

BERSI 2009: INITIAL APPLICATION

Blessed Edmund Rice Solidarity Initiative
Catholic Memorial School www.riceinstitute.com

*Note: This is an initial application.
Within three months of each trip, there will be a more thorough application process.*

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

Name:

Homeroom:

Grade:

Date of birth::

Home address:

City:

ZIP Code:

Home Phone:

**2009 BERSI TRIPS: PLACE A "CHECK" NEXT TO THE TRIP YOU WILL TAKE.
ALL TRIP COSTS INCLUDE AIRFARE, MEALS, ACTIVITIES, AND HOTEL.**

El Salvador (February 14-21, 2009): Participants will have an incredible 7-day experience exploring Central American culture and various Church efforts on behalf of the poor in El Salvador. The group will attend classes at the University of Central America while examining U.S. foreign policy through the lens of the Salvadoran civil war. They will also meet with various Church groups and representatives who labor on behalf of human rights. They will visit the convent and cancer hospice where Archbishop Oscar Romero lived and was assassinated in 1980, spend a morning volunteering at the Lidia Coggiola School--a preschool for children in La Libertad. They will spend a day volunteering at an orphanage and have lunch at the Women's Helath Promotion Training Program Project at Mejicanos. They will volunteer at a primary and secondary school in El Zaito, spend an evening at Mujer y Comunidad in Zaragoza, and explore the Pacific Coast in the beautiful city of La Libertad.

Approximate cost: \$1600

Peru (June 13-21, 2009): A group of sixteen students and faculty members will explore the "underside" of Lima, Peru, including the *pueblo joven*s or "young towns" on the desert outskirts of Lima. This life-changing trip is not for the faint of heart and is intended to introduce students and faculty to the serious problems and issues that affect the lives of the poor in the Third World. Students will spend a day volunteering at the youth clinic of Dr. Tony Lazarra and two days at various Christian Brother mission sites in Lima. They will also spend a day at a *comedor* community kitchen in *Villa El Salvador* and a day volunteering at a Church-run day-care center. In addition, the group will also experience some traditional touring, including a full day at the Pachamamac archeological dig as well as visiting various Peruvian museums and cultural opportunities in order to learn more about the food and culture of indigenous Peruvians.

Approximate cost: \$2000

South Korea (June 20-30, 2009): Be a part of the first Catholic Memorial delegation in school history to visit this unique land on the other side of the world. After one full-day of travel, students will spend a total of eight days in Seoul--an ultra-modern city that ranks as the fifth largest economy in the world. The group will visit the families of some of our CM Korean students and explore historical and cultural sites such as the Cheondogyo Temple, the Gyeongbok Palace, and Olympic Park, as well as natural wonders like Seoul Grand Park and Ttukseom Forest. Students will visit the 38th parallel that divides North and South Korea as well as Korean schools. Like all BERSI trips, a service component will also be part of this trip.

Approximate cost: \$2500

REFERENCE

Please name two teachers who, if asked, would be able to speak of your strengths as a student and person.

This application must be accompanied by a non-refundable deposit of \$100 and must be signed by both the student applicant and a parent/guardian to acknowledge the following: Admittance will be on a rolling basis beginning October 30, 2008. Space is limited on these trips; applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their initial applications early. Once accepted, a deposit of \$700 (check made payable to CM) must be received at Catholic Memorial no later than December 15, 2008 to reserve airfare. A space will only be held after this date for those whose deposits have been received. BERSI trips may seem expensive, but students are encouraged to defray this cost through the winter with fundraising activities, and ideas will be generated among the group on how to go about this. An exact cost for the trip will be determined three months prior to the trip, as will an exact itinerary. All trips must be paid in full by the date they begin. Upon acceptance and receipt of deposit, we will notify the student and parents by mail of his acceptance into the program and of the date of a mandatory organizational meeting.

Signature of applicant:

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

Date:



Catholic Memorial School

*We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.
We are spiritual beings having a human experience.*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

October 9, 2008

Dear CM Parents,

I am writing to invite your son to be a part of one of three very special opportunities that the Blessed Edmund Rice Solidarity Initiative (BERSI) will sponsor this year. Attached you will find an application for this year's BERSI trips. Please take a few minutes to read about the trips and learn what your son can gain from them.

Catholic Memorial's BERSI program has brought nearly three hundred students to cities in the western hemisphere with the aim of immersing them in new settings and opening their eyes to the world community in which we all have a stake as human beings. This year, with trips planned for Lima, Peru, El Salvador, and—for the first time—South Korea, we aim to offer such life-changing experiences to as many more students as we can.

Consider the following words from alumni of the BERSI program:

BERSI Peru was life changing and life molding for me. It was a huge step forward in my life, and it's changed me as a person.

~Peter McGovern '07

BERSI Puerto Rico gave us the opportunity to experience firsthand some of its natural treasures, develop personal relationships with locals, and truly immerse ourselves in sights, smells, and sounds of the culture. It was outstanding!

~Greg Sabina '09

One thing you may notice at first about these trips is the high costs of them. While we are working on establishing BERSI scholarship funds this year (as we have in years past), rest assured that through fundraising efforts with your son, we can help him find creative ways to reduce these costs.

Catholic Memorial School is no ordinary place. BERSI, named after founder of the Christian Brothers Edmund Rice, is just one thing that makes it extraordinary. So many Knights have learned as much since BERSI began in 2003. This year, your son can be a part of a transformative trip that he'll remember for years to come. For more information, feel free to give me a call at the number below or visit www.RiceInstitute.com.

Sincerely,

Joe McGonegal
BERSI Director