

C.R.O.S. currents

Dear Friends of C.R.O.S. Ministries,



I have come to believe in two images for C.R.O.S. Ministries. The first is of the Israelites

in the desert and each morning there was manna for that day. The second is of Jesus and the little boy with the five loaves and two fish and the multitudes need to eat. Miraculously, there was enough. We have a small staff and meager resources yet there is always enough. People are fed and lives are touched and healed.

The first person to receive food from our new North County Pantry located in Jupiter said to me, "I had been praying about how I was going to feed myself and my son who is autistic. I am having such trouble with my food stamp application." As she left with arms full of bags of food, she said "...thank you so much I will not have to worry this week about food."

Thank you for your continued support through prayers, time and gifts.

Peace and Grace,

Pam

Rev. Pamela A. Cahoon

Congregations and Community Partners Provide Holiday Hope

In November and December 2010, C.R.O.S. Ministries collaborated with hundreds of volunteers from local congregations and businesses to purchase, sort, repackage and distribute **564 holiday food boxes** and **57 grocery gift cards** to low income families. Each food box contained all the trimmings for a traditional holiday meal. Many of the same congregations purchased **1,200 holiday gift cards** which were distributed to children in need for holiday gifts.



Volunteers and recipients of the C.R.O.S. Holiday Food Program

Join Feinstein and C.R.O.S. in the Fight to End Hunger in Palm Beach County

C.R.O.S. Ministries has been chosen, among other organizations fighting hunger across the country, to benefit from the annual Feinstein Foundation Challenge. All donations of money received by C.R.O.S. Ministries from **March 1st through April 30th** will be matched. Food donations will also be matched at \$1 per item. The more we receive, the bigger portion of the \$1 million we will receive.

Please participate in March and April by making a donation of any size to C.R.O.S. Ministries and be sure to mark your donation "**Feinstein Challenge**." Join us in a successful grassroots campaigns to fight hunger!

C.R.O.S. Ministries collaborates with people of different faiths and organizations to create solutions to the unmet needs of people in our community.

caringkitchen

New Caring Kitchen Van Brings Hope

"We are so grateful!"
- April Hazamy

Thanks to an open heart and very generous donors The Caring Kitchen has a new van! The old van was simply on its "last tires" and our food recovery program was in jeopardy. As God would have it, the right person was sent to us at the right time to answer this need. Because of this incredible gift, we were able to continue pickups of in-kind food donations that are so vital to our ministry.

"The new van enables our drivers to pick up more donations safely and efficiently," said April Hazamy, Caring Kitchen Director and Client Advocate. "We are so grateful!"

We are always amazed at how faith in action reveals itself with stories like this, especially during the holidays. What a powerful affirmation of God's presence among us and of God's blessings on this ministry!



Holiday Fun!

Sixty-one children joined us for the annual Caring Kitchen holiday party; they had a blast making crafts and visiting with Santa.

crosgleaning

gleaning /gleaning/ noun: gathering after the harvest

The C.R.O.S. gleaning program invites volunteers to pick crops from the fields of local farms that are left behind after commercial harvesting; food that would otherwise go to waste. This fresh, nutritious produce is then distributed to various agencies that serve the hungry throughout Palm Beach County.



A Christmas Eve Blessing for the Hungry

The 2010-2011 gleaning season started very well; but, December brought record low freezing temperatures resulting in the halted growth of many crops.

Not only were the freezes extremely early, but temperatures turned out to be more frigid than anything the area had seen since 1962.

However, on Christmas Eve, we were called by Agri-Gators Farms in Palm City to rescue a field of sweet corn. We thought it would be almost impossible to find gleaners on that day, but 39 dedicated volunteers showed up to bless the hungry with their time. Kim, one of the volunteers, said "there's no other place I'd rather be." What an awesome Christmas blessing!

If you are interested in gleaning or donating to the program, please contact Viviane at 561-233-9009 ext.107 or by email at vilsaime@crosmministries.org.

"There's no other place I'd rather be!"
- Kim, Gleaning Volunteer on Christmas Eve 2010

A Surprise Encounter

In her book *"An Altar in the World,"* theologian Barbara Brown Taylor describes the spiritual practice of "encountering others." She says that the spiritual dimension of encountering others is chiefly revealed in looking at the other and seeing in them something other than that which we have written about them in our own life story. To truly encounter the other is to reach out to them, and rather than seeing what we expect or want to see in them, we see God.

On January 11, 2011, C.R.O.S. began a partnership with the Town of Jupiter to offer an emergency food pantry to the northern communities of Palm Beach County. The opening day was exciting, with new volunteers meeting, training and mobilizing. A volunteer invited our first client "Dorothy" to sit down, and she proceeded to tell her story of struggle as a single working mother and the joys and challenges of parenting her autistic son. She explained that because of his disorder, her son sometimes refuses to eat the only food she has on hand.

The volunteers listened and responded to Dorothy. It was a beautiful thing to see this group of strangers *encountering* each other and encountering Dorothy. Each one of them came to volunteer for their own reasons. Each one came carrying with them their own strengths and life experiences. Each one came with their own notions of what type of people they would find at a food pantry. As I observed these encounters, I could see each of these individuals being opened up in new and surprising ways. They discovered that C.R.O.S. food pantries aren't just about distributing food to the hungry, they're also about encountering God in the face of others.

After listening attentively to Dorothy's story, the volunteers gently guided Dorothy through the application process and brought her two bags of food, careful to make sure that there were items included that her son would eat. Then something truly amazing happened. As she was about to leave, Dorothy stopped, turned around, and informed the volunteers that she had two bags of food in her car, full of things that her special needs child refused to eat. She said, "I'll be right back. I want to bring those bags and donate them to the food pantry. I hope someone else can use them who needs them."

Thanks be to God for our faithful volunteers, thanks be to God for faithful donors like Dorothy and her son, and thanks be to God for showing up in the face of others every day in our C.R.O.S. food pantries.

— Rev. Amy Baer



"...rather than seeing what we expect or want to see in them, we see God."

Young People Making A Difference

The Caring Kitchen recently hosted four volunteers from Morikami Park Elementary School. Pictured below (L to R), Christopher, Griffin, Tanner, and Alex (not pictured) are working on a year-round project to learn about homelessness and hunger in our community as part of the school's International Bachelaurate Programme. Their goal is to both learn and to give back. During their visit, the boys were happy to help hand out bread to our clients.

"They are really getting something out of this experience. It is opening their eyes to a perspective of the issue they would not otherwise have," said Karen Altonen, mother of one of the student volunteers.

The boys will finish their project by presenting what they have learned to their class at the end of the year.

It is through simple activities like this that the ministries of C.R.O.S. can bridge the gap of understanding between socio-economic groups. If you, your organization, school, business or congregation would like to learn more about hunger and homelessness in our community, please contact Rev. Amy Baer at 561-233-9009 x105.



**"It was interesting to see how what little we did made such a big difference."
— Christopher, student**



Magical Evening of Music

March 3, 2011 • Old School Square, Delray Beach

Featuring International Theater and Concert Star

Sue Mathys

Pre-concert cocktail hour with live jazz by Same Difference

Tickets are \$75 each for reserved seating and \$100 tickets include a VIP Champagne Reception with Honorary Event Chair, Fred Fetzer.

For information, call 561-233-9009 x106 or e-mail sbardisa@crosmministries.org.

crospantries



We need food!

With the opening of two new food pantries this year, the C.R.O.S. Food Pantries are desperately in need of non-perishable food donations. It is a daily struggle to fill the pantry shelves of all six area pantries. Please consider holding a food drive and donating to your nearest C.R.O.S. food pantry.

For an easy-to-follow step-by-step guide to food drives, simply call or email Rev. Amy Baer at abaer@crosmministries.org or 561-779-7980.

croscamps



C.R.O.S. Camps Needs Summer Interns

C.R.O.S. Ministries is gearing up for another fun and faithful summer for local at-risk children. Internships are available for students and young adults ages 19-28

interested in ministry with children and youth at community day camps and resident summer camps. The student's service time will be June 1 – August 12, 2011. Room and board are provided for those assigned away from home. The application deadline is April 1, 2011.



"Through this internship I realized the calling that God had planned for me. And so I went back to college and also changed my major. This program opened my eyes to more options in life. It helped me see that I can actually do what I set my mind to do and not be afraid of doing it."

-Maria, 2010 C.R.O.S. Camps Summer Intern

THIS NEWSLETTER IS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.CROSMINISTRIES.ORG. IF YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE IT BY EMAIL, PLEASE CONTACT SUSAN BARDISA AT SBARDISA@CROSMINISTRIES.ORG



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