Center for Faith Justice Program Participants Continue to Volunteer and Engage Their Faith Long After Programs End, Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy Report Finds

Faith-based Non-Profit Organization Releases New Study on Youth Engagement in Faith, Service and Social Justice

LAWRENCEVILLE, NJ – Responses from former participants and their parents indicate that the signature "WorX" programs for youth and young adults offered by the Center for FaithJustice (CFJ) continue to have a lasting effect on their lives well after the programs have concluded. Adapted from the passage "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), these programs are designed to engage youth participants in faith, service and social justice. An assessment of the longitudinal impact of these programs shows that they do have long-term effects on many facets of life for alumni respondents, including decisions to practice their faith and volunteer in their communities.

Youth engagement is an important topic for both researchers and practitioners in the religious and nonprofit sectors. To add to this conversation, the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI with the Center for FaithJustice researched and wrote "What WorX: Measuring the Impact of Faith-based Service and Social Justice Programs on Catholic Youth." The study was made possible by the support of an anonymous funder.

To conduct the research, surveys were distributed to alumni of the WorX programs and parents of alumni. Key findings include:

- 94 percent of respondents indicated that their WorX experience influenced them to continue volunteering after the program;
- 93 percent of respondents still identify as Catholic;
- 96 percent of respondents said that their participation in the WorX programs helped them understand the difference between service and social justice extremely or pretty well; and
- 76 percent of parent respondents said that their child’s participation in one or more of CFJ’s programs was highly worth the financial investment.

"Both faith and service organizations nationwide are interested in youth engagement. There is a trend of youth becoming disengaged from their faith and their communities. Programs such as those offered by the Center for FaithJustice are working to change this shift," said David King, Karen Lake Buttrey Director of Lake Institute on Faith & Giving at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

"Finding meaningful ways to engage youth and young adults is especially important at a time when religious communities – and Catholicism in particular – are hemorrhaging youth members. This study demonstrates that intentional programs in faith, service and social justice do have a sustained positive impact on the lives of youth into young adulthood, informing everything from faith practice to choice of college major and, ultimately, their vocational journeys. It should signal to those in decision-making roles about the importance of investing in these types of programs," said Stephanie J. Peddicord, President, Center for FaithJustice.

In addition to focusing on participants’ long-term engagement in their faith, service and social justice, the alumni survey included questions about various components of the WorX programs, as well as participants’
views on many current social justice issues. The parent survey also focused on the long-term effects of the programs on their children.

**About Lilly Family School of Philanthropy**

The Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI is dedicated to improving philanthropy to improve the world by training and empowering students and professionals to be innovators and leaders who create positive and lasting change in the world. The school offers a comprehensive approach to philanthropy through its academic, research, and international programs, and through The Fund Raising School, Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, Mays Family Institute on Diverse Philanthropy and the Women’s Philanthropy Institute. Learn more.

**About the Center for FaithJustice**

Founded officially in 2008 (with programs dating back to the late 1990s), the Center for FaithJustice (CFJ) inspires the next generation of leaders by creating programs to serve those in need and educate for justice in the Catholic tradition. Informed by the passage “Faith without works is dead.” (James 2:26), CFJ offers a line of signature “WorX” programs for youth of various ages from middle school through early adulthood. CFJ has served more than 5,000 youth and young adults representing more than 300,000 combined hours of direct service and social justice education. Alumni have gone on to become impressive servant leaders in many diverse fields ranging from international aid to corporate America to ordained ministry. Learn more.