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Christian Family Movement

World Assembly Discusses the Vocation of Marriage

The International Confederation of Christian Family Movements ninth world assembly was held at **Santa Clara University** July 28 through August 1. Participants representing twenty nations participated in discussions on the theme "Family: Artisans of an Evolving Society." The diverse group brought widely disparate observations of marriage and family life to the meeting from the continents of **Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.**



Father Bill Young (second from right) joins delegates from Asia and Africa in discussion.

Dr. Frank Sicius, historian and author from St. Thomas University in **Miami, Fla.**, broadened the discussion by reviewing the historical and sociological evolution of



Kay and Gary Aitchison congratulate Father Sam Palmer (center), recipient of the Cardijn Award.

marriage and the family from Roman times to the present day.

Dr. Julie Hanlon Rubio, of St. Louis University, **St. Louis, Mo.**, presented a Christian theology of marriage to help the participants probe the spiritual aspects of their vocation. Dr. Rubio, spoke on the



Mariachis performed at Vasona County Park, Los Gatos.

—continued on page 5



Presidents' Perspective

by Peter and Jane Buchbauer

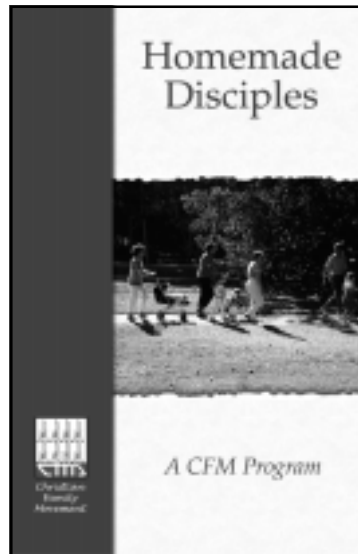
Homemade Disciples

In 1994, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a Pastoral Message, *Follow the Way of Love*, on the occasion of the United Nations International Year of the Family. In the message, the bishops pointed out the ways that the family lives out its mission as the domestic church. They wrote:

You carry out the mission of the church of the home in ordinary ways when:

- ◆ You **believe** in God and that God cares about you. It is God to whom you turn in times of trouble. It is God to whom you give thanks when all goes well.
- ◆ You **love** and never give up believing in the value of another person. Before young ones hear the Word of God preached from the pulpit, they form a picture of God drawn from their earliest experiences of being loved by parents, grandparents, godparents, and other family members.
- ◆ You **foster intimacy**, beginning with the physical and spiritual union of the spouses and extending in appropriate ways to the whole family. To be able to share yourself—good and bad qualities—within a family and to be accepted there is indispensable to forming a close relationship with God.

- ◆ You **evangelize** by professing faith in God, acting in accord with gospel values, and setting an example of Christian living for your children and for



others. And your children, by their spontaneous and genuine spirituality, will often surprise you into recognizing God's presence.

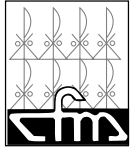
- ◆ You **educate**. As the primary teachers of your children, you impart knowledge of the faith and help them to acquire values necessary for Christian living. Your example is the most effective way to teach. Sometimes they listen and learn; sometimes they teach you new ways of believing

and understanding. Your wisdom and theirs come from the same Spirit.

- ◆ You **pray together**, thanking God for blessings, reaching for strength, asking for guidance in crisis and doubt. You know as you gather—restless toddlers, searching teenagers, harried adults—that God answers all prayers, but sometimes in surprising ways.
- ◆ You **serve one another**, often sacrificing your own wants, for the other's good. You struggle to take up your cross and carry it with love. Your "deaths" and "risings" become compelling signs of Jesus' own life, death, and resurrection.
- ◆ You **forgive and seek reconciliation**. Over and over, you let go of old hurts and grudges to make peace with one another. And family members come to believe that, no matter what, they are still loved by you and by God.
- ◆ You **celebrate life**—birthdays and weddings, births and deaths, a first day of school and a graduation, rites of passage into adulthood, new jobs, old friends, family reunions, surprise visits, holy days and holidays. You come together when tragedy strikes and in joyful celebration of the sacraments. As you gather for a meal, you break bread and share stories, becoming more fully the community of love Jesus calls us to be.

—continued on page 5

Peter and Jane Buchbauer, CFM Presidents, live in Winchester Virginia. Their children are Joseph, Peter, Michael and Maria.



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Want to touch base with CFMers around the country? Join CFM's e-mail exchange by contacting cfm-exchange@cfm.org

CFM's Mission

- ◆ to promote Christ-centered marriage and family life;
- ◆ to help individuals and their families to live the Christian faith in everyday life; and
- ◆ to improve society through actions of love, service, education and example.

Parent to Parent

by *Mary Lou Gorman*



On Keeping Promises

Parents and children make many promises one another, but do they always keep them? As parents, it's very important to keep the promises we make. The best way to gain the respect of your child is to keep promises. If we don't follow through on promises, we teach our children, by example, to be unreliable people.

Being disappointed when plans don't work out is part of the human condition. Learning to be resilient and make the best of changing circumstances is part of maturity. But though thunderstorms might cancel picnics, and though unexpected emergencies might lead to change in plans, the child must be able to trust that parents make promises sincerely, give personal priority to keeping them, and do not break promises due to their own lack of integrity

Children learn about wise decisionmaking by observing how parents make plans, keep promises, and choose to say no. Explaining to a child how priorities are set and how decisions are made and revised as necessary is part of education to maturity.

My advice is to think carefully before making promises to a child. Some parents are careful to make "plans" rather than promises, with the understanding that circumstances can arise to change the best of plans.

It is by the keeping of promises that all of us become reliable people, trustworthy friends, and role models of integrity.

Mary Lou and Phil Gorman, Arlington Heights, members of CFM since 1953, have four daughters and 14 grand-children.



Jose Manuel and Marigel Arnaud of Oaxaca, Mexico with Phil and Mary Lou Gorman at the ICCFM gala closing celebration.



Father Don Conroy, Jane Buchbauer, Paul Leingang, Jane Leingang and Peter Buchbauer pose together after the Leingangs' talk for ICCFM on the legacy of Cardinal Cardijn.

A "Typical" CFM Experience

The Good News Federation, Livonia, Mich.

Last year, the "Good News" federation at St. Edith and St. Robert Bellarmine parishes in **Livonia, Mich.**, prospered under the leadership of **Art and Mary Spencer.**



One popular outreach activity is the preparation of Easter "bags" for needy children. This past Palm Sunday the group filled 90 lunch bags with toys, candy and school supplies donated by parishioners. CFM children decorated the bags with pictures ranging from a Detroit Redwing to a punk rocker bunny.

The food drive for local food pantries incorporated a bit of a twist. Flyers about the collection were distributed in the neighborhoods around St. Edith parish. On the afternoon of the collection, teams of families collected the bags neighbors set out. As items were brought in, they were counted and checked against a "scavenger hunt" list prepared by organizers of the event. Prizes were awarded at the social that followed the food drive.

Small groups meet twice a month, with one meeting per year a joint meeting of two groups. Each month there is also an outreach or social activity. Last year's events included apple picking, a progressive dinner, a trip to attend a play, a



family retreat, a winter weekend getaway and a summer reunion picnic including past members.

The Spencers have belonged to CFM since 1999, and have found CFM valuable to them as spouses and parents.

Sarah, 11, and Christopher, 9, are enthusiastic participants in CFM activities. Art attributes their growing sensitivity to others and generosity in part to exposure to the topics of CFM meetings through family discussions and outreach activities which have included them.

Mary says that these activities lay down a foundation for the religious education they give their children, but they spur her and Art to act upon their faith as well. "I am not sure we would do these things if it wasn't for CFM."

Leader to Leader

by Rosemarie Fagan
Hawthorn Woods, Ill.

My husband and I host a picnic and mini-meeting at our home in August to introduce potential members to CFM. We use the introductory meeting from *Taking Time to Make a Difference* that is available at the CFM website, cfm.org. We talk about time pressures and each couple does the time chart that is included in the meeting.

We also share this quotation from the book *Lifebalance* by Linda and Richard Eyre:

We live in the first time and place in the world's history and geography where our challenges stem not from scarcity but from surplus, not from oppression but from options, and not from absence but from abundance.

Instead of struggling to find our next meal, we are struggling to get our busy families together long enough to eat a meal. Instead of fighting for freedom to make our choices, we are reeling in the complexity of eighty-three TV channels, tens of thousands of consumer items, and almost limitless numbers of education, job, and life-style alternatives.

It's not the sparse simplicity of too little but the crowded complexity of too much that plagues our lives. And the answers lie not in the balance of our abilities but in our ability to balance.

After doing this exercise, couples realize that it makes sense to make time in their schedules to join a group like CFM.



Christian families have a dual vocation: creating a civilization of love within the family and acting for justice in the world.

—Julie Rubio

—World Assembly, continued from page 1

subject of her book, *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family*, and how, in a changing society, family contributes to community.

The group had a chance to experience first hand the challenges the poor face in marriage and family life through visits to the Sacred Heart Community Center in **San Jose** and the **Santa Clara** facility of Catholic Charities. Discussion of all these experiences resulted in a resolution to promote the vision, values, and virtues of Christian marriage and family through prayer and action: in the family, in the Church, and in society. Each country agreed to implement this resolution in ways appropriate to their circles of influence.

The group enjoyed several experiences of California multiculturalism. They enjoyed a barbe-

cue at Vasona County Park in **Los Gatos**. There they were treated to a mariachi performance by local school children. “Elvis” made an appearance at the closing banquet on Saturday night.

At the concluding celebration of Mass, **Tony and Lily Gauci of Malta**, and Father Sam Palmer, **Des Moines, Iowa**, were honored with the Cardijn award for outstanding service to ICCFM.

Copies of talks given at the Assembly are available on the website, iccfm.org.



—Homemade Disciples, continued from page 2

- ◆ You **welcome** the stranger, the lonely one, the grieving person into your home. You give drink to the thirsty and food to the hungry. The Gospel assures us that when we do this, they are strangers no more, but Christ.
- ◆ You **act justly** in your community when you treat others with respect, stand against discrimination and racism, and work to overcome hunger, poverty, homelessness, illiteracy.
- ◆ You **affirm life** as a precious gift from God. You oppose whatever destroys life, such as abortion, euthanasia, unjust war, capital punishment, neighborhood and domestic

violence, poverty and racism. Within your family, when you shun violent words and actions and look for peaceful ways to resolve conflict, you become a voice for life, forming peacemakers for the next generation.

- ◆ You **raise up vocations** to the priesthood and religious life as you encourage your children to listen for God’s call and respond to God’s grace. This is especially fostered through family prayer, involvement in parish life, and by the way you speak of priests, sisters, brothers, and permanent deacons.

This year’s program, *Homemade Disciples*, guides us as we explore how well we carry out our mission

as the domestic church. We encourage all of our members to consider this program for their annual inquiry. It is the result of a lot of hard work by the program committee, especially editor **Lauri Prysbyz, Jane Leingang and Tom Toussaint**.

The importance of this topic cannot be understated. How we, as family, discharge our mission is increasingly important in these difficult times when the essence of marriage and family life faces persistent attack. Let us take this year to explore our mission, strengthen our marriages and families, and work to change our communities by our example of family life, gospel values and social justice.

Your Family & Cyberspace: Users Be Wise

By Elizabeth Reha

Remember the day you took your teenager out for their first driving lesson? It was a very frightening experience. The teenager may have been confident or maybe unsure, but you knew that they needed to learn the basics of handling the vehicle, rules of the road, and how to drive defensively. Using today's computers is very similar, except most of us don't have our computer licenses yet and our children are teaching us how to drive.

The computer age that began as a sci-fi phenomenon is now an integral part of our daily lives. We were amazed at the possibility of an "information highway", and now the highway is an eight-lane interstate with planes, trains and cyber fiber. Our children experience it as a normal part of life, while many struggle to keep up and are lucky to know how to turn the computer on.

We can do so much with computers. We can communicate with family and friends. We can listen to music or take a college course. We can trade stocks, make reservations, bank online, shop online and more.

So much positive possibilities! Unfortunately, there are negative aspects. When driving, you don't drive recklessly and take chances. Driving is an opportunity to go somewhere. A wise driver knows there can be potential risks in driving 60 miles down the road in a 2-ton vehicle. With computer usage there are risks also.

In a youth Internet survey by **Dr. David Finkelhor**, Crimes Against Children Research Center (Representative of 1500 youth, aged 10-17 in (1999) reports:

- ◆ One in five youth receive a sexual approach or solicitation (requests to engage in unwanted sexual activities or talk by an adult).
- ◆ One in 33 received aggressive sexual solicitation (asked to meet a perpetrator or called on the phone or sent email, money, or gifts).
- ◆ One in four had unwanted exposure to sexual materials (pictures of naked people or people having sex).
- ◆ One in 17 were threatened or harassed online.

Unsupervised children can be exposed to inappropriate material, harassment, and even potential physical molestation. There are hidden dangers of cyber-pedophiles, pornography, inappropriate content (e.g., bomb making, drug making), violent games, and addictions to online gambling, shopping, virtual games and computer games.

Children may not go looking for problems, but sometimes they happen via accidental typing, pop-ups, instant messaging, conversations in chat rooms, others' use of sexual and explicit language.

So what's a parent to do? First, learn about the Internet, how it

works and what it can do. Become a role model for your children in Internet usage. Put the computer in a public area of home. Monitor your child's use of the Internet. Spend time with you child online. Talk about responsible Internet use. Encourage your children to think. Remind children of rules with computers, at home and elsewhere.

You need to pay attention to signs of miss use of the Internet. Your child may have a change in sleeping patterns, demand privacy, have a change in grades, begin

Shining the Light on Technology

by Lauri Przybysz

Observe

- ◆ Look around your home. How many electronic gadgets do you have?

Judge

- ◆ Which Items could you do without? If you could keep only one which would it be? What determined your choices? What makes something change from a frill to a necessity? Would your family benefit from decreased use of technology? What new technology would enhance your family life?

Act

- ◆ Learn to use one new technology that you have judged would be helpful. Eliminate or decrease dependency on one kind of technology that you recognize as unhelpful. Invite some friends to join you on your technology evaluation.

ignoring responsibilities, show evidence of lying, have mood swings, lose interest in family and "real time" friends, or become isolated and disconnected.

Talk to your child about sexual victimization and potential danger online to minimize the chances of online exploitation. Utilize parental controls. Teach children responsible use of resources online. Find out what computer safeguards are being used by school, public library, and your child's friend's homes.

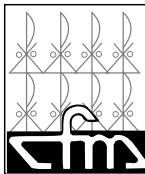
What should you do if you suspect something? Start by talking openly with your child. Review

what is on your child's computer. Use the Caller ID to determine who is calling your child. Monitor your child's access to all types of live electronic communications. You may have to call law enforcement agencies.

Computers and the Internet can offer a way for you to spend time with your child on educational and recreational activities. Online technologies enable you to stay in touch with your child's teachers, school schedules, and homework assignments. Internet can be an enriching opportunity for education for both you and your child.

Protect yourself and your family by being aware. Read the statement by the United States Catholic Bishop's: "Your Family and Cyberspace" (www.usccb.org/comm/cyberspace.htm), research safe online sites, read books, talk to experts. As in driving, if you use the Internet wisely, you can go many places safely. Young people are expected to be familiar with the computer as the technology age progresses. Let's drive safely out there!

—Reprinted with permission from the journal of the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers (NACFLM).



Christian Family Movement September 2004—August 2005 Membership Year

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Her religion

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()

Her occupation

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- Send ACT by e-mail only
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Leadership Position

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- Parish leader
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- locally nationally

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Membership in CFM supports a national ministry to families. Benefits include a one-year subscription to ACT, the national newsletter of the movement; your choice of program book at no charge; and the assistance of the national office in group formation.

The mission of CFM is to promote Christ-centered marriage and family life, to help individuals and their families live the Christian faith in everyday life, and to improve society through actions of love, service, education and example.



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

Whom will you reveal?

I used my father's old hammer to take apart some rickety wooden shelving in our basement. That old claw hammer is one of the things I have from "home"—my home as a child and young adult when my father and mother were alive.

The hammer has a wooden handle. A portion of the handle has been splintered away, probably as the result of forcefully pounding the wooden shaft into the steel hammer head.

Yet, even though the wooden handle has splintered, it is still smooth to the touch. The damaged portion was not sanded or machined. It was smoothed over the years simply by the process of being held in the hand and used over and over for the purpose for which it was intended.

I used it in the same way my father did. First I pounded the shelf boards up and away from the cross members to which they had been nailed. Then I pounded the boards back down, leaving the nail heads protruding far enough to be gripped between the claws of the hammer.

The rounded shape of the claws helps provide the leverage needed to pull the nails out of the wood. It is a satisfying experience, punctuated by the sounds of metal screeching past the wooden fibers that have held them in place for so many years.

Each time I handled the hammer, I thought about my father, and the work his hands had done. But

each time I pulled out a twisted nail and threw it away, I felt a little guilty, too – because my dad would have straightened out every usable nail and saved it.

Somewhere, I am sure, there are rusty cans full of rusty nails that my father saved over the years of his life. They are lost or forgotten now, no longer held in value.

—
*What values
have you received
from your father
and mother? ...
Which, if any,
have you discarded?*
—

Some of what I learned from my father stays with me—even though I may not think about it until I use his hammer or throw away a nail he would have kept.

◆ ◆ ◆

There's a passage in John 14 that comes to mind, as I reflect on the relationship of Jesus and his father. Jesus tells his disciples, "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him."

But Philip wants more: "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied."

Jesus responds, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has

seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"

Jesus goes on to instruct his disciples, "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves."

And then he makes what seems to me to be an extraordinary promise: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father."

As I reflect on the words of Jesus in John's Gospel account, I conclude that we can find God in the works of the one who has been sent to us. And if we believe in Jesus, we will also do the works that he did, and even "greater works" will be done by believers. How can that be?



What values have you received from your father and mother? Which of them have you tried to hold on to? Which, if any, have you discarded?

What values will your children take from your life and your example? Are there habits and traits that you hope they don't emulate?

Take the time to reflect on what you have been taught, by word or example, and what you are teaching those around you.

Take the time to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, and bear witness to the good news you have received. These are the works that will reveal the living presence of Jesus among us.

Paul is director of communications for the Diocese of Evansville, Ind.; and editor of the Message, the diocesan newspaper. His weekly column Taking the Time to Make a Difference is syndicated in a number of diocesan newspapers and appears on the CFM website. Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.

Marriage after widowhood or divorce brings considerable challenges, so a couple's ability to discuss hard issues and solve problems together is crucial to theirs becoming one of the 30% of remarriages that succeed.

Top factors in the fragility of second marriages are 1) marrying too soon after divorce and 2) marrying again without awareness of the potential problems that can arise. The sometimes unexpected challenges of remarriage include:

- Most individuals in a remarriage come with a history of at least one serious previous relationship, so the spouse must learn to accept the past history.
- A remarriage is always based upon a loss.
- Anger and guilt connected to unresolved grief can be misdirected toward the stepfamily.
- People bring their history with them, including children, former in-laws, friends, family traditions, financial obligations—even pets.
- Children from previous marriages will experience their own grief and adjustments. For instance, kids in a remarriage usually want things to be normal in the relationship between their birth parents. The Stepfamily Association of America has helpful resources, www.stepfam.org.
- Catholics considering marrying again after divorce must first work with the marriage tribunal in their diocese to obtain a declaration of nullity (an annulment). This applies whatever the kind or duration of the former marriage. For more information about annulment process, visit www.marriagepreparation.com or read *Catholic Annulment*:

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz



Remarriage Can Be Complicated

Spiritual Healing, by Dennis and Kay Flowers (Liguori).

Remarriage Manual: The Romance and the Reality is for couples contemplating marriage again, and for those who seek to understand and support them. This easy-to-read 62-page manual, published by International Marriage Encounter, explores realistic and unrealistic expectations about family life, step-children, and former families. Topics include: deceased former spouses, divorce recovery, readiness for marriage, compatibility, spirituality, money and wills, even attraction between step-children. Order from International Marriage Encounter (\$5.00 single copy, discounts for quantity), or subscribe to their excellent bi-monthly *Marriage* magazine at 612-454-6434. \$19.95/year. Visit www.marriagemagazine.org Each issue includes a few of *1001 Ways to Be Romantic*.

Although typical diocesan and parish marriage preparation (pre-Cana) programs often do not address the special issues of remarrying couples, there are excellent resources available to couples willing to invest time in preparing for marriage. *To Trust Again*, by family life minister **Bill Urbine**, (ACTA), can be used profitably by an individual couple or in a parish program. A leader's guide is available. Another good resource is **Barbara Coyle-Hennessey's** *Once More With Love: A Guide to Marrying*

Again (Ave Maria Press). She tackles the tough issues of remarriage with sensitivity and insight born out of her own painful experiences with divorce and the challenges of remarriage. Worksheets at the end of each chapter encourage individual reflection and honest dialogue, so each partner should have a copy.

Action Ideas

- ◆ Approach your parish or diocese about starting or enhancing re-marriage preparation. For advice on starting a program, contact me at lprzybysz@archbalt.org.
- ◆ Many couples may worry that the Church prejudices them. Only a small number of couples even apply for annulments. A warm welcome from the parish community can mean their re-entry into the life of the Church.
- ◆ Read one of the above publications or **Barbara Leahy Shlemon's** *Healing the Wounds of Divorce: A Spiritual Guide to Recovery*, Ave Maria Press, 1992. \$9.95.

Lauri and John Przybysz live in Severna Park, Md., and are the parents of six children. Lauri is coordinator of marriage and family enrichment for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Willie and Debbie McCullough of St. Joseph parish, **Lebanon, Ind.**, are starting *Taking the Time to Make a Difference* in the fall. They have recently gotten good support and guidance from a former **Chicago** CFMer, **Doris Gebbia**. The two families learned of their mutual interest in CFM while discussing outreach activities at a parish St. Vincent de Paul meeting.

National secretaries **Lauri and John Przybysz** visited with St. John the Baptist CFM leaders **Dave and Jennifer Goldstein** while they worked in their Pittsburgh area parish bazaar with some of their group members. The group is enjoying the program book *Your Marriage, the Great Adventure* and is gaining new members.

Tom and Mary Kay Halpin have two groups at St. Vincent parish, **Omaha, Neb.**, and are planning to start a third one this fall.

CFM national chaplain **Father Don Conroy** is the new pastor at Holy Family parish in **Latrobe, Penn.** He has scheduled a Covenant weekend in the spring with plans to start a CFM group. The Covenant team from Sacred Heart in **Winchester, Va.** has agreed to help with the weekend.

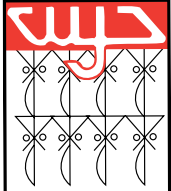
Russ and Josie Spence from **San Ramon, Calif.** report that St. Joan of Arc has thirty-two families in five groups, with eight new families just completing the introductory program, *Taking the Time to Make a Difference*. Their activities include a hoedown in

October, a Christmas party, a Seder dinner, and a CFM group camping trip. Service projects include Habitat for Humanity, Kids Night Out (a.k.a. babysitting) and fundraising events supporting Juvenile Diabetes and Spinal Muscular Dystrophy.

Suzanne and Jon St. John at Our Lady of Guadalupe in **Hermosa Beach, Calif.** inform us that their groups meet once a month for meetings during the school year. They meet monthly for additional social activities year round. The social activities have helped them build a stronger community.

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