

# LOOKING TO INCREASE GLOBAL SOLIDARITY IN YOUR PARISH?... LET THE CRS PARISH AMBASSADOR CORPS HELP!



## CRS Parish Ambassador Corps

### AMBASSADORS OF HOPE— TO THE PARISH, TO THE WORLD

Inspired by Pope Francis, Catholics across the United States hunger for new ways to live their faith—to encounter and respond to excluded and suffering people around the world. A passion for mission inspires Catholics, as disciples of Jesus Christ, to put the teachings of the Church into practice by energizing their parish communities to have a global impact. To help Catholics answer this call, Catholic Relief Services has developed the CRS Parish Ambassador Corps.

#### Overview

CRS Parish Ambassadors are active parishioners with a passion for **global solidarity**. They encourage their parishes to respond to Catholic social teaching by engaging their fellow parishioners to participate in CRS Rice Bowl and at least two other global solidarity initiatives, annually:

<b>EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT</b>	CRS Rice Bowl Catholics Confront Global Poverty CRS Food Fast
<b>AWARENESS</b>	CRS Speakers Bulletin notes and inserts
<b>STEWARDSHIP</b>	CRS Gift Catalog Global Emergency Response

CRS provides tools for engagement to help Catholics respond to the Gospel call to help our vulnerable brothers and sisters around the world.

#### Support for Parish Ambassadors

CRS Parish Ambassadors receive special formation on the spiritual roots of our call to care for those in need during two retreats—which include leadership training—that are provided through the Archdiocese of Seattle. Participants then become part of a nationwide CRS Ambassador community, sharing encouragement, prayer and resources via social networking. They also receive hands-on training in skills for effective parish engagement. These skills include:

- ✓ Building teams
- ✓ Identifying and engaging leaders and participants
- ✓ Facilitating meetings
- ✓ Becoming mentors
- ✓ Using CRS faith-sharing resources

Through special webinars, Ambassadors receive ongoing training and briefings on issues that impact people living in poverty overseas.

## Qualities

An effective CRS Parish Ambassador is connected to and able to collaborate with others and actively participates in parish life. He or she also has an interest in global mission and discipleship and desires to develop and grow as a leader. Diocesan leaders will act as mentors to Parish Ambassadors, with support from CRS regional offices, and technical assistance and training will be provided by CRS headquarters staff. Parish Ambassadors are nominated by their pastor, pastoral coordinator or a member of the parish staff. (Ambassadors may be parish staff.) Although Parish Ambassadors may self-identify through CRS, they must be commissioned by their pastor or pastoral coordinator (or their delegate). Since 2015, more than 55 ambassadors representing 27 parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle have been commissioned.



Photo by Philip Laubner/CRS

## Expectations

CRS Parish Ambassadors are expected to collaborate with parish staff to coordinate three global solidarity initiatives within the pastoral year—September through August—that help their fellow parishioners respond to the Gospel call to care for those in need. Ambassadors make a 2-year commitment to the program. After that, they may renew their commitment annually.

## Testimonials

*"Having parishioners serve as part of the CRS Ambassador Corp has enabled the faithful of our parish to be better connected to those in need in other parts of the world. More than just putting a band aid on one problem or another, we get to be part of CRS's work, even if indirectly, with local communities throughout the world, to collaborate in developing infrastructure and sustainable systems--all in the name of Jesus and in support of his Mission."* Fr. Todd O. Strange, Pastor, St. Joseph Catholic Church & School Issaquah

*"Having dedicated parishioners who are CRS Ambassadors has made a real difference for us. Their enthusiasm and positive attitude are contagious. They've brought fresh ideas and new energy, especially in how CRS connects to other ministries and activities here. They have both enhanced existing activities and started new ones reaching more parishioners than ever. All they have needed is the right guidance and support to take this to a new level."* Chris Koehler, Director of Immigrant Assistance, St. James Cathedral Seattle

*"Being a part of the CRS Ambassador program this year has been an honor and blessing. Not only has this program given me the opportunity to meet others from various parishes but also educate myself and my own parish about the significance of global solidarity and the importance it has in our Catholic faith."* Maria Dellett, Ambassador, St. Joseph's Issaquah

*"Becoming a CRS Ambassador has introduced me to prayerful, caring, committed people from throughout the Seattle Archdiocese. Their witness of faith challenges me to live my faith more deeply. It has inspired me to learn more about the need for and the programs addressing global solidarity and to share what I learn with others. It has also helped me put faces on the many "hungers" faced by our neighbors on this earth."* Nancy Holmes, Ambassador, Our Lady of Guadalupe Seattle

## For more information

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