

Best Practices Report – Diocese of Rochester

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The Diocese of Rochester’s Parish Support Ministries Office developed a video titled “*A Treasure Revealed: Migrant Workers in Our Midst.*” The project increased awareness of the plight of migrant workers within the diocese and provided information concerning opportunities to make direct volunteer or financial contributions toward improving the quality of life of migrant workers in the diocese. The Diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis has incorporated information from the video into its programs, and members of the social concerns committees of the diocese have all viewed the video. In conjunction with Diocesan Public Policy Sunday, viewing the video generated approximately 9,000 signatures toward advocacy for legalization of undocumented farm workers and passage of the Ag. Jobs Bill in the New York state legislature.

THE APPROACH

Methods or activities the diocese has taken to address the needs outlined in the diocese’s needs assessment:

The video responds to the need for increased awareness and education among Catholics who welcome the estimated 18,000 migrant workers who arrive in the diocese each year during the harvest season. As 90% of those workers are Catholics, the diocese identified a great need for a welcoming presence from other Catholics. The video has contributed to increased understanding of the customs of the migrant workers, as well as the particular social and economic needs that bring so many people from a different culture to the upstate New York area.

By providing a broad picture of migrant ministry within the diocese to people who would like to volunteer to take on ministries serving the migrant workers, the video also significantly increases the training capacity of the diocese. The video also serves to broaden the perspectives of people from isolated ministry communities and it provides a more complete picture of the gifts brought and challenges faced by various migrant communities.

Challenges or obstacles the diocese has faced in its approach and specific actions the diocese has taken (is taking) to overcome these challenges in order to achieve objectives:

The diocese included a wide array of representatives from different migrant communities, ministry providers, as well as agency and parish volunteers and workers to overcome the sense that some contributions are more valuable or that some groups are more important than others. Scant resources have, at times, created conflict between groups trying to accomplish the same goals, but production of the video seems to have created a rally effect as the focus returned to the migrant workers who are being served, increasing collaboration among diocesan and non-profit agencies.

OUTCOME-BASED OBJECTIVES		
<i>The following is a list of the primary objectives of the diocesan action plan and indicators of success for each objective, as well as a list of activities the diocese has employed towards accomplishing each objective:</i>		
Objectives	Measurements of Success for Each Objective	Milestones / Activities involved in accomplishing the objective
To provide an educational tool, namely, a professional quality video, that can be used to increase awareness within Diocesan Offices as well as within parishes, [which] documents the needs and gifts of migrant workers and their families in Western New York.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diocesan and parish offices are now better equipped to provide needed services and resources to migrant workers. Diocesan and non-profit agencies are collaborating to provide more and more consistent services to the migrant workers that they serve. Volunteers are more sensitive to the cultures and needs of migrant workers. Advocacy efforts on behalf of the migrant workers have additional grassroots support. 2. Parish communities are more supportive of initiatives to help migrant workers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The video was completed. 2. The video was delivered to diocesan offices and parishes. 3. The video was shown to the Rochester Advertising Council. 4. The video was awarded the Telly Award.

EVALUATION OF HOW NEEDS HAVE BEEN MET:
<i>Difference this initiative has made in the lives of those whom it is intended to serve:</i>
Diocesan and parish offices are now better equipped to provide needed services and resources to migrant workers. Diocesan and non-profit agencies are collaborating to provide more and more consistent services to the migrant workers that they serve. Volunteers are more sensitive to the cultures and needs of migrant workers. Advocacy efforts on behalf of the migrant workers have additional grassroots support.
<i>Ways in which the project has contributed to increasing the welcoming capacity of the diocese:</i>
Parish communities are more supportive of initiatives to help migrant workers.
<i>Ways in which the diocese plans to build up the work in the future:</i>
<p>The diocese is trying to build up a more comprehensive and better coordinated volunteer program.</p> <p>Priests and seminarians are being encouraged to attend additional training to respond to the needs of migrant workers.</p> <p>The Department of Parish Support Ministry is planning a Spanish-language version of the video. It will be sent to the Bishops of Latin-American dioceses from which migrants come to the area, in hopes of temporary support from Latin-American priests and seminarians to work with migrants while they are in the Diocese of Rochester and to provide readjustment services when the migrants return to their villages of origin.</p> <p>The Spanish-language video can also be shown to migrant communities, to increase a sense of solidarity with host parishes that are actively working to improve the quality of life of migrant workers who are temporarily members of their parishes.</p>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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