

Office of Justice and Peace
September – December 2009

The following is a summary of work completed by the Regional Coordinators in the Office of Justice and Peace from September through December 2009. Although this is not all inclusive it provides a good snap shot of activities and priorities. The information is grouped based on priorities that were established by the OJP Planning Groups in the Spring and Summer of 2009. Planning and recruitment to respond to needs in Southwest Virginia is currently under way. Future reports will also include outcome data as appropriate. Questions or comments regarding this information should be directed to Joanne Natrass at joanne.natrass@cccofva.org or Jay Brown, OJP Director at jay.brown@cccofva.org.

Catholic Social Teaching Education

- Presentation for St. Nicholas Confirmation class and sponsors on Sunday October 11th
- Attended Tidewater Sowers of Justice Meetings
- Catholic Campaign for Human Development activities
- Meetings in September, October and December with Richmond area Parish Social Ministers
- Worked on a fall Justice gathering with Father Allen Deck, SJ as keynote speaker
- Facilitated Just Neighbor program at St. Michael's
- Attend Richmond Sower's gatherings
- CST talk to St. Michael's RCIA group
- worked on regional Racial Justice Forum with organizers at RPEC
- 10/26, Richmond Sower's Leadership meeting
- At the request of Lynchburg College Campus Ministry, presented on Poverty, Hunger, and Homelessness – a Faith Perspective
- Attended and spoke at 2 death penalty vigils from a faith perspective
- Offering J-walking at St. Edwards
- Spoke on Care of Creation at Ecology event at Blessed Sacrament at Belmead
- Overnight retreat at Richmond Hill with J-Walking participants
- Worked on regional Racial Justice Forum

Respect Life

- Communicated with parishes re: Operation Rice Bowl
- Involved in coordination of activities for March for Life – communication, transportation, convening at the Pastoral Center, stickers
- Fielded request for Respect Life Video from outside source to be promoted to Catholic Schools
- Coordinated Respect Life Sunday Collection with all parishes

Haiti/Global Solidarity

- Conducted Four Regional Haiti Gatherings:
 - Central Regional Gathering: October 10, 2009 at Church of the Redeemer, Mechanicsville
30 people attended
 - Southwest Regional Gathering: October 17, 2009 at St. Mary's, Blacksburg
30 people attended
 - Eastern Regional Gathering: October 31, 2009, at St. Gregory's Virginia Beach
75 people attended
 - Northwest Regional Gathering, November 14, 2009, St. Francis Staunton.
20 – 25 people

- Policies and Procedures
 - Fiscal accountability policy finalized and reviewed with Twinning Committees, reviewed and discussed policy with Bishop Simon Pierre and Fr. Romel during December trip to Hinche
 - Revised the Vehicle use policy for Haiti twinning committees and other diocesan travelers to Haiti

- Developed the Haiti Solidarity Week materials and emailed to all parishes and twinning committees. Theme this year Global Solidarity and Care for God's Creation.

- New and potential twinning relationships:
 - Presented to Our Lady of Peace on Appomattox.
 - St. Vincent de Paul in Newport News. I have also been working with David Kauffman in involving Hampton University and Christopher Newport University in the project.
 - Longwood and Hampden – Sydney Colleges and St. Therese.
 - St. John Newman
 - Good Sheppard
 - St. Gabriel

- Annual Haiti Gathering – March 20th at St. Thomas Aquinas in Charlottesville. Bishop Simon Pierre will be the honored guest and speaker.

- Provided resources for parishes to participate in CRS Work of Human Hands Fair trade festivals and promoted alternative Christmas gift giving options
- Participated with CRS in the annual “Fashion me a People Conference “in Orlando Florida. Workshop provided by Patrice Schwermer on Global Solidarity and twinning

Migrant Ministry/Domestic Poverty

- Continued direct social services and pastoral services to migrant and seasonal farm workers (and year round, poor immigrant families). Involved volunteers from various parishes when possible. These services included:
 - Medical Attention: Assisted a couple to be with their premature twins being kept in neonatal care in Norfolk; Assisted two HIV positive migrant workers to receive their needed medical attention and medication; Made hospital visitations.
 - Funeral Arrangements: Assisted four families with funeral arrangements (e.g., Mass and grave side services or having the deceased send to family in Mexico).
 - Identity Documentation Issues: Help people to obtain their children’s birth certificates and to amend Birth Records (e.g., misspellings, omitted second family names and paternity acknowledgements, etc.); Helped people obtain their passports and those of their U.S. born children and helped them register their children for citizenship (dual) back in the parents’ country of origin.
 - Immigration Issues: Helped people find their relatives who were being detained by immigration officials; Help individuals comply with orders from immigration officials (e.g., court appearances and parole appointments) and help them obtain an attorney when needed. Gave consultations as to how the immigration process works, what the person might be eligible to do and assisting individuals with appropriate applications and responses to immigration request.
 - Emergency Assistance: Provided gas (for client’s automobile); Gift cards to the local grocery store; paid to fill medical prescriptions; paid part of rent and heating (electric/fuel) expenses.
 - Translation Services: Assisted people with understanding papers which they receive in the mail (e.g., medical bills, I made contact with the senders and assisted with making arrangements to pay the bills off over time) or translating their birth certificates for the vital records office in Virginia to use in correcting their children’s birth records.
- Worked with parishes to involve them in ministry amongst migrant farm workers. This included:

- Spoke at all the Masses on the weekend, at St. Thomas More in Lynchburg to solicit support for migrant ministry
- Collected and distributed Thanksgiving dinner bags of food from four parishes for 250 people still living in the migrant farm labor camps on the Eastern Shore.
- Collecting and distributed children's Christmas gifts from seven parishes for about 300 children on the Eastern Shore.
- Attended meetings on related issues. These included:
 - The Mexican Consulate in Washington, D.C. sponsored a presentation on "labor" rights and other relevant issues.
 - The diocesan Office of the Hispanic Apostolate held a meeting to network and discuss resources available throughout the diocese for the Hispanic/Spanish speaking/Immigrant (documented or not) populations.
 - Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia held a meeting with the local community health centers and the local county social services departments to plan how to do outreach to and to assist families with children who are believed to be eligible for Medicaid/FAMIS benefits but have not applied.
- Visited two seminaries in Florida to recruit possible outreach workers for the 2010 summer ministry. Presentation given to 70 seminarians; interviewed nine; will need to fill five or six positions.

Prison Ministry

- Ordered and issued bibles and missals for requesting Prison Ministry participants
- 9/11, attended talk with Sheriff Woody regarding crime and recidivism in Richmond, and restoration of Rights
- Communicated list from State Department of Corrections of approved "chaplains" – priests, deacons, and lay people
- Worked on issues of access in SW Virginia
- Sent information out about Just Faith – Prison Reform to Prison Ministry participants

Far Southwest Virginia