



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Photojournalists Launch National Campaign to Fight Poverty

## As American poverty rates rise, award-winning photographers team with Catholic Charities USA to raise awareness about the poor and promote solutions.

In Our Own Backyard, a non-profit organization of photojournalists committed to social reform, announces the launch of a new poverty awareness campaign, AmericanPoverty.org. In partnership with Catholic Charities USA, the campaign will be carried out by preeminent photojournalists, with the support of writers, filmmakers and advocates.

“Our photographs show that deep poverty isn’t an abstract idea, isolated to the Third World,” said project director Steve Liss, a twenty-five year veteran *Time* Magazine photographer. “The face of poverty is right here in the U.S., it’s in our workplaces, our neighborhoods, right in our back yard.”

“We are very pleased to be working with Steve Liss and the renowned group of photographers who are visually capturing the face of poverty in America,” said Rev. Larry Snyder, President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA. “Their poignant photographic portrayal is a stunning tableau of the poor who live among us, and a permanent reminder of the need for our work to reduce poverty in this country.”

An analysis of 2008 census data released last month by the National Academy of Sciences concludes that one in six Americans – 47.4 million people – lived in poverty last year. Sixteen million Americans, one third of them children, lived in severe poverty. Millions more are counted among the working poor, living paycheck-to-paycheck. More than two million families face foreclosure as a result of our mortgage lending crisis and devastating job losses.

To shed light on this growing issue, world-renowned photographers have joined the campaign including:

- Jon Lowenstein – Associate Director and 2008 Alicia Patterson Fellow
- Eli Reed – legendary Magnum photographer, author of the defining “Black in America”
- Brenda Ann Kenneally – winner of the 2009 Getty Grant for Editorial Photography
- Danny Wilcox Frazier – author of “Driftless: Stories From Iowa,” winner of the Honickman Book Prize
- Stephen Shames – author of “Outside the Dream” and founder of the LEAD Uganda Foundation
- Carlos Javier Ortiz – recipient of the 2009 Robert F. Kennedy Award for Journalism

AmericanPoverty.org will host an ongoing series of photography exhibits throughout the U.S. including eight in early 2010 as part of Catholic Charities USA’s Centennial Celebration. AmericanPoverty.org will also create a summer grant program for student journalists and offer ongoing support for photojournalists documenting efforts to fight poverty. “Photography is a powerful tool to help personalize the injustice of poverty,” said Liss. “Our goal is to ignite a passion for activism, particularly among America’s youth.”

In partnering with Catholic Charities USA, AmericanPoverty.org joins an organization of more than 1,700 local Catholic Charities institutions nationwide to provide support for the poor regardless of religious, social, or economic backgrounds. Over the past 100 years, Catholic Charities agencies have worked to reduce poverty by providing vital community services ranging from health care and job training to food and shelter.

For more information visit <http://americanpoverty.org/>