


December 2007

Highlights





You Asked for It!

Various members have asked for a streamlined process for printing the *NACYML News*—whether one article at a time or the whole online issue at once. With this issue that capability becomes a reality. You now have two print options:

- Use your browser's print function or click on the  "Print this page" link at the bottom of the right-hand navigation column to print an individual page.
- Print the entire issue by using the link below. This will open a single PDF document made up of "printed pages" of each article in order.

You can also download this PDF to your computer by right-clicking the link and selecting "Save Target As..." With the PDF file open, click the printer command in the Adobe Reader interface and the entire issue will be printed.

 [Download the PDF print file for this entire issue.](#)  (XXX KB)

Thinking about Summer Already? You Should Be...

The clocks have been set back an hour, the nights and mornings are chilly. It is dark when going to and coming from work. Christmas and the new year are around the corner. It is time to have the fireplace checked, get out the warm sweaters and socks, and settle in for the winter.

As you sit down to read this issue of *NACYML News*, brew a cup of tea or hot chocolate, grab a blanket and get ready for an issue all about summer programs!

Yes, it is time to begin planning for summer, and here is an opportunity to hear from colleagues who have had positive experiences with mission trips, sports programs, summer education, and camp experiences. Take a few minutes to reflect on how you will rest and restore your spirit for ministry this coming summer. Think about how you might set aside time for continuing education as you continue to grow in your ministry.

Think summer...and please pass the marshmallows.

From the Chair

Living as the Body of Christ

When I sat down to write this column, I could not gather my thoughts. My mind was not on summer programming, it was on southern California, specifically the Grass Valley Fire which was burning a short distance from my home. I was thinking of all the treasures I

Other Feature Articles...

Hispanic Teens are the New Face of Catholic Youth Ministry

Did you know that by the start of the fall semester next year, Latinos are expected to make up forty-six percent of the high school-age Catholic population in the United States, surpassing their Anglo counterparts as

would lose if the fire reached my house: my father's old St. Joseph Missal and his and my mother's rosaries, the special birthday cards and Christmas cards they had sent me, letters and pictures from my sister, nieces, and friends, plus irreplaceable pictures and video. Nothing of real monetary value, but priceless to me nonetheless.

I thought of the families I know who live almost across the street from the fire and wondered if they still had a home. Obviously writing a column for our NACYML newsletter had to wait. I busied myself with routine tasks while I awaited news on the fires. I was lucky; the fire was contained before it reached my home. Over four hundred others in our mountain community did not fare as well. Their homes were either lost or severely damaged.

[Continue reading Grace's article...](#)

NACYML Member Is Part of World Record Setting Team

Ben Weisse, a NACYML member and past member of the Leadership Team, from Blessed Sacrament Parish in Madison, Wisconsin, along with his twelve siblings recently set a new Guinness Book Record!

With only minutes to spare, the thirteen Weisse siblings completed the [Community First Fox Cities Marathon](#) on September 23, becoming the largest group of siblings to complete a marathon. Walking and running in memory of their brother, Peter, who died of cancer in 1968, the Weisse family raised money to be donated to the [V Foundation for Cancer Research](#). To read or hear more about Ben's accomplishment, visit the [NPR website](#). Way to go and congratulations Ben!

NACYML Website Discussion Forums

Let Us Know What Resources You Need for Ministry

Your assistance is needed in designing resources for your ministry! Please take a moment to respond to the [Volunteer](#)

the largest segment for the first time?

Pathways of Hope and Faith Among Hispanic Teens, a new book from [Instituto Fe y Vida](#), sheds light on both the strengths and challenges this young generation presents to our parish youth ministry programs.

[Read more...](#)

Catholic Scouting Is Youth Ministry

For the past several years, the [Boy Scouts of America](#) (BSA), through the [National Catholic Committee on Scouting](#) (NCCS), has been promoting a program which is, and should be, of great benefit to those associated with youth ministry. The NCCS, through its connection with BSA promotes Catholic values through the Boy Scout, Cub Scout and Venturing Programs.

[Scouting Is Youth Ministry](#) is a national initiative which promotes the goals of *Renewing the Vision* through scouting and its varied age appropriate activities.

[Read more...](#)

Youth Ministry and Sports: Seeing the Connection

As a youth minister, imagine facing these challenges...

- Having more than fifty percent of youth involved year round in parish youth ministry programs.
- Having a parent volunteer for every five youth and other parents ready and willing to attend and support the program.
- Having registration fees for the program that are paid up front, on time, and thereby having the financial resources to pay for the majority of the program.
- Having mandatory parent/volunteer training that makes a direct connection to the vision and goals of comprehensive youth ministry from *Renewing the Vision*.

[Read more...](#)

[Competencies Survey](#) and the [Skills Database Survey](#). Both surveys are located in the Members' Site [Discussion Forums](#) on the NACYML website.

Share Your Bread

Sharing Your Bread—What Is It All About?

This column has appeared in every issue of NACYML News since the first issue, in spring of 2005. [Read Mary's article](#) and learn more about this column and how you can contribute!

A Picture Is Worth...

Articles in this newsletter correspond to the Core Competencies detailed in the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers.


Look for the symbol in the article that indicates which core competency the article addresses.

To learn more about the standards, see the [resource page](#) which is always accessible from the newsletter navigation bar. It provides a summary of the core competencies and the specialized competencies for youth ministry leaders.



Special Offers for NACYML Members

PATHWAYS OF HOPE AND FAITH AMONG HISPANIC TEENS Discounted Price for NACYML Members

Pathways of Hope and Faith Among Hispanic Teens, a new book from [Instituto Fe y Vida](#), sheds light on both the strengths and challenges this young Hispanic generation presents to our parish youth ministry programs (see included article for further information). Fe y Vida is pleased to offer a special discount available only to NACYML members. To take advantage of the discounted price, [download the order form](#) .

YOUTH MINISTRY ACCESS One Free Month

The Center for Ministry Development is offering a 13-month subscription to Youth Ministry Access for the cost of a 12-month subscription. For more information, visit the [Center for Ministry Development website](#).



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December 2007

From the Chair

By Grace Cassetta

*Director of Youth Ministry, Diocese of Las Cruces
Las Cruces, New Mexico*

Living as the Body of Christ

When I sat down to write this column, I could not gather my thoughts. My mind was not on summer programming, it was on southern California, specifically the Grass Valley Fire which was burning a short distance from my home. I was thinking of all the treasures I would lose if the fire reached my house: my father's old St. Joseph Missal and his and my mother's rosaries, the special birthday cards and Christmas cards they had sent me, letters and pictures from my sister, nieces, and friends, plus irreplaceable pictures and video. Nothing of real monetary value, but priceless to me nonetheless. I thought of the families I know who live almost across the street from the fire and wondered if they still had a home. Obviously writing a column for our NACYML newsletter had to wait. I busied myself with routine tasks while I awaited news on the fires. I was lucky; the fire was contained before it reached my home. Over four hundred others in our mountain community did not fare as well. Their homes were either lost or severely damaged.

I was not the only member of NACYML affected by the fires. Fifty-one of our members live in dioceses affected by the fires and approximately thirteen members were directly impacted by the fires, whether by evacuation, fire threats, or families within their parishes losing homes. As I reflected on what these past few weeks have been like, I am struck by two opposing images: ambivalence—an 'oh well' shrug of the shoulder, and compassion—being the Body of Christ.

Seventeen fires burned over 500,000 acres of land, including many homes and businesses. Although there was extensive media coverage of the fires, there did not appear to be a national outpouring of sympathy. I noticed this with some coworkers here in New Mexico. Though they felt badly about the horror of the fires and the loss of homes, their sympathy was tempered by reports of multimillion dollar mansions burning, evacuees drinking Starbucks, and getting massages. The ambivalence seemed to be, "those fires are horrible but insurance will pay for the lost homes. The victims seem to be financially well-off. This is California where there is always some kind of disaster—earth quake, mud slide, or fire."

I know many in our country view California as a place of opulent living. This ambivalence toward the victims of the fires left me frustrated, sad, and angry. I know most of the victims are hard working people trying to provide for their families. This "oh well" shrug of the shoulder image was one formed, not so much by my immediate experience, but by the overall media coverage and their comments on the fires.

My personal experience was truly one of being part of the Body of Christ—where compassion, hope, gratitude, and generosity were in abundance. Immediately upon sending an e-mail to family, friends, and colleagues regarding the fires, I received thoughtful responses of prayers being offered and questions of how one could help the victims. Being far from my home, I relied on the mountain area's community website for information on the fires. The site has message boards for residents to share information. Though the primary thread was whether a town, street, or home was in danger, over and over there were messages of heartfelt gratitude to the fire fighters and emergency personnel for their unwavering dedication to defending the mountain and fighting the fire. Even those who knew their homes were gone expressed thanks.

Pat Clasby, a fellow member of the NACYML Leadership Team, who lives in San Diego was an inspiration to me during this time of crisis. Though Pat's home was in an area on the verge of possible evacuation, Pat's concerns were with those who had no place to go other than the evacuation center. He,

along with youth and adult volunteers from his parish, gathered and delivered supplies to the shelters. As the fires in my home community were contained and people returned to the area, I called my parish to see what I could do—perhaps offer the use of my home to a family who lost their own home. I discovered eighty other people had called and offered their cabins to homeless families. The loving arms of God are truly embracing the victims of the fire.

There are still many untold stories of loss, as well as opportunities to help. In talking with Pat about the migrant workers who lived in one of the areas hit in San Diego, he told me that they now not only do not have a place to live but do not have work either. For some, their status does not allow for financial aid.

Two other NACYML members, also parish coordinators of youth ministry who live in San Diego, have been directly affected by the fires. Debra Humkey of San Rafael Parish in Rancho Bernardo and Marcial Lopez of Immaculate Heart Parish in Ramona had over thirty families lose their homes.

If you would like to assist the victims of these fires, please contact [Pat Clasby](#), [Debra Humkey](#), [Marcial Lopez](#), or [Our Lady of the Lake Church](#).



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The Right Combination: Summer Programs that Re-Create

By Deacon Bob Killoren
Diocese of Columbus Scout Chaplain
Columbus, Ohio

This issue of the NACYML News is devoted to summer programming. There are two aspects of summer programs that have a particularly theological dimension: rest and service.

Here are some quotations from the *Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church* that I offer for your consideration. How can they play a role in planning your summer programs?



Building your Summer Program as an Extended Sabbath Rest

- "Rest gives men and women the possibility to remember and experience anew God's work, from Creation to Redemption, to recognize themselves as his work (cf. Eph 2:10), and to give thanks for their lives and for their subsistence to him who is their author." [258]
- Rest provides an opportunity allows for four essential ingredients special to the concept of Sabbath: "the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body." [284]
- Sabbath is "an appropriate time for the reflection, silence, study and meditation that foster the growth of the interior Christian life." [285]
- Sabbath is "a day that should be made holy by charitable activity." [285]

Building your Summer Program as an Expression of Loving Service

- "The presence of the laity in social life is characterized by service, the sign and expression of love." [551]
- "Among the areas of the social commitment of the laity, service to the human person emerges as a priority. Promoting the dignity of every person, the most precious possession of men and women, is the 'essential task, in a certain sense, the central and unifying task of the service which the Church, and the lay faithful in her, are called to render to the human family.'" [552]
- "The internal 'renewal of the Christian spirit' must precede the commitment to improve society 'according to the mind of the Church on the firmly established basis of social justice and social charity.'" [552]
- "History shows how hearts are devastated when men and women are incapable of recognizing other values or other effective realities apart from material goods, the obsessive quest for which suffocates and blocks their ability to give of themselves." [581]
- "Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving." [583]
- Solidarity with the human family "can take on the features of service and attention to those who live in poverty and need, to orphans, the handicapped, the sick, the elderly, to those who are in mourning, to those with doubts, to those who live in loneliness or who have been abandoned." [246]

Think about it...

As time allows, review [The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church](#), available online at the Vatican website.

Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

December 2007

Summertime...and the Living Is Easy

By Mike Patin
International Speaker and Entertainer
LaFayette, Louisiana

I think my title for this article comes from an old George and Ira Gershwin song from the Broadway musical *Porgy and Bess*. Yet for many youth ministers, summertime is the time for mission/service trips, social trips to water parks, tubing trips and water ski outings, retreats, fundraisers, and more.

Some ministers intensify programming because teens are more accessible in the summer than during the school year. So, 'easy living' is not exactly the phrase to describe summer for many youth leaders. Yet, there is something important about using the summer season to rest and recharge our batteries.

Too often many ministers work at breakneck pace during the summer and find themselves dreading fall programming because they really had no rejuvenation time of their own. Wayne Mueller, in his excellent book *Sabbath*, cites some of the reasons we do not normally rest,

*...we can, over time, become enthralled in the trance of our work.
It is all-important;
It must be done right away;
It won't get done without m;
I cannot stop or it will all fall apart;
It is all up to me;
Terrible things will happen if I do not get this done.
I have to keep working because I have things to buy and there are bills to pay for those things and I have to buy faster computers and more expensive telephones to help me get more done so I can keep up and make the money to pay for the bills for the things I need to buy to help me get these things done...*

Once we are in this trance, there never seems to be a good enough reason to stop. The wisdom of Sabbath time is that at a prescribed moment, it is time to stop. We cannot wait until we are finished, because we are never finished. We cannot wait until we have everything we need, because the mind is seduced by endlessly multiplying desires. We cannot wait until things slow down, because the world is moving faster and faster, and we cannot be left behind. There are always a million good reasons to keep on going, and never a good enough reason to stop. (pp.210-211)

Now, I know I cannot change my, or anyone else's, DNA, but I do think we have to re-examine our approaches to ministry for our own sanity as well as for providing teens with an example of what healthy ministers look like.

I would like to share two thoughts from some recent reading as areas for consideration as you and I prepare for this upcoming summer.

The first is from a book by a Methodist pastor, Robert Benson. It is a short book, [*Good Life*](#). It is about what St. Benedict has to say to people today about a 'rhythm of life.' Benson cites four areas that are key to monastic life but also to those of us today in this busy world:

- Prayer: I recommend some extended time for quiet and prayer. Perhaps an afternoon of silence or solitude once a month during the summer. An escape with the express purpose of getting in the boat to the other side of the lake with Jesus.
- Work: I think we have got that covered. My dad always challenged me to 'learn how to work' (That is the



Cajun equivalent of "Work smarter, not harder.")

- Community: I do not mean with the teens we serve. I mean the relationships (family and friends) outside of church relationships. Who are the people who give you energy, make your soul smile, or make you 'do the happy dance'?
- Rest: Slow down. Shut down. Sleep in. Do 'your stuff' in order to re-fuel the tank.

On this notion of rest, Matthew Kelly, in his book, *The Rhythm of Life*, names three habits that we would be good to cultivate as we try to create rhythm for ourselves:

- Rest: get adequate sleep
- Quiet Hour: take time for prayer and meditation
- Sabbath: regular intervals of doing nothing, of prolonged rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation

My punch line through it all is let us use the season of summer to be a bit more intentional about self-care. Bill Hybels says it best in his article, *The Art of Self-Leadership*, "The best gift you can give the people you lead is a healthy, energized, fully surrendered, focused self. And no one else can do that for you."

Take care of yourself. It is good stewardship, good modeling and good discipleship. Have a blessed summer in 2008.

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December 2007

Continuing Education Resource Listing

By Mary Mueller

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

Shawnee, Kansas

“Lay persons who permanently or temporarily devote themselves to special service of the church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation required to fulfill their function properly and to carry out this function conscientiously, eagerly and diligently.” (Code of Canon Law, #231)

There it is, right there in the Code of Canon Law. Training does not end when you sign the parish contract, or accept the policy book for the school or diocese. Youth protection sessions are not the only education needed or required of youth ministry volunteers or professionals.

Continuing education, whether in the form of a degree, certificate, or continuing education workshops, retreats, or other experiences is one way for each of us to look to promoting not only our individual professions, but the profession of youth ministry as well. As a group, when we accept the challenge to engage in lifelong faith formation and education, we also send a message to our teens, their families and our parishes.



It can be near-impossible to envision taking time out during the school year for continuing education. Retreats, youth groups, sacramental preparation, and religious formation programs all take precedence over our own needs for continuing education.

Summertime offers a unique opportunity for both individuals and institutions to focus on degree, certificate, and continuing education opportunities.

College campuses around the country offer summer degree programs and certificate programs. Diocesan offices cosponsor intensive training experiences for those new to ministry.

Check with your diocesan office or local colleges and universities for information on what is available in your area. Look to the [NFCYM website](#) for information on degree programs offered around the country. Watch upcoming issues of this newsletter and the [NACYML website](#) for other educational opportunities for youth ministry professionals.

Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

September 2007

“Sharing Your Bread with the Hungry” Isaiah 58:7 What is This All About?

This column has appeared in every issue of NACYML News since the first issue, in spring 2005.

Sharing Your Bread is...

- an opportunity for local or diocesan youth ministry networks to talk about how they feed, and are fed by the youth ministry community
- the place where youth ministry professionals can learn how other communities of professionals have come together to learn, support, challenge and grow as individuals and groups
- the column that offers insights into how groups can be formed

Sharing Your Bread offers networking connections so that new groups can touch base with, and learn from, the experiences of established groups.

Sharing Your Bread can feed and nurture all of us.

What is your parish or diocese doing that can be shared with other youth ministers? Contact [Mary Mueller](#) to see your ideas and resources highlighted in *Sharing Your Bread With the Hungry*.

Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

December 2007

Mission at Home: Act Locally

By Glen McCall

Director of Youth Ministry, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
Ridgewood, New York

“Think globally, act locally” is the philosophy that has caused me to add local mission trips to the programming schedule. I would like to share with you one particular program that I have found to be a great asset in teaching our young people about their Christian call to service. In a related article, Brianna Wong, a high school junior, also shares her experience of participation in this form of outreach.

Our parish is located in a rather wealthy suburb of New York City. Our teens (and adults for that matter) do not have ‘a face’ to put with words like *hunger* or *homelessness*. Although they understand these terms cognitively, very rarely do they see a person directly affected by these issues.

This is where Bridges steps in to fill the void. Bridges, a non-profit organization based out of Summit, New Jersey, has been providing bag lunches, clothing, toiletry items and most of all hope to the homeless and underprivileged since 1988. The two main geographic areas of service are New York City and Irvington, NJ. Our involvement was on a ‘Bridges Run’ to New York City.

What is a "Bridges Run?"

Bridges seeks out partnerships with volunteer groups, religious or secular, to provide the resources and people needed to meet the food, clothing, and hygiene needs of approximately two thousand homeless persons every Friday night. A caravan, with supplies and volunteers, stops at three locations: Battery Park, the Fulton Fish Market, and under the Brooklyn Bridge. At each stop, individuals and families line up to receive a brown bag lunch, toiletry bag, clothing, a cup of hot soup, and most of all conversation. Being present to our ‘street friends’ is what is most valued by individuals on both sides. For many, we may be the only friendly voice they have heard all week, the only people to look them straight in the eye, and smile at them.



Benefits of Bridges

One of the greatest challenges we have in the field of youth ministry is providing opportunities for meaningful intergenerational involvement. Bridges allows for this in varied and meaningful ways.

- **Parish Involvement:** For several months prior to the run, youth group members asked the parish at large to donate trial size toiletry items: soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and the like. This allowed everyone in the parish to be involved. The collection was a huge success, with enough collected for this run and leftovers for the next time.
- **Cookie Baking:** Parishioners were also encouraged to bake cookies and place 4 to 6 cookies in a plastic bag for the bag lunches. This offered a way for those who could not physically go with us on the run to participate and feel part of the service outreach.
- **Shopping:** Part of our responsibility was to supply 600 bag lunches each containing a meat sandwich, piece of fruit, one sweet and one salty snack, and a drink. Teens and adults paired up to do the shopping.
- **Community Building:** Our middle school and high school youth, and some adults (mostly senior citizens), got together on a Thursday afternoon and evening to put together the 600 toiletry bags and 600 bag lunches. We also had some people sorting toiletry items.

The Run

On July 13, fifteen teens and adults ventured to Summit, New Jersey and met with Francis, a Bridges staff member (and former homeless person) who traveled with us. We spent forty-five minutes at each of the three locations. The first fifteen minutes were spent handing out items of need, and the remaining thirty were for conversation with our 'street friends.'

One of the most powerful parts of the evening for our teens was when we met a homeless teen their age. This was a great dialogue starter on the way home.

Additional Benefits to Bridges

- **Education:** Prior to our run, Lois Bhatt, executive director of Bridges, came to speak to our group and shared with us the issues facing the homeless, as well as the commitment needed to participate. The entire parish was invited. Bridges provided a complimentary DVD, explaining in detail aspects of the organization. This made it possible for those who could not attend the speaking engagement to share in the education component.
- **Low Cost:** Mission trips can be costly. Often, the length of time spent fund raising exceeds the duration of the trip. High cost mission trips can exclude young people of lesser economic resources. Providing a local mission experience keeps costs low. Local merchants became involved by donating food and toiletries for our run. Parishioners donated super market gift cards so we can purchase needed items.
- **Ability for Multiple Trips:** Long distance mission trips are offered once a year or once every two years. Local mission trips can be offered multiple times during a program year. Accessing a variety of direct service organizations gives teens a broad spectrum of experiences.
- **Volunteerism:** Since the service is done locally, teens have the opportunity to volunteer on a regular basis in the areas that interest them most. For the first time, many become aware that there are needs in their own backyard. Needs that they can fulfill!

If you live in an area Bridges serves and would like to participate, or if you would like more information on Bridges, visit the [Bridges website](#).

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September 2007

Bridges Experience

By Brianne Wong

*Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church
Ridgewood, New York*

This past summer, the youth ministry of [Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church](#) went on a Bridges Run. Several teenagers, a few adults, and myself went to New York City to serve the homeless.

The first stop we made was at Battery Park, and was very hectic and overwhelming. When I was passing out lunches, there were people grabbing them from the bag I was holding. At first, I was afraid, but then I felt like I was making a difference, and happy to help. Many of the homeless people were asking me if they could have the plastic bag that held all the lunches. A plastic grocery bag—a thing we throw away was the thing they all were asking for. I learned that some people are very fortunate to be able to have the things they have. It made me more thankful and aware of the things I have, and the things I probably do not deserve.

When I was under the Brooklyn Bridge giving out clothes, I saw that on the other side of the street there were happy people strolling along the river. The side I was on was filled with people begging and struggling for food, clothes, and toiletries. The experience made me appreciate the things I have and gave me a better understanding on how other less fortunate people struggle with the daily necessities of life.

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December 2007

Gospel Road: A Summer Service Experience

By Katy Bee

*Youth Minister, Church of the Resurrection
New Albany, Ohio*

We call our parish summer youth program *Gospel Road*. It is a week-long service retreat that has been building momentum here at the [Church of the Resurrection](#) for at least ten years. Begun as an offshoot of a larger program operated by the [Diocese of Columbus](#), *Gospel Road* alternates between providing our students with an urban service experience one summer and a rural service experience the next.

During *Urban Gospel Road*, our students spend the week volunteering at various service agencies and organizations around Columbus. From soup kitchens, to homeless shelters, to home building organizations, to working with special needs children and the elderly, our students are exposed to many of the different needs of our community. Urban Gospel Road enables young people to see and serve Christ in all types of people. It is a powerful, eye-opening opportunity for our teenagers.

Equally powerful, but completely different in scope, is *Rural Gospel Road*. This summer experience takes teens and adult volunteers to [Harlan County, Kentucky](#) where they spend the week building, repairing, painting, re-roofing, shoring up, and sometimes even tearing down the homes of Harlan County residents. Coming from a privileged area, our kids are amazed at the living conditions of some of the residents of this rural Appalachian community.

Both the urban and the rural experiences help students recognize how blessed and privileged they are. They also recognize that Christ takes many forms and works through many types of people. Youth go into the week expecting to serve, and come out of the week feeling blessed and amazed by the people who touched their hearts and fed them spiritually. They experience Jesus in places they never expected.



Our parish is extremely supportive of our *Gospel Road* efforts. This is partly because they are just very generous people. However, it is also because in the past ten years, parishioners have participated in one of these *Gospel Road* projects, either as students or as adult volunteers. Our parishioners' children have gone on *Gospel Road* and returned changed people! These parishioners know first-hand the impact the experience has had on their families and they want others to have the same opportunities.

The trip takes place in June, so every February we begin our campaign. We ask for volunteers, financial contributions, and lots of prayers. We bill the project not as a youth project, but as a parish-wide project. It is amazing how willing people are to be involved when there are many options and levels of involvement.

This year, for our rural experience we built a house! That is right: we started from the ground up, in our church parking lot. We asked parishioners of all ages to come for an afternoon and work. Some parishioners provided refreshments. Our workshop was a huge tent (donated by a parishioner) set up in the parking lot so the project was highly visible to everyone. We made frequent pulpit announcements and published weekly bulletin updates about our progress.

When it was time to leave for the trip, we loaded all of the floor joists, roof trusses, and walls that the parish had constructed onto a flat bed truck. The day we left, the entire assembly processed to the parking lot after Mass where our pastor and deacon blessed the house and sent us on our way. We transported the house all the way to Kentucky where we completed phase one of the project. (Phase two will take place next summer!)

This was a project about which our entire parish could feel proud. In fact, as an offshoot of this project, another group in our parish organized a shoe drive. Even though they had already given time, money, and prayer to the house project, our parishioners purchased a new pair of shoes for each and every student in the local Harlan County elementary school.

The last minute approach does not work with something like this. A project of this scope and magnitude must be planned to the very last detail. Yes, the Spirit must be invited into the process, but attention to detail is the key. A timeline must be created, competent and committed people must be in place. Several people need to review the plan to catch any details that might have been left out.

Follow up is also important. Parishioners want to see where their money and time went. A DVD of the trip was created and the parish was invited to the viewing. We displayed pictures in the gathering space of our church and ran descriptions of completed projects in the bulletin.

Gospel Road has mobilized our parish community for service. It has opened our eyes to the needs of people in other regions, as well as in our own backyard. The opportunity to serve and give unites and inspires us to give more. It reminds us of what it means to be Christian. Our summer experiences have blessed our parish tremendously. It's almost as if God designed it that way.

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December 2007

Young People Who Care Ministries

By Sr. Therese Dush, CA, and Sr. Suzanne Thibault, CA
 Young People Who Care, Inc.
 Frenchville, Pennsylvania

Young People Who Care, Inc. (YPWC) began as a youth group in 1972 under the leadership of Sr. Therese Dush, assisted by Barbara and Jim Flickinger and eighteen ninth grade youth. Over the span of four years it grew to include 200 youth and seventy-five adults from across the Diocese of Erie. This group founded a Mission in Frenchville, Pennsylvania in 1976 to serve those in need and to provide mission experiences for youth.

To Teach as Jesus Did, published in 1972 by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, was the source of the guiding principles for the group. The document states, “The educational mission of the Church is an integrated ministry embracing three interlocking dimensions: the message revealed by God (didache) which the Church proclaims; fellowship in the life of the Holy Spirit (koinonia); and service to the Christian community and the entire human community (diakonia).”

Renewing the Vision: a Framework of Catholic Youth Ministry, published in 1997 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated the same goals in a new way: to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community; and to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

How does one incorporate prayer, community, simplicity, service, and education, into a day, a weekend, or a week program for youth?

Basic components of a youth ministry program are student and adult involvement, parish awareness and involvement, money, transportation, and clearances for adults working with the youth. Frequently programs fall apart because one of the above is weak or missing. It takes a community of people convinced of the vision, with a diversity of talents and a willingness to give, to make this happen. Notice the word ‘community’ is used, not ‘team’, for it is the witness of this group, this community, which will sustain the work.

It is the intention here to share how *Young People Who Care, Inc.* has done this in a one week program and leave it to your creativity to do something similar in the mini experience of a day or a weekend.

The 2007 Summer Program had the theme “Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord” and the educational component of Catholic social teachings. A day in the life of students begins with 6:30 AM wake up followed by breakfast, which a ‘home crew’ would have prepared.

Morning Prayer

Each day focused on one of four of the elements of Catholic social teaching: dignity of the human person, call to community, care for God’s creation, and an option for the poor. Friday’s focus of discipleship encouraged students to continue the good work that had begun at YPWC in their home parishes, schools, and communities.

After morning prayer, students and their adult leaders then received their job assignments for the day, prepared their lunches, and assembled the tools and supplies they would need for the day. Before being sent out to assist those in need,



the students spent forty-five minutes in the blueberry patch picking blueberries. The blueberries are sold to help support the Mission and all of its ministries.

The Work Day

Work teams, having received orientation and education, leave for their jobsite by 8:30 a.m. They may be assigned to any one of the following: replacing a roof, painting, yard work, home renovation, house cleaning, visiting the homebound, assisting the handicapped, or a variety of other jobs. Work crews return to the main mission about 4:00 p.m. They enjoy a refreshing swim in the river with the beautiful mountain scenery as a back drop for fun and relaxation.

Each student group is assigned a day to prepare the meals for the whole group. Dinner is enjoyed at about 5:30 in the evening. Quiet hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with a focus that helps the student reflect upon their experiences of service and living in Christian community, after which the time is spent in quiet for the individual to rest, pray, journal, read, or write letters. One young lady expressed it this way, "I felt a deeper connection to God that I have never had. I feel like this week has literally opened my eyes and I am thankful for that."

The remainder of the evening is spent in all kinds of recreation; volleyball, soccer, capture the flag, cards, games, campfires, and any kind of fun imaginable. It is a time when friendships are made and celebrated, when laughter and shouts are heard all over the mountainside, when memories are made of good times spent with good friends! (There are no cell phones, radios, video games, or television).

Night Prayer

Night prayer occurs at 9:30 p.m. This is the time that reminds everyone of the purpose of the mission experience, 'to answer the call of the Gospel, to be people of service reaching out in love to those in need and to those within the community itself.'

Night prayer is often held by candle light or flashlight, or by the light of the campfire, sometimes at the youth center prayer space, outside at the cross on the hill, at Mary's Grotto, or by the labyrinth. Student groups plan these night prayers and each week brings creative and prayerful experiences that deepen the faith of the participants and bring the day to a close.

Listening to the students on Friday night and reading their evaluations reassures all the members of the YPWC staff that God is never outdone in generosity to those who love him. Each summer roofs are repaired, porches are built, homes are repaired and/or painted, stories are told, songs are sung, blueberries are picked, and lives are touched and changed—all in the spirit of service, prayer, simplicity, and hospitality.

Student Evaluation

Students have shared the following about their experiences:

- "I learned that service brings a person closer to God unlike anything else...you understand what it means to be selfless."
- "I was reminded of how grateful someone can be for a simple smile or someone to talk to. Changing the world may not be as difficult as it is made out to be with the right state of mind and a good spirit."
- "It is important to work together to achieve a major goal. I learned this by working with groups of people from different states at the work sites."

YPWC has been providing one week mission experiences for youth for the past thirty years. Students and their adult advisors from more than fifteen states have experienced this effective program. Some schools have returned for as many as twenty-eight years. This one week experience is offered throughout the months of June, July, and August. There is also a college program which is offered during term breaks.

YPWC has been involved in youth ministry training for the past thirty-one years and provides internship opportunities for youth ministry. YPWC, Inc. recruits men and women volunteers to assist in meeting the

needs of the poor throughout the year and to be leaders in youth ministry.

For More Information

For more information as to how you can volunteer and/or bring a group to YPWC [contact us via our website](#), or by calling 814-263-4855.

Email *NACYML News* at nacyml@nfcymoffice.org

December 2007

Youth Ministry and Sports: Seeing the Connection (It's Already There!)

By Dobie Moser

*Executive Director, National Center for Catholic Youth Sports
Diocese of Cleveland*

As a youth minister, imagine facing these challenges...

- Having more than fifty percent of youth involved year round in parish youth ministry programs.
- Having a parent volunteer for every five youth and other parents ready and willing to attend and support the program.
- Having registration fees for the program that are paid up front, on time, and thereby having the financial resources to pay for the majority of the program.
- Having mandatory parent/volunteer training that makes a direct connection to the vision and goals of comprehensive youth ministry from [*Renewing the Vision*](#).

This scenario need not be imagined. It is happening regularly through parish and school sports programs for youth from grades four through twelve. It is estimated that more than one half of Catholic youth participate in sports programs through their parish, school, or community recreation programs. The [National Center for Catholic Youth Sports \(NCCYS\)](#) is your national organization that is committed to teaching young people Gospel values through sports.

Making the connection between sports and youth ministry is not a new idea. Saint Don Bosco, the saint of young people, knew this well and followed this maxim: go where young people are and connect their life experience with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Simply put, we need to start where they are versus where we are. Many young people today are at the field, on the track, and in the gym.

The goal of NCCYS is to use sports to teach Gospel values. In this context sports can be a highly effective tool to achieve the three goals for Catholic youth ministry as stated in *Renewing the Vision*, with the end in mind of developing Christian disciples. Young people are playing sports in record numbers. Youth ministry programs have a terrific opportunity to make the following connections:

- **Sports as Youth Ministry:** Young people learn a great deal and have fun through play. When sports are placed in the context of ministry, the goal of building Christian disciples in and through the faith community becomes central. Sports in a Catholic ministry setting are about helping young people be more Christ-like in how they live. The high quality standards of any ministry program and its leadership also apply to sports programs.
- **Coach as Youth Minister:** The role of any youth ministry leader is to use his or her gifts to serve the young people entrusted to their care. In sports the coach represents the faith community in ways similar to those who serve in other ministries in the parish. Therefore the training, support, and formation of the coach are mandatory. We need to move well beyond a 'warm body' volunteer approach to ministry, therefore getting the coach trained to serve in the context of ministering to young people is critical. NCCYS has joined with the [American Sports Education Program](#) to offer an online [*Catholic Coaching Essentials*](#) course for the training and formation of coaches.
- **Team as Christian Community:** Great sports teams are rooted in caring, loving relationships between all parties. In this way teams learn how to share Gospel values, call forth integrity and honesty from each other, and learn how to deal with typical frustrations and moments of growth that happen within a team. Teams rooted in Christian community will learn how to deal with conflict, victory and defeat, and while

doing so honor their opponents, the officials, and the game itself.

- **Parents as Partners:** The role of parents in sports programs is a considerable issue and challenge in many youth sports programs. By engaging parents as co-workers toward a common mission, Catholic sports programs work with parents to engage them in using their gifts and talents to uphold the mission and values of the Gospel through sports. Just as parents are seen as the primary catechist of their children, they are likewise seen as the primary and first coach through their Christian behavior and example.
- **Winning the Right Way:** There are many wonderful lessons to be learned through sports. These include setting individual and team goals and working hard to achieve them; pushing to learn your own limits and what it takes to grow beyond them and do what you did not think was possible; dealing with setbacks and defeats personally and as a team; learning how a team working together can achieve significantly more than an individual alone. Doing all of this within the context of fair and honest play teaches that cheating to win is always wrong and is in direct conflict with Gospel values.



The National Center for Catholic Youth Sports is about 'keeping the faith while keeping the score.' Consider working with NCCYS to set up your online coaches' training or to do a parent training to engage parents as partners in your Catholic youth sports program. The NCCYS has a [parent brochure](#) that is available through the NFCYM Online Store that can be given directly to parents to further their role as partners and coworkers in this ministry that we share. NCCYS also provides training and consultation to Catholic school sports programs to help them intentionally connect the mission and values of the school to the operation of the school athletic program, which is one of the most visible programs in the community.

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Catholic Scouting Is Youth Ministry

By Rob Layer

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Recently I was approached by my diocesan Office of Youth Ministry to become the diocesan liaison for Catholic scouting. Until then, my view of scouting: Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts USA, and Camp Fire USA, was most likely similar to other youth ministry professionals. Scouts go camping, earn merit badges, do good deeds, and sell popcorn and cookies. They show up in uniform on Scout Sunday, use the church hall or gym, and do projects around the parish to earn awards.

That outlook has changed considerably, and I have been the beneficiary of years of experience and training which the adult leaders of our local troops, units, packs and crews, have under their belts.

For the past several years, the [Boy Scouts of America](#) (BSA), through the [National Catholic Committee on Scouting](#) (NCCS), has been promoting a program which is, and should be, of great benefit to those associated with youth ministry. The NCCS, through its connection with BSA promotes Catholic values through the Boy Scout, Cub Scout and Venturing Programs. [Scouting Is Youth Ministry](#) is a national initiative which promotes the goals of Renewing the Vision through scouting and its varied age appropriate activities.

Each summer during Relationships Week at the [Philmont Scout Ranch Training Center](#) in New Mexico, the NCCS runs a program entitled *Scouting in the Catholic Church*. Having attended this year's program, along with fifty other adult leaders in scouting, priests, and youth ministry professionals, I came to understand more fully the scope of the Catholic scouting programs.



Girl Scouts of America (GSUSA), along with Camp Fire USA, are members of the NFCYM, and promote various youth programs and religious awards through the [National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire](#) (NCCGSCF).

Catholic scouting, through the emblem and [religious recognition programs](#), helps each young man and woman learn more about their faith. All levels have an age-appropriate Catholic emblem or award covering various topics relating to the sacraments, church history, Mary, and vocations (among others). What better way to reach our youth than to volunteer as an emblem or awards counselor or religious recognition moderator? As youth ministry professionals we have the knowledge and experience to build bridges.

Each Catholic diocese, through the NCCS, has established a Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting (DCCS), and should be coordinated through the diocesan youth ministry office. If you are unsure how to contact your own DCCS, you may go to the [NCCS website](#) and click on the local contacts tab to find out who your DCCS chairperson and chaplain are. Many dioceses also have distinct diocesan councils for the religious recognition programs for Catholic youth in Girl Scouts and Camp Fire USA. Contact your diocesan youth ministry office or [NCCGSCF regional representative](#) for additional information.

Want to learn more? Visit the following websites:

- [Boy Scouts of America](#)
- [Venturing BSA](#)
- [Girl Scouts of America](#)

- [Camp Fire USA](#)
- [National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry](#)
- [National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire](#)
- [National Catholic Committee on Scouting](#)
- [History of US Catholic Scouting](#)

In closing, I want to say that my own youth ministry has been uplifted through the relationships that have been formed with the Catholic scouts and adult leaders in my parish and diocese. Reach out to scout troops, packs, units, and Venturing crews to welcome them and offer your assistance.

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December 2007

Hispanic Teens are the New Face of Catholic Youth Ministry

By Ken Johnson-Mondragón

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Did you know that by the start of the fall semester next year, Latinos are expected to make up forty-six percent of the high school-age Catholic population in the United States, surpassing their Anglo counterparts as the largest segment for the first time?

Pathways of Hope and Faith Among Hispanic Teens, a new book from [Instituto Fe y Vida](#), sheds light on both the strengths and challenges this young generation presents to our parish youth ministry programs.

Here are a few highlights from the study and the publication:


- Among young Catholics, Hispanics are more interested in learning about their faith, more likely to pray or read the Scriptures on a regular basis, and more likely to say they feel close to God or that their faith is an important part of their daily lives than their Anglo peers.
- There are significant socioeconomic and religio-cultural differences between most Hispanic teens and other young Catholics that can make it difficult to form them into a cohesive community.
- As a result, Latino youth are still underrepresented in Catholic youth ministry and confirmation programs, often despite continuous efforts from their parents and youth ministers to encourage their participation.

How can you tap into the religious instincts of the Hispanic teens and expand the outreach of your ministry? The answers to this and many other questions begin with a fresh analysis of surveys and interviews with over 3,000 teenagers conducted by the [National Study of Youth and Religion](#) (NSYR). A unique feature of this book is that it contains sixty-four excerpts from actual conversations with Hispanic teens. You can hear them reflect on their lives, their families, and their religious beliefs, practices, and experiences in their own words.

Before anything was written for this project, a multidisciplinary and ecumenical team of nine writers and six conversation partners gathered to reflect on the NSYR findings regarding Hispanic teens. The richness borne of this broad and enlightened approach has produced a collection of theological reflections and more than sixty specific pastoral recommendations that will guide youth ministers and parents to be more effective in fostering the religious formation of the Latino teens in their care. For example, there is a great need to invest in the cultural competence of our youth ministry leadership teams, and *Pathways of Hope and Faith* suggests three easy ways any parish can accomplish that goal.

Each chapter concludes with a set of questions for reflection and a list of books, articles, and websites that provide additional resources. In addition, the final chapter offers an overall summary of the findings regarding Hispanic Catholic teens and identifies ten factors that need to be addressed in the Catholic Church to provide a more comprehensive outreach to them. The table of contents, introduction, and interview samples from the book can be found on the [Fe y Vida website](#).



Fe y Vida is pleased to offer a special discount available only to NACYML members. To take advantage of the discounted price, [download the order form](#) 

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