

Preparing Young Men to Become Teachers



Partners...in. Mission



Christian Brothers of the Midwest

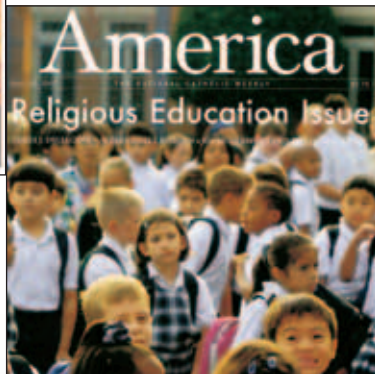
Lasallian Teacher Immersion Program

Partners in Mission has followed with interest and great pride the progress of the young men participating in the innovative program, the Lasallian Teacher Immersion Program (LTIP). Now, as it enters its second year of implementation, the word of its existence is spreading beyond the confines of the Midwest District.

Involved in education for over three decades in faculty and administrative positions at secondary schools and universities, Brother Patrick Conway, the director of the program, observed that there is a critical shortage of male teachers. This shortage not only exists in Catholic schools but in public schools as well. He commented that this is a crucial problem when considering that up to 40% of children in the U.S. are being raised without their biological father in the household and fewer male role models are involved in their educational process. The end result is devastating and drop-out rates document the reality.



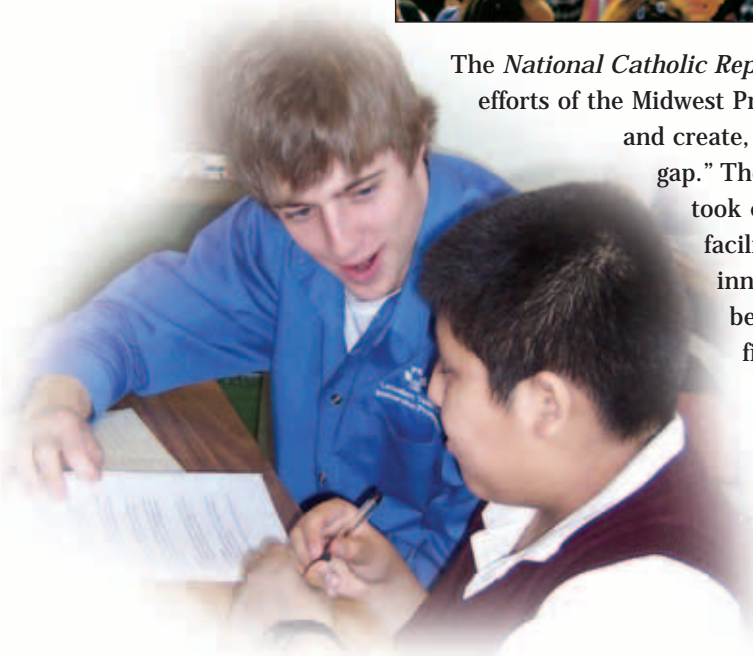
Articles have appeared throughout the summer and fall in several publications recognizing the efforts by the Christian Brothers, specifically through the LTIP to address this concern. The national Catholic weekly magazine, *America*, reported in the September 10th, 2007, issue, "The Midwest District of the Christian Brothers has begun a program to combat the growing shortage of male teachers. The province offers the Lasallian Teacher Immersion Program at universities run by the religious community to provide male college students with classroom teaching experience and opportunities to serve those in need while earning college credit."



The *National Catholic Reporter*, in their September 7, 2007, issue, acknowledged the efforts of the Midwest Province of the Christian Brothers "to combat the shortage" and create, as Brother Patrick said, "a pool of male teachers to fill the gap." The newspaper provided further details, "Participants not only took classes, but worked in shelters, soup kitchens and daycare facilities. In Chicago, they volunteered at San Miguel School, an inner-city middle school for at-risk students. In the summer between their sophomore and junior years, students spend five weeks in Guatemala ."

Earlier in the summer, the *St. Louis Review* quoted Brother Patrick, "The Lasallian Teacher Immersion Program is in many ways a return to our original mission

LTIP participant Adam Runge has the opportunity to work with a middle school student during his service visit to the San Miguel Middle School, Back of the Yards Campus, Chicago, Illinois.





... St. John Baptist de La Salle began his educational mission in the late 1600s with a teacher-training program, preparing laymen to serve the Church as teachers..."

Brother Patrick has enlisted the assistance of Brother Stephen Markham to work with him as Co-Director on this expanding program. Six young men have been added to the program, two from Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois, two from Saint Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota, and two from Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee. In January 2008, these young men will follow in the footsteps of the six charter students who began in January 2007 on the first phase of the program. That for-credit immersion experience, took them from the Holy Family Catholic Worker in Kansas City, Missouri, to the San Miguel Schools of Chicago and Saint Louis, as well as giving them an overview of the schools of the Christian Brothers across the Midwest.

LTIP participants had the opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the inner-workings of a school at Christian Brothers College High School in Saint Louis, Missouri.



LTIP participants encounter the "Little Bit Foundation" run by parent volunteers at Christian Brothers College High School in Saint Louis, Missouri. This program provides nearly-new clothing and school supplies for children "in need."



Brother Konrad Diebold, President, at Saint Patrick High School in Chicago, Illinois, takes the opportunity to discuss "What are the Characteristics of a Lasallian School?" with the LTIP participants.



LTIP participant Andrew Knobbe works with a student at San Miguel Middle School, Gary Comer Campus, Chicago, Illinois



If you are interested in receiving more information on the LTIP program, please contact
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Brother Robert Werle, Archivist, conveys the history of the Christian Brothers in America for over 150 years. The Archives is located on Christian Brothers University campus in Memphis, Tennessee.



LTIP participants and Brother James Wegesin, teacher at De La Salle Institute in Chicago, Illinois.

The Charter students will prepare for the second immersion experience, which will take them out of this country during the summer of 2008 to Guatemala for language immersion, cultural acclimation and a familiarization with the global Lasallian network.

At the end of phase one, these young men reflected on their unique opportunity. Jim Trebisovsky, one of the original six participants, wrote, "Throughout the course of this semester I have been learning about teaching through an immersion experience that could not have been replicated by simply reading a textbook. I was able to leave the classroom setting and travel to Lasallian elementary, middle and secondary schools and truly experience what teaching was like at different economic and social levels. Spending time in these schools has taught me about the significant role a teacher plays in the life of each student, what makes a teacher effective, the important role of non-teaching staff, and how extra-curricular programs positively impact students..."

In the meantime, Brother Patrick and Brother Stephen continue their work meeting with high school and university administrators; talking with high school and college students; challenging them 'to consider' if they have what it takes to be a teacher in the twenty-first century.

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—Jim Trebisovsky

