



Daily Bread

Send in Hunger Appeal Contributions TODAY

Rocky Mountain Synod contributions to the World Hunger Appeal for fiscal year 2009 continue to run behind 2008. We understand that some individuals and congregations seem to be caught between dramatically rising local needs and diminishing financial capacity, but it is *critical* that all WHA dollars get sent in on time.

Unfortunately, fiscal year 2009 ends on a Sunday—January 31. To be certain that all contributions get recorded in the synod office and forwarded to the Chicago office, checks need to ARRIVE NO LATER than January 29.

Make sure your congregation's treasurer/bookkeeper mails ALL hunger dollars to the synod office (or the national WHA office) as soon as possible.

DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING. It's always good to check! Remember, 60% of WHA contributions come from congregations. Is your congregation part of this cost-effective and *Lutheran* life-saving effort?

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Contact us for ideas and help.
We also offer to consult, teach,
speak and preach!

Bread for the World to Focus on Policies for Low-Income Families

The 2009 Bread for the World Offering of Letters focused on a logical approach to using American foreign assistance to promote being good stewards of our resources *and* saving lives in the process.

The 2010 emphasis will urge Congress to strengthen key tax credits that can make a big difference for low-income workers and their families. The full web site for the 2010 Offering of Letters will be available February 1. Watch www.bread.org/OL2010 for updates.



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.



ELCA World Hunger
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

2009 Domestic Hunger Grants Awarded

In 2009, the ELCA World Hunger Program awarded **348** domestic hunger grants, totaling **\$797,700**. Eleven of those grants came back to the Rocky Mountain Synod. Recipients include:

- + **Relief Projects**—*Colorado Springs Ecumenical Social Ministries Food Pantry, Denver Urban Ministries Food Pantry, Metro Care Ring Emergency Food and Support, Project Angel Heart Meals for People with Life-Threatening Illnesses, South West Improvement Council Sharing Food Program, St. Paul Lutheran Church Local Assistance Ministry, and Ft. Collins Homelessness Prevention Initiative.*
- + **Development Projects**—*COMPA Ministry Vacu-Seal Program, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Justice and Mercy Ministries, Work Options for Women Culinary Training and Job Placement.*
- + **Organizing Project**—*Albuquerque Interfaith Workforce Training Strategy.*

Applications for 2010 are due May 1. Go to www.elca.org/domestichungergrants.

Hunger Dollars at Work in Mexico

Sometimes, it is difficult to get the picture...to really understand EXACTLY how and why hunger appeal dollars make such a difference. Travelling to Mexico City last fall with other lay people and clergy for the World Hunger Leadership Gathering gave me at least some additional snap shots of the story.

Staying at the Lutheran Center and listening to multiple presentations on the history of Mexico (from the perspective of the people who actually live there); the impact of trade agreements and multinational agricultural businesses on the ability of small farmers to survive and the country to feed itself; the connection between hunger and immigration and the impact of our border policies on the poor of Mexico; the economic realities of a country in which 70% of the people are officially unemployed; the impact of rampant political corruption, and the theology that has informed many social justice movements—we were (sort of) prepared to venture forth and visit projects supported by hunger appeal dollars.

The accompaniment model that guides our church's work and that of our partners became real as we journeyed to the shanty town of Lomas on abandoned mining land just outside of Mexico City. For 22 years, the hunger appeal's partner in Mexico has been AMEXTRA, a 25-year-old organization born out of a faith-based movement among university students.

AMEXTRA has been working in Lomas for five years, finding leaders among the people, consulting with the community, and accompanying Lomas on its own journey to a better future. At the Community Center, representatives of projects told us their stories about the Tortilleria that provides employment and lower cost tortillas, the water purification plant, the HIV and teen pregnancy prevention programs, tutoring projects, soy programs to promote healthy eating, rabbits and chickens that provide protein and income, vegetable gardens, rain-water catchment systems, ETC.

We even learned how WHA funds were used in Lomas when the swine flu epidemic hit Mexico last spring. Elena, an unforgettably beautiful and serene woman trained in community organizing, headed up the effort in Lomas. Using materials provided by your hunger donations, they hand sewed 500 cloth masks and then took the face masks, soap, and bleach and went to every dwelling to check on neighbors and provide instructions on how to prevent spreading the virus. As a result, NOT ONE PERSON got sick with swine flu—in a place with no running water or sanitation system, no furnaces in the primarily three-wall dwellings, and minimal or no access to health care.



The other AMEXTRA endeavor we visited was located in a more developed community called Chalco. Here AMEXTRA has been working for about 20 years and the projects (again, determined in consultation with the community) are quite varied. Perhaps most amazing was the story of the microloan program housed in the Community Center. The mission is to offer financial services to help individuals build businesses to support their families. Each participant has to join a solidarity group of at least five individuals. The group meets weekly for support and encouragement. After saving money for eight weeks, a person is eligible to take out a loan worth up to five times the amount of his/her savings. The fiscal sustainability is astonishing. At the time of our visit, the program had

more than \$11 million in savings accounts and an active loan portfolio of \$24 million. Only \$52,000 of that loan portfolio was considered "at risk." Would that Wall Street and banks "too big to fail" could do as well!

These loans—and all the projects in both Lomas and Chalco—have done more than feed people. They have developed dignity and self-esteem and brought hope where dire poverty seemed insurmountable. Yes, people still live in poverty that is haunting and impossible to miss; but THEY ARE NOT POOR. Accompaniment works because we walk together as the community determines its own needs...and we **both** give *and* receive.

Thanks be to God for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal AND for people who donate generously so this life-saving and life-giving work can take place all around the world.

— Carol McDivitt

Mexico City Trip

The Rocky Mountain Synod's Global Mission Committee sponsors a trip to The Lutheran Center in June. Check it out and consider signing up!

1-2-3 CONTACT!

Congregational hunger leaders should make sure they (and others who work with them) are receiving the two ELCA World Hunger Resource Packets and the quarterly issues of the *LifeLines* newsletter. Go to www.elca.org/hunger/contact or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2764, to sign up.

Make Travel-and Mission Trips-Transformational

As you plan vacations and mission trips (especially for youth groups), consider these points—

- ✓ Are you going on the trip just for YOU or your group...or are you going to enter into *relationships* so you can see the country and issues in a new way?
- ✓ Mission Trips are not *necessarily* transformational unless they move beyond charity and allow participants to RECEIVE as well as to GIVE.
- ✓ It is important to be educated BEFORE going to a new place—at least enough to understand the basic political and economic issues and to make sure your group's work project is not taking away employment from people who need it.
- ✓ Consider what you or your group will do when you get home. Raise money, tell the stories, advocate for policies that fix systemic causes of poverty??

