



September 25, 2006 - Conan O'Brien Breaks Bread To Celebrate the Opening Of a Meal Center Close To His Heart

Lawrence, MA --Labels Are For Jars (LAFJ) and Cor Unum today announced the successful completion of the Cor Unum Meal Center - a 5,600square foot facility that will help feed hungry families in Lawrence beginning September 30, 2006. LAFJ member Conan O'Brien joins other leaders to "break bread" in support of the meal center they helped make possible.



Cor Unum ("One Heart" in Latin) was established to address the vast unmet nutritional needs in Lawrence, a community in which 75 percent of children are at risk of hunger. Construction of the \$1.5+ million facility began last winter. The entire construction cost was privately funded through donations from individuals, corporations, foundations, the Archdiocese of Boston, and Labels Are For Jars - a group that continues to raise funds to operate the meal center.

Father Erikson, Conan O'Brien, Father Paul O'Brien and Mary Ellen Mills from Labels Are For Jars, break bread together during the opening ceremonies. george martell photo
(see more pictures here)

"We have a lot of good things going on in Lawrence," stated Father Paul B. O'Brien, pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Lawrence, and chairperson of Cor Unum and LAFJ. "Unfortunately, poverty in our community is still on the rise. With Cor Unum, anyone who needs a very good meal will have one major anxiety removed from life. Cor Unum will be a dependable sanctuary for the people of Lawrence. As long as one person in our city needs food, our doors will be open."

The Cor Unum Meal Center will offer a dignified atmosphere and provide a safe environment for the body, soul, and spirit of all those who are in need. The center, staffed mainly by volunteers, will commence operations with the serving of dinners on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday nights, beginning on September 30. Additional meals and days of service will be added in subsequent months. The center has the capacity to serve three hot meals a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Cor Unum announced a major partnership with the Greater Boston Food Bank, through which the majority of its food supplies will come.

In September of 2005, Cor Unum and LAFJ established the goal of raising \$400,000 to support the operations of the center by the time its doors opened. At today's event, leaders of the two organizations announced that more than \$500,000 had been raised. "We are thrilled to have significantly surpassed our goal," explained Mary Ellen Mills, a member of the Labels Are For Jars Central Committee. "We also know that Cor Unum will require strong ongoing financial support. I encourage everyone who wants to get involved with this project to connect with us through www.labelsareforjars.org."

Cardinal Seán O'Malley, appearing via taped message because he is in Italy, stated: "The development of Cor Unum has been a tremendous blessing for the Archdiocese of Boston and for me personally. Cor Unum has a unique importance because it is so creatively and so comprehensively addressing the reality of hunger in Lawrence. . . . For too many Americans, much of day-to-day existence has become centered on



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making difficult choices. How will I keep a roof over my family's head today and also feed them? Which will I choose today - paying the electricity bill, or eating food? . . . The reality of hunger in the United States and in Lawrence is obviously complex, but the basic solution to the reality of hunger is fairly simple - we need to feed one another. All of you who have made possible the Cor Unum Meal Center made a simple choice - to help feed your brothers and sisters who are hungry. That simple choice has already had a profound effect - Cor Unum is a reality. The world really has changed for hungry people in Lawrence, and the world is going to change a great deal more for hungry people in Lawrence in the years ahead because of the ministry of Cor Unum..."

Located in South Lawrence, The Cor Unum Meal Center will provide the following:

- A facility large enough to feed 80 people at one seating, with multiple serving times to accommodate up to 250 people for each meal
- A varied menu of nutritious, well-balanced free meals prepared on site
- An opportunity to socialize with others in a warm, friendly, accepting atmosphere
- A food pantry, previously located in the basement of Saint Patrick Parish's offices, for the provision of food in the form of groceries.

Labels Are For Jars is a dynamic undertaking designed to raise money to fund and operate the Cor Unum Meal Center.

Labels Are For Jars has designed a thought-provoking black t-shirt, which helps to prevent societal labeling. The shirt is adorned with a commonly used negative label ("addict", "geek", "homeless", "jock", "minority", "prisoner", "mentally ill", "pacifist", "slacker", and "troubled teen") on the front with "labelsareforjars.org" across the back. The shirt is packaged in a clear plastic jar with a coin slot cut into the screw top. Buyers are encouraged to use the jar at home, school, or work to collect and donate as much money as they can. One hundred percent of donations are used to fund the Cor Unum Meal Center.

The shirts are sold on the web and through direct sales groups in local communities called street teams. Street teams are primarily groups of high school and college students, who have a unique power to affect change in our society. Labels gear is also available in all Newbury Comics locations.

Since its launch in the winter of 2004, Labels Are For Jars has raised more than \$775,000 to build and operate the Cor Unum Meal Center.

For more information, please visit www.labelsareforjars.org

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