

SERVE

FOCUS
NORTH + AMERICA

2010 ANNUAL REPORT
& MINISTRY UPDATE

+ READ ABOUT THE
NEW FOCUS CENTERS
& PROGRAMS
YOU HELPED START

+ LEARN HOW ONE
VOLUNTEER'S LIFE
WAS CHANGED
THROUGH SERVING

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen:
...Is it not to share your bread with
the hungry, and that you bring to your
house the poor who are cast out..."

Isaiah 58:6-7

THE NEEDS ARE GREAT



Food

50 million + Americans do not have enough to eat all year.



Occupation

Nearly 10% of North Americans are jobless & 1 in 3 families can't pay their bills.



Clothing

Countless working poor & homeless people lack basic clothing & other necessities.



Understanding

The challenges of poverty are complex, leaving too many overwhelmed and hopeless.



Shelter

3.5 million people may experience homelessness this year.

What have we done to help?

BUT *YOU* ARE HELPING.

THROUGH FOCUS NORTH AMERICA ...



You are feeding the hungry by providing hot, nutritious meals & **FOOD** assistance.



You are preparing people for work by providing job readiness & **OCCUPATION** training.



You are building self-esteem & meeting basic needs by providing work **CLOTHING**, school supplies & material aid.



You are helping to heal broken hearts by providing vital life-recovery services & **UNDERSTANDING**.



You are supporting people in need of **SHELTER** by providing caring case workers & home repair for the elderly and disabled.

IN 2010

16,000

guests

through

13,000

volunteer hours &

10,000

pieces of clothing.

& provided over

30,000

nutritious meals

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Your Eminences, Your Graces, Reverend Fathers, Brother & Sister Supporters in Christ,

God has continued to bless FOCUS North America incredibly in its mission to do God's will by working with our brothers and sisters in need, here at home. They are icons of the living God. In 2010 alone, our first full year of service, over 30,000 meals, 10,000 items of clothing, and hundreds of hours of unemployment aid, counseling and document services have been provided to over 16,000 of these "living icons." We are just beginning. The U.S. Government reports over 50 million Americans, including over 17 million children, lack consistent adequate food. http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats_graphs.htm#how_many



Charles Ajalat
Chairman of the Board

In one short year, we have gone from FOCUS Kansas City-Reconciliation Services to starting FOCUS San Diego, FOCUS Orange County, CA, FOCUS Minnesota, FOCUS Gateway City in St. Louis, FOCUS Pittsburgh and FOCUS Indianapolis in addition to dramatically expanding our YES! Program for teens and Appalachia Program for domestic service retreats and home repair. In most of our locations we are already serving 100-200 people EACH week. Other potential FOCUS Center locations include Chicago, Detroit and Oklahoma City.

"Over 50 million Americans, including over 17 million children, lack consistent adequate food."

Our goal in 2011 will be to expand these operations while bringing aboard other locations, as our resources allow. The impact our Orthodox volunteers are making on communities, governments and others is also amazing. FOCUS Orange County is a great example. The City of Anaheim, CA has asked FOCUS OC (in addition to the 200 meals FOCUS OC serves each week) to serve meals at all four of its quarterly citywide outreaches it provides for hundreds of "motel families." These motel families are homeless folks or working poor who cannot afford the deposit and application costs for an apartment. And at the House of Blues in Downtown Disney, FOCUS OC was honored as one of three prominent Orange County charities along with Children's Hospital of Orange County and Marine's Toys for Tots. Through one government program we are able to get very large quantities of food, including meat, for FREE. Through another program, we are able to buy meat for our brothers and sisters in need at SIX CENTS a pound. If a donor's \$100 donation, for example, is used to buy almost 1700 pounds of meat, we turn this investment into over \$3,500; and over 90% of it goes to help those in need. (See financials on page 7)

"[We turn] a donor's \$100... investment into over \$3,500; and over 90% of it goes to help those in need."

The commitment of those working with us, Board, staff and volunteers, is amazing. Taking time off a week before the Super Bowl, Troy Polamalu (AP defensive player of the year) and former Board member (now Advisory Board member) Theodora Polamalu showed their support for those in need as our honored guests at our sold-out FOCUS Pittsburgh fundraiser dinner. The event raised over \$60,000 in one night for FOCUS NA's work in Pittsburgh. As in other locations the Pittsburgh Holy Cross Philoptochos and community's support, the support of the clergy, the churches and the volunteers is simply and truly heart-warming.

Lisa Rudquist expressed what our volunteers are experiencing—a deep and spiritual transformation through serving others. Read her letter (page 5) and see how her service with FOCUS greatly impacted her personally, her family and her church.

With only a partial operational year in 2010 for many of the centers we had over 600 volunteers logging over 13,000 volunteer hours. This is merely the beginning of our vision to serve in 100 communities nationwide with a national volunteer core of over 10,000—with God transforming our own lives as well as the lives of those whom we serve.

None of this would be possible without your outstanding Board of Directors, Executive Director, national staff, local staff and particularly you, our supporters and donors. From our hearts, we thank you for your vision, your love and your support. May God bless all of you and your families always!

Charles R. Ajalat
Charles Ajalat
Chairman of the Board

FOCUS
NORTH + AMERICA

"LITTLE DID I KNOW OR EVEN CONSIDER THE IMPACT FOCUS MINNESOTA WOULD HAVE ON ME PERSONALLY, MY FAMILY AND THE ORTHODOX COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE."

Dear Focus North America Board Members,

I would like to take a moment to thank all of you for your vision and efforts in seeing FOCUS North America come to fruition. I am a member of St. George Antiochian Church in West St. Paul, Minnesota and humbly sit on the leadership team for FOCUS Minnesota.

I was very excited when word came that Minnesota would be getting a FOCUS center. I had visions of how great it would be to serve others who come in from the streets or from a home that is not stable or even just talking with those who needed to know someone cared about them. Little did I know and even consider the impact FOCUS Minnesota would have on me personally, my family and the Orthodox Community as a whole.

I have volunteered several times serving meals at the FOCUS center in Minneapolis. Each time my personal journey and relationship with Christ strengthens. I am amazed how taking a very small amount of time out of a day to serve others actually serves me in such significant ways. Compassion, forgiveness, love to name a few are the lessons I am reminded of while talking with others over a simple meal. When I look into the eyes of our brothers and sisters who join us, I thank the Lord for bringing us together to do his will, not our own, and for making us like Him who is our eternal Father and Comforter.

My children have taken great curiosity in the work that I do at the FOCUS center. They have now attended a meal as well as created a clothing drive with friends and neighbors to benefit FOCUS. I am so happy that my children can experience and learn the gift of giving to others through FOCUS rather than through other venues. I think it is so important to teach our children the importance of being disciples of Christ and FOCUS helps to do just that.

My church family is another area where I have seen the tremendous impact of FOCUS. People are coming together like I have never seen for the good of FOCUS. FOCUS MN has given church members a reason to reach out and communicate with fellow parishioners they may normally not have.

"FOCUS MN has given the entire Orthodox community here in Minnesota a place to meet and share the love of Christ together and with all."

On a broader note, I have met other Orthodox Christians from around the Twin Cities area that I may not have otherwise met. People from all of the parishes are developing friendships and camaraderie that would not be possible without FOCUS MN. Our children are coming together and getting to know each other outside of 'camp', believe it or not! FOCUS MN has given the entire Orthodox community here in Minnesota a place to meet and share the love of Christ together and with all.

I appreciate your time in reading this. I want you to know as you plan for the future, know that the impact of FOCUS is not just on those that come into our centers out of need but also on us, your fellow Orthodox brothers and sisters in Christ. I thank God for all of you. Please know your dedication to this most worthy cause has a deep impact on many, many people.

In His Love,

Lisa Rudquist



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Fr. Justin Mathews
Executive Director

Eight Lives You Touched in 2010

In San Diego, CA, a homeless man receives a hot, nutritious meal enjoying a moment of rest from life on the streets.

In Orange County, CA, a mother living in a cramped motel room cries during a Christmas party when her children are each given Build-A-Bears, gifts she could not have afforded.

In Kansas City, MO, hopeful immigrants struggling in a new country work hard to learn English and find jobs.

In Minneapolis, MN, a lonely man whose heart condition cost him his job at Burger King and who cannot pay his rent finds new friends that help him.

In St. Louis, MO, a woman who kept her newborn child is learning financial management skills and how to write a resume in preparation for a job interview and a new life.

In the Appalachian Mountains of NC, a young couple in recovery thanks the teens who built a backyard fence to keep their young autistic son safe from their busy road.

In Central FL, a father of three finds shoes that his kids can wear to school and receives a ticket for free laundry services so he can wash their clothes this week.

A Year of Amazing Growth Thanks to You!

FOCUS NA started 2010 with one model FOCUS Center in Kansas City and ended the year with many new developing centers and programs! In only 12 months we've taken great strides towards our vision of 100 FOCUS Centers in 100 cities! Your gifts helped these FOCUS centers, the YES! youth program and FOCUS Partners from Canada to Mexico (which received over \$50,000 in 2010) put into action the call to care for "the least of these."

As you can see in the 2010 financials, we've been careful stewards of the gifts you've given by offering vital care for so many that are in need.

Last year through FOCUS NA, you helped care for 16,000 people, provided over 30,000 nutritious meals and mobilized over 600 volunteers who gave more than 13,000 hours of service!

FOCUS NA is built upon the strength of many united to serve. Through our daily social action ministries, we seek meaningful transformations that are rarely possible without the vast coordination and collaboration FOCUS NA builds. FOCUS NA is distinguished from other Orthodox Christian agencies by this solely domestic, hands-on, operational approach. As a faith-based agency, FOCUS NA is distinguished from other initiatives by our dignified engagement strategies and holistic programs.

The Poor are our "Guests" Not Clients

Our staff and volunteers are trained to sit and break bread with, listen to and be a prayerful presence with every guest. Unlike so many ministries that preach first then offer tangible care later, we believe the food is the Gospel. By serving our guests' empty stomachs first, we hope to earn the privilege to care for their broken hearts. We strive to treat everyone with dignity as "living icons" of Christ, worthy of restoration and veneration. Our guests tell us this focus on dignity is often missing in other agencies.

Working in this way, FOCUS NA becomes part of the fabric of the community--rejoicing with those who rejoice, suffering with those who suffer. We believe communities have the ability to rise out of poverty, attain economic stability and develop new life, just like the individuals we serve. This is essential to an Orthodox Christian vision of restoration and community development.

Continued Growth and Momentum in 2011

In our third year, excitement is building as FOCUS NA is growing. In 2011 we will bolster our fiscal sustainability for existing FOCUS Centers so we can expand our services. We will serve even more people by opening new FOCUS centers in the future. We will support FOCUS Partners. We will supply new resources for parishes to help them initiate new social action ministries. We will increase the number of Orthodox youth reached through the YES! program.

This year we are also piloting a new occupational workforce development program and fatherhood initiative for low-income and unemployed persons called FOCUS ReEngage. As a part of the ongoing expansion of our life-recovery services, we will be launching this twelve session curriculum in our FOCUS Centers to reconnect fathers with their children and help people find work.

Sharing the Heart of our Tradition

St. John Chrysostom once said, "There are two kinds of [people], one who sees the parish as his universe and one who sees the universe as his parish." Through the work of FOCUS NA, our hearts are opening to a universe of hidden poverty, first in ourselves and then in the world around us.

What could be more important than sharing our lives and our resources (Is. 58:6) with the desperately poor? Together through FOCUS NA, we can share the true heart of our Tradition with North America by building upon our tradition of self-sacrifice, prayer and almsgiving. Let us go forth!

For Those We Serve,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Fr. Justin Mathews". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Fr. Justin Mathews
Executive Director

FINANCIALS

***90% in 2010!** We started FOCUS North America with an eye for efficient ministry to care for as many people as possible. Through the USDA and other sponsors, we leverage our resources to go as far as possible. Additionally, because we have our Board of Directors and a handful of private donors dedicated to our mission who invest in our national operational costs, we have essentially two “bank accounts”: one for FOCUS NA ministries providing direct care for the poor and one for our national operating support. Therefore, 90% of all publicly raised funds go directly to help the poor by establishing and supporting our local FOCUS Centers, FOCUS Partners and the YES! Program for youth. You can give with confidence that your generous gifts go right where they are most needed, to provide Food, Occupation, Clothing, Understanding and Shelter for the poor. +

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF – DECEMBER 31, 2010

Assets

Cash	\$ 299,568
Security Deposits	\$ 2,000
Total current assets	\$ 301,568
Equipment, less accumulated depreciation of \$6317.96	\$ 2,552
Mailing list, less accumulated amortization of \$2040.00	\$ 5,160

Liabilities \$ 0

Net Assets \$ 309,280

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES JANUARY 1, 2010 - DECEMBER 31, 2010

Revenues

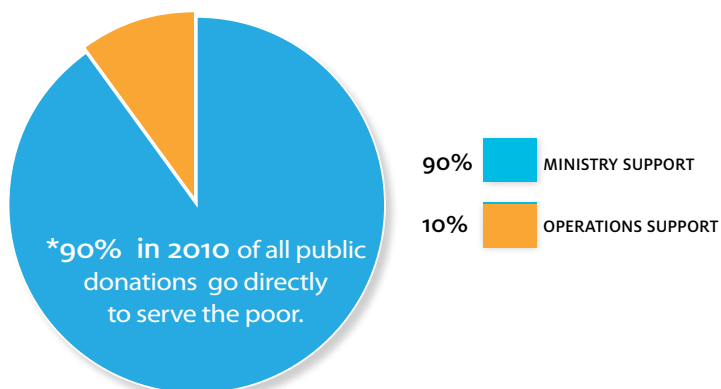
Contributions	\$ 781,121
Registrations Fees	\$ 23,657
Interest Income	\$ 423
Gift in Kind	\$ 74,400
Total Revenues	\$ 879,601

Expenses

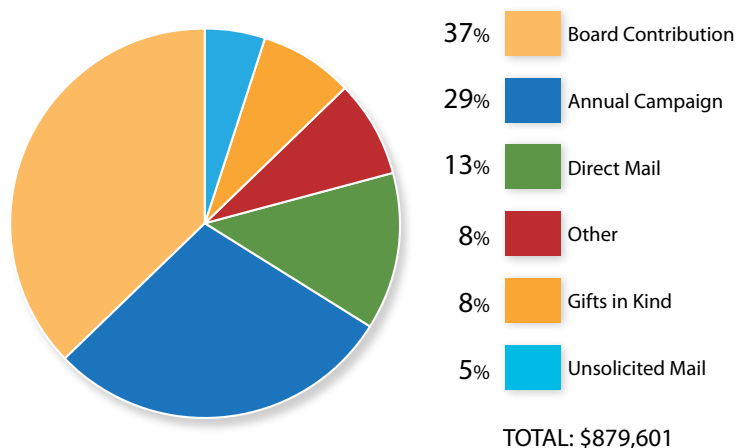
Program Services	\$ 385,159
Development	\$ 226,402
Management and General	\$ 178,684
Total Expenses	\$ 790,245

Revenue in Excess of Expenses \$ 89,357

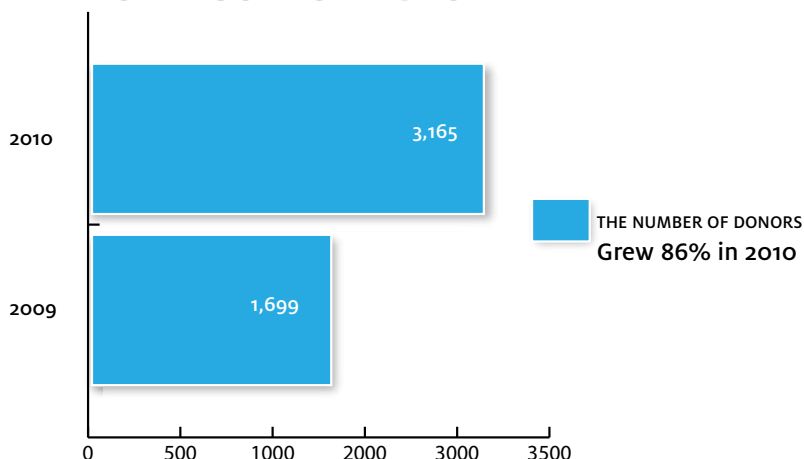
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY



2010 SOURCES OF SUPPORT



TOTAL SUPPORT GROWTH





YOU gave Luis care, rent assistance and helped him through tough times.

"I couldn't have done this all on my own."

"I was walking down the street, came down the stairs and you were here," Luis remembered about his first encounter with FOCUS Minnesota. "I didn't know what I was looking for. I just needed help."

Luis was "the real thing," FOCUS MN Director Vera Proctor said. Luis had always taken care of himself. He worked shift after shift at Burger King to pay his bills, rent and living expenses. It had always been hand-to-mouth, but he had done it on his own.

But missing work for health reasons and facing open-heart surgery had put him behind on his rent. "All he wanted," Proctor said "was a little help to get him over the hump and back to working at Burger King."

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 2009 there were more than 10 million low-income working families in the United States. That means that nearly 1 in 3 working families in the United States struggle to meet their basic needs.

When someone lives "paycheck to paycheck," getting sick and needing medical attention or having to miss work to care for an ailing family member could be all it takes to push someone into homelessness.

With no savings, no family and no safety net, Luis finally realized he was in need. Proctor and others advocated for him so he could get the necessary benefits to get him through his major surgery and long recovery from it. With a \$450 rent payment and increasing medical bills, the \$214 of assistance given by the county was hardly adequate.

"He was afraid he would die," Proctor said. "We helped him with a living will and helped interpret the forms and paperwork necessary for him to get more help."

On the day of his surgery, new friends he met through FOCUS MN took him to the hospital and later visited him while he was in recovery. Luis wasn't sure what he was looking for that Saturday afternoon he wandered into the FOCUS MN center, but what he got was UNDERSTANDING, people who were willing to help and to befriend him.

Proctor said Luis came in recently and thanked everyone for their help. "I couldn't have done this all on my own," Luis told her. "I just wanted to come in and show you that I'm okay." +



“Barbara always had fresh-brewed ice tea for us and said she was grateful for our work.”

When you are elderly, disabled and a widow, the city’s demands to repair your crumbling front steps are futile. Barbara wasn’t sure how to fix her front porch, which amounted to a crumbling heap of steps and a wobbly railing.

“We found Barbara through a local church database that gathered requests for home repairs,” Eric Shanburn, Director of FOCUS Gateway City in St. Louis said. “We fixed her steps, patched her foundation, secured her railing and did some painting as well. Barbara always had fresh-brewed ice tea for us and said she was grateful for our work.”

Recent Census Bureau reports indicated that compared to the general population of homeowners, low-income homeowners generally lived in smaller, older houses and had houses with a lower value. Sixteen percent of low-income homeowners lived in a house that was in moderate to serious need of repair.

For low-income families and individuals, their home may be all they have. Simple repair problems left unattended due to lack of resources or physical ability escalate into larger problems exposing homeowners and their families to health and safety risks.

Shanburn said he wanted to help the elderly, and especially widows, with repairing and making their homes safer and as they worked on Barbara’s house they met others in the neighborhood who needed help. “It started with Barbara and then we met John,” Shanburn said.

“I was wondering if you could help me too?” Shanburn remembered the eighty-year-old man asking. “We helped him replace four broken windows before the cold of winter set in.”

After John, Shanburn said it was another neighbor a couple houses down and then another across the street. By the time the year ended, Shanburn and FOCUS Gateway Cities’ volunteers had completed 29 projects for those in need.

Shanburn said there are many more projects to come and working to improve the SHELTER, the home, of those in need is at the heart of what FOCUS NA is trying to accomplish.

“I guess we kind of adopted this block,” Shanburn said of the neighborhood, which is only a few minutes from the FOCUS Gateway City headquarters. “The people in the neighborhood know us now. We show up and they come out to greet us.”

Another effort to affect low-income individuals in the area has been through FOCUS Gateway City’s Employment Assistance Program. It helped prepare over 100 applications for employment for women accessing the services of THRIVE, a crisis pregnancy center promoting alternatives to abortion. Providing access to needed skills for a dependable OCCUPATION is a vital resource for individuals who want to move out of poverty.

The women worked with FOCUS Gateway City volunteers to improve their keyboard skills, sharpen their communication skills, fill out job applications, and learn how to dress appropriately for the workplace and how important it is to be on time.

The average age of women attending the Employment Assistance Program was 19 and many lacked access to a computer and the Internet, making it difficult for them to apply online for jobs. They also lacked trustworthy transportation.

Shanburn said that in 2011, the Employment Assistance Program will be open to a more general population.

“One of the biggest needs people have is work,” Shanburn said. “They need work, but either can’t find it, don’t know where to look for it, or don’t have the necessary skills to get it.”

FOCUS Gateway City donors are making it possible for those stuck in poverty in the St. Louis area to access necessary resources through FOCUS Gateway City to make valuable changes to their homes, their livelihood and their lives. +



"We were able to provide a real Christmas celebration for these families."

The sign at the entrance to Disneyland reads: "The Happiest Place on Earth." That sign and the lights of the huge children's wonderland are just around the corner from the Valencia Inn where FOCUS Orange County serves a free meal to between 175-225 working poor families who call the motel their home.

It's one of the wealthiest counties in the country and yet more than 1,000 families lived in motels last year, according to the Orange County Department of Education McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (co-authored by Maria Foscarinis a member of FOCUS North America's Advisory Board). Old motels like the Valencia Inn, which once housed happy tourists en route to Disneyland, are now home to families who might work a minimum wage at the famous park, a local McDonald's or Walmart but still cannot afford the security deposit on their own apartment and often cannot afford to feed their families.

High rents and a shortage of public housing are also contributing factors for those families who find themselves bunking five people in one room, cooking dinner on hot plates, washing clothes in bathtubs and dealing with bedbugs, lice, violence and overcrowding.

In November 2010 FOCUS Orange County volunteers began serving weekly meals and offering clothing and food pantry items to the working poor living at the Valencia Inn and the nearby El Dorado Motel.

With a box truck full of food and supplies, FOCUS Orange County Director Jacob Lee and a host of volunteers set up tables and serve every Sunday night. The meals are made by local Orthodox churches and are a blessing of FOOD for families that are barely scraping by. "I have been amazed at how generous the churches have been in making and preparing these meals," Lee said.

FOCUS Orange County also provided 350 back-to-school backpacks filled with school supplies for the families they serve in an effort to help these poor kids and youth get off to a good start on their school year. Buses often stop at the motels and shelters first before picking up

kids at their neighborhood stops in an effort not to further stigmatize these homeless youth. Last year there were 25,964 homeless children accounted for by the Orange County School District.

Lee said there is much work to be done with these families including: health care, education on infant care, job training and so much more. "These families are counting on us to be there every week," Lee said.

FOCUS Orange County partnered with the City of Anaheim to provide food for the people attending the city's vaccine drive for the working poor. Volunteers served hundreds of meals and offered games for the children at the event.

And at a time when food banks were empty in the area, FOCUS Orange County rallied Orthodox Churches to collect nearly 3,000 canned food items for the food pantry at the motel.

As Christmas approached, Lee knew FOCUS Orange County would need to start plans for a Christmas party and start petitioning volunteers and donors for Christmas presents for these underprivileged kids.

"What happened was overwhelming," Lee said. Volunteers provided catered dinner, sweets, crafts for the kids to make and presents for parents to wrap and take home for their kids on Christmas. The highlight for the kids was the 70 Build-a-Bears that were given away.

"We were able to provide a real Christmas celebration for these families," Lee said. One of the mothers living at the motel approached Lee at the party. "Nancy came up to me at the party with tears in her eyes," he said. "She said she was so thankful for everything because she said she never could have provided such gifts for her kids."

"Glory be to God for all that has been done and all that will be done," Lee said. "There is a lot of excitement going into 2011 and with the help of faithful volunteers and FOCUS donors we will serve even more families and children in need this year." +



“Guests tell us they love that we sit with them and listen.”

In one of the most beautiful parts of the country, a city rich in industry, art, military strength and tourism, San Diego boasts an alarmingly high number of homeless people. San Diego County officials counted 8,574 homeless individuals last year.

With so many people living on the streets, food banks and soup kitchens are a lifeblood for those who are homeless and hungry. FOCUS San Diego (like Indianapolis) is presently an all-volunteer effort; however, we are hopeful it will soon become a FOCUS Center.

The weekly meals at FOCUS San Diego and one additional monthly meal may seem like a drop in the bucket, but for those who depend on the smiling faces of FOCUS volunteers and the hot, nutritious meals they serve, it is a needed place of comfort and nourishment in their weeks.

Patty Diaz, Ministry Coordinator for FOCUS San Diego, said that every week guests make a point to stop by the kitchen and offer words of gratitude and appreciation for the meal.

“We also have a number of people each week who ask if they can stay to help with clean up,” Diaz said. “They want to have a way to ‘repay’ us for providing a meal for them.”

With over 100 people served at each meal, the FOCUS San Diego volunteers stay very busy with the predominantly homeless population they are serving. FOCUS San Diego partners with God's Extended Hand, a homeless mission in downtown San Diego, for the use of their building and food service area for weekly Wednesday night meals and one monthly Thursday night meal.

The July 2010 report issued by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty showed that there had been a 26% increase in the need for food assistance, with 25% of those needs going unmet. Writers of the report stressed that “access to food is both a human need and a right.”

Ryan Alex, FOCUS San Diego Director, said it seems like some people want to “do their good deed and leave” when it comes to serving the homeless. “We care about who they are,” Alex said. “Guests tell us they love that we sit with them and listen.”

FOCUS San Diego serves healthy, nourishing FOOD to the homeless and working poor in San Diego, but the presence of its volunteers amidst a struggling group of people also provides familiar faces and even friendships.

During a talk one night being given at the FOCUS San Diego meal, Alex noticed a man being quite difficult and causing a disruption. “Initially I asked him to stop, but he continued,” Alex said. The man's disruption continued to escalate and Alex decided to change his tactic.

“I offered him my hand and said, ‘My name is Ryan.’ He promptly shook my hand and tears started to appear in his eyes ... He offered in a broken voice, ‘I know God.’ ‘I don't doubt that,’ I responded and we stood there holding hands,” Alex said. “That moment we started a friendship that continues to this day.” +

YOU gave new work boots, clean clothes and a new beginning to people in need.



“A man came up to me and asked if I was ‘collecting names for a wish list,’ and if I was, he could sure use some shoes.”

Part of the vision of FOCUS NA is to support Orthodox Christian social action ministries, agencies, professionals and volunteers who are endeavoring to serve those in need in their communities.

Having partnered with over 20 agencies from Canada to Mexico, FOCUS NA is helping build up the efforts of the faithful who are committed to helping the poor. Providing grants to ministries like Project Mexico, which builds homes for poverty-stricken families outside of Tijuana and cares for and educates teenage boys at its St. Innocent Orphanage and St. John the Compassionate Mission in Toronto, which hosts a free community meal, offers free tutoring and counseling and runs a social enterprise bakery staffed by community members of all social backgrounds, is just one way FOCUS NA is supporting the good work of others.

In addition to grants, FOCUS NA has lent its expertise in public relations, board governance, best practices, fundraising strategies, volunteer management and leadership training to help strengthen the skills and effectiveness of like-minded agencies.

In Central Florida, FOCUS NA's capacity building efforts through training and consultation with The Ephraim Project, an Orlando-based ministry to aid the poor, helped bring local clergy and lay leaders together to build consensus about the work being done to help the poor in the Orlando area. FOCUS NA also brought together an additional 120 volunteers to minister alongside The Ephraim Project.

Volunteers are crucial to implementing the services needed by the

homeless and working poor in Orlando and at all the FOCUS Centers and partnering agencies.

Tara Concelman, a member of the Orthodox Church of St. Stephen the Protomartyr in the Orlando area, was raised in the suburbs but had a genuine desire to serve the hungry and homeless.

When she moved to downtown Orlando she found herself confronted daily by the poverty and need of those on the streets. “I started praying that God would change my heart and instead of seeing them as scary or dirty that I would be given the heart of the Samaritan and see them as God sees them--with compassion,” Concelman said.

Concelman's desire to change her own heart towards the poor led her to volunteer through FOCUS NA with The Ephraim Project. As she walked around talking with people one day at one of the FOCUS-sponsored community meals, a man approached her and asked if she was “collecting names for a wish list” and if she was, he could sure use a pair of shoes.

That “wish list” set Concelman on track to start collecting CLOTHING, shoes and other necessities for the men, women and children coming to the free meals.

“The biggest need here is for work boots with steel toes or sturdy tennis shoes,” Concelman said. “Some people want to work but can't without the work boots. Some adults and even children were barefoot and others' shoes were torn or worn through because they walk so much.” +

APPALACHIA Program

YOU cared for working poor families living in the Appalachian mountains of North Carolina.



“I thank my God for you coming and serving. You are a real blessing.”

People are struggling everywhere, but in Mitchell County, NC, closing textile mills and overseas outsourcing has left the county with a 20% unemployment rate.

When Melvin's back gave out, he was forced to quit his job in a grocery store. This was especially hard because his wife, Marcia, had been confined to a wheelchair and was unable to work.

So when record snowfall ruined their roof and ceiling all they could do was patch the holes and hope it would hold. Little or no income, combined with health problems and even disability means homeowners living in poverty often watch their only sense of stability, their SHELTER, literally fall in around them.

The Appalachia Program, a domestic service ministry of FOCUS North America, coordinates home repair and work projects to make sure that the working poor in Appalachia have a safe and sturdy place to call home.

Volunteer teams are assembled and sent between March and September to do short-term projects in the neediest parts of the Appalachian

Mountains of North Carolina. The service trips provide an accessible and inexpensive way for volunteers to explore their own spiritual growth through the service of others, through the exploration of the mountains and through times of teaching and personal reflection.

Melvin and Marcia were some of the Appalachia program's first recipients of services. A team of eight volunteers worked for three days removing and replacing the rotting ceiling in the couple's living room, dining room and two bedrooms.

“I thank my God for you coming and serving,” Melvin told FOCUS volunteers. “You are a real blessing.”

If you or your church wants to participate in a service trip with this ministry, please contact Bryan Dahms, National Director of Ministries, at 866-267-3083 or bryandahms@focusna.org. FOCUS NA will connect you with the appropriate project for your skills and budget and will arrange lodging, meals and other logistics. The need in Mitchell and surrounding counties is great and the list of needed projects is growing—we need your help! +

YES! Program

YOUTH EQUIPPED TO SERVE

YOU equipped over 300 Orthodox Christian youth to lead and serve!



“This IS real life!” Katrina Bitar, YES! Program Director, says of the program which aims to expose young people to the reality of poverty, engage them in the service of others, equip them with the tools to guide others in service and entrust them with leadership both on trips and with continuing the mission of YES! in their communities, to inspire, lead and educate others.

“YES! provides the structure and God works out the experience,” Bitar said. “We put human beings in touch with one another and that is real life—seeing God in others, worshipping God in others.”

There were a record 13 trips last year, Bitar said and 2011 hopes to boast even more. Bitar said each trip is planned so that young people will be challenged to confront their own prejudices and ideas about who the poor really are. They eat with the homeless, talk with the homeless and more importantly they are taught to listen to the homeless. In addition to these basic interactions with those in need, Bitar said the youth take a prayer tour where they are encouraged to “see the city as God sees it.” They also serve in local centers or outreach programs including soup kitchens, nursing homes, halfway houses, crisis pregnancy centers and more.

Nora Haddad, a participant in the YES! Kansas City trip said the experience went beyond “eye-opening” and was truly “life-changing” for her. “It was like God was teaching a hands-on class about the reality of the poor and homeless in the world through the lives and

actions of our wonderful YES! trip advisors and through the homeless and poor people we met and talked with as well,” Haddad said.

Bitar said she expects those involved in the YES! trips to be changed. “We talk to them about how their weekend with YES! isn’t just about the people they will meet and serve while with us,” she said. “This experience is about everyone they know—people at home, church, school, their neighbors.” This experience should change the way they think about the kids they find hard to deal with at school, their annoying sibling and the teacher who doesn’t ever cut them a break.

“You come to realize that everyone you meet is no different from yourself,” Jacob Corbin, a participant on the YES! Los Angeles trip, said. “You make yourself equal to others. This is what God intended for us. After all, aren’t we ALL made in the likeness of Christ.”

Perhaps the biggest impact young people have is after they are comfortably back home in their normal lives. This is where YES! makes a difference. The program’s ultimate purpose is to raise up a generation of young people who lead others in living out a true mission of the church—to love and serve our most needy neighbors.

“They come to see that they have been given the resources to meet the fundamental needs of people,” Bitar said. And then they become leaders in their schools and communities and inform others and teach others. They become advocates for those in need. +



FOCUS NA is a ministry that Troy and I are excited to be involved with since its mission to serve the poor is one that resonates deep within our philanthropy.

We chose to get involved with the ministry because as Orthodox we are called to exemplify the commandments of Christ to care for our fellow man in need. FOCUS represents an organization whose dedication to the poor is unparalleled in its efforts to reconcile the whole person and truly change their lives for the betterment of themselves and society. It is truly a blessing to have such an organization within grasp so that we can serve the poor in a nationwide effort. As economic times are continuing to grow increasingly difficult, it is clear that now more than ever we need FOCUS centers in our cities. +

Troy and Theodora Polamalu

FOCUS North America Board of Directors 2010

- + MR. CHARLES AJALAT, CHAIRMAN
- + MR. WILLIAM HOEFT, VICE CHAIRMAN
- + DR. JULIE PAPTATHEOFANIS, SECRETARY
- + V. REV. FR. TOM AVRAMIS
- + MRS. LORY BARSDATE EASTON
- + MR. BRIAN GERICH
- + MS. GEORGIA KAZAKIS
- + MR. WENDELL MADDOX
- + DR. NICK PANDELIDIS
- + REV. FR. JUSTIN MATHEWS, *EX-OFFICIO*

FOCUS North America Advisory Board Members

Andrew Natsios - (Chairman) Former head of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Peter Marudas - Former Chief of Staff to U.S. Senator Sarbanes.

Maria Foscarinis - Founder and Executive Director of National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty.

Kh. Frederica & Fr. Gregory Mathewes-Green - Nationally known author and commentator and outstanding parish priest.

Joel Smith - President, Comprehensive Media, Nashville, TN.

Mrs. Theodora Polamalu - Serves the needy throughout North America with husband Troy Polamalu (Pittsburgh Steelers)

WHAT WILL BE YOUR LEGACY ?

After you have taken care of your Church and family, with what is left over, please make a legacy gift to FOCUS North America. You can help ensure our restorative and life-changing services will help hurting men, women and children for years to come. Have you already remembered FOCUS North America with a legacy gift? Please let us know so we can say thank you! If not, please contact us to learn more by emailing FrJustin@FOCUSNA.org or calling 1-866-267-3083, ext. 701.



DIRTY HANDS AND BIG HEARTS!

Many thanks to the thousands of generous individuals and many church groups, foundations and corporations for their financial and in-kind support to help the poor. Our dedicated volunteers also get their hands dirty every day providing an enormous support system for our guests and local directors. They give hope to the hopeless through servant leadership and extend our ministry's resources.

Last year FOCUS NA volunteers donated more than 13,000 hours. From cooking meals and scrubbing dishes to distributing clothes and helping teach classes, our volunteers do it all. As they work side by side with our guests in need and ministry leaders, all give and receive. Thank you!

WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:

- Run a food or clothing drive
- Volunteer at a FOCUS Center
- Host a YES! youth trip in your church
- Send FOCUS NA Care Kits (learn how online)
- Plan an event to raise support for FOCUS NA
- Join a FOCUS Appalachia service retreat
- Host a FOCUS NA speaker
- Become a FOCUS NA Parish Coordinator
- Follow us on Twitter and friend us on Facebook
- Tell a friend about FOCUS NA
- Donate sacrificially

SEND DONATIONS TO:

FOCUS North America
PO Box 871578
Kansas City, MO 64187-1578

NATIONAL OFFICES:

3101 Troost Ave. Kansas City, MO 64109
Toll Free.1-866-267-3083 Fax. 1-866-267-3083
Info@FOCUSNA.org

CONTACTS:

FOCUS Gateway City (St. Louis) • Eric Shanburn, Local Director
1-866-267-3083, ext. 711 • EricShanburn@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/gatewaycity

FOCUS Kansas City-Reconciliation Services • Fr. Paisius, Local Director
1-866-267-3083, ext. 1 • FrPaisius@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/KansasCity

FOCUS Minnesota • Vera Proctor, Local Director
1-866-267-3083, ext. 712 • VSProctor@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/Minnesota

FOCUS Orange County • Jacob Lee, Local Director
1-866-267-3083, ext. 704 • JacobLee@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/OrangeCounty

FOCUS Pittsburgh • Paul Abernathy, Local Director
1-866-267-3083, ext. 713 • Paul@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/Pittsburgh

FOCUS San Diego • Ryan Alex, Local Director
1-866-267-3083, ext. 716 • RyanAlex@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/SanDiego

FOCUS Indianapolis • Randy Evans, Local Director
1-866-267-3083, ext. 710 • RandyEvans@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/Indianapolis

ReEngage Program Director & GIK Solicitor • Rodney Knott,
1-866-267-3083, ext. 703 • RodneyKnott@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/ReEngage

YES! Program Director • Katrina Bitar
1-866-267-3083, ext. 705 • Katrina@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/YES

Appalachia Program • Bryan Dahms, Service Retreat Director
1-866-267-3083, ext. 706 • BryanDahms@FOCUSNA.org
www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/Appalachia

Executive Director • Fr. Justin Mathews
1-866-267-3083, ext. 701 • FrJustin@FOCUSNA.org

National Director of Ministries • Bryan Dahms
1-866-267-3083, ext. 706 • BryanDahms@FOCUSNA.org

For a complete directory of the FOCUS North America team, go to: www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org/Contacts

YOU ARE HELPING THOSE MOST IN NEED
& MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE.



SEE HOW INSIDE!

FOCUS

NORTH + AMERICA

3101 Troost Ave, Kansas City, MO 64109

www.FOCUSNorthAmerica.org

FELLOWSHIP of ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS UNITED to SERVE