

## Letters, now blessed, head for D.C.

By Arthur Foulkes Tribune-Star | Posted: Monday, March 2, 2015 10:25 pm

Hundreds of letters in support of federal funding for childhood nutrition programs will soon make their way from Terre Haute to people in power in Washington, D.C.

Nearly 300 letters were blessed with a prayer Monday night at the United Campus Ministries in a short ceremony before about 20 people, mostly representatives of local churches or other organizations that collected letters for the mission.

Hand-delivered by students from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, the letters are the initiative of the Terre Haute chapter of Bread for the World, a Washington, D.C.-based not-for-profit dedicated to ending hunger in the U.S. by 2030 and reducing hunger worldwide.

More than a dozen SMWC students will take the letters next week to Indiana senators Joe Donnelly and Dan Coats and U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon, the congressman representing the Wabash Valley. The letters urge Congress to continue to support childhood nutrition programs, such as the national school lunch and breakfast programs.

Most of the food that supports needy people in the United States is paid for by federal programs, according to Bread for the World. About 21.5 million children receive a free school lunch. About half that number receive a free school breakfast and a much smaller number receive free meals during the summer months, the organization reports.

Congress is due to review child nutrition programs this year for possible re-authorization. The letters urge Indiana's representatives to continue funding for federal anti-hunger programs.

"This fits well with our mission" of Catholic social teaching, said Andrea Beyke, campus minister at SWMC.

The Woods students will leave this weekend and spend six days in Washington. They plan to visit lawmakers on Capitol Hill on the fourth day. The other days they will volunteer to help the homeless and perform other work for charities in the area, Beyke said.

In 2014, the U.S. federal government spent about \$100 billion on food assistance programs, according to



### Letters, now blessed, head for legislators

Tribune-Star/Alexis Rusch Blessing of the letters: Linda Peters, board chair of United Campus Ministries (above), blesses letters going to Washington, D.C., with Saint Mary-of-the-Woods students. The blessing was Monday night at United Campus Ministries. The letters are to encourage legislators to protect child nutrition programs.

figures published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Bread for the World's website, [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org), includes a sample letter to Congress in support of anti-hunger programs. You can follow the progress of the team from The Woods on Twitter @SMWCCampusMin or on Facebook at SMWC Campus Ministry.

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