

## SO MANY IN POVERTY; WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?



“As far as the social justice question goes, I don't think you can be an evangelist, or part of this evangelical movement in the church, without being as clearly committed to social justice as the church has been in the past. We can't preach the Gospel and not live it. If we don't love the poor, and do all we can to improve their lot, we're going to go to Hell. It's very clear from the gospels that we have the duty to do that.” *Archbishop Charles Chaput in an interview with National Catholic Reporter, July 19, 2011*

How many Oregonians are hungry? In June of 2011, 776,972 Oregonians used SNAP (once known as “food stamps”). That is an increase of 64.2% in the last five years, and doesn't include the two out of three eligible seniors who are not using SNAP. That is a lot of hungry Oregonians.

Across the country 46.2 million citizens were living below the Federal Poverty Level in 2010. That's the highest number since 1959 — before we had color televisions.

The charitable pipelines are not big enough to end hunger by providing food boxes for every need.

**The Catholic Campaign for Human Development is one way to move people out of poverty.**

CCHD is the domestic anti-poverty, social justice program of the U.S. Catholic bishops. Its philosophy emphasizes empowerment and participation *by the poor for the poor*—people living in poverty must have the dominant voice in the organization. By helping the poor to participate in the decisions and actions that affect their lives, CCHD empowers them to move beyond poverty.

For over 40 years the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) has awarded grants to community and economic development organizations in the Archdiocese of Portland that empower individuals to break the cycle of poverty and defend the dignity of all human beings by address the problem of poverty in their neighborhoods. This commitment includes the participation of Catholic parishes, schools, Catholic Charities, and health ministries.

**The national Catholic Campaign for Human Development Collection is the weekend before Thanksgiving.** This Collection is the primary source of funding for CCHD's anti-poverty grants and education programs. Funded organizations provide important resources that help uplift our suffering neighbors. Please be generous.

One such program, [Community Alliance of Tenants](#), works for safe and affordable housing through education, empowerment, and advocacy.

[Madonna's Center](#) serves disadvantaged teen parents (age 19 and under) in Clackamas County who are without family/financial support or not eligible for government-funded programs because of age and circumstances, and are assuming primary responsibility for parenting their children (age three and under) while also working towards self-sufficiency.

Another way to move people out of poverty is for state and federal governments to continue their support of public food assistance programs and public income assistance programs. [The U.S. Bishops made their concerns known.](#)

The U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops joined with other faith leaders to form a [Circle of Protection](#) around programs that meet the essential needs of hungry and poor people at home and abroad—Public Food and Income Assistance Programs that protect the poor: SNAP, WIC, Head Start, TANF, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Unemployment Insurance, and others.

“We believe the moral measure of the debate is how the most poor and vulnerable people fare. We look at every budget proposal from the bottom up—how it treats “the least of these” (Matthew 25:45).”

(Readings for Christ the King)



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