

# NorAm Blast January 27, 2021

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## Palma School on CBS This Morning

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Palma School was featured on CBS This Morning for their work with inmates at Soledad State Prison in California. To learn more about their work and to see clips of the episode, please click on the picture below.



The story has also been featured in a number of other publications and programs, click on the pictures below to read more:



## Palma's Christmas Food Collection- Mia Mirassou

Palma School and its students have spent many years serving the needs of the farm workers community in and around the Salinas Valley. This year's food, gift, and coat distribution in Pajaro, California came with new challenges for safety. Months before, Principal David Sullivan accepted the challenge and began planning for this event with the director of *Casa de la Cultura*, Sister Rosa Dolores Rodriguez. Casa de la Cultura Center is a heart that beats for the farm working community. It is a hospital for the sick, a pantry for the hungry, and a haven to empower the weary. Palma ASB and the Blessed Edmund Rice Society combined forces to bag and box a healthy variety of food for some 300 families. Chieftain students, parents, and teachers teamed up with grit under grace to sort, lift, and load. "Now," said one wise Chieftain, "it feels like Christmas."



## Fighting Food Insecurity at Tampa Catholic- Jina Masters



COVID increased the number of food insecure in Tampa Florida significantly. Over 11 thousand families are receiving supplies each week at mega pantries. 68% of those families are new to food relief. How is our Blessed Edmund Rice school responding? With much compassion and action! Tampa Catholic High School has supported 7 different local nonprofits this year that dedicate their time and efforts to feeding the hungry. Our students have served and will continue to serve our homeless community, church food pantries, as well as local soup kitchens. We have organized supplies, worked in warehouses, made a couple thousand sandwiches, and loaded families' trunks all in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable of Tampa Bay.



## Say No to Racism- A Conversation across the Pond

The following article was written by Ann Nichols, Network Facilitator for Edmund Rice England, in the Winter 2020 edition of their newsletter *Presence*, The Voice of Edmund's People in the English Network. To read the entire newsletter, [click here](#) and find the issue in the bottom left corner.

### Racial Justice Campaign Edmund Rice Network, North America

#### England joins the Campaign:

In November, St Joseph's College Prefect Leadership Team had a virtual meeting with some of the seniors from Iona Prep, a large Edmund Rice School in New York to find out about the anti-racism campaign in the American Schools and to discuss in this topic in general.



An excellent and lengthy conversation was had, both sets of students were eager to share and find out about the others' views and experiences. It was great for St Joseph's pupils to hear directly the views of their peers in America about the summer's events rather than relying on the media and social media spin they were rather sceptical about.

We touched upon the historical context of racial tension in both countries and the reasons behind the current anger and protests. Political division was discussed in some depth and the Trump Presidency as a period of backward steps in terms of harmony, rights and progress in social justice.

Both groups were hopeful that through education we can improve the situation. That we must stamp out subtle racism, address it on the ground and never be the by-standers who allow racist language or behaviour to happen around us. Do what Edmund Rice would have done; take action, stand up for what is right and get out of your comfort zone!

**There is no chance of equality in our society if some people's lives matter less due to the colour of their skin.**

This group will continue to meet online every month to discuss further issues of social justice and how we can work together to make our voices be heard louder.



#### St Joseph's Comments

Max Paskin: "Yesterday's conversation with Iona Prep was a great opportunity as it helped me to visualise the global span of the Edmund Rice community."

James Cullen: "The meeting was a fantastic opportunity to become acquainted with a differing perspective on a global issue without any sort of filter."

Ted Murray: "The Edmund Rice Network has given me opportunities within our wider school community to speak with other Edmund Rice schools, such as Iona Prep where I gained the knowledge and understanding of others in Edmund Rice schools internationally."

Rodya P: "Yesterday's session was enlightening, and it was interesting to hear a similar view from a different perspective on such an important topic."

Chloe Thomas: "The conversation with Iona Prep gave me insight into their thoughts and personal experiences of racial injustice."

Zainab Barry: "The conversation with Iona Prep was very enlightening, and this conversation has sparked many others, that need to be had, revolving around race. It was definitely one of the best aspects of this programme."

## **Virtually Connecting the ERCBNA Network**

Covid-19 has created tremendous challenges for every sector of our world, particularly for our schools and the difficulties of remote learning. But the digital reality that many of our Edmund Rice schools and students now face has also opened opportunities to connect with their peers despite being thousands of miles apart. Over the past three months, schools have joined on a number of video conference calls to hold conversations about what their schools are involved in surrounding human rights and advocacy work.

### **Edmund Rice Youth Ambassadors**

Back in November, we held the first meeting of our Edmund Rice Youth Ambassador program, which tasks students to serve as

leaders in their schools to promote projects and initiatives related to human rights. This group will continue to meet each month online to share what they are doing in their schools, as well as coordinate various human right campaigns that include Edmund Rice schools from across the global network. In February, these schools and their students will join Edmund Rice England for a program surrounding climate change and reducing waste in schools.

### **ERCBNA School Calls**

We have also held calls each month with any interested ERCBNA schools to check in and discuss relevant issues surrounding human rights and social justice. Schools that are interested in connecting and joining these calls should email Sean D'Alfonso at [spd@cbinstitute.org](mailto:spd@cbinstitute.org). The next call will be held in late February.



## Serving and Advocating at Brother Rice

- *Thane Hall*



Brother Rice High School helped provide some Christmas joy to children in Southwest Detroit. For the second year, Brother Rice High School teamed with the Missionaries of Charity to help provide some Christmas joy to the children that the Sisters minister with in Southwest Detroit. Brother Rice students helped to raise over \$4000 in gift cards, in lieu of clothes or toys because of Covid-19, so the Sisters could provide them to the children. We thank the Missionaries of Charity for this opportunity to serve the Lord in their children!



Students from Bro. Rice hold up gift cards that they fundraised to purchase for children in need during the Christmas Season.

Brother Rice students were also busy during the holidays writing Christmas cards for retired Edmund Rice Christian Brothers. For Christmas, students at Brother Rice wrote Christmas cards to our retired Brothers living in the St. Joseph Residence in New Rochelle, New York and they were overjoyed receiving them.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day and maintaining proper social distancing, Brother Rice High School conducted a MLK: Clean out your Closets Drive to help our homeless brothers and sisters at the Pope Francis Center in Detroit. For the last couple of years students from Brother Rice High School have been helping out at the center, prior to Covid-19 of course, and it is hoped that we can return to our monthly service work once we are given the all clear. Loving our neighbor in the marginalized is an intrinsic value of a Brother Rice Education!

## **ACTION ALERTS**

### **Diversity, Equity Inclusion Training for ERCBNA Educators**

Mr. Rick Holyfield, Dean of Diversity, Inclusion (DEI), and Community Engagement at the Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, will hold a workshop on DEI for all ERCBNA educators on February 24th at 7:00 PM (EST). The workshop is designed to help educators identify and understand microaggressions and how to facilitate conversations surrounding race in the classroom. If you are interested in attending this workshop, please RSVP by [clicking here](#).

### **ERCBNA Peru Digital Immersion**

Bro. Steve Casey, CFC, Director of Immersions, is coordinating “virtual” immersion trips to Peru amidst the ongoing pandemic. Schools will have the opportunity through Zoom to connect with Steve and members of the local Lima community to experience an immersion trip there. If your school is interested in being part of this immersion program, [please contact Br. Casey by clicking here](#).

**Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita (Courtesy of CMSM)** Feb. 8 is the [feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita](#), who was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery in Sudan and Italy. Once Josephine was freed, she became a Canossian nun and dedicated her life to sharing her testament of deliverance from slavery and comforting the poor and suffering.

She was declared a saint in 2000. Catholics all over the world are encouraged to host or attend prayer services to create greater awareness about human trafficking. Through prayer, we not only reflect on the experiences of those that have suffered through this affront to human dignity, but also comfort, strengthen, and help empower survivors. To learn more about the life of St. Josephine, [click here](#). For more details on the current issue of trafficking, you can access a range of resources [here](#).

### **February 8- World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action Against Human Trafficking**

### **Urge Congress to end U.S. Support for the War in Yemen**

The six year civil war in Yemen is one of the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. Click on the link above to urge the U.S. Congress to end U.S. military support of the war.

## **Support Haitian Artists**

The Mission Frère-Haiti program continues to support local artisans through the sale of various art items. These items are now on sale on the ERCBNA website. All proceeds go to support educational, medical and housing initiatives run by the sisters of Jesus and Mary in Jean-Rabel, Haiti. [Click here to see the available items.](#)



## **Black History Month Resources**

February celebrates Black History Month and with it comes many great opportunities for educators. Below are two links that contain resources for the month:

[Black History Month Resources for Educators \(weareteachers.com\)](#)

[Resources from November's Black Catholic History Month \(Archdiocese for the Military Services\)](#)