



News from the

Catholic Diocese of Palm Beach

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NEWS RELEASE

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HUNGER SURVIVOR ADDRESSES STUDENTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OPERATION RICE BOWL

The Catholic Diocese of Palm Beach chapter of Catholic Relief Services will be host to Thomas Awiapo, a hunger survivor, who will address local Catholic school students about the importance of participating in the Operation Rice Bowl Program which launches in February 2008 during Lent.

Thomas Awiapo is the Senior Program Officer with CRS Ghana. His story is a remarkable one. Orphaned before the age of ten, he was left on his own to struggle for survival. He was the second of four brothers; his youngest two brothers died of malnutrition and lack of care. Neither of his parents had gone to school and they had no intention of sending any of their children to school. Today, Mr. Awiapo is a graduate of the University of Ghana and holds a Masters degree in Public Administration from California State University at Hayward. Mr. Awiapo grew up attending a CRS-supported school in Ghana that used to offer a snack and a lunch to children who went to school in his village. His hunger for education eventually led him to the U.S. to pursue his education. During his studies at Hayward, he spent his free time telling his story to parishes and schools throughout northern California. Throughout his time in the U.S., he spoke to over 6-thousand students in more than 60 elementary and high schools, teachers, faith groups and Masses in five diocese. His story and presentations are so compelling that many have asked him to return. Mr. Awiapo's village received help from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) through Operation Rice Bowl, the CRS program that connects prayer, fasting and almsgiving with education about poverty and hunger around the world. Mr. Awiapo's visits to the United States are sponsored by Catholic Relief Services as a way to thank Catholic communities for their support and to raise awareness about hunger, relief and development.

Hunger Awareness Appearances take place Thursday February 7, 2008:

9:30 a.m. Pope John Paul II High School, 4001 N. Military Trail, Boca Raton

1:00 p.m. St. Ann School, 324 N. Olive Street, West Palm Beach

2:00 p.m. Rosarian Academy, 807 N. Flagler Blvd, West Palm Beach

4:30 p.m. St. Vincent de Paul Regional Seminary, 10701 S. Military Trail, Boynton Beach

Media are welcome to attend, to coordinate coverage, please contact the Office of Communications in advance.