



NETWORK CONNECTION

SECOND QUARTER 2018

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A LIVING WAGE

Achieving Dignity and Decency for All



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NUNS ON THE BUS ROLL AGAIN THIS OCTOBER!

We are busy planning and have exciting news to share soon. Watch your email and the NETWORK website this summer for details. Not receiving our emails yet? Sign up at www.networklobby.org/connect or email us at info@networklobby.org

ON THE COVER

Hundreds of Spirit-filled advocates, including NETWORK staff and many women religious, participated in the National Catholic Day of Action with Dreamers on February 27, 2018.

Photo by: Catherine Gillette

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Supporting Working Families and Individuals with a Living Wage

Our Current Reality Demands Wages that Allow People to Flourish

BY SISTER SIMONE CAMPBELL

I have gotten to know entirely too many people like Carmen who, along with her husband, worked a near-minimum-wage job. When we met, President Obama had just signed an executive order mandating federal contractors pay their workers a minimum of \$12 per hour (an increase of \$4.75 per hour). Carmen was one of those workers. When the new contract took effect, she was going to get a raise! I asked her what it would mean for her and her family. She told me it would allow her husband to quit his third job and spend a little bit of time with her and their young child.

This made me want to weep. Carmen and her husband both work full time, and her husband has two more part-time jobs to try to make ends meet. Carmen's mother-in-law lives with the family in a one-bedroom apartment in the D.C. area and provides childcare for their son.

This is the story of 21st Century Poverty and the challenges our families face. Salaries have not kept pace with the cost of living. Workers have to cobble together a variety of jobs in order to make ends meet. Even with a modest increase in base pay, low income families still struggle.

I met Aundrea in Seattle at an IHOP restaurant where she was the manager of the front of the house. Seattle has made headlines for raising their minimum wage to \$15 per hour over three years, so I was curious about how that had impacted Aundrea and her family. She said that the change in the law had been a help because she was making more money and could pay for the basic needs of her two children and herself. But, unexpected bills were still a problem. She told me that recently one of her boys had needed unexpected dental work. She didn't have the savings to pay for this need.

I asked her how she handled it, if she had put the bill on a credit card. Aundrea quickly told me that no, she stayed away from credit cards. What she had reluctantly done was pawn

their most prized possession: the computer. She hated to do it, but it was the only way to pay the bill.

These two families lead us at NETWORK to know that the reality of 21st Century Poverty is driven by low wages and worry. If we are to address the needs of our time, therefore, we must struggle to raise wages so that all workers and their families can live in dignity.

This is about more than just being able to make ends meet with one job. Pope Francis tells us:

“We are not simply talking about ensuring nourishment or a dignified sustenance for all people, but also their general temporal welfare and prosperity. This means education, access to healthcare, and above all employment, for it is through free,

creative, participatory, and mutually supportive labor that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives. A just wage enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use.” (*Evangelii Gaudium* “Joy of the Gospel,” paragraph 192)

We realized that if we are going to mend the gap in income and wealth in our nation, we need to create “living wages” not just an increased minimum wage. Living wages take into consideration what it costs to live in a region. It looks at the cost of housing, childcare, healthcare, transportation, and more. From there, we can calculate what the minimum salary is to still allow a family flourish.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology has created a Living Wage Calculator to do the math. What we need now is the energy of people insisting that Congress acts to ensure our families can live vibrant lives.

Carmen needs to know that her family can live in dignity. Aundrea needs to be able to care for her boys without having to pawn their prized computer. This would be a faithful response to an economy that too often exploits our families living in poverty. This is at the heart of our advocacy to Mend the Gaps! ☀️



Sister Simone and fellow Nuns on the Bus with residents of Elmwood Gardens in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Notable Quotables

What justice-seekers have been saying this quarter

"The President's proposal to build a wall is as deeply misguided today as it was when it was first introduced."

Tweet from Rabbi Jonah Pesner (@JonahPesner) during President Trump's 2018 State of the Union

"When communities of color can't get ahead no matter how hard they try, we are all failing as a nation."

Rep. Joe Crowley (NY-14), discussing #MendtheGaps during a Twitter chat

"Scripture tells me that every person no matter their immigration status is a child of God and deserves to be treated with dignity."

Sister JoAnn Persch, RSM, speaking during the Catholic Day of Action with Dreamers on Capitol Hill

"It's 2018. We no longer carry around cell phones the size of bricks. Why should we be content to stick with decades-old family and parental leave policies?"

Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), writing about family-friendly policies at Moneyish.com

"There are no queens in welfare, just mothers, and fathers who need short-term help to feed, house, and clothe their children."

California State Senator Holly Mitchell, dismantling the myth of the "welfare queen" in NETWORK's 21st Century Poverty campaign

"There is nothing partisan or political about protecting Dreamers."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA-12), delivering an eight-hour speech in support of Dreamers

"The history, the tension, the anger, and frustration that your peers feel are your crosses to bear."

Jeremiah Pennebaker, NETWORK Grassroots Mobilization Associate, writing in a NETWORK blog

"Women who speak up for their rights are not going away."

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) on International Women's Day 2018

"The future of the global world is living together: this calls for the commitment to build bridges, to keep dialogue open, to continue and meet with one another."

Pope Francis, speaking to the Community of St. Egidio in Rome's Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere

"Dreamers are our neighbors and their home is here."

Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, calling on Congress to pass legislation to protect Dreamers

"Systemic racism is something we don't talk about. We need to now."

Rev. William Barber II, quoted in a TIME Magazine article about the 50th anniversary of the Kerner Report

"For us, this is a very big deal."

Sam Liccardo, Mayor of San Jose, CA, speaking about a possible undercount in the 2020 Census to the New York Times



Photo by: Annette Bernhardt

Finding the Path to Fair and Just Wages

Refusing to Go Back on the Progress We've Made

BY SISTER QUINCY HOWARD, OP, NETWORK GOVERNMENT RELATIONS FELLOW

In our contemporary society, we prize work and productivity above nearly all else. Unfortunately, our current labor standards, wages, and working conditions fail to reflect that entirely. At the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, *Gaudium et Spes* (the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) stated that the human being is “the source and focus and the aim of all economic social life.” Any form of work, therefore, should enhance the dignity of each person, and our society must recognize the dignity of all work by ensuring it is justly rewarded.

Pope Francis describes the ideal of work as a path to growth, human development, and personal fulfillment. Accordingly, business is potentially a noble vocation, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good. When businesses stop investing in people in order to gain the greatest short-term financial gain, it is

“bad business for society.” (*Laudato Si'*, 128) Yet, in the United States, our economic system has encouraged the relentless and single-minded pursuit of the greatest profit for decades. Pope Francis speaks of the “urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life.” (*Laudato Si'*, 123) We at NETWORK say it is time for all workers to earn a living wage.

The Value of Labor: How We Compensate Work

The words wage and income are often used interchangeably. Income is a wider term that can refer to cash earnings or total compensation for work, including benefits like health insurance or paid leave. In today's labor market, “wages” often refer to a flat fee earned per hour. A long-standing American ideal is that wages for a full-time worker will amount to sufficient compensation to provide for themselves and their family.

cont on page 6

The reality for low-income and hourly wage workers today, however, is that they are unlikely to receive benefits (beyond basic Social Security) or workplace accommodations. They are largely left to fend for themselves when it comes to securing childcare, accommodating erratic and unpredictable scheduling, arranging transportation, caring for sick or dependent family, saving for retirement, or recovering from an illness—paying for it all with an insufficient paycheck. The national debate around the minimum wage is a huge simplification of a deeply complex issue: income that enables workers to live and thrive. NETWORK has adopted the concept of “Living Wages” to characterize the just compensation for work which allows for a dignified life, taking into account the real cost of living.

The Decline of the Just Labor Market

The problem of wage stagnation is often presumed to stem from forces of globalization or technological advancement, factors we also associate with progress. But the slowed growth of workers’ incomes the past 35 years can be clearly traced to national policies that favor employers at the expense of workers. This erosion of more just labor market policies and practices is chipping away at the hard-earned labor standards, business practices, and ideas of fairness that defined the American Dream.

The declining fairness of the labor market was and continues to be precipitated by federal policy changes—or in some cases, by failures to change policy. Extensive research shows that minimum wage increases substantially boost workers’ in-

comes at virtually no cost to government and with no discernable effect on employment. Despite this evidence, members of Congress have repeatedly voted against increasing the minimum wage since its last increase in 2009.

Changes in business practices can also result in depressing workers’ income. For instance, employers can skirt responsibilities, such as providing benefits, to their workers through the now-common practice of misclassifying workers as independent contractors or temporary workers. Employers who include non-compete clauses in their employment contracts limit workers’ options to find other work if they choose to leave a company. Likewise, employers with mandatory arbitration provisions in their contracts preclude any legal claims or class action lawsuits initiated by workers in the case of employer wrongdoing.

Institutional changes to the labor market have taken a serious toll on workers’ rights and bargaining power and have contributed to wage stagnation. The decline in unionization and the subsequent shift of workplace norms eroded expectations for the average worker around what constitutes reasonable compensation. The erosion of collective bargaining power has been the single largest factor suppressing wage growth for middle-wage workers over the last few decades. While non-standard employment, also known as the gig economy (think temp work and entrepreneurial/independent contractors), has given workers some flexibility and freedom, it lacks basic worker protections. Similar to the current tipped minimum wage of \$2.13 an hour, non-standard employment can also pay far below the current minimum wage.



Photo by: Anna Waters

Race and Gender Gaps in Wages

- Women make up less than half of the overall U.S. workforce, but account for 54.7% of workers making less than \$15 per hour
- African American workers make up about 12% of the workforce, but account for 15% of the below-\$15 wage workforce
- Latinx workers are 16.5% of the workforce, but account for almost 23% of workers making less than \$15 per hour
- Overrepresentation of people of color in low-wage industries contributes to the racial pay gap. The 2015 median hourly wage was lower for Black men (\$15) and Latino men (\$14), than white men and Asian men, \$21 and \$24, respectively. White women (\$17) and Asian women (\$18) had higher median hourly wages than Black and Latina women, \$13 and \$12, respectively

Source: National Employment Law Project. Policy Brief: What a \$15 Minimum Wage Means for Women and Workers of Color. December 2016.

The enforcement of labor standards in the United States has become so lax that hundreds of thousands of employers routinely fail to pay minimum wage or overtime, protect their employees from workplace hazards, accurately classify workers, pay payroll taxes or worker's compensation premiums, provide family and medical leave, or even simply pay employees the wages they have earned. All of these policies and practices have undercut the ability of low- and middle-wage workers, who are increasingly college graduates, to get quality jobs that provide upward mobility, decent benefits, reasonable work hours, and economic security.

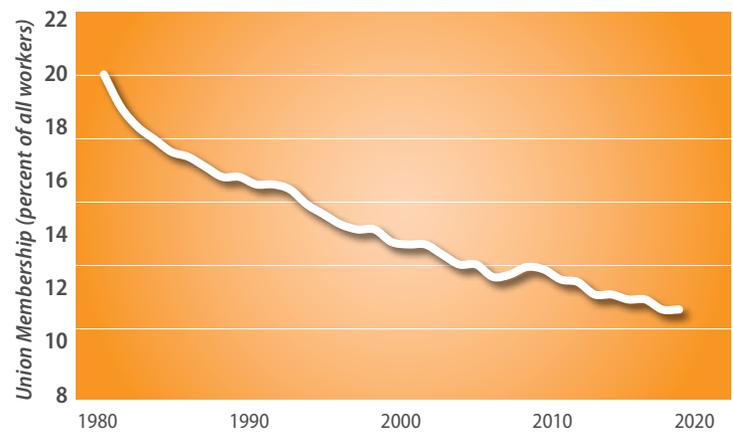
21st Century Poverty and the Reality of Today's Worker

Instead of equipping employees to provide for themselves and their families, employers today are paying their workers poverty wages. This sets employees up to barely get by and forces them to access federal safety net programs just to make ends meet. The numbers are stark:

- A full-time minimum wage worker earns an annual pre-tax income of \$15,080. This doesn't even begin to approach the 2016 federal poverty threshold for a family of four at \$24,563.¹
- Only 13% of workers in the U.S. have access to paid family leave through their employers.²
- Approximately 64% of private-sector workers in the U.S. currently have access to paid sick days, but among the 10% of workers with the lowest wages, only 27% have access to paid sick days.³
- Low-wage workers are least able to afford to absorb lost wages when they or their family members are sick. When these workers get sick, they are forced either to stay at home without pay and risk losing their job, or go to work and jeopardize their health and that of their colleagues.
- One-third (34%) of female hourly-wage workers aged 26–32 receive their work schedules with a week or less of advance notice. Irregular work schedules lead to income instability, particularly as low-income workers are the most likely to have irregular work schedules.⁴
- Minimum wage workers earning \$7.25 an hour must work an extra 41 days in 2018 just to make the same amount they did in 2009.⁵
- Among Americans ages 40–55, the median retirement account balance is \$14,500—less than 4% of the \$375,000 the median-income worker will need in savings.⁶

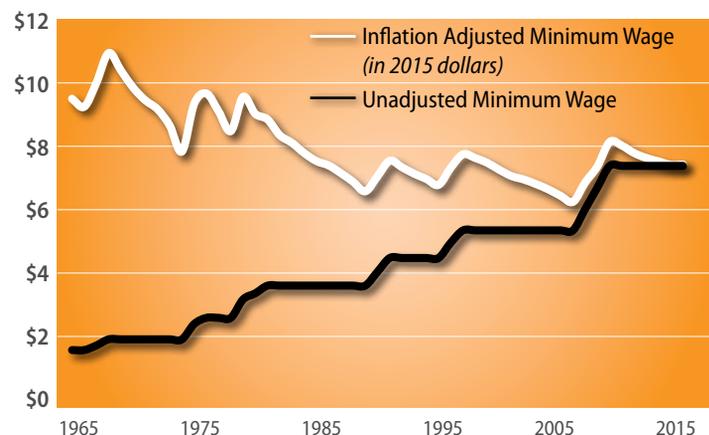
Union Membership in the U.S. (1983–2017)

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>



U.S. Minimum Wage (1965–2015)

Source: <http://money.cnn.com/interactive/economy/minimum-wage-since1938/>



Labor Policies that Are Just

Three-and-a-half decades of backsliding on protections against employer abuses and exploitation have resulted in wage stagnation and untenable financial circumstances for many low- and middle-income workers. In a recent poll conducted by the Center for American Progress, 71% of voters ages 18–34 reported serious problems “finding a decent job with good wages.” As the problem of poverty wages has become more protracted, many state and city governments have stepped in to address the needs of the working class. As of today, 18 states and 20 cities have new higher minimum wage requirements than the federal government.⁸

Nevertheless, addressing wage stagnation and working towards a “Living Wage” for workers in the U.S. requires a multi-pronged, federal approach that begins with a higher minimum wage. We at NETWORK call for the policy changes below to get closer to a living wage:

- Pass legislation to raise a federal minimum wage, indexed to the real costs of living. There is broad agreement that the current wage floor is inadequate to support workers and that the federal minimum wage should be raised and tied to inflation. Market-based algorithms exist which can provide a more sound approach to setting fair wage rates. Applied formulas can account for variations in household size, circumstances, and geographic location, thereby indexing a minimum wage to what employees and their families need to live.
- Pass federal legislation to phase out the discriminatory sub-minimum wages for tipped workers and workers with disabilities.
- Enact policies that enhance transparency for workers’ wages to increase workers’ bargaining power.
- Ensure workers have paid family leave so they can take time off for the arrival of a child or a serious health condition affecting themselves or a relative, without forcing them to choose between work and family.

- Provide every worker with paid sick leave to give them the ability to rest and recuperate without financial repercussions. Include those with access to unpaid sick days, as missed wages may prove too burdensome to take the time off to properly care for an illness for low-wage workers.
- Invest in early childhood education and more affordable child care so parents do not need to choose between work or child care, and to prevent children starting their education a step behind.
- Provide every worker with a portable retirement saving account which offers a mechanism for savings to be pooled and invested to achieve higher returns.
- Enact federal policies which require fair scheduling practices to allow workers to balance their work and personal lives.
- Whether it is provided through employer benefits or through the individual market, it is essential that the nation commit to a system of healthcare coverage that is available and affordable to all workers.

120 years ago, Pope Leo XIII introduced the idea of a “just” wage to the Catholic Church in the encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*. He defined the just wage as an amount needed to support a thrifty and sensible worker plus their family, and prescribed that it must be sufficient to allow the worker to save and acquire property of their own. In a nation as wealthy as ours, there is no justification for short-changing our workers.

The obligation to earn one’s bread by the sweat of one’s brow also presumes the right to do so. A society in which this right is systematically denied, in which economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment, cannot be justified from an ethical point of view.

—Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*

Endnotes

1. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2017/demo/p60-259.html>
2. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/paid-leave/paid-family-and-medical-leave.pdf>
3. <https://www.epi.org/publication/work-sick-or-lose-pay-the-high-cost-of-being-sick-when-you-dont-get-paid-sick-days/>
4. <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/equal-opportunity/schedules-that-work-act-fact-sheet.pdf>
5. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2018/03/01/447359/march-1-minimum-wage-workers-equal-pay-day/>
6. <http://rescuingretirement.org/the-problem/>
7. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2018/03/07/447412/ensuring-basic-living-standards/>
8. <https://www.marketplace.org/2018/01/01/business/new-patchwork-minimum-wage-rules-means-new-challenges-business>
9. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2018/03/07/447412/ensuring-basic-living-standards/>



“Arrest a Nun, Not a Dreamer”

Catholic Community Prays and Acts in Solidarity with Dreamers

By Mary Cunningham, NETWORK Communications Associate

Catholic sisters held signs as they gathered with 200 other advocates during the National Catholic Day of Action with Dreamers on February 27, 2018. Members of the Catholic community met on Capitol Hill to demand a legislative solution from Congress for the nearly 800,000 DACA recipients who face uncertainty about their legal status in the United States. PICO National Network organized the day of events along with Catholic organizations including: Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., Franciscan Action Network, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Pax Christi USA, and NETWORK.

The event highlighted Dreamers’ precarious position and called on advocates and people of faith to move towards action. Sister Quincy Howard, OP, a Government Relations Fellow at NETWORK, attended and reflected on the way we are treating Dreamers in this country: “I hope that people’s eyes and hearts can be opened to the suffering of these young people who have done nothing wrong. Dreamers are our teachers, our students, and our neighbors, and our government is currently threatening them with exile from the only home they know.”

The day began with a press conference outside the Capitol building with speeches from Sister JoAnn Persch, RSM, Father Tom Reese, SJ, and others. After the speeches, the attendees recited the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary together. The crowd then moved into the Russell Senate Office Building and those who chose to participate in civil disobedience formed a circle, singing and praying together in the center of the rotunda. After issuing several warnings, Capitol police arrested around 40 Catholic leaders, many of them women religious.

Sisters participated in the act of civil disobedience because they felt it was a moral imperative and a small sacrifice compared to the lived experience of the Dreamers. Sister Diane Roche, RSCJ, Director of the Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation at the Stuart Center in Washington, D.C. said “If there is an issue worth getting arrested for, this is it. This is my first time ever, and I can’t think of anything I’d rather do to stand in solidarity. It is a small enough thing compared to what they are going through.”



The action was a stark reminder that although Dreamers and supporters are organizing and advocating tirelessly, Congress has still failed to pass a legislative solution that will protect them from deportation. Each day that goes by, Dreamers face more uncertainty about their future.

As Sister Ann Scholz, SSND, LCWR Associate Director for Social Mission and NETWORK Board member, said: “Our mission as Christians is to welcome those who are in need as we would welcome Jesus. So really, we can do no other than be here today to stand with Dreamers and ask our elected officials to provide the welcome that is theirs because they are created in the image of God just as we are.” ☀️



Exploring the Challenges and Hopes of a

A Roundtable Conversation with Worker Centers around the Country

Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) is a national network that builds collective power by advancing the rights of workers through unions, worker centers, and other expressions of the labor movement, and by engaging diverse faith communities and allies in joint action, from grassroots organizing to shaping policy at the local, state, and national levels. They envision a nation where all workers enjoy the rights to living wages, healthcare, and pensions that allow workers to raise families and retire with dignity; safe working conditions, free from discrimination; organize and bargain collectively to improve wages, benefits, and conditions without harassment, intimidation, or retaliation; equal protection under labor law — regardless of immigration status — and an end to the practice of pitting immigrant and U.S.-born workers against one another; fair and just participation in a global economy that promotes the welfare of both domestic and foreign workers.



NETWORK spoke with three IWJ-affiliate worker centers to learn more about their advocacy for workers' rights, including their struggles and their triumphs:

NETWORK: What is your worker center's mission?

Casa DuPage Workers Center (Casa): Our mission is to educate, organize, and mobilize Latino workers in DuPage County around their rights, collective struggles, and responsibilities with other workers to transform their workplaces into places of justice. We struggle to build a new economy in DuPage, premised on worker dignity, equality, solidarity, and putting people before profit.

Workers Interfaith Network (WIN): Our mission is that every person has the God-given right to a safe and fair work environment and the right to a living wage and access to healthcare.

Worker Justice Wisconsin (Wisconsin): We are both a worker resource and organizing center in Madison as well as a broader coalition for change statewide. We have many beliefs and backgrounds and several shared convictions: we believe healthy and safe workplaces are for all, not just for some of us. We believe no matter what else we do, until we have fair and livable wages, we do not have a fair and livable city — or county or state. We be-

lieve all workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively. Our mission statement reads: Worker justice is necessary for a just economy. Worker Justice Wisconsin builds collective worker power through training, labor rights education, collective action and community engagement with an emphasis on interfaith involvement.

NETWORK: What motivates you to do your work?

Casa: We are motivated by the knowledge that we are agents of changes in this world, lights in the darkness. There are lots of workplaces around DuPage County where there is a lot of darkness: intimidation and bullying, wage theft, poverty wages, exposure to hazardous materials, and sexual harassment. This is not the plan of God for these workers' lives; this is the opposite of the Kingdom for these workers. We want to fill these dark spaces of workplaces with liberating acts of solidarity and compassion, breaking the chains and yokes of oppression, inspiring workers to not be satisfied with less, but that God has more for them.

WIN: We have a unique setting in Memphis as the home of the 1968 Sanitation Workers Strike. We are motivated by the workers that we talk to, by the history behind us, and by the struggles that we currently face. As a city, we are perceived as making leaps and bounds over the last 50 years. But we are still the #1 ranking city of poverty, we default to the federal minimum wage, and have no bargaining rights as a state to aid us in changing the systematic harnesses used against us.

Wisconsin: My own [Executive Director, Becky Schigiel] employment history includes years in restaurants and retail, as well as social work. It is my observation that most people can handle daily life just fine, if they are able to live in dignity and support their families. Worker justice is "root cause" work; we cannot address poverty or other inequities without addressing the workplace.



Photo from Workers Interfaith Network



Living Wage for Workers

NETWORK: What are some kinds of labor exploitation and/or worker violations that you see in your community?

Casa: We see that wage theft is very common of Latino immigrant workers. For example, we worked on a case this summer where the owner of a painting company contracted 10 workers to paint a building. The owner had already been paid in a lump sum for the work, but after two months he decided that he would not pay his workers and let all them go. We came in and did a series of pickets at his house—even with his neighbors! We see low wages and lack of benefits, such as sick days, as well. Recently some janitors came to us who worked for a staffing agency that provides janitors for schools. They have no sick days, forcing them to work while sick and harming public health, and they are paid a flat rate of \$10 an hour. Up until recently, they were allowed one week of paid vacation, but that was taken from them, so they came to us and we are organizing a union!

WIN: At our center, we see all sorts of labor violations. We see safety violations, wage theft, misclassification of workers both in construction and restaurant employment, and Equal Employment Opportunity discrimination. We see labor violation across the spectrum not limited to women, people of color, or immigration status.

Wisconsin: People regularly come to our center from jobs with overt racism and threats. Many have been injured without treatment, not paid correctly or not paid at all. We see a lot of wage theft, as well as discrimination against immigrants, people of color, and women. Most of these workers have demanding jobs that pay little and benefit many, such as: restaurants, construction, agriculture, healthcare, and cleaning.

NETWORK: What does a living wage mean to you?

Casa: A living wage is a wage that allows workers to live lives of dignity and decency. A living wage destroys poverty, which affects 40% of all Black and Brown children, victims of the low-wage service sector jobs. A living wage allows for families, for free time, for time to worship God, and rejoice in the power and passion of our humanity. Due to low-wage jobs, work fills our lives while destroying our futures. Raising the minimum wage across the country and in every community can bring about

deeper lives, liberties, and a renewed pursuit of happiness that is currently closed to many workers: single mothers, African Americans, Latinos, immigrants, working-class families, and youth who are suffering under current conditions of poverty

WIN: A living wage means a wage that is able to cover a family's basic needs free of government assistance or private subsidy. For our area, Memphis, research has increasingly shown a living wage to be \$15–\$18 an hour.

Wisconsin: A living wage is one that results in the ability of a person working full-time to sustain the necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing. It is determined correctly in the context of each community, in that we have to factor in costs like transportation, childcare, and healthcare, depending on how these things are obtained where we live, and what work schedules look like.

Casa DuPage Workers Center

Wheaton, Illinois

www.dupagesolidarity.org

Workers Interfaith Network

Memphis, Tennessee

www.workersinterfaithnetwork.org

Worker Justice Wisconsin

Madison, Wisconsin

www.workerjustice.org



Photo from Worker Justice Wisconsin



Feeding the Community WHEN WAGES AREN'T ENOUGH

By Matt Habash, President and CEO, Mid-Ohio Foodbank

If I told you hungry neighbors in central Ohio miss an average of 3.2 meals a week, your immediate reaction may be, ‘that’s not so bad’ — right? Maybe you skip breakfast every morning.

But consider this: Fourteen-year-old Maria’s father works two jobs so her mother can be home for Maria and her two siblings, as well as Maria’s aging grandparents. Maria and her mother were at a local food pantry the day a load of farm-fresh peaches came in, and they happily bagged up several to take home.

A volunteer could tell Maria was hungry, so she offered a peach as a snack while she shopped.

“No, thank you,” was the polite reply. Because, as Maria shared: “*It’s not my day to eat.*”

Not-my-day-to-eat.

To make their food budget stretch, each person in the household did not eat one day a week. Even the seniors. Even the children. Do we think that’s acceptable? Do we, as a humane society, believe it is acceptable for families to miss entire days of eating — week after week, month after month for months on end?

Our hungry neighbors obtain food through three main channels: their own income (48% of meals), government resources, e.g. SNAP (31%) and charitable response (6%). That leaves a 15% gap of missed meals.

One of most surprising client responses helped shift our entire focus. “I can’t afford to shop at a food pantry.” *Can’t afford to get food at no cost?* Because of limited hours of pantry service, this neighbor was unable to obtain no-charge food without taking a day off work. That no-cost food is pretty costly when it comes with a loss of hours of wages. Particularly so when those wages are not enough to meet the basic needs of a family.

We began to look at available services not just in numbers of agencies—80% which are faith-based, but in hours those pantries are open. We are identifying partners in high-need areas and helping to increase their capacity to serve more people and extend hours. Our goal is to help these partners meet the unique needs of their community. This model will be both client-based and community-placed.

The Nuns on the Bus meet Matt Habash during their visit to the Mid-Ohio Foodbank. Photo by: Samantha Kahrar





NETWORK WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Leslye Colvin is the communications coordinator for *Gathering for Mission*, a project of Catholic Committee of the South inspired by Pope Francis’s call for dialogue. She has a range of experience in promoting mission and expanding outreach in a variety of sectors including both faith-based nonprofit and the archdiocesan level. Leslye is passionate about encouraging diversity of thought especially as it relates to those often marginalized within the Church and society. She earned a master’s degree in Communications from University of Massachusetts, Amherst and her undergraduate degree from Xavier University of Louisiana. She belongs to St. Columba Parish in Dothan, Alabama.



Catherine Ferguson, SNJM is a Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. Retired from congregational leadership, Catherine currently carries out her passion for justice volunteering with World Relief Spokane on behalf of refugees seeking asylum in the U.S. and assisting the campaign of a candidate for U.S. representative whose values are in line with NETWORK positions. Catherine brings to NETWORK her experience and education: a Ph.D. in International Studies, her time as the Associate Director of Inner City Law Center in Los Angeles, a poverty law firm that successfully prosecuted slum landlords, and ten years of policy advocacy at the United Nations through UNANIMA International.



Robert P. Kirschner has been Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry’s Vice President, Development & Communications in Cleveland since 2011. During this time, Robert led a successful \$5.5M capital campaign, increased annual giving by 150%, and developed a comprehensive foundation management process and other strategic initiatives. Prior to joining LMM, Robert worked in higher education advancement including stints at John Carroll University and Kenyon College. He earned his M.A. from The Ohio State University and B.S. from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Robert serves on the Board of Directors for Computer Reach, the Board of Trustees for Countryside Conservancy, and is an ordained deacon in the Byzantine Catholic Church. He lives in Brecksville, Ohio with his wife, Claudine, and their four children.



Alejandra Marroquin is a native of Guatemala, migrating to the United States with her family in 1993. She earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Penn State University and a master’s degree in social work from Marywood University. For the past 12 years, Alejandra has worked closely with the Hispanic-Latino community in the greater Scranton area of Northeastern Pennsylvania. She has done numerous presentations and given interviews on topics relating to the Hispanic-Latino community and immigration awareness. Alejandra worked for Catholic Social Service, the Diocese of Scranton, and Friendship House, a social service agency for children and families. She currently works as the Adult Behavioral Health Coordinator for Lackawanna/Susquehanna Counties. She resides in Dunmore, Pennsylvania and is an IHM (Immaculate Heart of Mary) associate.



Rachelle Reyes Wenger is the Director of Public Policy and Community Advocacy for Dignity Health, where she has been since 1996. Based in southern California, she is primarily responsible for advancing the organization’s public policy and advocacy priorities in the legislative and community arenas, mobilizing grassroots advocacy efforts, and developing partnerships to build common ground. She is actively engaged in a national coalition addressing the intersection between healthcare and immigration. Rachelle serves as chair for The Root Cause Coalition advocacy committee, leads efforts with Business for Innovative Climate Policy, is a member of Community Hospital San Bernardino’s Board of Directors, as well as Housing California’s Board, and she serves on Mercy Housing’s Southern California Advisory Council.

We know that food is health, and that food-insecure families have a greater risk for costly diseases like diabetes and hypertension—diseases that can be mitigated through access to healthy foods. Last year, about 60% of the food Mid-Ohio Foodbank distributed was fresh: produce, meat, dairy, grains.

We are working to build hubs to bring together nutritious food with health care partners—improving health outcomes with those we serve while mitigating healthcare costs. And, we are urging our elected leaders to start looking at SNAP through a public health policy lens, not as an entitlement.

This is all part of a strategy that connects our hungry neighbors with nutritious food, stabilizing families today while helping them access resources for tomorrow so they can thrive for a lifetime.

In 2015, Nuns on the Bus visited the Mid-Ohio Foodbank. Matt Habash shared how the foodbank had benefitted from raising the wages all of their employees to at least \$15 an hour. Watch the video at: www.networklobby.org/foodbank

Immigration Inaction on Capitol Hill, Sights Set on Work Requirements

An update from D.C. on key developments during the past quarter, and social justice issues on the horizon



Missed Opportunity: Immigration

It has now been more than six months since President Trump rescinded DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), closing it to new applicants and setting a March 5 deadline for Congress to pass legislation to provide ongoing protection for current DACA recipients. Despite having sufficient time, even with significant advocacy from Dreamers, the religious community, and other allies, Congress failed to pass legislation. While there were bipartisan proposals that made it to the Senate floor, President Trump effectively shut them down.

Two recent injunctions from courts in New York and California are preventing the end of the program for those who had or currently hold DACA permits, and those who are eligible for renewal. Still, no new DACA applications are being processed by the Administration and with no deadline in sight Congress seems to have effectively washed its hands of protecting Dreamers.

We continue advocating to ensure state-sanctioned family separation is not our country's legacy. Congress has the chance to reduce funding for raids and border operations which target immigrant communities in the federal budget. We must continue connecting with our members of Congress and urge them to reject additional funding of anti-immigrant policies which exacerbate the suffering of our communities.



On the Horizon: Work Requirements

In January, the Trump administration began approving states' proposals to impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients. Kentucky was the first state the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid approved to institute work requirements on its Medicaid program. Since then, work requirement requests from Arkansas and Indiana have been approved, and seven other states have submitted requests. Most people on Medicaid who are able to work already do; instituting these strict work requirements for the first time fundamentally changes this fifty-plus-year program.

Creating these work requirements is just a way to remove people from Medicaid. In Kentucky, state officials anticipate work requirements moving 95,000 people off of Medicaid to job-sponsored or marketplace plans. It is actually more likely that they will move off Medicaid and become uninsured.

For now, Medicaid work requirements are being instituted on a state-by-state basis. Congress is looking at making these changes to the Medicaid program permanent through legislation as well as adding further work requirements to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the upcoming Farm Bill. Congress must work to ensure that the Farm Bill and other legislation do not include harmful work requirements that will punish the families and individuals who are most vulnerable in our nation.

2017 NETWORK LOBBY ANNUAL REPORT

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice — a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace — educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation.



Dear Friends,

2017 was a tumultuous year, but as I've reflected, I've realized that there is much to celebrate at NETWORK! This past year affirmed for us that staying focused on our mission provides some stability in chaotic times. This two-page annual report — the first in recent memory — gives us an opportunity to share and celebrate our successes. I hope you enjoy it!

We learned that our Mend the Gaps strategy is a gift when it is difficult to know how to proceed because everything seems to be up for grabs. Our clarion call was the fight to protect the Affordable Care Act, but even on legislation like the Tax Bill, the faith community's voice was heard on all fronts. Together, we were a powerhouse of effective advocacy in the districts and states, in the media, on the phones. Your fierce commitment made our impact possible. THANK YOU!

In 2017, we also made significant progress analyzing income and wealth disparity, in particular how people of color are disproportionately affected by our nation's policies. This past year made me more aware that the pinnacle of white privilege is being able to turn our eyes away from our nation's original sin of racism. Moving forward, we are prepared to stay focused and nimble in our advocacy to dismantle structures of white supremacy.

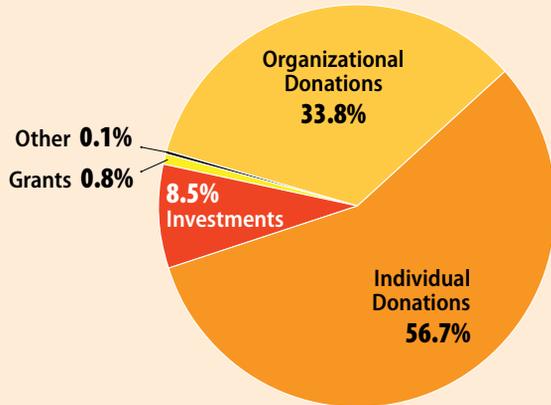
We know there is still significant work to be done and we are facing even more challenging times. As you read this year's annual report, please remember YOU are NETWORK's biggest asset as you communicate with your members of Congress, talk to your friends about Catholic Social Justice, and support NETWORK financially. We are grateful that together we have made a difference — and I am counting on you for what lies ahead. Well done, good and faithful!

Blessings,

S. Simone Campbell, SSS

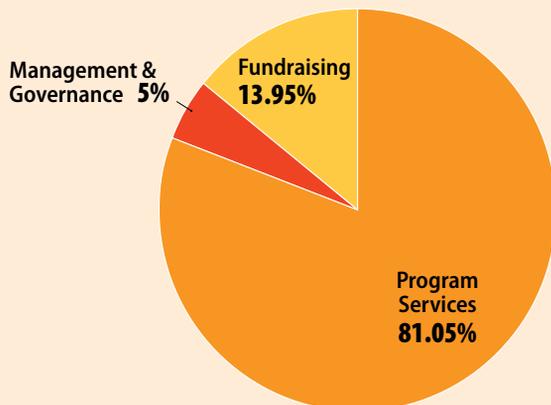
WHERE OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT COMES FROM

2017 Revenue = \$1,203,707



HOW YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IMPACTS OUR MISSION

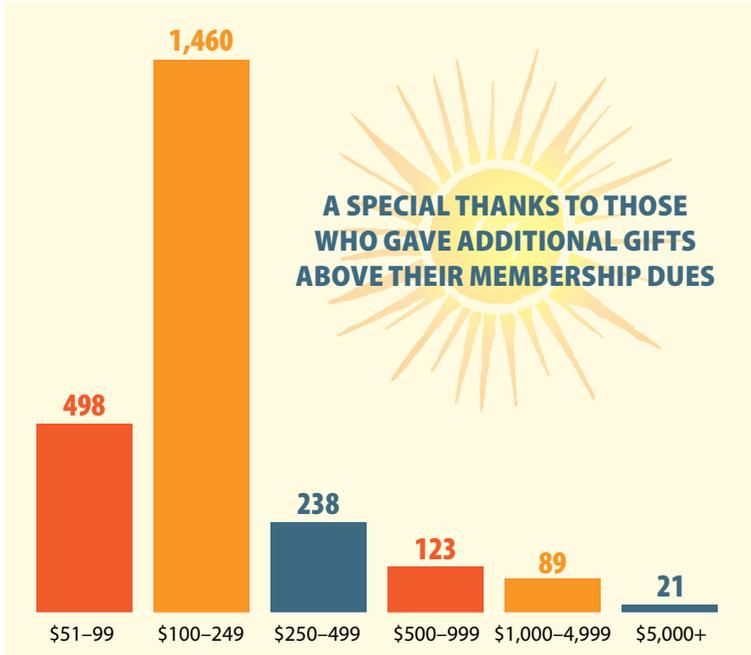
2017 Expenses = \$1,059,270



OUR NETWORK Community

Thank you to the **6,041** people, congregations, and organizations who donated in 2017!

A Sister-Spirit welcome to the 1,002 new NETWORK Lobby donors in 2017!



2,071 Loyalty Society
People who have given consecutively for 5 years or more

351 GEMs

People who participate in the Giving Every Month program

24 Bread & Roses Society
People who included NETWORK in their estate planning



Look what we ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER!

28,667 emails sent to Members of Congress by NETWORK supporters

55,000+ calls made to Members of Congress, including:

- 25,131 calls on Healthcare
- 10,064 calls on Tax
- 10,007 calls on Immigration

3.531 million emails sent to NETWORK supporters

66,767 followers on social media (Facebook and Twitter) including 5,827 NEW followers

121,594 people visited www.networklobby.org and viewed our webpages 420,575 times

41 press releases disseminated

86 blogs published

459 lobby visits on Capitol Hill

27 Capitol Hill / D.C. press conferences, events, rallies

262 attendees of NETWORK webinars

50 people participated in state advocate teams or councils in three states

7,151 signed the Nuns Letter to all 100 Senate offices on Healthcare

Our Agenda

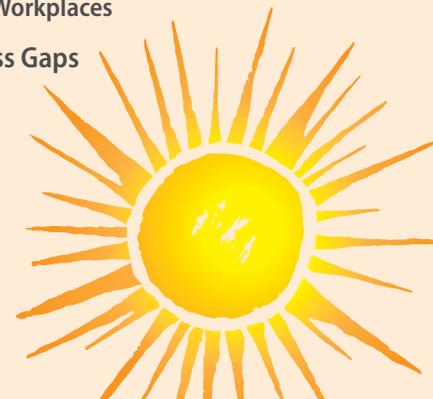
WE REMAIN FOCUSED ON MENDING THE GAPS

 Mending the Wealth and Income Gap

- Tax Justice
- Living Wages
- Family-Friendly Workplaces

 Mending the Access Gaps

- Democracy
- Healthcare
- Citizenship
- Housing



2017 NETWORK ADVOCATES ANNUAL REPORT

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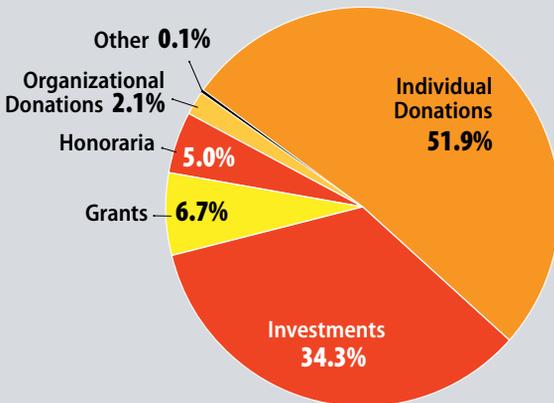
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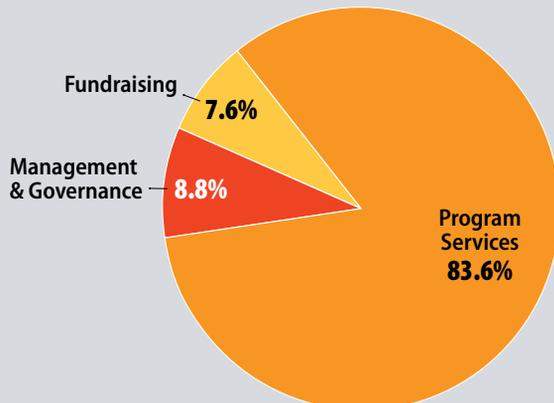
WHERE OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT COMES FROM

2017 Revenue = \$905,078



HOW YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IMPACTS OUR MISSION

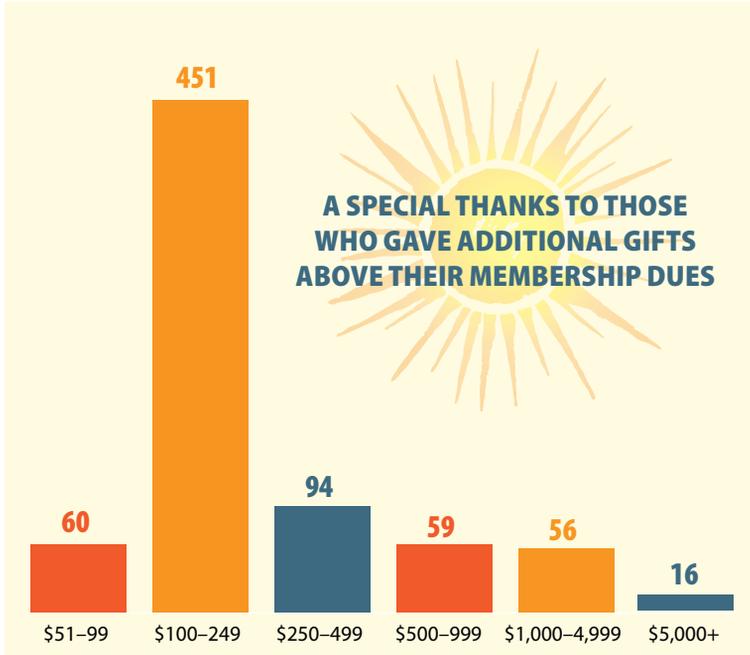
2017 Expenses = \$671,277



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A Sister-Spirit welcome to the 430 new NETWORK Advocates donors in 2017!



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People who have given consecutively for 5 years or more

157 GEMs
People who participate in the Giving Every Month program

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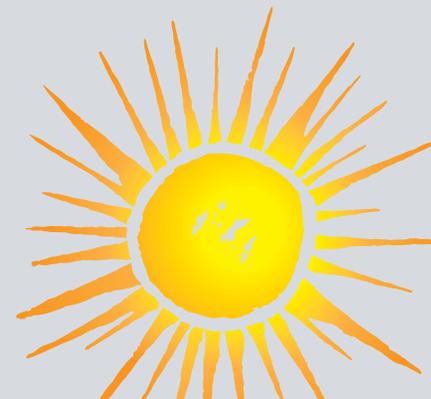
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 - Tax Justice
 - Living Wages
 - Family-Friendly Workplaces

- ☀️ Mending the Access Gaps
 - Democracy
 - Healthcare
 - Citizenship
 - Housing



NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes, and lobbies for economic and social transformation.

NETWORK LOBBY FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Fr. Terrence J. Moran (Secretary)
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Annette Craven
Lorena G. Gonzalez
Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ
Alice Kitchen
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Betsy McDougall
Patricia Mejia
Melba Rodriguez
Ann Scholz, SSND
Judith Sharpe
Erin Zubal, OSU
Jerry Zurek

NETWORK ADVOCATES FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Patricia Mejia
Fr. Terrence J. Moran
Ann Scholz, SSND
Judith Sharpe
Erin Zubal, OSU
Jerry Zurek

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Colleen Ross, Ashley Wilson

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Simone Campbell, SSS, Paul Marchione,
LaTreviette Matthews

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM

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Laura Peralta-Schulte, Tralonne Shorter

GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION TEAM

Claudia Brock, Catherine Gillette,
Meg Olson, Jeremiah Pennebaker

FELLOWS

Nancy Groth, Mary Ellen Lacy, DC, Joan Neal,
Patricia Sodo, Janet Yurkanin, IHM



Illuminating the Reality of 21st Century Poverty

“The myth of the welfare queen was imagined over 40 years ago; these were women supposedly having babies just to get rich off of welfare benefits. This gained traction in the early 90’s during so-called “welfare reform,” and it wasn’t by accident. The myth was used to undermine public support for important social safety net programs.”

— Senator Holly Mitchell, California State Senator

For more than 45 years, NETWORK’s mission has been addressing economic inequality. In 2016, we launched our 2020 Policy Vision to Mend the Gaps, and now we are embarking on its complement: 21st Century Poverty.

Simply put, our national narrative on poverty is full of misconceptions and stereotypes. Too often, we hear that if someone just “works hard and plays by the rules” they will “get ahead.” Unfortunately, for many people today this couldn’t be further from the truth. NETWORK is on a journey to educate others, and ourselves, about the current reality of who is living in poverty and why.

Visit www.networkadvocates.org/21stCenturyPoverty to download our complete resource with facts, stories, prayers, reflection questions, and more to explore the reality of 21st Century Poverty.

“What I really want to encourage you all to do is to know that you make the difference in breaking open 21st Century Poverty. We know that the Christian message of joy, hope, and engagement means that there’s enough to go around. And then, we will become like the apostles on the way to Emmaus where they didn’t recognize Jesus in the beginning, but then discovered that when he broke bread and shared it among them, that he was there. There IS enough to go around if we recognize his presence in our midst.”

— Sister Simone Campbell

For Your Reading List

Several recently published books have featured the work of Sister Simone and NETWORK! Keep an eye out for them at your local bookstore or library.



The Badass Babe Workbook: Creative Exercises, Drawing Activities, Empowering Stories, and Fuel for Your Personal Revolution, by Julie Van Grol

From Sister Simone:

"This workbook encourages me to speak out with all my sisters in these challenging times. Join me in celebrating women who work for the common good—and join us in sharing your personal journey!"



A Pope Francis Lexicon: Essays by Over 50 Bishops, Theologians, and Journalists Edited by Joshua J. McElwee and Cindy Wooden featuring a chapter on Pope Francis's use of the word 'justice' by Sister Simone:

"Pope Francis's justice is rooted in the ground of people's lives and watered with their tears... when we weep together, we will move toward justice. Let this be our political action for justice in our economy and society."



Religion and Progressive Activism: New Stories about Faith and Politics Edited by Ruth Braunstein, Todd Nicholas Fuiest, and Rhys H. Williams.

"When a group of Catholic Sisters set off on a national bus tour to critique Republican congressman Paul Ryan's proposed cuts to the federal budget, this unlikely vision captured the media's attention... Overall, storytelling may be most useful for progressive religious groups like the Nuns because stories show, rather than tell."



Drawing by: Julie Van Grol