



Vincentian Solidarity Office

June 2006 Bulletin

Comments from the VSO Administrator

Dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with us!

Since I last wrote in March of 2006, the VSO funded seven more VSF Micro-Project Grant Applications. The Vice-Province of St. Justin de Jacobis in Eritrea received a micro-project grant to purchase computer equipment and a copier machine for seminarians in two of its formation houses in Asmara. The Province of Northern India received a micro-project grant to replace the roof of a mission presbytery in Joshipur, Mayurbhanj District, in Orissa. The Province of Slovakia received a micro-project grant to equip its popular mission team with a computer, printer and projector in Bijacovce. The Province of Cuba received a micro-project grant to renovate a church complex in Santiago de Cuba. The Mission of Fiji received a micro-project grant to establish a farming project at a school hostel in Natovi. The Rwanda Mission received a micro-project grant to purchase computers and network wiring for its seminary in Kabgayi. Finally, the Province of Ethiopia received a micro-project grant to purchase an electrical generator for one of its houses with a kindergarten in Shishinda. These bring the total number of micro-projects funded, at the conclusion of the first year of the VSF micro-project grant program, to 15. These grants were awarded in 14 different countries on five continents for a multitude of pastoral and socioeconomic purposes.

What a concrete manifestation of solidarity by confreres in industrialized countries, who in contributing to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund, have supported works of charity and justice by confreres in developing countries!

Faternally in St. Vincent,

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

A Water Tank Truck in Enugu

The central house, major seminary, and a parish of the Vice-Province of Nigeria are located in the Maryland section of the City of Enugu in southeastern Nigeria. The largest industry in Enugu is coal mining. While this industry is vital for the local economy, it is detrimental to the health of the city's populace; mining pollutes the underground water. Residents, most of whom are poor, must depend upon the collection of rain for potable water. Some struggle to survive during the annual dry season because of water shortages. Lives are lost to typhoid fever, dysentery, and other water-borne diseases. Government intervention for this problem is negligible. Commercial interests exploit the situation and make purchasing safe water unfeasible for the poor.



The refurbished Mercedes Benz tanker truck

The Vincentians in Enugu have personally suffered from the lack of safe water, and long held concern over this situation for the welfare of the poor in the city. Recently they decided to tackle the problem. The Vice-Province of Nigeria approached the VSO for assistance to finance the purchase of a refurbished Mercedes Benz truck to be outfitted as a water tanker. Acquisition of a water tanker would enable the Vincentians to obtain safe water from a distance at a reasonable price. The VSO was able to match a generous donation from an anonymous donor in Ireland with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund to finance the purchase of the truck and its

outfitting as a tanker. Vincentians are now able to transport fresh water into Enugu for their own use and also for the poor living in the Maryland section of the city. The confreres charge the poor residents minimal fees for the water which are used to help fuel and maintain the truck, and pay its operator.

Protecting Children in San Pedro Sula

According to the 2005 United Nations Human Development Index, Honduras is the third poorest nation in Latin America. The confreres of the Mission of Honduras have established the Amigos Para Siempre (Friends for Ever) program to address poverty in the City of San Pedro Sula in the northwestern region of Honduras. San Pedro Sula has approximately 650,000 residents. Many of these are poor immigrants that have overwhelmed the city's social welfare infrastructure.

Amigos Para Siempre recently launched a project targeting poor children and families in the Suncery Barrio and three nearby communities in San Pedro Sula. These barrios suffer high rates of drug trafficking and prostitution. Two-thirds of the families in the barrios are headed by single women who work long hours at low-paying jobs. Many children drop out of school to help make income for their families. The children of these families are at high risk for being exploited by the drug and commercial sex trade. The name of the project is APREMDES: Amigos Previniendo la Entrada al Mundo de las Drogas, Delincuencia y Explotación Sexual (Friends Preventing the Entrance into the World of Drugs, Delinquency, and Sexual Exploitation).

APREMDES aims to prevent children in the four barrios from becoming involved in dangerous activities that often accompany urban poverty. The project offers children opportunities for healthy activities, and reinforces their connection to family and school. The project directly targets 200 children from 5 to 16 years in age. The children are initially contacted on the streets. Once children are engaged in the project, extensive efforts are also made to visit and work with their families. Project activities include tutoring, organized games and sports, workshops on arts and crafts, hygiene, nutrition supplements, health assessments and referrals, and counseling. The

project is also implementing an anti-drug campaign, "Just Say No to Drugs," on the streets and in the schools across the four barrios. The campaign includes posters, education, and celebrations.



Some of the children served by Amigos Para Siempre

The Mission of Honduras requested the assistance of the VSO to obtain funding for APREMDES. The VSO was able to match a generous grant from the Cooperación Vicenciana para del Desarrollo – Acción Misionera Vicenciana de España (COVIDE-AMVE) in Madrid with monies from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund, enabling APREMDES to go forward.

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Our goal: To assist the poorer provinces, vice-provinces, missions, and visitors' conferences of the Congregation of the Mission with obtaining funds for their works and needs.

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