

PARENTING

Family Events

● **MON, JAN. 21** — Family Fun Day: multicultural performances and family craft activities with a global theme; Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; \$6 adults, \$5 seniors & students, \$5 children 2-17, under 2 free; 585/263-2700.

● **MON, JAN. 21** — Program: "The Beatitudes for the 21st Century," commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; Almata Whittis, storyteller; Bausch Auditorium, Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Ave., Rochester, 10, 11 a.m., 1 p.m.; \$7 adults, \$6 college students & seniors, \$5 children 3-18, under 3 free; 585/271-4552 or www.rmsc.org.

● **WED, JAN. 23** — Application deadline: learn to ice skate classes; Greater Canandaigua Civic Center, 250 N. Bloomfield Rd., Canandaigua; six-week series begins Jan. 26; Saturdays 10 a.m.-noon; \$80; 585/396-7230.

● **JAN. 26, FEB. 2** — Walking tour: walk in Mendon Ponds Park to view glacial features left from the last Ice Age in New York State; Mendon Ponds Park, Canfield Rd., Mendon; 1-4 p.m.; \$5; dress warmly; call Mariana 585/271-7368 or geologictours@earthlink.net.

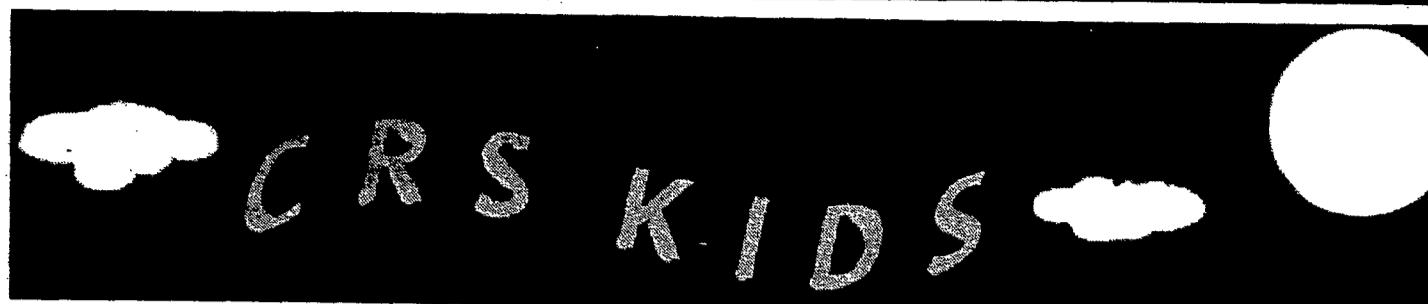
● **JAN. 26-MAY 5** — Exhibit: "Kid Stuff: Great Toys From Our Childhood"; 40 of the greatest toys from the past 50 years; Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; \$6 adults, \$5 seniors & students, \$5 children 2-17, under 2 free; 585/263-2700.

● **SUN, JAN. 27** — Fun Family Movie: "The Goonies"; a young boy and his friends search for hidden treasure; ages 5 and up; Dryden Theatre, George Eastman House, 55 West Ave., Rochester; 2 p.m.; \$5 adults, \$2 children; 48 families invited and up to 100 children; 585/271-4361, ext. 218.

● **THRU MAR. 15** — Application deadline: National Catholic Youth Conference; St. John's Abbey and University, for June 23-July 11; open to Catholic students entering grades 10, 11, 12; \$450 includes room and board; contact Michelle Plombon, St. John's University, School of Theology, Collegeville, MN 56321 or call 320/363-2062.

● **MON, APR. 15** — Registration deadline: for Ten Star All-Star Summer Basketball Camp; for boys and girls ages 10-19; Roberts Wesleyan College, 2301 Westside Dr., North Chili; for free brochure call 704/568-6801.

● **THRU APR. 28** — Exhibit: "Go Figure!"; for children ages 2-7 and adults to make connections between math and everyday life; bilingual; third floor, Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Ave., Rochester; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; \$7 adults, \$6 college students & seniors, \$5 children 3-18, under 3 free; 585/271-4552, ext. 342 or www.rmsc.org.



Images courtesy CRS Web site

Site connects kids to justice issues

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Want your children to learn about social-justice issues and have a bit of fun while doing it?

That's the premise Catholic Relief Services is taking with a new Web site for children ages 8-13. Launched this past November, the interactive site, CRS Kids, can be found at www.catholicrelief.org/kids/index.html or by clicking the icon on the CRS home page of www.catholicrelief.org.

The site offers numerous ways to learn about refugees, water, hunger and poverty. For example:

- A section dedicated to hunger allows children to compare a typical day to an Ethiopian's; whereas kids in the United States may enjoy several meals per day, Ethiopians often skip meals due to lack of food. In addition, the "Fascinating Facts" icon points out: "People living in the United States consume more resources (food, water, material items, etc.) than people living in any other country. If everyone in the world consumed as much as the people in the United States, it would take 4.5 more planet earths to sustain us."

- A section on refugees introduces Web guests to people who have been displaced from their homes due to recent wars in their countries. Included in this section are photographs of children at refugee camps, who are natives of such lands as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kosovo.

- A section on water points out how Catholic Relief Services works in many countries to ensure that natives have clean drinking water. It also points out that countries receiving too much rain through flooding lose their homes, crops and animals — as well as the availability of clean water, even though they're surrounded by water.

- A section on poverty depicts how a small, poor country can get into debt by borrowing from another country's government or international lending institutions — and then be forced to follow the demands of the lender if it struggles to repay these debts.

CRS Kids asks visitors how they might go about solving such problems. Many e-mail responses are posted on the site. In addition, the site offers a resource section for teachers, with lesson plans and suggested classroom activities.

Laura Mirkovic, the Web site's director, told the *Catholic Courier* that CRS Kids strives to present serious subjects in a manner that children will embrace. Examples are cartoon images such as those seen accompanying this article; multiple-choice trivia quizzes; and lively music.

"Particularly on a kids' site, we had to make it more positive. We didn't want to frighten them or scare them away, but wanted to still give them a taste of reality," Mirkovic explained in a telephone interview from CRS' head offices in Balti-



more, Md.

The site was in development for about a year. Mirkovic said the need for CRS Kids stemmed from the growing realization that many Web resources on social-justice issues are available for teens and college students, but not younger children.

"This was out of a response from teachers who needed materials, and parents who support CRS and want a kid-friendly site that covers issues they would really like their kids to know more about," Mirkovic said.

The site gets high marks from Ruth Putnam, who serves as coordinator of Works of Love for diocesan Catholic Charities. Putnam also taught fourth and sixth grades over a 12-year period at St. Joseph's School in Penfield.

"The graphics are great and the activities are very interesting for kids," Putnam said of CRS Kids. "I went to other sites on social justice and kids, and there's nothing that compares to the quality of this. It is a wonderful starting point for any teachers who want to deal with social-justice issues in their classroom. It would also be a great way for families to involve their kids

— what it means to be Catholic Christians in this world."

Putnam also remarked that CRS Kids mirrors the objectives of Works of Love. The first-year initiative promotes loving one another through service and social justice. Many Catholic schools and parish youth groups have participated in Works of Love projects.

Putnam did offer a word of caution — that information on CRS Kids should be used primarily to spark follow-up discussions, not to be taken simply at face value. Because social-justice topics are so complex and produce so many differing viewpoints, she said, "It really needs to be part of something larger. You need to be open for conversation on these issues."



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