

Students participate in 30-hour fast to raise money for world hunger

By Matt Vande Bunte, The Grand Rapids Press

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Jessica Scott | The Grand Rapids Press
Sophomores Cam Wysocki, 16, left, and Brett Michaud, 15, in Forest Hills Northern High School, will participate in a 30-hour fast to raise money for world hunger. GRAND RAPIDS TOWNSHIP - The church sometimes feels to Cam Wysocki "like a little classroom where you're learning about God," while at other times "you feel like you're connecting with God."

The Forest Hills Northern High School sophomore expects a fast this weekend at his church will be the kind of event that not only connects him to God, but also to an estimated 1 billion people worldwide who go hungry daily.

"Every day I eat so much," said Wysocki, 16. "We don't realize what's going on in the world. How much we have compared to the average of the world is eye-opening."

And, for at least 30 hours, the comparison will be stomach-growling for Wysocki and about 30 other youth from **Genesis United Methodist Church**, as well as some friends from school. They plan to fast from 6 a.m. Friday to noon Saturday as part of an annual **30-Hour Famine** to raise money for World Vision's international hunger programs.

World Vision also is organizing a 30-Hour Famine April 23-24. Almost 500,000 teens nationwide are expected to fast -- consuming only water and juice -- while collecting \$12 million in donations. The Genesis group's fundraising goal is \$3,600.

Some of the money this year will support earthquake relief in Haiti through fruit-tree planting, drip irrigation projects, construction of medical clinics and food distribution.

The fast will help teens "see beyond the extreme blessedness that we experience in the United States, even in our worst economic downspin," said Dan Bright, youth ministry coordinator at Genesis.

"They have a snack whenever they want," he said. "To fast for these 30 hours will give them a small feeling of what it's like for some people in these other countries, and also open them up spiritually to how God may want to use them."

Wysocki and his peers will ask fellow students Friday to give their lunch money to **World Vision**. They will spend the night at church playing games and learning about world hunger, while passing some time at the movie theater.

The group plans to volunteer at a food bank Saturday morning, then break the fast with a large meal at noon.

"We have shelter, water and food, but over in Africa and other places, they don't necessarily have that," said Brett Michaud, 15, a **St. Robert parishioner** and friend of Wysocki's. "For us to go one day without food, I feel like I'm connecting with them."

"It's inspiring to me. It moves me to think that kids have to do this almost every single day."

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