



News Release: January 7, 2015

Communicators for Women Religious receives Conrad N. Hilton Foundation grant

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation has awarded a \$70,000 grant to enable Communicators for Women Religious (CWR) to conduct an extensive evaluation of the organization, which will identify where capacity building would be effective and develop that into a strategic direction to grow the organization and its impact.

“CWR has the potential to have a deeper impact in raising public awareness about women religious, and the Hilton Foundation’s generous grant will enable us to develop a new, far-reaching strategic plan so that we can do this even more effectively,” said Eileen Dickerson, chair of the CWR Board of Directors. “We believe that CWR can become a strong hub for all communications related to Catholic women religious, providing resources, training, events, networking and information regarding Catholic sisters, their mission and image.”

CWR is an international, professional organization of personnel responsible for communications within religious congregations of women. The organization’s mission is to be a network of professional support and education for members who promote understanding of women religious, enhance their image and advance their mission. CWR is also a resource to organizations serving women religious and currently has 180 members representing 140 religious congregations.

The organization will begin by contracting with a professional consultant to conduct a far-reaching evaluation of the organization, said Julie Gilberto-Brady, chair of the CWR ad hoc committee that will oversee the project. The CWR board of directors plans to engage all members of the organization, as well as other non-profits that serve women religious, in the process over the next few months. The final outcome – a new strategic plan that grows the capacity of CWR and expands its impact in the promotion of women religious – will be presented to the full CWR membership at their business meeting during the annual conference in October 2015 in Albuquerque.

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“CWR is the only organization of its kind serving communicators for women religious, and members realize that they are in a unique position to assist the unfolding future of women religious,” Gilberto-Brady said. “When completed, this project will provide us with the clear direction to move forward and expand our reach, empowering our organization to grow in its influence in the promotion of women religious and be an even greater resource to organizations that serve women religious, as well as our own member and individual congregations of women religious.”

The grant to CWR reflects the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation’s commitment to strengthening congregations of Catholic sisters in service to people in need around the world. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by international business pioneer Conrad N. Hilton, who founded Hilton Hotels and left his fortune to help the world's disadvantaged and vulnerable people. The Foundation currently conducts strategic initiatives in six priority areas: providing safe water, ending chronic homelessness, preventing substance abuse, helping children affected by HIV and AIDS, supporting transition-age youth in foster care, and extending Conrad Hilton's support for the work of Catholic sisters. From its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1 billion in grants.

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