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HOPE Matters

A Publication for Friends and Supporters of Catholic Charities of Kansas City-St Joseph, Inc.

Cycling for Change



What would compel a Catholic priest to cycle 5052 miles across the United States? If you are Fr. Matt Ruhl, SJ, it is your passion for the poor.

Catholic Charities USA has initiated a multi-faceted approach to reduce by half the number of people living in poverty in the United States by 2020 - a very ambitious goal, especially in these challenging economic times. The campaign stresses the need for businesses, faith-based organizations, government and individuals to come together to address the systemic causes of poverty in this country.

Fr. Matt Ruhl, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish in Kansas City, explains his mission, "After I read about the CCUSA Campaign to Reduce Poverty, I thought 'this is one of the most audacious plans I've ever read.' But I believe we do have the resources in this country to succeed. What we need is to find the will to do it!"

"This is why I decided to gather a team to ride with me from Cape Flattery, WA, to Key West, FL in the summer of 2010 to create awareness of the campaign and raise money for Catholic Charities at the same time."



Fr. Matt and his Cycling for Change (C4C) team hope to be catalysts for change across the nation, as they encourage local leaders and concerned citizens to address the root causes of poverty in their areas. Fr. Matt and the team also intend to raise funds for the expansion of programs at the Caritas Center - Catholic Charities' midtown Kansas City service center offering integrated and innovative programs for individuals and families endeavoring to lift themselves out of poverty.

Suzanne Cronkhite, Cycling for Change Coordinator, discussed the plans of the project, "This is a very ambitious endeavor. After two years of planning, the C4C team is fine-tuning the cross-country route, sponsorship packets are being distributed, the cyclists are training, and we are excited to host our first local ride around the metro area on May 23, 2009. We are absolutely in full gear!"

The route, profiles of the C4C team, information on local events and complete details of how you can be involved can be found at www.cyclingforchange.org.



Fr. Matt Ruhl, SJ, (center) cycles year-round with the Flying Fish, a group of avid cyclists from St. Francis Xavier Parish in Kansas City, MO.

A map of the C4C national route and a "clip and save" of the inaugural schedule of events in Kansas City can be found on page 6.

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