

Volume 1 Issue 4

September 2016

# Nor Am

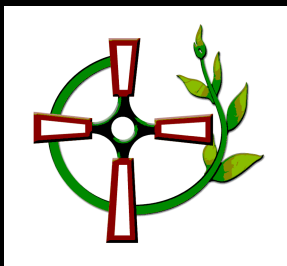


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The Edmund Rice  
North America  
Advocacy

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Christian Brothers  
Mission Frère  
Newsletter



# NorAm

The Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America  
Mission Frère - Advocacy Newsletter

The Mission of the *Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Mission Frère-Advocacy Program* is to create an awareness of and to advocate for the needs of those most marginalized in our society. Our goal is to create a more just, peaceful and equitable world by being faithful to the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and the spirit of Blessed Edmund Rice. We foster presence, compassion and liberation in collaboration with the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province, the members of the Consortium of Edmund Rice Schools and all who are inspired by the charism of Blessed Edmund Rice in the North American Edmund Rice Network.

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# CALL FOR CHANGE

In the wake of the recent violence across the United States, particularly against young African-American men, leaders from the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Network have responded with calls for change and the need to build bridges across race.



Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America  
A Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers

Dear Advocates,

For the past few years the United States has given witness to the high profile killings of young black men at the hands of our police and law enforcement agents who have the very difficult job of protecting and ensuring the safety of all of our citizens. Parallel to these killings, but often much less publicized, are the almost daily killings of young black men on the streets of our cities across the country. Gun violence, gang activity and widespread drug use often play a role in these senseless killings. Economic disadvantages, educational shortfalls, blatant discrimination and racism are also leading factors that too often lead to violence. Frequently, the lack of justice in our criminal justice system and other inequalities persist in our society and aid in perpetuating a seemingly never ending cycle of violence. Clearly, the present system is broken and undoubtedly biased against our black brothers and sisters.

This past July, while on an advocacy trip to our Latin American Region, I cringed each morning as the news of more and more killings came to light. The senseless killings of young black men by police seemed to spawn the equally senseless killings of police by disenfranchised citizens. Each day, our Latin American friends would ask what is happening in the United States that such a climate of mistrust and bias pervades. Each morning, Sean D'Alfonso, our Advocacy Coordinator, and I would engage in conversations with our Latin American cohorts on these issues. The unbiased perspective of Latin Americans on what is happening in the United States and why it is happening left me with a helpless sense of not being able to justify remaining silent. In responding daily to questions like this, as the leader of the Christian Brothers in North America, I felt a need and a call, at the very least, to attempt to share with our wider Edmund Rice Network some thoughts on how an Edmund Rice Christian Brother Education calls upon all of us to promote a more just and equitable society.

Thus, even a cursory look at *The Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice Christian Brother Education* provides some insight into where we as a Consortium of Edmund Rice Schools stand on matters of poverty and injustice.

*Essential Element # 3 states: The Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice Christian Brother Education Calls Educational Ministry Sites and Those Working in Them to **Stand in Solidarity with Those Marginalized by Poverty and Injustice.***

- promote policies and structures that reflect a climate of compassion for the poor and disadvantaged
- include education and advocacy for peace, justice, global awareness, and care for the Earth
- prepare students to work toward the creation of a just society
- encourage ministry experiences that work with and serve the poor and marginalized
- support mission areas at home and abroad
- establish tuition and scholarship policies that open educational opportunities to the poor and disadvantaged.

Our schools live out this *Essential Element* every day. Our campus ministry programs and our school policies and protocols speak to our commitment in this regard. But can we do more? Can we move beyond service and charity toward true advocacy by speaking out on matters of race and discrimination that can lead to systemic changes in our society and help to bring about a more just and equitable treatment of our black neighbors? I do not mean to imply that some of our schools are not already doing this. If you are, please let us know so that we can share it with the rest of the network and encourage others to follow suit.

In proclaiming this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis implored:

Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask our hypocrisy and egoism.

In light of the Pope's statement, how profound it is that the 2014 Nairobi Chapter of the Christian Brothers calls us to:

Engage in advocacy with the voiceless, the marginalized and all that are oppressed.

My friends, we have an opportunity here to be bridge builders and healers on an issue that is relevant to all of us. Let us make the most of it by acting as strong advocates for justice and equality.

God bless,

*Kevin M. Griffith*

Bro. Kevin M. Griffith  
Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America, Province Leader

# CALL FOR CHANGE

In the wake of the recent violence across the United States, particularly against young African-American men, leaders from the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Network have responded with calls for change and the need to build bridges across race.



Dear Members of the Iona Community,

I write to you today as President of a College founded on the values of peace, justice, service and the pursuit of truth. So it pains me whenever I have to write to you about a world that is struggling to find peace; a country that is struggling to find justice; a period when aggression seems to overcome our service; and a College that is simply struggling to find truth and meaning from what, at times, appears to be madness. It is at moments like these that our faith becomes even more important.

Last week, our campus community prayed for the families of Philando Castile in Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Louisiana, and for the families of the injured and fallen officers in Dallas. We stand unified against bias, senseless acts of violence, and murder at anyone's hands. We respect and support the fundamental right that every person should be able to return safely to their home each day.

President Obama noted,

"There is sorrow, there is anger, there is confusion about next steps..., but there is unity in recognizing that this is not how we want our communities to operate. This is not who we want to be as Americans."

My hope for our Iona Community is that we continue to come more firmly together in what we are for, rather than what we are against, by facing division by building bridges of unity. We are for intellectual inquiry, community engagement, and an appreciation for diversity. We respect one another and encourage enrichment through diversity, faith and intellectual inquiry. We are committed to continuing our efforts to support underrepresented populations, embrace the marginalized, and demonstrate our values of justice, peace and service, deciding who we want to be as children of God, as Americans and as Ionians.

We have so much more to do.

The horrific events of last week just demonstrate how far we have yet to go. As the father of young children, I have an overwhelming feeling of sadness as I listen to parents who feel compelled to tell their children to fear the police. Our sadness is compounded by witnessing the death and destruction of lives, all lives. We cannot survive as a civilized nation if substantial segments of our population feel they cannot trust the criminal justice system or fear physical violence. Hence, the call for unity.

As a place for higher learning, Iona College must proactively ensure that its community can wrestle with these difficult questions through open and informed dialogue, in and out of the classroom. We must take actions that make our College an even more welcoming and educational environment for all. I am asking our students, faculty, and staff to come together to find reasoned solutions. Like our country, our College community must come together in prayer, in mutual support, in conversation and respectful dialogue, in governance and leadership, in service, and in our educational pursuits to face division by building bridges of unity. We are developing a plan to begin this process when the College is back in session, and I will provide those details once it is completed.

For now, I want you to know that your President, your administration, your faculty, and your College care deeply about those who, with much justification, feel disenfranchised. In particular, I want our many African American students and the sons and daughters of first responders to know that this College is here for each of you at this difficult time. Your College was founded to provide education to those who might not have the same opportunities as others and on the deeply held belief that education can be one of the great equalizers.

We may be at a crossroads in this country. At key moments in our country's history, suffering and injustice has been turned into hope and progress. I pray that this is one of those moments.

As we prayed in Mass yesterday morning with my children, may we ***"go out into the world in peace. Have courage! Hold fast to what is good. Return no one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering. Honor all people. Love and serve the Lord your God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit."***

May we build bridges of unity in the face of great division and may God Bless you all,

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Nyre, Ph.D.  
President

# CALL FOR CHANGE

In the wake of the recent violence across the United States, particularly against young African-American men, leaders from the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Network have responded with calls for change and the need to build bridges across race.

## Paranoia to Metanoia: Courageous Mercy Transforming Violence and Racism

August 18, 2016



COLUMBUS, OHIO (August 5, 2016). The leaders of U.S. Catholic men's religious orders gathered for our national assembly "Rich in Mercy" August 2-5 in Columbus, OH. In our gathering of prayer and reflection, we sensed the deep pain and division again in our nation, as well as elsewhere. In our response, Jesus is our guide. He says, "This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you." (John 15:12) We are called to love as Jesus loved and to honor those who love in this way: compassionate, empathetic, reconciling, love of friends and perceived enemies, using nonviolent resistance against injustice and violence.

Thus, we are inspired to boldly call for a shift from the response of paranoia, i.e. "small picture," fear, tribalism, and destruction, to that of metanoia, i.e. "big picture," ongoing conversion, seeing the image of God in all people.

The responses of paranoia have been clearly manifested recently in different forms of violence. For instance, examples of direct violence include the killings in Orlando at an LGBTQ club, the killing of black men, the killing of police, killing of priests, and the ongoing bombing and killing in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Nigeria. Examples of cultural violence include the discrimination and rhetoric of de-humanization towards immigrants, refugees, LGBTQ persons, Muslims and politicians. Examples of structural violence include laws or policies that increasingly restrict immigration and the welcoming refugees, mass incarceration of people of color, militarization of our border, and investing in ongoing war.

Acknowledging our human frailties, we confess the role we have played in such actions or enabling conditions for such violence. For instance, we confess the ways we may have discriminated against minority religious in our own communities and our need to work more consciously for racial justice. Many of us also confess our lack of understanding of white privilege. "For instance, whites can go almost anywhere without being challenged about their presence there."

With God's grace we must turn to metanoia. This includes having a "bigger mind and heart" which sees the dignity and the image of God in all persons involved in conflicts. We seek to live into our Eucharistic prayer:

"For though the human race is divided by dissension and discord, yet we know that by testing us, you change our hearts to prepare them for reconciliation. Even more, by your Spirit you move human hearts that enemies may speak to each other again, adversaries may join hands, and peoples seek to meet together. By the working of your power it comes about, O Lord, that hatred is overcome by love, revenge gives way to forgiveness, and discord is changed to mutual respect."

Thus, we grieve and we commit to walking with those who suffer, especially the marginalized and oppressed groups. We commit to enabling circles of dialogue as this is central to acknowledging the wounds and identifying sustainable ways of healing and transformation. Yet, Catholic social teaching recognizes that there are times when conflict calls for something more than dialogue. On the one hand, we may need silence and prayer. On the other hand, we may need the courage to use nonviolent methods of non-cooperation (boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience, etc.) to create the conditions where a new message can be heard and dialogue can be fruitful.

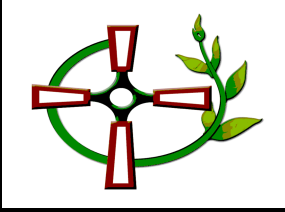
In sum, we commit ourselves, and call on other Catholics and all people to 1) take time to weep and feel the pain of these tragedies, 2) take time for silence, deep breathing, and prayer, 3) take time to create dialogue spaces for truth and reconciliation, 4) take time to get training in nonviolent conflict transformation skills, and 5) take time to advocate local, state and federal governments to change the policies of structural violence.

*Very Reverend Brian F. Terry, SA*

Very Rev. Brian F. Terry, SA  
CMSM President



# SUMMER OASIS



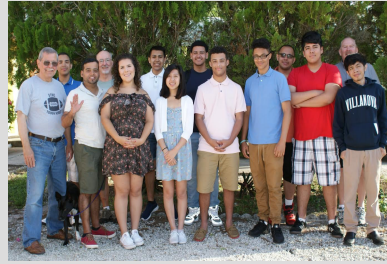
**E**ach summer, a small conference center at St. Leo's Parish in Bonita Springs, Florida, transforms into the headquarters of an unforgettable summer camp for many of Bonita's young students. This camp is the product of a coalition between Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Venice, St. Leo's Parish and the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers. For more than 30 years, the Positive Youth Development enrichment day program has provided kids ages 6-12 with an eight-week summer camp that for many of its camper is an opportunity they might not typically have. The camp allows students to have a summer that balances school enrichment activities with summer camp fun, including mini-golf, talent shows, sports and outdoor games; all coming at an affordable cost.

**T**he camp began 30 years ago to provide the children of Central American migrant workers with the opportunity to send their children to an excellent summer camp with fun activities that all children should experience. Many of these families worked long, grueling hours in the fields in nearby Immokalee. While demographics have changed during the past 30 years, most children at the camp come from families of recent immigrants.

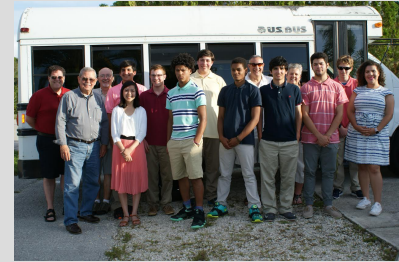
**S**ince the camp's early days, the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers have played a major role helping to run the camp each summer. Today, Brothers Tim Smyth, Joe Payne and Bob Koppes facilitate the various Edmund Rice Christian Brothers schools that travel to Bonita Springs for each week during the summer. Brothers Tim, Joe and Bob help to plan each school's stay in Bonita Springs and prepare and facilitate nightly reflections for each group. This year, they were joined by two Notre Dame University volunteers, Jacky Luna and Alyssa Ngo, who spent the entire summer at the camp and were instrumental in its success.

**T**he ERCB schools that visit each summer typically send 5-8 students and faculty members to spend one week serving as counselors at the camp. They help to bring supplies, plan and coordinate the weekly activities, and help supervise the more than 50 campers that participate in the camp. Working at the camp is an incredibly rewarding experience, and has opened ERCB students eyes to the harsh realities of immigration, fair labor and education in the U.S. Many schools that volunteered at this year's camp plan to incorporate what they learned in Bonita into various advocacy projects throughout this year.

## LOOK BACK: BONITA CAMP 2016



All Hallows, New York



Bishop Hendricken, Rhode Island



Tampa Catholic, Florida



Brother Rice, Michigan



Catholic Memorial, Massachusetts



Iona Prep, New York

# SNAPSHOTS: PERU IMMERSION



For the past 7 years, Brother Steve Casey has led the North American Immersion Program in Lima, Peru. Hundreds of students from ERCBNA schools have had the privilege of traveling to Peru to serve those in Lima through this incredible program. Many have gone home and told their stories and experiences to family, friends and their school community. This summer, returning volunteers and new volunteers from across the world came to experience immersion in Lima firsthand. Read about and see their experiences below:



## Lorenzo Senior, Brother Rice, Michigan



Last year, I saved up and decided to go down to Peru with Brother Rice High School. I had been on one mission trip before, and was so inspired by my experience I knew that I needed to go on another immersion trip. This first trip to Lima was so inspiring and life changing, that I made it a priority to go again.

I wanted to go back to serve, and so I flew to Lima on my own, where I stayed with Brother Casey for eight days. I did not plan any certain projects for this trip, and showed up willing to help in any way that the people there would need. That meant a lot of painting, but painting for people who appreciate and need something that simple was absolutely amazing. On top of that, being able to go back on my own and visit friends who I had met the past year was incredible.



Lorenzo visiting with friends in Lima.



Lorenzo painting with Lima residents

It was definitely inspiring to meet the people we were working for with the group, but when alone, I was really able to interact and know the amazing people I was blessed to serve. My trips to Peru have been the most life changing and incredible moments of my life, and I thank the Christian Brothers greatly for giving me such great opportunities to serve and love the people of Peru.

[To see Lorenzo's video click here](#)



Brother Rice Senior Lorenzo visiting with students at Fe y Alegria in Lima, Peru.



ERCBNA Network members Lorenzo and Jasmine painting in Peru.



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## Jasmine- Theology Teacher, Mission Collection Coordinator Bergen Catholic, New Jersey



I did all a tourist could do in Peru...climbed Machu Picchu? Check. Flew over the Nasca Lines? Check. Ate Guinea pig? Check minus ... I barely tried it. Saw a llama? Check. Bought pan-pipes for nephews and nieces? Check. I had the opportunity to visit Peru thanks to Bergen Catholic High School as a faculty delegate in order to witness first-hand the good works of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers. My husband and I decided to go early, you know, to do some Indiana Jones-like exploring. But none of our adventures were more transformative and thrilling than our time with the Christian Brothers--- particularly at Fe y Alegria Number 26. After a whirlwind of altitude adjustments, overnight buses, and backpacking, we arrived in Lima welcomed by Brother Stephen Casey. He showed us the real Peru (one that somehow we'd missed in all the travels).

Stephen showed us the beautiful people who are in need in Peru. After being the head Mission Coordinator for BCHS, I had loads of questions for him. I wanted to know everything about the people who were receiving the donations of our programs. I soon realized all my questions were going to be answered because Brother Casey had a **checklist of his own**.

### Meeting the students of Fe y Alegria. Check!

Fe y Alegria is the envy of most Peruvian schools because the Brothers have pumped in money to provide the basics that Peruvians aren't getting in other schools. Some parents cannot afford a decent meal, so the brothers started to employ student mothers to create a free lunch program for hungry students. A science lab is being built as you read this. A fenced field to play soccer has replaced a dusty dirt patch. These students are working hard to improve their futures and help their parents when they graduate.

### Painting a house? Check!

There were two places we painted. The first was the home of Kevin, who is the son of a bus driver who has worked for the Christian Brothers. Kevin's mom died of cancer and he postponed his first year of college to take care of her during her illness. He lives in a tiny apartment with his father and sister, who has developmental disabilities. The dream of this family is to have a small, brick home in the desert hills, which the Christian Brothers are now helping to build. The second paint job was a daycare center that feeds and provides care for children for a few dollars each day. This Godsend for single, working parents is partly supported by the Christian Brothers. My husband and I got down to work and primed the house with paint and painted the outside.



**Bergen Catholic Theology teacher Jasmine and husband Mike serving in Peru.**

### Ride on an overcrowded Peruvian bus like a Fe y Alegria parent? Check!

Buses leave their doors open, reminiscent of an angry beehive on wheels, with a buzz of swarming, busy people on their way to work. People commute several hours to go to school or work every day, sometimes with three or four transfers before arrival. After working all day, standing on your feet it isn't easy to stand on a crowded bus for a couple of hours.

There was poverty. Lots of it. Dirt roads and wild dogs; water is hard to come by in the desert and people have to buy tanks of water for their houses. The people we met work harder than anyone I've ever seen.

There was hope. Lots of it. There was a stable and growing economy, shiny new train stations, a new bus system, and a new McDonalds. There were paved roads and construction everywhere. These people were the students and parents of the Fe y Alegria students working towards the "Peruvian Dream," a house to call their own.

There was love and dedication to family life. Lots of it.

I am so glad to be a witness and small help to the Brother's mission in Peru. I invite anyone who is thinking about traveling to Peru to be more than a tourist. Try to be one with its people. Take time to get to know their hopes and dreams. In the end it is not the tales of adventure that matter, but the friendship and love between people that make it.



# SNAPSHOTS: PERU IMMERSION



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## Diego Alumnus, Colegio Cardenal Newman, Argentina



It's been more than seven months since I returned from my experience in Lima and the first thing I tried to do was recall the most significant moments of the trip. I've never had a very good memory, which reminded me of the diary I kept during the nearly three weeks I spent in Las Flores with Brothers Paul, Steve and the group from Iona College. The first words that I found, the morning I left from Buenos Aires to Lima, are as follows: "Today I woke up with a sense of insecurity, of not knowing what I had gotten into, wondering if the days I'll be spending in Lima aren't too many."

They definitely weren't. Every day was a real gift, full of mixed emotions, joys and frustrations, satisfactions and discomfort. They were days of intense work; building the house for Berta and Anaís, peeling beans with Tania and her boys, fixing the roof of Diana's house, playing all morning at Camp in Fe y Alegría, and going up and down endless sets of stairs to hear the different stories of the people of Canto Grande.

I can't remember a day I didn't return exhausted and covered in dust but always with a sense of immense gratitude in my heart. I rediscovered the value of the labor that Brothers Paul and Steve make on the hill by reconnecting with the immersion trip to Peru I did in my last year of school with Cardenal Newman. This trip has kept me learning and growing as if it were a completely new experience.

As I re-read the pages and remember what was going on inside of me throughout each day, I thank God for the opportunity of having returned to Lima and, as every shirt from the Iona group said, "of finding myself by getting lost in the service of others."



Colegio Cardenal Newman alumnus Diego spending time in Canto Grande, Lima, Peru.

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## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Last spring, Brother Stephen Casey's sister, Sheila, and cousin, Yvonne traveled from Rhode Island and Ireland, respectively, to experience Lima, Peru and immersion there.



### Yvonne- Ireland

Peru stole my heart! I was delighted to get the opportunity to travel to Peru for 3 weeks this Spring. I stayed in the lovely "Casa Hendricken" with Brother Paul Keohane and Brother Stephen Casey (my favorite cousin) who made me feel right at home. I joined them with two groups on immersion with pupils from two American high schools.

We visited Villa El Salvador where we met with the lovely Sister Clair, who showed us around to the local orphanage and clinic and the great work they do there. The children whom we met with are so full of joy and happiness. Living on what we would consider very little, they are so thankful and giving. We also had the pleasure of building a house with the group on a brilliant day. At the house, we sprayed and painted the wood and got to see the family's joy when we completed their new home.



**Yvonne cooking with the ladies in Lima, Peru.**

Another incredible experience was a day cooking dinner for the group with the ladies in the neighborhood of San Francisco. As a chef, this was a particularly special experience working with them.

My experiences on this trip had a huge impact on me, as I was able to get to see life in a very different context to what I am used to at home. The trip made me realize that we take a lot for granted with our comforts of home. I'm looking forward to taking another trip to Peru to volunteer again.

### Sheila- Rhode Island

Helping others in need. Making a difference. Giving back. All phrases that ran through my head and my dialogue with friends and family as I prepared to join the Christian Brothers Immersion Mission Program. Little did I know it would be much more. In one word, my experience in Peru was transformational. After years of hearing the stories from my brother Stephen, seeing the pictures and meeting dozens of immersion mission participants, I felt I knew what to expect. And yes, I worked hard and



**Sheila visiting with Brother Steve and friends in Lima, Peru.**

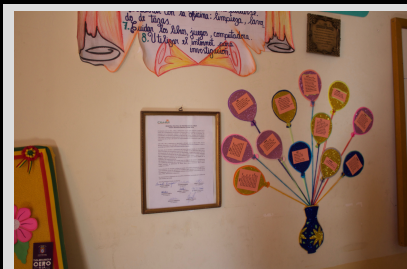
got my hands dirty, however I didn't anticipate the profound impact the faith and joy of the people would have on me. My understanding of wealth and poverty shifted. The trip made me reflect on the raw hope and joy I have missed out on in my own life, too often distracted in striving for my own definition of financial stability and success.

It was the spark that reminded me to be open to the possibilities God has in store for me. The people I met reignited my sense of hope and joy and reminded me how fortunate I am. I had the privilege to participate in an Immersion Mission; the challenge now is to continue to embody the immersion experience in my life every day."



## ADVOCACY IN SOUTH AMERICA

This summer, NA Province Leader, Brother Kevin Griffith and Advocacy Coordinator, Sean D'Alfonso had the opportunity to spend two weeks in South America. Here, they visited three very different Christian Brothers' educational partners, all of which are united in their passion for service, justice and advocacy.



Pictured left is the bulletin board at the Center that celebrates the birthdays of the children (top), and an Olympics-themed soccer tournament won by their students (below).



## ADVOCACY IN ACTION: BOLIVIA

During the month of July, North American Province Leader, Br. Kevin Griffith, and Advocacy Coordinator, Sean D'Alfonso had the privilege of traveling to South America, to visit three different Christian Brothers' educational partners, and to learn more about the incredible programs each of them are involved in. For two weeks, Sean and Kevin traveled between three countries to visit Colegio Cardenal Newman (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Colegio Stella Maris (Montevideo, Uruguay); and el Centro Educativo Hermano Manolo (Cochabamba, Bolivia). These two weeks shed light on the expertise and passion that the faculty, staff and students that each of these three learning centers have for serving and advocating for the needs of others.

The Hermano Manolo Center is a tough place to find. Nestled in a corner on the second floor of an old train station-turned marketplace, you might walk by it if you didn't know it was there. But what happens inside of the Manolo Center is enough to turn every head in the busy marketplace below. Since its inception in 2008, the Manolo Center has been providing "market kids" from the city of Cochabamba with an education that they would certainly not otherwise have.

In 2008, the Christian Brothers began working with children living in Cochabamba who were struggling with drug problems. Many of these children had a 5th grade or lower education, and had dropped out to work in the marketplace to support themselves and their families. While this was a crucial service to these children and



**The marketplace below the Manolo Center**

their families, the Brothers realized it wasn't having much success in changing their lives.

In 2009, the Brothers changed their methods and opened the Hermano Manolo Center, which would focus more on education and giving children ways to improve their lives through it. The Center was named after Br. Timothy O'Brien, an ER Christian Brother from Ireland who passed away in 2008, after dedicating his life to working with children. While the center started with only a few children, the Brothers knew there was still a great need for education in the lives of the kids showing up each day. But since 2009, the word has spread through the marketplace, and the Manolo Center has grown in leaps and bounds.

Today, the Center is run by four Christian Brothers living in the Cochabamba Community (Brs. Eddie McArdle, Dermot Cregan, Jorge Tavera and Francisco Tuiro as well as a Social Worker, Sandra. They provide much more than a mere after school program. The Center has organized itself into six main action areas that they have identified as crucial to the success of their students. The Center focuses on a wholistic approach to the lives of their kids, striving to be involved with as many stakeholders as possible. They focus greatly on education, which includes visits to the kids' schools and homes and constant monitoring of their academic performance.

The Center also creates strong connections with families and other community partners. While many of the children's parents work in the market



**Leaders of the Manolo Center: (l-r) Br. Francisco Tuiro, Ms. Sandra, Br. Eddie McArdle. Not pictured: Br. Dermot Cregan and Br. Jorge Tavera**

each day, the Center still meets with parents as much as possible. They invite guests to come speak and volunteer at the Center, often bringing in local employers to help the students understand what they need to advance their education and careers. The Center has recently brought in medical professionals for free treatment for students. The Manolo Center focuses on many things that are forgotten in the lives of these students, who between them and their families, are working just to survive. They celebrate children's birthdays that wouldn't be at home, educate the students about their own cultural identity, and connect parents to the Center by holding meetings in Quechua (the local language that most parents speak). To say that the Manolo Center is merely an education center would belittle the incredible ways that it is changing children's lives in Cochabamba.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable odds that the Center and their students face, the Manolo Center is having great success in changing the future for its kids. A recent graduate of the program will soon attend the police academy, and the Center is frequently engaged in meetings with local school leaders to improve the educational system in Cochabamba. This year, the Center will send five of its students to Peru to participate in an Edmund Rice Schools student leadership conference.

Often passed by, hidden in the corner of an old, run-down train station, the Hermano Manolo Center is succeeding front and center in advocating for a brighter future for the "market kids" of Cochabamba, Bolivia.

**To see the Center in action, click here:**

<http://www.miseancara.ie/hermano-manolo-centre/>



## ADVOCACY IN SOUTH AMERICA

This summer, NA Province Leader, Brother Kevin Griffith and Advocacy Coordinator, Sean D'Alfonso had the opportunity to spend two weeks in South America. Here, they visited three very different Christian Brothers' educational partners, all of which are united in their passion for service, justice and advocacy.



A visit to Saint Peter Claver with Valentina (A Newman parent and school administrator at Saint Peter Claver) and Freddy (the school's principal)



Newman students paint one of the exterior walls at Saint Peter Claver.

## SERVICE AND ADVOCACY: ARGENTINA

Colegio Cardenal Newman is a special place. Where else would you find a school blasting music between classes when the bell rings for its students? Where else would you see rugby practice lasting into the middle of the night? Well, not every school is Colegio Cardenal Newman in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where, from the moment you walk through the doors it has a different feel. A gracious and caring staff, students who are glowing with an excitement to learn and an atmosphere that is both conducive to learning, yet appreciative of the wants and needs of both its students and faculty. Newman is known throughout Argentina as one of the nation's top schools. It has a rugby program that is amongst the best for high schools in the world, a beautiful campus and off-site athletic center, and offers an excellent education. But the best aspect of Newman lies in the school's culture that comes from the students, staff and alumni who make it so special.

Colegio Cardenal Newman opened its doors to students in 1948 after being founded by the Edmund Rice Irish Christian Brothers as an English-speaking school. With them, the Brothers brought rugby, which took hold at Newman and has transformed the school into the country's most dominant program today. With roughly 1,000 male students, grades K-12, the school has a proud history and many students are the sons of ex-pupils. Today, the school has an incredibly strong alumni base, including its Parents Association that is instrumental in the school's "projects," in the community. Across Argentina, Newman is known today for its rugby team, and the fact that the country's President, Mauricio Macri, is an alumnus. But the school's most outstanding and meaningful programs are found through their pastoral team.

There aren't many schools who have 9 staff members in their Campus Ministry Department. But Newman is a special place. Here, under the guidance of the school's Director, Alberto Olivero, and Director of Campus Ministry, Salvador Boucau, there is a huge focus on promoting the charisma and legacy of Edmund Rice through their Campus Ministry program. At Newman, the school's Campus Ministry Program permeates all aspects of the school. Students at Newman have countless

opportunities to serve others, advocate for change in their community, and to understand what it means to be an Edmund Rice Christian Brother student.

When Brother Phillip Pinto (then Congregation Leader) visited Latin America years ago, he challenged ERCB schools to focus more resources and energy on a single service/outreach project in which to be involved. Colegio Cardenal Newman took this to heart. Not only do Newman students work tirelessly with various service and advocacy projects within their local community and abroad (Peru), the school's parents and alumni are also heavily involved in the same "projects." These "projects," aren't the same as many we are used to in the United States and Canada. Newman has decided to fully involve itself in supporting and advocating for those marginalized in their community. Newman's program SER (Solidarity Edmund Rice), incorporates a number of impressive service projects that are led by students and staff as well as parent and alumni volunteers. The participation level of alumni and parents in the SER program is incredible, and it allows Newman to have a wide reach on the impact they have in their community. While the school is involved in a number of impressive service and advocacy projects, few are more eye-opening than their work with the Saint Peter Claver School (San Pedro Claver).

Saint Peter Claver is a small, parroquial, middle and high school in a neighborhood roughly 20 minutes from Newman. Unlike a number of the surrounding neighborhoods, the area where Saint Peter Claver's students live is an impoverished and dangerous one. Gangs operate regularly in the area and drugs often fill the streets that the students walk to school on. A few years ago, Newman constituents began to volunteer on a regular basis at Saint Peter Claver, beautifying the campus and spending time tutoring and working with its students. When Newman's Administration saw the impact that their constituents were having, and the relationships being formed with Saint Peter Claver's students, Newman began to further develop the program into one of its strongest.

Today, Newman does more than just volunteer there. The Newman school community has volunteered countless hours at the school, contributed large donations to help fund needed improvements and

completely turned the school around, providing hope and a brighter future for its students. What is most impressive about this program is Newman's willingness to take a step further, as they have truly advocated for change at Saint Peter Claver. A Newman parent (and now administrator at Saint Peter Claver) Valentina Mammolino has been instrumental in advocating for these changes. She has led a group of Newman parents and alumni who have worked with local and international businesses to raise funds for the school, brought in local employers to help train students in careers that they are interested in, and even coordinated a rugby-exchange program between the two schools. Valentina and the Newman Community have completely transformed the lives of students at Saint Peter Claver through their service and advocacy work.

At Newman, advocacy plays an integral part in the school's curriculum and connection with the Edmund Rice Network. The school's advocacy program is spearheaded by Guillermo Bullrich and Juan Pablo Eviner, the school's coordinators and liaisons with Edmund Rice International. Guillermo and Juan Pablo work with the rest of the Campus Ministry team and school staff to implement advocacy projects and lesson plans within classrooms. Last year, the school created a recycling campaign to collect plastic bottles and tops and reduce their environmental footprint. Throughout the school year, they have led the school in different global advocacy programs such as Earth Day and the U.N. Earth Hour, as well as various advocacy initiatives with other ERCB Network schools around the world. From this recent visit came plans to strengthen the relationship between North and Latin American advocacy programs, and to participate jointly in a number of initiatives throughout the year.

Colegio Cardenal Newman is a special place. The school's commitment to the charisma of Edmund Rice and service and advocacy for the poor and marginalized are evident the moment you walk through their doors. Newman is truly shaping young men who will go out and change the world.

Learn more about Newman and The S.E.R. Program:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpY-aar3xaE>

# ADVOCACY IN SOUTH AMERICA

This summer, NA Province Leader, Brother Kevin Griffith and Advocacy Coordinator, Sean D'Alfonso had the opportunity to spend two weeks in South America. Here, they visited three very different Christian Brothers' educational partners, all of which are united in their passion for service, justice and advocacy.



Exploring Stella Maris' Advocacy Initiatives with the school's advocacy coordinators, Gonzalo Irigoyen and Olivier Manchoulas.



Stella Maris' 30 Rights in 30 Days Campaign, promoting Human Rights outlined by the U.N.

## ADVOCATING FOR THE WORLD: URUGUAY

Despite their differences in location and student bodies, the ERCB schools in Argentina and Uruguay are incredibly similar in their desire to serve and advocate for others. A July visit to Colegio Stella Maris in Montevideo, Uruguay, certainly furthered this idea and showcased the school's commitment to its history and tradition as an Edmund Rice Christian Brothers School.

Stella Maris is a co-educational, K-12 ERCB school that has more than 1,000 students. The school was founded in 1955 by the Irish Christian Brothers as an all-male high school. In 1985, the first class of female students joined the school, and in the years since, the school has fully transitioned into a completely co-educational system.

Stella Maris is another example of a school that is dedicated to being a model for service and advocacy. This dedication comes first from its administration and pastoral team which are led by the school's Principal, Patricia Ponce de León. Patricia and her administrative and pastoral teams make it a point of emphasis to continue the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice, and to ensure that service and advocacy are key hallmarks of a Stella Maris education. Staying true to this tradition, Stella Maris is engaged in a number of projects that allow Stella Maris students to not only serve the marginalized in their community, but also advocate for change on their behalf. Led by the head of the Pastoral Team, José Hernández, Stella Maris students are learning what it means to serve like Christ. Stella Maris students, faculty and staff and parents are involved in countless service projects, and incorporate the entire school community in them. Two of these many service projects are at the forefront of their work.

The first is near to the hearts of all Stella Maris students, alumni and the entire school community. In 1972, a plane carrying Uruguay's National Rugby Team (including many Stella Maris alumni and their families) crashed in the Andes of Chile, killing 29 of the 45 people on board. In remembrance of these students, the mothers from

Stella Maris founded a library, "La biblioteca de Nuestros Hijos" (Our Children). While founded in honor of the Stella Maris students in the crash and to preserve their memories, the library serves students of all ages, both public and private, from around



Brother Kevin Griffith and Sean D'Alfonso speak to students during a July trip to Colegio Stella Maris in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Montevideo and the surrounding area. The library advocates for better education for students by providing them a place to improve their reading skills, by providing tutoring and other educational programs, as well as technological courses and help. Stella Maris parents and students have been instrumental in both the founding of the library, as well as the library's present success and growth. Stella Maris and the mothers at Nuestro Hijos Library have had a profound impact on children in the Montevideo area.

Another service project that Stella Maris has been heavily involved in is Madres de la Cruz (Mothers of the Cross), an educational center that provides assistance to more than 60 children and their families in an impoverished area of the Carrasco section of Montevideo. Here, Stella Maris students and parents volunteer their time to provide children at the center with educational, physical, and spiritual guidance to enhance their futures. Mothers of students and alumni of Stella Maris volunteer their time at the center to fulfill their role as "Mothers of the Cross," by providing guidance to the children that attend the center. Stella Maris' work with Madres de la Cruz has been an incredibly important project for both the school community and the Carrasco neighborhood in which

they serve.

Stella Maris is also very active in promoting advocacy and ecojustice through the work of the school's connection with Edmund Rice International. Gonzalo Irigoyen and Olivier Manchoulas are the



Stella Maris students and children from Madres de la Cruz at an event at the school.

school's advocacy coordinators that work hand in hand with the pastoral team (campus ministry) at Stella Maris. Over the past few years, Gonzalo and Olivier have worked tirelessly to promote advocacy projects, including a large focus on ecojustice and protecting the environment.

Chemistry students from Stella Maris recently visited a plastic recycling center and learned about the science behind recycling as well as how damaging plastic pollution can be to the environment. From this trip, students returned back to school and promoted a recycling campaign to reduce the school's ecological footprint. The school has also promoted various U.N. calendar events, such as Earth Hour (which promotes energy conservation) as well as the U.N.'s 30 Rights in 30 Days, which informs students about the need to protect Human Rights throughout the world. Stella Maris students also contribute regularly to ERI's online community through the school's promotion of ERI Ambassadors. These students help to lead advocacy projects within the school and promote them for the ER Global Network.

Visiting Stella Maris was an experience that showcased the school's commitment to educational excellence, but more importantly, the school's desire to promote the mission and call of Edmund Rice to serve and advocate for the "poor among us."

To learn about Stella Maris and its programs, visit:

<http://www.stellamaris.edu.uy/en/home>



# WRITING TO FIGHT ADDICTION

-Stephanie Thurrott



Former Boston Superintendent-in-chief of Police Dan Linskey (left) and Jan McGrory (right), CM Principal Tom Beatty's sister-in-law, spoke to CM students about how they and others have been effected by opioids.

Students at Catholic Memorial in Boston recently participated in a campaign to help fight in the battle against the growing opioid crisis in their community and the United States. Through local speakers, classroom lessons and watching film, students at Catholic Memorial have learned how to advocate for others affected by this crisis and how to live lives filled with presence, compassion and liberation.

## #StateWithoutStigMA

As part of CM's advocacy efforts, over the winter the Catholic Memorial community focused on the opioid crisis. In January, students in grades 8 to 12 attended a morning-long symposium with a series of speakers.

Kenna Sullivan, an independent clinical social worker and mother of Connor Sullivan '16, talked about the effects of opioids she has seen in emergency rooms. Jan McGrory, CM Principal Tom Beatty's sister-in-law, shared her story of losing her 23-year-old daughter to opioid addiction. And Dan Linskey, a former superintendent-in-chief of the Boston Police Department, told of his days working undercover in the neighborhoods of West Roxbury. The students also watched "If Only," a short movie produced by the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation.

The students discussed opioid addiction and advocacy in Theology class. "There were a lot of conversations about addiction and stigmas," says Carolyn White, CM guidance counselor. "The kids understood that it's a disease that

could attack any of us."

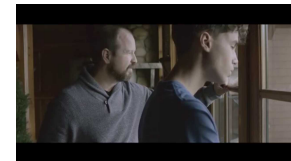
At the time, Governor Charlie Baker had recently proposed a bill, "An Act Relative to Substance Use, Treatment, Education and Prevention," and CM students wrote letters to representatives in support of the governor's initiative. The bill was signed into law on March 14.

"This legislation was a good fit for us because it's a far-reaching topic. It knows no race or social class and unfortunately it's something we all at some point may have experience with," says White, who organized the letter-writing campaign.

As part of his letter, junior Matthew Rowan wrote, "I have seen the effects of opioid addiction in my neighborhood of West Roxbury. Many of the public fields have needles laying all over them. Many children are no longer able to use the fields because of this issue."

Junior Ryan Durant pointed to successful efforts to combat opioid addiction overseas in his letter, writing, "In England, the country started to not treat substance abusers

as criminals and instead implemented programs to get the sufferers the help they needed and wanted instead of just throwing them in jail. This dramatically decreased fatalities and even [the number of] users."

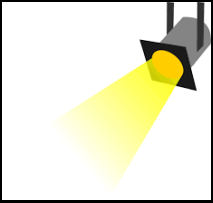


A scene from Wahlberg's film "If Only."

Junior Frank Han expressed concern for friends who are struggling with addiction and pointed to increased funding in schools, classes for both students and parents, and detox programs for teenagers as potential solutions in his letter.

The CM community mailed more than 500 letters. White points out that just seeing a stack of letters sends a powerful message. And the letter-writing initiative gives students the opportunity to understand the difference between advocating and being of service. "They can see how much power they have to create change," White notes.





## ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT:

### *ERI Youth Ambassadors*



Edmund Rice International (ERI) is a non-organization (NGO) committed to working for children and young people who are marginalized because of poverty, lack of access to education, legal status, environmental degradation, or involvement in armed conflict.

ERI works extensively with ERCB schools across the globe to empower students to become leaders who can advocate for those marginalized around the world.

ERCB schools across the global network have nominated one to two students in their school to act as ERI Ambassadors. These ERI Ambassadors are student leaders who promote various advocacy projects within their school community and share their work with the rest of the global network through pictures, video and reflection via Facebook.

During the 2016-2017 year, ERCBNA schools will nominate student(s) from their schools to become ERI Ambassadors and to share their stories with the global ERCB network. We encourage schools to begin this process in the first few weeks of the school year and to send their student names and contact information to Sean D'Alfonso so they can be shared with the global ER Network.

To learn more about ERI, please visit (Facebook Login Required): [YOUTH AMBASSADORS](#)

## ADVOCACY LINKS



### Edmund Rice School Network

This is a link to the School Network, which comprises schools from the ERCBNA Province and the Latin American Region. This link contains information regarding schools and the various programs and activities the Office of Educational Services (OES) is involved in.

<http://www.edmundriceschools.org>



### Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM): Justice and Peace Alerts

An association of the leadership of men in religious and apostolic institutes in the U.S. The link below is to the CMSM publication "Justice Alert," which highlights areas where justice is needed and proposes direct action through advocacy. The ERCBNA Province is a member of CMSM.

<http://www.cmsm.org/justice-alerts.shtml>



**Edmund Rice International (ERI):** Click below to access the most recent issues of Edmund Rice International's newsletter. This newsletter highlights the various areas of advocacy that ERI is involved in at the U.N. and beyond. Mission Frère-Advocacy works in concert with ERI.

<http://us1.campaign-archive2.com/?u=e4d66fd6201da4a3aeb2f5b00&id=b96679563e&e=50613733ea>



**Carbon Rangers:** An e-newsletter published by Bro. Kevin Cawley, CFC, ERI Team and Executive Director of the Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue at Iona College. Carbon Rangers creates awareness for climate change and advocates for responsible environmental stewardship.

[http://edmundriceinternational.org/jpic/?page\\_id=79](http://edmundriceinternational.org/jpic/?page_id=79)



### Edmund Rice Latin America (LATAM):

The link below is to LATAM, the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers' Newsletter in Latin America. The Latin American Region and North American Province work closely together to promote justice in the Americas. Click below to see the great work being done in Latin America.

<http://edmundricelatinamerica.org/latam-newsletter/>



### Smart Justice Network of Canada:

Brother Michael Maher works with this organization to bring awareness to the criminal justice system. Brother Maher and his colleagues advocate for both offenders and victims through Restorative Justice, which advocates for the criminal justice system to address the harm(s) done through mechanisms of support, accountability and healing. Click below to learn more:

<http://smartjustice.ca>



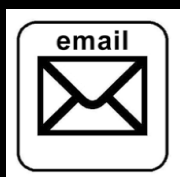
### Edmund Rice Education Beyond Borders:

EREBB advocates for the rights of children to receive quality Catholic school education and brings together Edmund Rice Christian Brother Schools from around the world. Click below to access their website:

<http://erebb.org>

## CONTACT US

*We are always looking for submissions and links from across the network and beyond!*



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NorAm Editor



[https://twitter.com/ERCBNA\\_ADVOCACY](https://twitter.com/ERCBNA_ADVOCACY)



[www.ercbna.org](http://www.ercbna.org)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS



**September 22-25:** ACTION Student Leadership Workshop,  
Jacksonville, Florida



**October 1-October 6:** EREBB International Congress, India



**March 23-26:** ERCB School Advocacy Coordinators Workshop,  
Jericho House, Wainfleet, Canada