have doubled. In addition, the Volunteer/Donations Specialist is also making a higher than average number of appointments for people to drop off furniture and items at the warehouse on days when immediate pick-up is unavailable. This has necessitated more donation organization days, in order to keep up with the influx of items, and an overall increase in volunteer recruitment.

Megan Thibodeau, mthibodeau@dmdioocese.org

Sign up for the Parish Social Ministry Listserv (Arlington, Virginia)

Did you know that Catholic Charities USA has a free monthly webinar series about Parish Social Ministry as well as a "best-practices" listserv? There's lots of good supplemental info and ideas applicable to our POWR programs here too!

Rebecca Cormier Ruiz, r.ruiz@arlingtondiocese.org

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/Page.aspx?pid=2106>

Partnerships

Local University Partnerships Pay Off (Boston, Massachusetts)

We have developed a new relationship with an interfaith group at Suffolk University that has agreed to host a collection of hygiene products for our clients. Tufts University's Refugee Assistance Program (TURAP), which hosted a very successful coat drive for us in December, has also expressed a willingness to host one again in the future. Additionally, we are in conversation with 28 other religious and international student groups at local colleges and universities. Following up on our success with TURAP, we matched another nine committed Tufts students with refugee clients. We currently have 36 TURAP members matched in positive and mutually beneficial relationships.

Jason Reynolds, jason_reynolds@ccab.org

Refugee Students Complete Nutrition Class (Cleveland, Ohio)

We took part in six week nutrition class taught through the Ohio State University extension program. Refugee students loved the class and prepared a healthy meal for the teacher on the last day. They were especially appreciative of the information on food safety. The interpreter was really impressed with the class and ended up donating his time.

Stacy Dever, sdever@clevelandcatholiccharities.org

Refugee Ambassador Program Goes West (Portland, Oregon)

We are in conversation with six area high schools working to implement the Refugee Ambassador Program for the 2011-2012 School Year. We will be holding a parish information night in conjunction with World Refugee Day in June 2011.

Jenifer Kluthe, jkluthe@catholiccharitiesoregon.org

Special Events

Lessons Learned in Events Planning

Agency events are a great way to get the word out about specific programs. Staff are well advised to work closely with event coordinators, to be sure that their programs get as much publicity as possible. marilyn.breslow@cccovva.org

Lost Boy and Mayor to Attend World Refugee Day (Indianapolis, Indiana)

The date is set! On World Refugee Day, we will host our first POWR-sponsored fundraiser. Our guest speaker is John Dau, a former lost boy. The Mayor of Indianapolis will attend and will present a proclamation. Tickets will cost \$35. Each Refugee Ambassador has agreed to sell 25 tickets. We also sent out 15 marketing packets to top donors. The packets contain the movie featuring John Dau ("God Grew Tired of Us"), a bag of popcorn, and a letter asking for sponsorship.

Gabrielle Campo, gcampo@archindy.org

Social Teaching Event Focuses on Refugee Resettlement (Richmond, Virginia)

Staff and VISTA volunteers supported a People of Faith Gathering at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church. This intergenerational social teaching program, themed "Option for the Poor and Vulnerable," was facilitated by refugee resettlement staff, volunteers and refugees. The robust day of activities gave the agency the opportunity to tell its story, enlighten the public to the refugee plight, and enhance the social teachings of the local Catholic community and a parish that has been a vital supporter throughout the years.

Marilyn Breslow, marilyn.breslow@cccovva.org

Baseball, Art Contests and Burundi Choir Planned for World Refugee Day (San Antonio, Texas)

We plan to organize a World Refugee Day event in conjunction with the San Antonio Missions baseball team, so that the refugees can enjoy a day of fun at the stadium, and are seeking sponsorship from local businesses and community partners. The events will feature a Burundi Choir's singing of the National Anthem, as well as a swearing in Ceremony prior to the game. A World Refugee Day art contest is scheduled for June 20th.

Paula Walker, pwalker@ccaosa.org



POWR Webinar Resources



Recordings and presentations are now available on the Members-Only Website. The next webinar on Special Events is scheduled for June 14th. Mark your calendars!

1 Webinar on School Partnerships

This webinar highlighted partnerships with schools and the development of a *Refugee Ambassador's Guide*.

→ <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/diows/etrainings.shtml>

[Under "Specialty Trainings"]

2 Webinar on Volunteer Management

This webinar explored different approaches to utilizing volunteers, with a special focus on the *use of AmeriCorps Vista funds*.

→ <http://usccb.na4.acrobat.com/p60805591/>

[Webinar Recording]

Survey on Client Satisfaction

Refugees Report Comfort in Using Public Transportation (Anchorage, Alaska)

In surveys at three months, 100% of our clients reported comfort in using the bus. Our Volunteer Transportation Committee was utilized for the first time to bring the Older Refugee Group to a museum for an outing. Volunteers reported a positive experience and our program was able to save up to \$100, which would have been the cost for taxis. I also had our client survey translated into Russian for our newest clients, and designed spreadsheets with graphs to capture survey information.

Natalie Magnatta, nmagnatta@cssalaska.org

Volunteer Management

POWR Mentors Assist New Mothers, African Student (Cleveland, Ohio)

We had three births and were able to match the new mothers up with mentors, to help assist with appointments for the newborn children. It has been a great way for stay at home moms to participate in our program.

Stacy Dever, sdebver@clevelandcatholiccharities.org

Volunteers Help Repair Computers (Buffalo, New York)

Two volunteers cleaned, repaired and loaded 20 computers. Some of the computers had been donated but needed programs, and some had been out of service in the computer lab. Becky Mischler, b.mischler@ccwny.org

Lesson Learned: Turning Down an Unethical Offer (Arlington, Virginia)

An evangelical church offered to help on a large scale (i.e. hundreds of volunteers) with orientation and ESL, but we learned that the church has a training program for its congregants to "convert Muslims." Although the offer for such a large amount of help was attractive, we considered their goal of converting those they assist as being contrary to our obligations to clients, and to the State Department agreement, and decided to politely decline.

Rebecca Cormier Ruiz, r.ruiz@arlingtondiocese.org

Keeping Volunteers Happy with Awards (Richmond, Virginia)

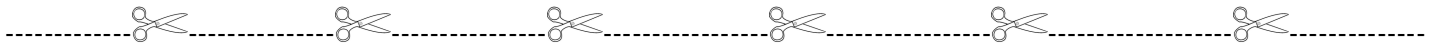
Parishes have already begun to promote our Community Service Awards, and many look forward to the opportunity to reflect upon a year of service. Ideas have included writing up a description of how volunteers work with refugees in the program. We will see what works best, but Refugee Resettlement is eager to use this event as a tool to create buzz around our program, and positive media for our agency.

Marilyn Breslow, marilyn.breslow@cccovfva.org

ESL Classes Take Students to State Capitol (Des Moines, Iowa)

We began to offer "Field Trips" to community resources through our ESL program. Examples include the library and the local bicycle cooperative. Accompanied by three staff and five volunteers, a group of 12 refugees utilized the free trolley system to visit the capitol, where they received a guided tour and met the governor, Terry Branstad.

Megan Thibodeau, mthibodeau@dmdiocese.org



Social Media *Special*

WEBINARS

Project SOAR Webinar on Telling Your Story in Tough Economic Times

- <http://tinyurl.com/6z9x87q> (Webinar Recording)
- <http://tinyurl.com/6zvxyism> (Power Point Presentation)
- <http://tinyurl.com/6cjercg> (Handout)

MEDIA RELATIONS

CLINIC Immigration Management Manual – This curriculum covers program design, case selection criteria, fee schedules, funding sources, marketing, training, accreditation and representation ethics

- <http://tinyurl.com/6fyanpq> (Marketing and Media)
- <http://tinyurl.com/6xuxt36> (Complete Manual)

International Rescue Committee Media Handbook – This handbook will help you with writing press releases and use of social media

- <http://tinyurl.com/2ekqoju>

USCCB/MRS Members Only Website – Check out USCCB/MRS' media relations materials

- <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/diows/media.shtml>

NEW AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Nonprofit Tech 2.0 Blog – A Social Media Guide for Nonprofits

- <http://nonprofitorgs.wordpress.com/>

Nonprofit Technology Network – This website provides tips about important issues in nonprofit technology

- <http://www.nten.org/learn/bytopic/social%20media>

2010 Guide to Nonprofit Marketing Wisdom – A collections of lessons learned, including private fundraising

- <http://gettingattention.org/nonprofit-marketing/guide-nonprofit-marketing-wisdom.pdf>

Project to Strengthening Organizations Assisting Refugees – An Email and Electronic Communication Guidebook

- <http://www.ethniccommunities.org/library/SOAREmailCommunication.pdf>

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