

January 26, 2012

Media Alert

Survivor of Ghana Extreme Poverty Visits Orlando to Discuss Global Relief Efforts and Sustainable Development Projects

Who: Thomas Awiapo, citizen of Ghana and field expert with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Catholic parishioners, individuals in the community interested in the impact of global poverty initiatives

What: Thomas Awiapo along with other national and regional spokespersons for Catholic Relief Services will be making presentations on relief efforts and sustainable development projects in other countries through the efforts of CRS. This event is part of "Celebrate Life Day" sponsored by the Diocese of Orlando Office of Advocacy and Justice. All are welcome to attend.

When: Saturday, January 28 at 6:30 p.m.

Where: Holy Family Catholic Church
5125 S. Apopka-Vineland Rd.
Orlando, FL 32819

Additional Information:

One of four orphaned brothers, Thomas Awiapo would go to bed at night crying from hunger.

Born into extreme poverty in northern Ghana, Thomas and his brothers would crouch over a single bowl to share what little food they had. Thomas' two younger brothers eventually died from malnutrition; his older brother walked off one day never to be seen again. "We'd wake up with no breakfast. We had no idea what lunch was. We cried for food," says Thomas. One day, Thomas smelled lunch cooking at a CRS-supported school and it changed his life. Like millions of children who have received meals provided by CRS, a daily lunch brought Thomas into the classroom and kept him coming back.

Thomas is a field expert with Catholic Relief Services and travels every year to tell his story to American Catholics. As part of the CRS Operation Rice Bowl Hunger Awareness Speakers' Tour, Thomas will be visiting parishes, schools and communities across the United States from January 23 through April 4.

"I come from a family that knows nothing about education. I started to go to school simply to have lunch," says Thomas, who holds a master's degree from California State University.