



SUMMIT ON VOLUNTEERISM

A Response to
Economic Crisis

Lorenzo Martinez, Episcopal Relief and Development

Thank you. It's an honor to be here. I'm Lorenzo Martinez, as you heard, Vice President of External Affairs for Episcopal Relief and Development. Let me tell you a little bit about the organization before I talk about how we use volunteers. We are the official international relief and development arm of the Episcopal Church. We are an independent 501C3 organization, and we work in 44 countries, helping communities overcome poverty, helping to fight diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, and also assisting after disasters, like Katrina, tsunami, etc.

We couldn't do the work that we do without volunteers. We use them to promote our work here in this country. We have a network of about 3,000 volunteers in different parishes, and we are there to talk about the work that Episcopal Relief and Development does. And the reason is, even though it is the Episcopal Church, not everyone knows what we do because there are so many Episcopal groups doing wonderful development work. So it is really important to keep ourselves in front of the different parishes, because that is what keeps us alive. Contributions come to us as a result of parishioners knowing who we are and what we do. So this network that we have of about 3,000 volunteers is extremely valuable to us.

We use volunteers also for direct fundraising. For example, one volunteer in the Dioceses of Olympia in Washington, who lives in Seattle, decided to help a particular program that we have in Africa. We have a program called Net for Life. We are distributing nets in 16 countries in Africa to help people who, particularly pregnant women and children under five because they are the most vulnerable to the disease. And about 3,000 children die every day from malaria. So this is very, very important work. One net will cost \$12, and that includes the distribution of the net, training people on how to use the nets, and also monitoring and evaluating the program. So this is a very economical way of supporting a program. This lady in Seattle decided that she was going to do a campaign in her area, and she got a group of volunteers. And they started selling cards over the Christmas holiday for \$12. For \$12 you could buy a card and you can send it to a friend and say "I bought a net on your behalf." They raised half a million dollars with this campaign.

The Dioceses of Chicago has replicated the campaign. They are doing something very similar. It's now also happening in Portland. So as a result, we're now in the process of doing a feasibility study to see if we could do a national campaign selling those \$12 nets. We are hoping to raise about \$12 million. We could not do this campaign without volunteers. The work that this lady did in Olympia in Seattle was truly amazing with her friends from her church and from other parishes nearby.

We also use volunteers to help provide direct services. As I mentioned, we work in 44 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. And we use volunteers; we train them so that they can help us provide services. We do not have staff in all those countries. We use the local partners, which are churches and some ecumenical groups as well, to provide the services that are needed. Volunteers are really helping us get



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to the end of the road because where the government cannot reach, we are there because there's usually a church there, and people tend to go to a place of worship in times of need.

We also use volunteers to take supporters to see our programs. We have a number of volunteers who take people to Latin America and Africa to see the programs that we do. And of course we have also sent volunteers to provide support after Katrina, for example. We did a lot of work down there. We couldn't have done that without volunteers. We are still there, and we are still recruiting people to go down there and provide support that is needed. Something that is very crucial to using volunteers is training. And I think that is very, very vital. It is something that we certainly do, but we could do a better job of it. And this is what really we need to concentrate on in the future. We need to get more volunteers to help us. The network of 3,000 is tremendous, but we need more. And the number of volunteers helping us with direct services is terrific. We need more. The number of volunteers helping us all around is great. We need more. But we need the resources to train them.

And I want to thank all of you for the work that you do and for considering the work of volunteers to be so important. My job is to oversee all of the fundraising, marketing, communications, and volunteer activities for the organization. And I have to tell you that perhaps the most rewarding part of my job is to see the work of volunteers because, as you heard, they do not get paid. They do it because of the love for the mission of the organization. They do it because they feel that this is how they can give back to the world and to themselves. So I thank you for being here, and for giving me this opportunity to address you. Thank you.