Challenging Poverty Today

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National Christ Child Society Conference
2:00-3:00 and 3:30-4:30, Friday, September 25, 2015

“The guiding principle of the Society has always been personal service rendered for the love of the Christ Child to the least of these little ones. In developing this purpose, the Society has widened and deepened its activities to meet the exigencies of its time” (Mary Virginia Merrick). This principle is at the heart of the Challenging Poverty: One Child at a Time Manual, 2015 edition.

The Christ Child Society’s long history of serving children makes it a natural fit for hands-on outreach programs that address the sad statistics of poverty in our country; 1 in 5 children lives at or below the poverty level. The term under-resourced has replaced prior terminology such as poor and needy in describing people who lack the skills, tools and support systems that bring financial and emotional security. These include adequate health care, educational opportunity, literacy, food, stable family structure and confidence in the future. Each CCS chapter is encouraged to consider establishing or expanding a program with a focus on supplementing education, strengthening families or providing some of the other resources necessary for a child’s security, comfort and success.

The 2015 edition of Challenging Poverty was redesigned to be user friendly, informative, and instructive. It features the following:

- a chapter on cultural competency, which is the ability to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, in a manner that affirms their worth and dignity;
- a step by step process for the development and maintenance of a program;
- a simple explanation of the Logic Model as a method of planning, executing and evaluating programs;
- a helpful resource appendix;
- evaluation techniques and samples;
- Best Practices, a compilation of a variety of successful CCS programs.

The 2015 Challenging Poverty Manual can be found on the National Christ Child Society website (www.NationalChristChild.org). All chapters are urged to heed the words of our founder, “find a need and fill it.” As the world changes, cultures conflict, educational systems flounder, economies falter and injustice deepens, the Christ Child Society can, sadly, find many needs to fill. This manual is offered to make the process of reaching out to the children of our communities a clear, doable - and difficult to ignore – undertaking.
Four chapters whose programs are excellent examples of what *Challenging Poverty* is all about share their stories and serve as role models for chapters who want to launch a new, or enhance an existing, outreach program.

**Best Practice Presenters:**

- The **Toledo Chapter’s Parenting Today’s Kids program** offers parent support and education.
  Presented by Karen Smith, Toledo Chapter Board Member, (kkip143@gmail.com)

- **The Reading Enrichment Program** of the **Stuart Chapter** has volunteers that go into classes at the Dunbar Learning Center once or twice a month.
  Presented by Cheryle Mackie, Stuart Chapter and NCCS Vice President, (camackie@aol.com)

- The **Pasadena Chapter** developed **Christ Child Treasures**, a self-esteem program for 5th and 6th grade students in local at-risk parochial schools.
  Presented by Karen Sweeney, Pasadena Chapter President, (karensweeney1865@hotmail.com)

- **SUCCESS Tutoring** is the hands-on program of the **South Bend Chapter**, providing tutors, classroom helpers and mentors at one of the neediest parochial schools in the area.
  Presented by Peg Riggs, South Bend Chapter President, (pegriggs1@yahoo.com)