

Students will help renovate Worcester homes

BY SARAH MILLERICK
CRUSADER NEWS STAFF

On April 21, members of the Holy Cross community will have the opportunity to participate in a service project through Rebuilding Together Worcester, an organization that works to rebuild houses for low-income homeowners. Students will donate their time and talent to help elderly and disabled persons and low-income families stay in their homes. The mission statement of the volunteer group states that its purpose is to allow people to live in "warmth, safety and independence."

Rebuilding Together is a national organization, formerly known as Christmas in April. It is the largest national program of its kind. Katherine McNamara of Public Affairs participated in Rebuilding Together when she lived in Washington. When she heard that a chapter was starting in Worcester, she looked forward to getting involved on a personal level. She also hoped to encourage Holy Cross students to participate.

Similarly, Mairead Sullivan '03 participated in a Chicago chapter of Rebuilding Together with her parish youth group. She was part of three rebuild-

ing projects, working together with her peers and skilled electricians and plumbers to renovate homes.

Currently there are four members of the Holy Cross community on the board of Rebuilding Together Worcester, including McNamara, Kate Scollin of Student Programs, and juniors Sullivan and Kate Halleroun. The board members organized a book sale in Hogan on Thursday, Mar. 29. Ten percent of the proceeds from the sale went to buy supplies for the College's project. McNamara deemed the event "a success." Additional financial support for the program is gained through partnerships with corporations.

Sullivan explained that the organization "is definitely trying to get a lot of students involved." She sees Rebuilding Together Worcester as "starting small scale," but gathering student interest and support in the coming years. The upcoming day of service is similar to Holy Cross Cares Day, in that students will join together to paint, rake, and fix up property that needs rehabilitation. This project will not only give Holy Cross students a chance to reach out to their neighbors in Worcester, but also to develop an awareness of the needs of the Worcester community.

Professor seeks to blend commerce with religion

BY KATE MEYERS
CRUSADER NEWS STAFF

As citizens of the western world, many Americans are not aware of the imperialism and exploitation that European powers have been imposing on countries in Africa over the past few centuries. On Thursday, Mar. 29, Professor Eloise Breir of SUNY Albany came to Holy Cross to give a lecture on "Christianity: Making Africa Safe for Commerce." Through her studies in African literature and her fieldwork in Cameroon, Prof. Breir has transformed SUNY Albany into a mecca for African Literature Fulbright Scholars, boasting her extensive knowledge and understanding of the ways in which missionaries and imperial powers have affected the economy on the African continent.

The famous explorer Dr. David Livingstone once identified missionary work as a way to "make an open path for commerce through Christianity." Through this philosophy, the imperial powers in Europe, including France and Great Britain, discovered Africa as a prime source and market for their goods. Even today, drug companies are under great pressure to lower the cost of AIDS drugs in order to make them more available to the African people. Because of the fact that 70 percent of the world's AIDS patients are found in Africa, the drug companies are being called "AIDS profiteers" because they are targeting the poor and sick in Africa and making a profit off their financial weakness. This is just one example of the many ways in which the western world exploits the people of Africa, a practice stemming from the sending of missionaries over to Africa to "Christianize" its people.

Contrary to common belief, Christianity did not originate in Europe; it actually originated in Egypt and Ethiopia over 2,000 years ago. Africa was in fact visited by the Jesuits before they even got to America. African writers were even among the contributors to the Constitution of Christian Thought. With this information, Prof. Breir sought to dispel the fallacy that it was the work of European missionaries that brought Christianity and civilization to Africa.

Years later, Europeans used the belief that it was necessary to bring Christianity to Africa to justify the slave trade. Because sugar was the most valuable trade

commodity in the 18th and 19th centuries, the French went to Africa to acquire free labor, as they kidnapped Africans from their countries and profited off their work. They justified this by saying that the slaves were the best way to ensure massive conversions to Christianity, and proclaimed that "slavery saves souls." Therefore, slavery set the stage for years of exploitation of Africa by Europe, under the guise of Christianity.

The French eventually abolished slavery but continued to send missionaries to Africa, teaching the Africans to speak French and to labor on their farms in order to bring profits to France. The French oppressed the Africans to such a great extent that the only way left for them to survive was to convert to Christianity and to embrace the language and culture of the Europeans. Prof. Breir identified the core goals of the imperial powers as the "3 C's": Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization. Because the African people were not offered higher education, and were taught entirely in the language of their colonizers, Europe has maintained its stronghold over Africa for many years. To the Africans, technological progress tended to be equated with Christianity, due to the fact that they had no forms of advanced technology at their disposal and only learned of it through the missionaries. Adhering to Christianity became a "defense mechanism" for the African people, stated Breir, despite its disrespect for their own culture.

Today, the western world benefits from African goods more than ever. With no real production or marketing of their own, African consumers are forced to depend on Western products such as Coca Cola and Marlboro. The continent of Africa is full of natural resources that "quietly leave the continent" at the hands of the Europeans and benefit those who live the comfortable life in Europe and North America. Much of the world's oil, wood, copper, and diamonds come from Africa, but the African people never reap the profits from them. While the media is quick to show genocide, wars, and sickness in Africa, they tend to overlook the fact that outside of Africa, consumers are living "the good life" off of African spoils. Prof. Breir emphasized that imperial powers have long been using the excuse that Christianity will help the people, but in reality that excuse has functioned as a shroud used to cover the truths that are hidden from the rest of the world.

Who's Who

BY MATTHEW HAYES
CRUSADER NEWS STAFF

Holy Cross students participate in a variety of charitable activities. However, few have actually founded their own charity like Justin Kiczek '03, has. Named the Heaven's Playground Shootout, the annual event has an interesting history. Kiczek, who hails from

Morristown, New Jersey, said the idea of a friendly tournament initially started his senior year of high school, when he and a group of friends decided to have a three-on-three basketball tournament to celebrate their graduation. Initially Kiczek and Greg Walsh, a friend from Morristown who is a co-founder of the charity, expected only about twenty-five of their friends to participate in the low-key tournament, which was held in Kiczek's back yard. They were shocked when about eighty people expressed interest in participating. Encouraged and excited by the success of his first tournament, Kiczek soon decided to make the tournament an annual event and began making plans for the following year. It was over winter break of his freshman year that the idea of a charity tournament developed in Kiczek's mind. "It just kind of grew from there," he recalled.

After doing some research, Kiczek and Walsh discovered the Tomorrow's Children's Fund, a New Jersey not-for-profit organization which benefits children with cancer. The Fund is affiliated with the Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack, New Jersey. Kiczek and Walsh prepared for the 2000 tournament by selling t-shirts for \$12 each, asking a local business to donate trophies, and soliciting monetary donations from local institutions. The second tournament was held on June 8, 2000, again in Kiczek's back yard, and proved to be a resounding success. Although he had only anticipated raising about \$500 for the charity, total donations exceeded \$1,640.

Money was raised through donations, the sale of t-shirts, and playing fees for the tournament. All told, about 125 people showed up to the tournament, forming 16 three-person teams.

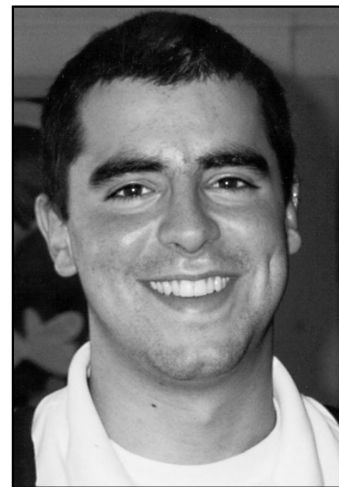
The success of the tournament has required that Kiczek make some changes. Worried about the legal issues surrounding such a tournament, Kiczek has applied to become a recog-

nized not-for-profit organization under New Jersey law. "Yeah," Kiczek said about this move, "now I'm a president of a corporation and have a Board of Directors!" This year, the tournament will be held on June 2. Because of the anticipated size of the tournament, this year will mark the first time that the Heaven's

Playground Shootout will not be held at Kiczek's house; it has been relocated to a nearby park. Additionally, Kiczek wants to double the size of the tournament, hoping to attract 32 teams,

up from last year's roster of 16. Furthermore, he hopes to attract more corporate sponsorship. Although trophies were donated last year, this year, Kiczek hopes to elicit donations of food and t-shirts, as well. Kiczek and Walsh also hope to advertise the event more in order to attract a larger crowd.

Kiczek also has created a web site for his organization, which can be found at: <http://www.morrisig.com/heaven-splayground>. The site features a history of the growth of the tournament and pictures from the 1999 and 2000 shootouts. In coming weeks, Kiczek will also allow participants to sign up on-line through the site. Anybody who will be in the Morristown area on June 2 is encouraged to sign up, and help raise money for a worthy cause. Still surprised at the success of his shootout, Kiczek remarked, "it just started as a small group of friends who wanted to celebrate graduation, but then it got really big!"



The Crusader/Joe Bonillo
Justin Kiczek, co-founder of Heaven's Playground Shootout

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