



# Student Leader Handbook CRS Clubs

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[crs.org/CRS Clubs](https://crs.org/CRS Clubs)

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GROW:

# About Catholic Relief Services

## WHAT IS CRS?

As the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States, CRS saves, protects and transforms lives in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality.

## MISSION STATEMENT

**Catholic Relief Services** carries out the commitment of the Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas. We are motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to cherish, preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, foster charity and justice, and embody Catholic social and moral teaching as we act to:

- **PROMOTE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty, and nurturing peaceful and just societies; and,
- **SERVE CATHOLICS IN THE UNITED STATES** as they live their faith in solidarity with their sisters and brothers around the world.

**As part of the universal mission of the Catholic Church, we work with local, national and international Catholic institutions and structures, as well as other organizations, to assist people on the basis of need, not creed, race or nationality.**

## INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

If CRS and its partners:

- Protect human life and dignity by caring for poor and vulnerable people;
- Increase individuals', families' and communities' ability to recover and grow by protecting, building and maximizing family and community, human, social, political, physical, financial, natural and spiritual assets;
- Promote just relationships between all people, within and across families, communities and nations; and
- Ensure people have the ability to make the decisions that impact their lives,
- Then people can reach their full human potential in an atmosphere of peace, social justice and human dignity,

Because:

- People use their assets to develop strategies to manage risk, build resilience and improve their lives,
- People use their assets to influence structures and systems, and
- Social equity and inclusion are essential to creating an atmosphere of peace, social justice and human dignity.

## Faith. Action. Results.

**Faith:** Faith is our foundation. We have faith in the people we serve and our shared ability to build a more just and peaceful world.

**Action:** The desire to serve is not enough. We must act collaboratively to bring about real improvements in peoples' quality of life and genuine engagement in building peace and justice.

**Results:** Demonstrated through measurable outcomes, our actions must be effective in alleviating human suffering, removing root causes and empowering people to achieve their full potential.



# GROW: Lead the Way on Migration

## THE WORLD TODAY

More than 80 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes because of persecution, conflict, poverty and violence. There are more refugees and internally displaced people now than at any other time in history. This is truly a global humanitarian crisis.

## WHEN DID WE SEE YOU A STRANGER AND WELCOME YOU?

The Church believes that people have the right to find opportunities in their home countries and that they have the right to migrate when conditions in their country of origin preclude them from providing for the safety and well-being of their families. For more than 75 years, CRS has led the way in supporting the needs of migrants and refugees. Our agriculture, health, education, peacebuilding and livelihoods work assists refugees worldwide to address the root causes of forced migration.

## THERE'S MORE WORK TO BE DONE

Visit [crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway) to learn more about how CRS works to ensure that all people can move freely and thrive where they are and how your actions can make an impact in the lives of people around the world.

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## Understanding Migration

**“The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State.”**

—International Organization for Migration

The term migration can apply to many different types of movement. Here are some common terms as defined by the IOM that you will see and hear when discussing migration:

- **Asylum Seeker:** An individual who is seeking international protection.
- **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.





Photo by Andrew McConnell for CRS

- **Refugee:** A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.
- **Vulnerability:** Within a migration context, vulnerability is the limited capacity to avoid, resist, cope with or recover from harm. This limited capacity is the result of the unique interaction of individual, household, community and structural characteristics and conditions.



GROW:

# Lead the Way on Hunger

## THE WORLD TODAY

Food is a necessity. Its scarcity shortens lives, hampers development and causes immeasurable loss of human potential. The numbers are staggering. One in nine people worldwide do not have enough to eat and many lack access to enough nutritious food. Each year, nearly 3 million malnourished children under age 5 die from illnesses from which healthier kids recover. One in four undernourished children do not grow or develop as they should. Globally, the number of children who face a lifetime of developmental challenges caused by malnutrition exceeds 149 million—that's more than twice the number of all children in the United States.

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## Food security is defined as...

**“All people at all times having access to sufficient safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.”**

—World Health Organization

Let's break that down:

- **“All people at all times...”**: No one is excluded from this need.
- **“...having access...”**: If food is available, but it is unsafe for someone to obtain; if food is at too great a distance; if someone cannot afford the food with their wages; or if someone who is differently abled isn't able to get to the food, then that food is not accessible to all people.
- **“...to sufficient safe, nutritious food...”**: The food available to people must be enough to fulfill caloric need. It must be safe to consume, and it must be nutritiously complete—meaning a person does not have “food security” if the only food he or she can afford, or access is junk food.
- **“...to maintain a healthy and active life.”**: The food available to people must support a healthy life, meaning that it should not break the body down or have a negative impact on health, and it should give the ability to thrive, not just survive.

## WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY?

As a Church, we believe that all people have the right to regular access to healthy food. As missionary disciples, we are compelled to respond to the needs of the hungry. We are reminded in the Gospel of Matthew that whatever we do for the least



Photo by Georgina Goodwin for CRS

of our sisters and brothers, we do for the Lord (Matthew 25:40). For more than 75 years through CRS, Catholics in the United States have led the way in supporting short- and long-term solutions to hunger. Together, we respond to immediate emergencies that keep people from accessing food. We prevent hunger and malnutrition from developing in the first place. Land management and conservation programs transform barren hillsides into productive farmland. Nutrition is delivered to children in their critical first thousand days of life. Agricultural training increases food production and income. CRS programs help prevent and end hunger.

### **THERE'S MORE WORK TO BE DONE.**

For every **cause of food insecurity**, there are **proven solutions** that can alleviate suffering or prevent the crisis from ever occurring.

Visit [crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway) to learn more about how CRS works to ensure food security for all people and how your actions can make an impact in the lives of people around the world.



## LEAD: CRS Clubs

Throughout history, young people have been the sparks to ignite real and lasting change. Today across the United States and around the world, young people are still the most active change-makers striving to alter the systems and structures that reinforce global inequity and inequality. When young people raise their voices in the halls of power, they use their passion and energy to lead the way to a better world for all people.

Students in Catholic schools across the country have demonstrated this same passion and energy to serve people around the world who struggle against the effects of poverty, conflict, natural disasters and systems of oppression.

Through your CRS Club, you and other student leaders at your school can learn ways to lift your voices and create real, positive change in the world by advocating and fundraising around pressing global issues. By acting together, you can take action to be change-makers now and grow your skills to be the influencers of positive change into the future.

With your CRS Club, you will:

- Learn about critical humanitarian issues.
- Build skills for effective leadership, advocacy, global citizenship and more.
- Put your faith into action on behalf of our most vulnerable members of our global family.
- Have fun while making a difference with your community!

### CRS CLUBS AND BEYOND

Did you know that the critical work you engage in with CRS Clubs can continue through college and beyond?

Catholic Relief Services is building a national network of CRS Chapters to mobilize Catholics and others of goodwill to end global poverty. These chapters—comprised of university students, parishioners, diocesan groups and other community members—are taking critical and meaningful actions to address global poverty and advocate on behalf of our global family.

After graduating high school, you'll have the opportunity to join a national network of CRS University Chapters and CRS Chapters for adults to connect you with a broader community of like-minded champions for justice. You'll be able to continue strengthening your leadership skills and deepen your commitment to the movement that will transform our world.



## LEAD:

# Roles and Responsibilities

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*“True leadership is fruitful, and each one of you has the seed of leadership inside you. Make it grow. Be leaders wherever it behooves you to be. Leaders of thought, leaders of action, leaders of joy, leaders of hope, leaders of the construction of a better world. This is your path, the seed is within.”*

—Pope Francis

You are called to lead. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we are each called to act in the service of our global family and to help others do the same. You are part of a movement of Catholics and others of goodwill across the United States, who are striving to make the world a better place, but participation is only the first step. Tend the seed of leadership inside you and grow in your ability to be a leader in the movement that will build a better future for all people.

There are several leadership roles in CRS Clubs. These roles all work together, alongside club committees (see page 11), to engage and motivate your campus and larger community to pray, learn, give and act together. There are many skills necessary to be successful leaders for your club. Don't worry if you don't have all of these skills, yet—part of being a true leader is recognizing where there is room for growth and putting in the effort to learn!

### **President:**

The president of your CRS Club should be a dedicated and passionate person who is willing to take the lead on major events and projects. This person should be a good communicator and be ready to interface with members of the community, media and congressional offices. The president will lead both the Leadership and Member Meetings as well as act as the chair of the Advocacy Committee.

### **Vice President:**

The Club's vice president should have a similar array of skills to those of the president and may be in a place of growth in approaching those skills. The vice president fills in for the club president temporarily during meetings and engagements for which the president is unavailable. The vice president takes the lead as the chair of the Education and Outreach Committee and directs the planning of large-scale campus and community actions. This role also includes a significant amount of public interaction.

### **Secretary:**

The secretary of your CRS Club directs club communications. He or she will take notes for each Leadership and Member Meeting and work together with the president to devise meeting agendas. The secretary works closely with the faculty advisor to keep club members informed with news from CRS. In addition, the secretary participates as the chair of the Media Committee and directs club actions related to written congressional correspondence, social media and media outreach such as letters to the editor and op-eds. The club secretary should be a great communicator with strong attention to detail and a passion and skill for writing.

### **Treasurer:**

The Club treasurer leads club actions concerning fundraising and works closely with the faculty advisor to ensure that funds are donated to CRS in an appropriate and timely manner. In addition, the treasurer is in charge of fiscal education for the club members as it relates CRS' work, including the congressional budgeting process, called "appropriations," and CRS funding sources. The treasurer also chairs the Fundraising Committee. The person who fills this role should have a passion for the ways that charitable works help us to serve our sisters and brothers around the world and be motivated to learn more about the ways that both direct fundraising and the congressional appropriations process can help people to escape the cycle of poverty.

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*"Just as a body, though  
one, has many parts,  
but all its many parts  
form one body, so it is  
with Christ."*

—1 Corinthians 12:12



Photo by Philip Laubner for CRS

## LEAD: Club Committees

**Committees are the driving force to get things done in your CRS Club. Teamwork and collaboration will help you achieve your club goals and make the biggest impact.**



Photo by Philip Laubner for CRS

The following committees are recommended, but feel free to set up whatever committees and sub-committees will help you be successful throughout the school year.

- **Advocacy:** The Advocacy Committee is responsible for connecting with congressional offices in partnership with the club secretary. The committee also plans meetings with congressional staff or members. This committee is chaired by the club president unless the club decides otherwise.
- **Education and Outreach:** The Education and Outreach Committee plans and executes community education and recruitment events on campus or within the larger community. The committee works closely with other committees to include advocacy and/or fundraising actions in events and to leverage media attention for events. This committee is chaired by the club vice president unless the club decides otherwise.
- **Media and Communications:** The Media and Communications Committee manages communications with media, the school and congressional offices in collaboration with Advocacy Committee. The committee ensures proper media coverage for events and advertises upcoming events in the community. This committee is chaired by the club secretary unless the club decides otherwise.
- **Fundraising:** The Fundraising Committee directs all fundraising activities within the club, school and community. The committee oversees managing CRS Rice Bowl and any other fundraising actions. It works with the Education and Outreach Committee to engage the entire community in giving opportunities. This committee is chaired by the club treasurer unless the club decides otherwise.



# ENGAGE: Getting Started

## CLUB LAUNCH

Work with your Club Advisor to set up your Club Launch with a local CRS staff member. The Club Launch will take about 40 minutes and will introduce your club members and community to CRS and how you can be an important part of the lifesaving work that is being done around the world.

The Club Launch can be online or in-person, depending on school preference and CRS staff availability, and can include only your interested club members or the whole school! Involving your whole school can get the ball rolling on motivating them to action but can also mean more work. Talk to your club advisor about what will work best in your school and then work together with CRS staff to arrange the launch.

## CLUB TRAININGS

Being a part of a CRS Club means pushing yourself to learn and engage in impactful and exciting ways. To do that successfully, there are going to be skills you need to learn! Kick off your school year with an overview of what it means to be a successful CRS Club and the different ways that your school can take action.

The initial club trainings will take place in two, 40-minute parts. Work with your Club Advisor and local CRS staff to schedule times and dates that work best for your club members. Consider doing your trainings over lunch or after school. Every club will work differently, so take the time to find the best opportunity for training.

## YOUR FIRST CLUB MEETINGS

To make the most of your school year, there are some key agenda items that should be taken care of in your first few club meetings:

- 1. Choosing Club Leaders:** Part of being a CRS Club is growing the leadership skills of your community. Each club is encouraged to identify four members to fill key leadership roles: president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. If these roles have not been filled yet, use one or two of your first meetings to nominate candidates and select your Club Leadership Team. See the [Lead: Roles and Responsibilities](#) section of this handbook for more information on the different roles and responsibilities.
- 2. Learn About Your Members of Congress:** Each state has two senators and a varying number of representatives. Take time early in the school year to learn about your state's senators and determine what congressional district your school is in to determine what representative covers that district. You can use this online tool to help you identify your members of Congress: [www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative). Use each member's website to understand more about the issues they champion and their stance on global development policy.



- **Thinking Ahead:** Use the **CRS Chapter and Club Action Planning Tool** found on [crs.org/crsclubs](https://crs.org/crsclubs) to plan out your year. Mobilizing your campus will take some work and planning. Take time early in the school year to discuss what actions you would like to support throughout the year. Learn more about the different action opportunities available to you and be creative—you can make an impact! And you will make the most impact if you have a good understanding of your school year. Use this planning time to set club goals for what you want to accomplish this school year.

## QUICK TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

- **Hold regular Member and Leadership Team meetings.** The more consistent the meetings are, the more likely you are to be successful at reaching your club's goals and keeping your members active.
- **Set an agenda.** Setting an agenda will help keep your meetings on track and get everyone on the same page for what you want to accomplish. The best meetings have a purpose and goals for what you want to get out of the meeting. People are more engaged when they know what they are working to achieve. Meeting Agenda Template on [crs.org/crsclubs](https://crs.org/crsclubs) for guidance on how to create an effective agenda.
- **Activate your members.** Make sure that your club members are involved in the meeting. One person talking through an entire meeting isn't fun for the members or for the person doing the talking! Set aside time for members to give feedback and suggestions or to take action directly. Meetings are great times to engage club members in writing letters to members of Congress or encouraging your best writers to get published through letters to the editor or op-eds. See the **Fall** and **Spring Advocacy Actions** sheets and other resources on [crs.org/crsclubs](https://crs.org/crsclubs) for more information on ways to take action that make a difference!
- **Integrate media.** Use the digital resources from [crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway) to make your meetings interesting and educational. There are stories and videos to help your club learn about the issues and understand the impact you can make.
- **Celebrate!** Your club is sure to be doing great work—so take the time to celebrate! Don't forget to recognize the hard work of individuals, committees, the club and your whole community. Thank people for their efforts and lift up things like reaching your fundraising goals, individuals getting published in the media or the club holding a successful event.



ENGAGE:

# Values and Guiding Principles

## CRS Club Values

**CRS Clubs** work passionately to contribute to a more just, peaceful and prosperous world.

**CRS Clubs** contribute to innovative approaches to address the world's most critical humanitarian problems.

**CRS Clubs** are committed to the pursuit of the common good and focused on delivering sustainable solutions that create lasting impact.

**CRS Clubs** serve those people in greatest need and are inspired by the potential and opportunities of those communities.

During an initial club meeting, have members discuss the CRS Club Values and CRS Club Guiding Principles listed on this page. Which values or guiding principles resonate with the group? Are there additional values or guiding principles that members would like to include in the list?

## CRS CLUB GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person

Created in the image of God, all human life is sacred and possesses a dignity that comes directly from our creation and not from any action of our own.

### Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has basic rights and responsibilities that flow from our human dignity and that belong to us as human beings regardless of any social or political structures. The rights are numerous and include those things that make life truly human. Corresponding to our rights are duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good of all.

### Social Nature of Humanity

All of us are social by nature and are called to live in community with others—our full human potential isn't realized in solitude, but in community with others. How we organize our families, societies and communities directly affects human dignity and our ability to achieve our full human potential.

### The Common Good

In order for all of us to have an opportunity to grow and develop fully, a certain social fabric must exist within society. This is the common good. Numerous social conditions—economic, political, material and cultural—impact our ability to realize our human dignity and reach our full potential.

### Subsidiarity

A higher level of government—or organization—should not perform any function or duty that can be handled more effectively at a lower level by people who are closer to the problem and have a better understanding of the issue.

**Solidarity**

We are all part of one human family—whatever our national, racial, religious, economic or ideological differences—and in an increasingly interconnected world, loving our neighbor has global dimensions.

**Option for the Poor**

In every economic, political and social decision, a weighted concern must be given to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. When we do this, we strengthen the entire community, because the powerlessness of any member wounds the rest of society.

**Stewardship**

There is inherent integrity to all of creation and it requires careful stewardship of all our resources, ensuring that we use and distribute them justly and equitably—as well as planning for future generations.



## ENGAGE: Recruitment

One of the ways your club can have a greater impact is by involving more people. Your club will be able to accomplish more and have a stronger voice if more students—and even faculty and staff—are involved. Keep CRS up-to-date on your membership numbers. Here are some things to think about to recruit—and keep—new club members:

### WAYS TO RECRUIT:

- **Launch:** Every club starts with a launch event led by a local CRS staff member. Consider opening your launch to the whole school as an opportunity for recruitment and to get everyone excited to make a difference in the world. Also, think about having a launch event each year that introduces the student body to the Impact Issues you'll focus on for the academic year and invites new members to join.
- **Posters:** CRS has a variety of posters at [crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway). Print these posters and put them around your school or make your own!
- **Announcements:** Make sure to periodically announce to your school when and where your meetings and events will be held and what your community can do to get involved. Use video, audio and written announcements to make sure that everyone is informed.
- **Tabling:** Does your school have a club fair? If so, make sure to participate! If not, see if you could set up your own table during a lunch or free period to let people know what the CRS Club is about and how they can get involved. Make sure that your table is colorful, engaging and informative. Use pictures, resources and stories from [crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway) to show how fun and meaningful being part of a CRS Club can be.

### KEEPING YOUR MEMBERS ENGAGED:

- **Activity:** The best way to keep members engaged is to have an active club! It's more fun to be part of a club that is consistently active throughout the academic year. People enjoy feeling like they are part of something that is making a difference. By completing four major fundraising and advocacy events and taking small but impactful actions between these events, your members should feel engaged and that they are contributing to real change in the world!
- **Consistency:** Make sure that your meetings happen consistently each month. Aim for two Member Meetings and one Leadership Team meeting each month. Having a consistent meeting time and space will keep your club moving forward and your members committed.



- **Committees:** Encourage each member to join a committee (learn more on page 11). Your committees and members will be most successful with the creativity and passion of all your members.
- **Celebration:** All work and no play is no fun! Take time each meeting to celebrate your club's successes and new or outstanding members. Also, have at least two meetings throughout the year that are just about celebrating your hard work!
- **Leadership:** The opportunity to lead is one of the most motivating parts of being in any club. Encourage all your members to consider striving for a leadership role and make sure that your elections are fair and accessible. Consider term limits for your Leadership Team to ensure that more people get a chance to take on a leadership role.
- **Space:** Ensure that your meeting space is accessible, welcoming and consistent. It might seem like a simple thing, but it can be helpful to have a comfortable space that allows all members the chance to participate equally.



## ACT: CRS Club Actions

**As a Church and as people of goodwill, we are called to stand up with people who are vulnerable during the world's most challenging moments.**

CRS works in difficult environments and through trying times, offering hope and supporting the dignity of our sisters and brothers facing poverty, disaster and conflict. Not only should we be proud of this hard work, but we can be a part of this transformative work!

### **WE ARE ALL PART OF CRS!**

CRS Clubs have a special role in being a part of the transformational work of CRS and the Church around the world. As young people with passion and motivation to build a more just world, you can make an impact.

CRS has identified a variety of ways that your school can move us closer to a more just, thriving world. These actions fall into two categories: Fundraising and Advocacy. To be recognized as a CRS Club, your school will need to participate in four campus-wide actions each academic year, as well as monthly individual member actions that will help your club members grow in their advocacy skills and build relationships with their members of Congress.

### **CAMPUS-WIDE ACTIONS**

CRS Club members should use their creativity and passion to determine how they will mobilize their campus community through those four actions to create positive change in our world. Your school's advocacy and fundraising actions should be carried out throughout your school year with the following guidance. See the [Act: Advocacy and Fundraising](#) section of this manual for ideas on how to involve your community.

**Fundraising:** Hold one fundraising event each fall and each spring to involve your community in the lifesaving work of CRS. Resources and toolkits are available to help you be successful. One great example of a spring fundraiser is CRS Rice Bowl, which your school might already participate in each Lent.

**Advocacy:** CRS Clubs mobilize their communities through two school-wide advocacy actions each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. Advocacy can take many forms—from educating your community about an issue to visiting Capitol Hill to building relationships with members of Congress. Every action can make an impact. A fall advocacy action should teach your campus community about CRS' impact issues and start moving them to make a difference. A spring advocacy action should challenge your school community to mobilize in an intentional way. This is your opportunity to build on the work you have done throughout the year.

## MONTHLY MEMBER ACTIONS

In addition to the four campus-wide actions that are part of being a CRS Club, your club members are invited to participate in more individualized actions each month to build relationships with their members of Congress and grow in key skills for effective advocacy. Through their Club Advisors, members will receive a **Monthly Action Sheet**, which will also be posted on [crs.org/crsclubs](https://crs.org/crsclubs). Club members can also find additional skill building resources to help with writing letters, making calls, educating your community and making a difference.

Individual member advocacy actions will focus on a piece of legislation or policy connected to this year's Impact Issues. CRS Chapter and Club members across the United States will unite in advocating on this piece of legislation each month. More information about the current policy or piece of legislation will be available in the **Monthly Action Sheet** and on [crs.org/crsclubs](https://crs.org/crsclubs).

## REPORTING YOUR SUCCESS

CRS wants to hear about the good that you are doing by activating your school and community! To celebrate your hard work and recognize your CRS Club as an active part of the movement to create a better world, CRS needs to know how you have taken action throughout the year. Reporting your club's actions is easy! Work with your Club Advisor and use the Member Action Tracking worksheet to report your club actions through CRS' online reporting tool.



## ACT: Fundraising

There are millions of men, women and children who experience poverty, conflict, climate change, emergencies, hunger and other grave problems who cannot wait for the systems and structures of the world to change. Their needs are too urgent and often a matter of life and death.

Our faith teaches us that we should serve the immediate needs of our global family through **charitable works**. Charitable works are one important way we assist our vulnerable sisters and brothers. By providing food, shelter, education, job training, medical treatment and other support, we can help families and individuals to overcome life-threatening challenges.

Your school's generosity through fundraising for CRS helps us meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable right now. The donations from your school's fundraisers help to build a world where communities everywhere have what they need to thrive.

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*“Rediscover the joy of God’s plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love him, our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness.”*

—Pope Francis

### HOW DO I FUNDRAISE WITH CRS?

Fundraising can be as simple as asking people to donate their pocket-change at lunch or as intense as a multi-school challenge—it’s up to you! Here are some examples of ways that your community can make a life-changing difference in the lives of people in need around the world:

- **CRS Rice Bowl:** ([crsricebowl.org](https://crsricebowl.org)) CRS Rice Bowl is the best way to support CRS’ work to battle hunger through your school’s Lenten almsgiving. With CRS Rice Bowl, your CRS Club can put faith into action through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Seventy-five percent of your Lenten alms donated through CRS Rice Bowl supports the work of CRS in more than 100 different countries each year. Twenty-five percent of all donations to CRS Rice Bowl stay in the local diocese to support hunger and poverty alleviation efforts. Since its inception in 1975, CRS Rice Bowl has raised nearly \$300 million.
- **Dress-Down Day:** Dress-down days are an easy way to spread information about CRS’ impact issues and involve your whole school in a fundraiser to support lifesaving work overseas. Work with your school’s administration to have a dress-down day where each person donates a small amount to be able to come to school out of uniform. Take it to the next level by having everyone wear a color representing an issue or using posters or the morning announcements to tell people about the issue and pray together.
- **Global Food Drive:** Consider holding a global food drive. Instead of bringing in cans, students can bring in the equivalent in donations. Those donations help fight global poverty. Use CRS’ resources at [crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise](https://crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise) to see how far each donation can go!





Photo by Philip Laubner for CRS

- **Ark of Hope:** Race to fill an ark with symbolic animals or special items connected to CRS' work around the world. Use the fun ark printouts to bring it to life and consider making it a competition between homerooms to see who can fill their ark first. Resources are available at [crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise](https://crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise) to connect your Ark of Hope fundraiser to CRS' Impact Issues through prayers, stories and symbolic gifts.
- **Table of Thanks:** Around the world, people gather to celebrate and share food, fun, culture and love! Make your school's celebrations more impactful by integrating a Feast of Grace fundraiser or start a new tradition around one of the dates related to CRS' Impact Issues. Connect your joy to that of people around the world who can thrive due to the generosity of communities like yours. Go to [crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise](https://crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise) or prayers, stories and symbolic gifts to make your celebration life-giving in a new way!
- **Create Your Own:** You know your school best! Think about what will inspire and engage your school the most. Your creativity will allow your school to have an impact in a way that only you can! Visit [crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise](https://crs.org/leadtheway/fundraise) for a toolkit with easy steps to help you plan out the logistics of your creative fundraising ideas.



## ACT: Advocacy

Part of leading the way means looking at the bigger picture and imagining what can—and should—be. As change-makers, people of faith and builders of a better future, we are challenged to address structural issues in our world that prevent individuals and communities from thriving.

*Advocacy is one of the most effective ways to ease human suffering and build a more just world.*

Advocacy means influencing decision-making at local, national and international levels, usually to address a specific problem. Advocacy can include using media to influence public opinion, educating decision-makers, organizing events, researching issues and coordinating groups. Effective advocacy requires an understanding of the problem or issue, a good grasp of the political environment and a coherent solution to the problem.


### *Use your voice.*

Together, we have a mission to advocate on behalf of our most vulnerable sisters and brothers living in poverty around the world. We have the power to influence policy and make things happen. Research shows that the voices and actions of constituents—you—have the most significant impact on members of Congress and their decision making. There are many ways to lift your voice on the issues you care about.

## ADVOCACY

- **TAKE MONTHLY ACTION:** Each month, your club will receive a Monthly Action Sheet with information about a timely and important action that members can take to move forward a piece of legislation.
- **EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY:** The issues that affect our world are complex and sometimes misunderstood. There are many ways to increase your community's knowledge and understanding of these pressing global issues. Set up an information table at lunch, integrate information into your morning announcements or hold an event focused on teaching your community—you could even invite your member of Congress!
- **ATTEND AN EVENT:** Members of Congress regularly host town hall meetings and other gatherings in their districts or states to hear from constituents like you. Attending an event is an excellent opportunity to ask questions about your issues and get to know the congressional staff.

- **WRITE YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES:** Emails and letters on an issue can influence your members of Congress, but it's best to make them personal. Share who you are and why you care about the issue—it will make your message 10 times more effective.
- **SPREAD THE WORD:** Op-ed pieces and letters to the editor in your local press amplify the issues you care about and promote support in your community. Congressional offices monitor local media, so it's a great way to put your issue front and center.
- **USE SOCIAL MEDIA:** Whether it's Twitter or Facebook, the social media platforms you use can be powerful tools to contact the U.S. Congress. Research shows that just 30 posts or comments from constituents on an issue will help get the attention of congressional offices.
- **MEET IN-PERSON:** There is nothing more impactful than in-person meetings with your members of Congress. Whether in Washington, D.C., or back home in the local office, your meetings help develop relationships and can shape policy.
- **VISIT OUR ACTION CENTER:** Find more templates and examples of how to be strong advocates.



**Thank you for choosing to lift your voice to create real, positive change around the world by advocating and fundraising around pressing global issues.**

**Your CRS Club can continue to lead the way by visiting [crs.org/crsclubs](https://crs.org/crsclubs).**



## Join us

by texting LEAD NOW to 306-44 to get  
the latest CRS advocacy news and alerts.

[crs.org/leadtheway](https://crs.org/leadtheway)