

newsworthy trends

Americans Joining Together To Fight Poverty

(NAPS)—A growing number of Americans are doing something to break the cycle of poverty.

Even at a time of great economic prosperity, 32 million people still live in poverty in the United States. The 1999 average poverty threshold for a family of three was \$13,290.

The latest census figures confirm that one of every six American children lives in poverty. That is nearly five million children—a number greater than the population of the city of Los Angeles. Families continue to be hard hit as well, as one in every eleven families in America struggles to get out of poverty.

To survive and break the cycle of poverty, families need access to a decent education and job training; adequate health care, and safe neighborhoods. However, unlike those in the middle class, the poor cannot take these things for granted.

Fortunately, for those who want to be part of the solution, there are a number of practical and productive ways to get involved. You can be a mentor to an underprivileged child. You can hire and pay a living wage to someone who is trying to work his or her way out of poverty. Or, you can support an organization in your local community that helps people help themselves.

For example, it is possible to support organizations like the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. For the past 30 years, CCHD, as it is known, has distributed \$250 million in grants to 3,500 self-help programs to create jobs, provide affordable housing, improve schools, ensure just wages, fight crime and develop leaders for the future. CCHD is sponsored by the U.S. Catholic



Funded by CCHD, an Iowa program is stabilizing family farms by connecting new farmers with those who are retiring.

bishops and supported by an annual collection in all Catholic churches.

CCHD funds community and economic development programs without regard to religious affiliation in the belief that local leaders know best the needs of the communities they serve.

The grants are distributed only to organizations in which the poor assume leadership roles for community improvement efforts. The funded programs are designed to make permanent changes in the lives of the people they serve and the generations that follow.

Nationally, CCHD also promotes programs designed to raise public awareness of poverty and its self-perpetuating effects. In addition to raising awareness, this campaign also encourages people to visit a Web site where they can find out how to fight poverty in their own community.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.povertyusa.org.

Note to Editors: January is Poverty in America Awareness Month.