



Holy Cross Associates Co-Facilitator Handbook

We first want to express our deep gratitude to each of you for giving your time and talents so generously to the HCA program. The role that you play for us, and for the Associates is invaluable. Through your insights, companionship, and example, the Associates come to understand and appreciate this experience. We look forward to working with you this year, and ask for God's blessing on all of our work!

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL FACILITATOR

“Any helping relationship in the context of Christian faith is an opportunity for sacrament. The helper can regard her or himself as making God present to the other in God's concern, compassion, acceptance, support. In this context, a helper is one who agrees to listen, to be a companion who goes along on the journey, to be willing to be him or herself, honest in feelings, strengths and weaknesses.”

- Paraphrased from The Art of Christian Listening by Thomas Hart

You bring your unique gifts and experience to the role of Local Facilitator. A challenge for Local Facilitators is to seek a balance between, on the one hand, being present to the Associates: offering support and challenge, sharing examples from experience and resources; and on the other hand providing enough space, listening, and trust for them to take initiative, make decisions, find their own way and find growth as individuals and community.

Description of Local Facilitators role with the Associates Program

The Local Facilitators of the Associates in a site are generally a team of two. They are resource persons, facilitators, mentors, who support and challenge young men and women in a lay formation program.

The team of two is usually composed of a Holy Cross religious from the local community and a lay person who is a former Holy Cross Associate or has had other relevant experience.

Responsibilities:

1. Presence at the Orientation at designated site -- usually the first week in August.
2. Team building with each other, i.e., develop working relationship.
 - a. Discussing schedules and responsibilities, availability for community nights/retreats, times to meet individually with HCAs.
 - b. Discussing styles of facilitating, perspectives on role within community, and ways to assist in community development/discernment.
 - c. Building in regular communication regarding thoughts on how community and individuals are doing; any concerns that may arise.
 - d. Working out a means of accountability with the program staff, local and in South Bend.
3. Facilitation of Associates' formation in the local site by:
 - a. Setting up an orientation (tour) for the Associates to the local site and their placements.
 - b. Putting the Associates in touch with the local Holy Cross community and acting as liaison between the Associates and the local community.
 - c. Introducing the present Associates to former Associates in the area
 - d. Planning with the Associates topics of reflection during the year.
 - e. Meeting with each Associate on a regular basis for check-in at least once during each half of the year.
 - f. Being present, celebrating and praying with the Associates at weekly gathering as well as other times.
 - g. Assisting the Associates in planning retreats and finding places for retreating.
 - h. Facilitating the process of introduction to spiritual direction and potential spiritual directors.
 - i. Assisting in community and individual discernment regarding travel, simple living, community relationships and conflicts.

Length of term:

Ideally a Local Facilitator for the program would serve for more than one year -- possibly three

would be ideal. Realistically, we are looking for individuals to serve for a year and to recommit themselves on the basis of an informal assessment done between themselves, the Associates, their local Holy Cross community if they are CSCs, and the staff in South Bend. The appointments are always made with the concurrence of the home office and the local CSC community.

Remuneration:

Presently we are offering a stipend of \$300 to each Co-Facilitator to be used for expenses incurred in their interaction with the Associates. The travel expenses for the Local Facilitators to and from the Orientation are paid through the Program. All expenses during the time in August are covered by the program. If more funding is needed for the Facilitators to meet expenses with the Associates, a request is made of the office and we will supply the needed amount.

BEGINNING THE YEAR ...

Before Arrival

Please check the house before the Associates come to make sure all is in order. The rent will be paid by the current Associates for July and August. The utilities should have been paid the last month, so they will be left on in the interim. The departing HCA group should make sure that any broken appliances are fixed before the new group arrives.

Each house of Associates will have sent a set of house keys and the checkbook to the home office. We will give these items to the new group at orientation before they leave for their sites. They should have left car keys and notes in the house for the new group.

Co-Facilitators, possibly in coordination with the local CSCs or community, should help figure out who can and will meet the HCAs at the bus station, and how to arrange getting them to their house. The home office will help as needed.

Work Placements

The placements have been notified that they can expect the Associate to report to work by the third Monday in August. This date gives the Associates time to settle in, get to know where their placements are, work out travel arrangements, get to know the city, etc. This time is also a great opportunity for Co-Facilitators to show the HCAs a few things of interest in the local area.

The Local Facilitators, with the help of former Associates and others in the area, will orient the new group to the area. During the first week there, the Local Facilitators probably check in each day. Also during the first week, one (or both) of the Local Facilitators should make arrangements with the agencies for the HCAs to visit the facilities. This is usually done as a group so that each Associate can get a feel for where his/her housemates will work. The Local Facilitators introduce the Associates to their contact person at each placement. Names and agencies should be in the Local Facilitators' file or with the HCA office.

Building Community

Some of the Associate houses are in a CSC parish, others are not. It's important to plan some events with the parish people to welcome the Associates. Some have done this through the bulletin, others through a picnic, others through introductions at liturgies.

During the first few weeks, Local Facilitators introduce the Associates to the CSC community in the area. Begin establishing these ties as early as possible. In some cities, the Associates are invited to the weekly CSC community night. Often, the Associates are invited to community celebrations (feast days, ordination, etc.). It would be important to discuss with the local CSC superior what the expectations are for the Associates' involvement with the CSC community.

At the beginning of the year, Local Facilitators and Associates should establish a schedule for weekly meetings. Former Associates might be invited to meet with new ones in the first few weeks over a dinner, cook-out, etc. List of names and addresses of former Associates in the area can be supplied to both the Local Facilitators and the HCA house.

SERVICE

Work Placement Contacts

The Local Facilitators introduce the new Associates to their supervisors at their respective work placements during the first week. Associates have been sent the name and address of their contact person during the Summer; most will have been in touch with them by the time they arrive.

Someone from the HCA office will usually make a visit to the agency sometime during the year to touch base and take care of any business matters. The agencies will be in contact with the Home Office if there are any problems with the individual Associate and the placement, and any concerns will be relayed to the local facilitators.

Concerns

It may become necessary for an Associate to change jobs during the year. If the Associate reports problems on the job, please encourage him/her to go first to his/her supervisor to discuss the situation. If the problem remains, it might be necessary for the Local Facilitators to arrange a meeting with the Associate and his/her supervisor. Please notify the HCA office if the situation is serious enough to cause a possible job change, and keep the HCA staff up-dated on any meetings or discussions with the agencies. If it looks as though the situation cannot be rectified, we ask that the Associate give proper notice to the agency, and if possible and appropriate, schedule an exit interview. The Associate who changes jobs during the year should then be actively involved in the new job search along with the Local Facilitators.

Reflection on Service

Throughout the year, the Local Facilitators assist the HCAs in making connections between service, faith and opting for the poor. Often this reflection takes place informally, but this reflection should also at times be "formalized." The questions and issues raised through their experience in serving should be addressed throughout the year. The Associates should be given opportunities to talk about their struggles, their successes, their frustrations in their placements. Their attitudes and opinions may go through tremendous changes and growth during the year; often the Local Facilitators are instrumental in assisting them in articulating these changes, and sorting through the range of feelings. If possible, one of the meetings between each Local Facilitator and each Associate should include a visit to the placement during work time.

At different points in the year, you may want to invite people who have been involved in service for a longer time to have them meet with the Associates and share their own stories. Often, an HCA group may invite someone with particular knowledge in a certain area (i.e., homelessness, domestic violence, etc.) to speak to the group on a community night. It might be beneficial for the Associates to get together with local CSCs to share their respective experiences of service.

The Local Facilitators also encourage the Associates to come in touch with social issues. Finding articles and making them aware of what is available to them in the local community helps them to gain information and insight.

COMMUNITY

Community Life

Community life is an exciting and challenging part of the Associate experience. Though the groups generally start out relating well with one another, discovering new friendships, willing to cooperate and compromise, inevitably, a gap arises between their expectations and the reality. During the months of September, October, and November, the Associates often experience feelings of homesickness, and question whether they made the right decision in joining HCA. This happens to a certain degree in each house every year, but it's important for the Local Facilitators to affirm the Associates in their struggles and remind them that these feelings are natural and normal. Often, Associates come in with the expectation that community will simply "happen"; they need to know that community building is a process, and that these struggles are steps along the way.

Local Facilitators work with the Associates throughout the year on communication skills and healthy ways to confront as part of the process of building community. This begins at orientation and continues in various ways during the year.

We strongly encourage the Associates to share meals together as many nights a week as possible. Community night when the Local Facilitators join the HCAs for dinner is also a weekly event. We also suggest that an additional weekly meeting (often called 'Nuts and Bolts') be held, where plans, chores, and responsibilities in the house are worked out. (The Local Facilitators are not there for this.)

Community Night

Community night has become a "sacred" event with the Associate Program. It has been treated in different ways by different groups and Local Facilitators, but it is basically an opportunity each week for the Associates and Local Facilitators to come together to reflect on what is happening in the life of the HCA community. Usually, there is a meal and prayer (or liturgy) together and then a definite amount of time set up for reflection or some other activity. Community night may occasionally be playing games or going out for dessert or bowling, but usual focus of the evening should be reflection. Local Facilitators can be aware of the balance in the house. Some communities and individuals may lean toward the serious and heavy reflection, and may need to be encouraged to take breaks in order to have some fun together. Others (more likely) may need to be challenged and given resources in order to stimulate serious reflection together.

Community night should not usually be a time to work on house problems unless immediate serious concerns are happening and discernment with Local Facilitators needs to occur at that time. Typically, community nights should be a time to enjoy each others' company.

At times, the community may want to invite a guest for community night. The time should be treated seriously and has to be regular. In the beginning, establishing and clarifying the relationship between the Local Facilitators and the community might be a good starting point. Then it might be helpful to begin some reflection on the transition, placements, and initial feelings about this experience.

Meeting and Discernment

We encourage Local Facilitators to meet individually with each Associate during the first month so that he/she has an opportunity to speak to you about how he/she is doing. Ideally, each Associate should have had a one-on-one meeting with one of the Local Facilitators before the first house retreat in the Fall. Going out for coffee or dessert is a nice way to set a relaxed tone for these one-on-ones if possible. It's also a good idea to meet individually again at various points in the year. Local Facilitators can be listening on community nights and check in with

each other about which individuals may need some individual attention regarding struggles and challenges.

House Issues

Relationships and friendships develop naturally among the Associates, and romances may develop as well. Though it is often difficult for the individuals to bring it up to the whole group, this has to be talked about. It can ruin a whole year for the house if it isn't addressed. Everyone will have different reactions: some feel left out, some feel it's none of anyone else's business, etc.. The Local Facilitators should help them take a critical, objective look at what this does to the house and their total living experience. Likewise, an Associate who becomes seriously involved in a relationship with someone from outside the community might need help in seeing how the choices that he/she is making affect the others in the group.

There are other predictable issues that surface each year in Associate communities such as travel, simple lifestyle, expectations surrounding prayer, etc.. Local Facilitators should help the Associates gain skills in consensus decision making. For most Associates, this is a new concept, and very different from the way they've made decisions in the past. They need guidance, and practice in these areas. The HCA office can supply articles, and exercises designed to facilitate such experiences.

Sometimes there may be need to get outside help for an individual or for the group. Alcohol interventions have occurred during an Associate year. At times, psychological counseling has been needed (see FINANCES section for insurance information). Please make sure that the South Bend staff has been notified immediately by the Associates or by you, or any major physical or emotional concerns, including accidents and serious illness.

SPIRITUAL LIFE and PRAYER

Communal Spirituality

The Local Facilitators provide valuable assistance in developing the spiritual life of the Associate community. Whereas most Associates have already had experience in service, and in relating to others, some Associates do not have much experience in sharing their spirituality and faith life with another person or group of people.

It is expected that each community will have some form of communal prayer, beyond community night, during the week. Again, this does not come naturally or easily for many HCAs. Local Facilitators should assist them in seeing the importance of this routine, and in making connections between prayer, service, community, etc..

Individual expectations for prayer should be addressed during the first or second week of the year. Local Facilitators should be a part of these early discussions. Because this is new to most Associates, they may need guidance and suggestions. Many times, Associate communities will experiment with different forms and methods of prayer: some have tried gathering once a week for reflection on Scripture or other readings, some have tried morning and evening prayer, some have read the daily Gospel before meals, etc.. Some times these "formulas" will "work" for a few weeks, then they'll miss a few weeks, and put prayer on the back burner for a while. Encourage them to keep trying until they find a routine that "fits" their community.

There are books of Psalms and other resources in each house. The HCA office will send many articles to the houses throughout the year. If you find particularly good articles, send a copy to the HCA office and we'll circulate it to the other Local Facilitators.

Retreats

Ideally, the Associates will participate in two "in-house" retreats (retreat for only their local community and any invited facilitator), one in the Fall and one in the Spring. Local Facilitators can assist HCAs in locating retreat sites; often local friends of the program/community members generously offer houses and cabins for weekend retreats. Associates should be encouraged to give thanks for these gifts with donations or help in any way that may be needed.

Usually, the Local Facilitators should do most of the planning of the Fall retreat, based on input, interests and suggestions from the Associates. The exception to this would be a house in which more than one Associates has experience in retreat planning and is very interested in taking responsibility for this retreat. In this case, Local Facilitators should still work with them in the framing of the retreat. It's important for them to get time away to reflect on the first two of three months.

In the past, the houses have paired up for a retreat together over Thanksgiving. The HCA Staff is often a resource for this retreat.

In the late Winter or Spring, the Associates usually have another retreat. The Local Facilitators should, if possible, also come to the Spring house retreat. This retreat should be planned mainly by the Associates themselves.

The annual May Retreat at the University of Portland is being planned for the upcoming Associate year. This typically occurs during Memorial Day weekend.

Individual Associates will often take some time to themselves at different points in the year. Local Facilitators should encourage them to do this when needed and help them find a place to go. In some cities, local CSCs have offered the use of various Holy Cross retreat houses.

Spiritual Direction

We strongly encourage each Associate to receive spiritual direction, which is also new for most of them. In the first few weeks, the Local Facilitators should introduce what spiritual direction is/can be, and its importance during this year. A spiritual director can give the Associate outside perspective and insight into this powerful experience.

Please be ready to suggest people, both men and women, CSCs and others, who will be appropriate persons for the Associates to seek out for spiritual direction. Usually, the Local Facilitators and work supervisors do not serve as spiritual directors for the Associates, but it isn't an impossible situation. The local CSCs should be helpful in putting together a list of potential spiritual directors. Arrange for the Associates to come in touch with these people so they can meet those who are available. In the past, some houses have invited potential spiritual directors over for a dessert or the like, to meet the group. Also, Local Facilitators should alert the Associates to the fact that they can "check out" someone to be a spiritual director without making a commitment to continue meeting with them -- and that this works both ways.

AN OPTION FOR THE POOR -- Living Simply

Integrating the Simple Lifestyle

Because Associates often come to the HCA year with a variety of experience and philosophy regarding living simply, a discussion and exercises related to this could be one of the first community night reflections. Local Facilitators can help Associates to see the possibilities for awareness and impact on others in relation to the option for the poor as well as the possibilities for personal growth living simply provides. Associates should look at ways in which living simply relates not only to how they deal with money, but just as importantly, how living simply relates to relationships and time use. Local Facilitators may want to challenge Associates not to over-commit themselves in order to be more present to each other, as well as addressing TV use, going out excessively, and/or spending excessive time in relationships outside of the community (necessary for Associates to have, but with consideration to their commitment to community).

We would hope that the Associates will grow in their understanding of stewardship during this year. We should encourage them to recycle, take care of their "things", be creative when it comes to giving gifts or celebrating birthdays, share a simple meal once a week, challenge themselves with things like 'No Energy Days' or fasting of other sorts, etc..

Travel Policy

The Travel Policy has often been an item of discussion in the Associate communities. Following is a copy of the travel policy as presented by the HCA staff:

The Associate agrees in the spirit of an option for solidarity with the poor, and in opting for living a common life with others, to limit personal travel during the period of service. Typical travel would be to family emergencies or weddings of immediate family members. Travel to meet family needs is ordinarily assumed to be a family expense. Occasions such as graduate school or job interviews may become necessary but in no case are the financial responsibility of the Associate Program.

We would like to explain why we ask Associates to limit their travel and offer some thoughts for Associates to consider while discerning whether or not to travel.

1. Respect for the commitment both the HCA program and the individual Associate make to the work placement.

An Associate is considered a newly hired employee. Most new employees have very limited vacation and sick days. The HCA program, in their agreement with each agency, requests three days off at Thanksgiving and an additional four days off for the Spring Retreat. This is more than most employers give to a new employee during their first year of employment.

2. The Associate's commitment to building a community life.

We would offer these thoughts for reflection before an Associate seeks to travel.

- a. *It is difficult for a community to continue to grow if all of its members are not present.*
- b. *Each Associate is given \$60 per month for personal use. The Associate is asked to try and live within that boundary. While some Associates are able to finance travel from outside sources, others are not. If some Associates augment their personal stipend in order to travel excessively and others are unable to do so, this could prove to be a source of tension within the Associate community.*

c. *Times of celebration together often strengthen bonds among people.*

3. Solidarity with the poor.

It is an economic reality that those who are poor are forced to limit their travel. Associates commit themselves to living a preferential option for the poor.

Though the Holy Cross Associates program does not forbid travel under any circumstances, we ask all Associates to consider these motivations during their discernment process when deciding whether or not to travel.

Visits to Associate locations by friends and families are valued and appreciated aspects of the HCA experience. Recognizing that the presence of visitors for more than a few days can interfere with the normal work and living patterns established by the Associates as a group, the Associate agrees to limit the number and length of such visits.

Each Associate is asked to enter a process of discernment with his/her community and Local Facilitators before making commitments to travel or inviting others to visit.

It would be good for the Local Facilitators to review this policy with the Associates at appropriate times during the year. It should be noted that Local Facilitators are to be a part of the discernment process.

FINANCES

Basically, the Associates live on a break-even budget (as does the Program). Each agency that places an Associate pays him/her a stipend and reimburses the home office for an administrative fee and health insurance. The stipend (payable to the HCA) is currently set at around \$8,300 gross pay. Separately, \$1600 comes to our office in the form of an administrative fee, and a paycheck goes to the Associate over the year, usually twice monthly or so; this, in turn, is deposited into a general HCA account. In addition to these funds, the agencies also cover the cost of the HCA health insurance policy.

House Money

Each month, the Provincial accounting office transfers money to each house by means of electronic transfer (quarterly for Chile). The Associates use the money to pay for rent, utilities, food, transportation costs, entertainment, household expenses, travel to any Program related retreats and travel home at the end of the year. Each Associate also draws \$60 per month for personal expenses out of this account.

Part of having the Associates reflect on an option for the poor is to have them be accountable for their own expenses and to budget wisely. They will have to make choices on what they do, what they eat, where they go, etc. Meals and what they eat are usually the first consideration when it comes to living simply and beginning their identification with the poor. Entertainment is also a big question for them. How they spend their time together, and stay within a budget is a new challenge for many. Though the house steward takes responsibility for the accounting in the house and sending a financial report to the HCA office, each person should participate in the decision making about how their money is spent. Most houses will have a ledger book to record expenses; likewise, each Associate should be responsible for writing down what they've spent of the house money. It's good to return periodically to the root of these choices, to the issues behind these decisions, as the Associates examine and recommit themselves to the option for the poor.

Cars

Inevitably, in each house at some point in the year, the Associates will run into problems with the cars. Please inform the HCA office of any major repairs; we may want to consider buying a new car if the repair expense exceeds \$500 or if repairs are often needed. Also new is a "coupon-book" that each car should have which allows the Associates to take the car to a pre-determined place for an oil change, tune up, etc. and to simply use the coupon as payment. The garage will use the coupon to bill the province.

Insurance

The HCA Health Insurance plan is provided by Christian Brothers. A copy of the plan is included.

Finances

Money is transferred to the house account on or about the 25th of the month before it is used; included is a portion to cover medical expenses.

Mental Health Benefits

As a general rule, the HCA insurance plan pays for 50% of these costs for the Associates, but usually a deductible needs to be satisfied first. In the past, the HCA house has picked up the other 50% or worked a payment arrangement with the home office. Either way, please do not hesitate to recommend counseling if you feel it is necessary. In any case where an

Associate seems to be in an unhealthy pattern or situation, we ask that the Local Facilitators please keep in touch with the staff at the HCA office with any developments.

Deductibles, co-payments, prescriptions

Again, as a general rule, the houses and the individual HCAs are responsible for taking care of the health needs by responsible use of the health plan. If they stay within the network of providers in their areas, they will generally have only co-payments to pay in order to see a doctor. In the event of a hospitalization or other, more major, procedure, there may be a deductible to pay and the home office needs to be consulted (particularly if the house has not