



Social Justice

Hunger in Story County

A Committee of St. Cecilia's Catholic Church

A group of women from St. Cecilia Parish* is working with others in their sorority, called *Charites*, to help alleviate hunger in Story County children. *Charites* is partnering with Meeker School to set up the Backpack Program this fall and plans to partner with Sawyer School in the future. The Backpack Program provides healthy, kid-friendly food to low-income children on weekends and school breaks.

According to Jean Kresse, President and CEO of United Way of Story County, UWSC piloted the Backpack Program in November, 2011, after learning the free and reduced lunch rate at Mitchell School was 47%. By September 2012, that percentage had risen to over 50% and the Ames School District had 28.5% on the free and reduced lunch program.**

In the program, school counselors identify children who would benefit from having nutritious food on the weekend; the recipients must qualify for free or reduced lunches. Each Friday during the school year, a backpack is filled with food for one child for the weekend and discreetly placed in the student's locker. There



are no identifying marks on the backpack to indicate it is anything but a backpack. The contents of the backpacks vary each week, but contain a variety of items such as pop-top meals or soup, 100 percent juice, single-serve cereal, fruit cups, peanut butter and shelf-stable 2 percent milk. The food is purchased at reduced prices at the Food Bank of Iowa. Cost per student per year is estimated at \$145.60.

Currently, the schools that have partnered with United Way of Story County and the Food Bank of Iowa to implement the program include Mitchell (24 children); Ballard (24); Nevada (50 - UWSC covers 30 and the Food Bank covers 20);

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** Income guidelines for 2013 for a family of four are as follows: Yearly income at or below \$30,615—eligible for free lunches; yearly income at or below \$43,568—eligible for reduced-price lunches. Source: Iowa Department of Education.

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(continued)

Meeker (new this fall with 20) and Edwards (also new this fall with 15). Many more children are eligible but do not yet participate in the program.

However, children are not the only citizens who are food insecure (i.e., unsure of where their next meal is coming from). In Story County, 13.5 % of the people live at or below the poverty level. That is equal to 12,000 people, 2,570 of them children.

Community efforts by UWSC and its Hunger Collaboration to reduce hunger in Story County include:

- Food Pantry Collaboration; Food at First; Free Market; Food Drives; Backpack Program
- Congregate meals; Home-delivered meals; Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Nutrition focus: Healthy Food Vouchers; School Gardens; Cooking classes
- Encouraging bringing in more federal dollars for summer food programs for children.

For more information on the BackPack Program or other United Way of Story County hunger programs, please contact UWSC at 515-268-5142.

Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels volunteers help by delivering meals to Ames residents over the lunch hour. Typical routes include 5-10 stops that are arranged as much as possible by geographic location. First, volunteers stop at MGMC to pick up the meals in carriers and the route information, deliver the meals, and then return carriers to Mary Greeley Medical Center. Volunteers provide their own transportation. Hours are 11:30 a.m. start, typically shifts last 1-1.5 hours. Volunteer substitutes are always needed. For more information, please contact Cathy Kaspar at 233-0517.

The Saint Cecilia Social Justice Committee meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Sunroom. Everyone is welcome to attend. All donations are made in accordance with Catholic Social Justice teachings. Financial reports and budget information are available from the parish office. Minutes from the meetings are posted on the parish website.

Called to Trust

What it means to rest in God's love

by Leisa Anstinger



From being thrown about to being cradled with care

A friend and I were reflecting on the passage from Jeremiah in which we hear, "Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel." (Jer 18:6) We spoke about the care with which the potter must carefully touch the clay as it spins on the wheel, otherwise it falls apart, and we thought together about what it means to place oneself in God's firm yet gentle care. But then my friend shared something I have never forgotten. She said that she had taken a pottery class once and that as a potter first works with a piece of clay, it has to be thrown onto the wheel, to soften it so that it will become pliable in the potter's hands. Ah...it does feel like that sometimes in our lives of faith, doesn't it? We



feel tossed about a bit, especially at first, until we learn to more readily rest in God's love. As we learn to trust, though, something changes. We more easily recognize the cradling care of our good and gracious God. We are transformed from being a non-responsive "blob" of clay to being a responsive work of art in the making.

How do we grow in trust of God? Learning to trust God takes an initial leap of faith, in which we recognize that God has always been with us, and always will be, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus teaches us to trust in words and through his actions. He tells us to remember that if God cares for the birds and the flowers, surely God will care for us; and he reminds us to not be afraid; fear wears away trust quickly and deeply. At key moments in his life and ministry, we are told that Jesus spent significant time in prayer, discerning and committing to the Father's loving will, and he teaches us to do the same.

The challenge: Trusting in God sounds so easy, until we really have to do it. Then we, like many disciples and believers throughout the centuries, find this simple practice is not so simple. Worry, fear, or concern sets in, and no matter how much our hearts tell us to trust, our heads begin to list all the ways in which trusting doesn't make sense. We hear Jesus' words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." (Jn 14: 1) And we understand the importance of following Jesus' lead: rely on prayer; place our cares

before God; act in faith even when fear or a troubled spirit reappears. Trust!

Let's get practical. Some of the simplest daily details of our lives are changed for the better when we learn to trust. We will consider practical steps toward living and growing in trustful faith on the reverse of this sheet.

Let's be spiritual. What we have not really said yet is that developing this sense of trust comes from growing in a deep relationship with God. We cannot trust someone we do not know. Trusting to the point of placing one's life in the hands of another will be possible only to the extent that we have a relationship with that other person. Our

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relationship with God is like any relationship: it takes time, attention and the willingness to open our hearts and minds to the One who loves us beyond measure.



The Stewardship Project
www.CatholicLifeandFaith.com

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. ...By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn 13: 34a-35)



Practical Ways to Grow in Trust

Learn from Jesus and Mary

In the Gospels we see evidence of Mary's and Jesus' essential willingness to trust in God's plan. From them we learn:

Trust that God's ways are best: Mary's response to the angel's announcement that she was to be the mother of the Messiah is a lesson in trust. When you wonder how you can serve, forgive, and give as God calls us to, learn from Mary's example.

Trust in God's love, even when things are bleak: Jesus' complete trust even as he walked the road to the cross teaches us the true depth of God's love and the extent to which we can trust when the circumstances of our lives are difficult, painful, or hurtful.

Trust in God's ways with the practical, daily aspects of our lives: This is where "the rubber meets the road" in living as a good steward. When we give more than we are accustomed to giving, of our time or money, our talents or attention, something in us feels that we will not have what we want or need because we have

given it to someone else. The answer to this is to trust God and prioritize our lives accordingly.

Trust God with the fullness of life: Learning to grow in trustfulness of God is a big-picture process as well as one that touches the little details of our lives. Place yourself in God's caring embrace each day; end the day by offering prayers of gratitude and petition, by asking for forgiveness, and relying on God's mercy. Doing so daily builds a foundation of trust in moments of sunlight and in times of darkness.

Trust in the Holy Spirit's gentle and persistent promptings: How can we know what or how much we need to serve, give, share, or care? When we feel something touch our heart that calls us beyond ourselves for the sake of another, we can be sure the Holy Spirit is calling. Trust in that gentle yet persistent call, and respond as generously as you are able. "The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor 9: 6-7)



Trust

*Then Mary said,
"Here am I, the
servant of the Lord;
let it be with me
according to your
word." (Lk 1:38)*



After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord -- and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." (Jn 13:12-14)

In what ways do you trust God?

It is best for us to look for evidence of ways we are living well in order to grow in the future. How do you already trust God in your life? What areas of your life need attention in order to grow in this sense of trust in the coming year? Use this space to record your thoughts and your commitment for the future: