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## Quote of the week



"The man is a crockpot of different things. . . . He led one of the most exciting, insane lives I've ever read in my life, and I just had to play him."

— Leonardo DiCaprio, on eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes, whom he plays in "The Aviator."

# Hunger relief to a T

By TENLEY WOODMAN

Nonprofit organization Labels are for Jars is aiming to put a lid on stereotypes and hunger.

The Rev. Paul O'Brien of St. Patrick's Church in South Lawrence helped create the charity to combat the city's hunger problems.

In Lawrence, 31.7 percent of

## Charity workers wear their hearts on their shirts

children younger than 18 are living in households below the poverty line, and approximately 75 percent of school-age children in the city qualify for government food programs.

"We've got to change the world here. Hunger is a huge issue in this country and urban America," O'Brien said.

To raise money for Cor Unum, a meal center to be built next to St. Patrick's Church, Labels are for Jars sells T-shirts with "addict," "mentally ill" or "illegal immigrant" on the front, and the organization's name on the back.

"In America we seem to do an awful lot of labeling — jocks, geeks, mentally ill people, addicts. We spend a lot of time distancing ourselves from each other with labels," O'Brien said.

"I thought it would be great to undermine labeling by throwing them on ourselves."

The shirts are packaged in jars, which people can use to collect money for the meal center.

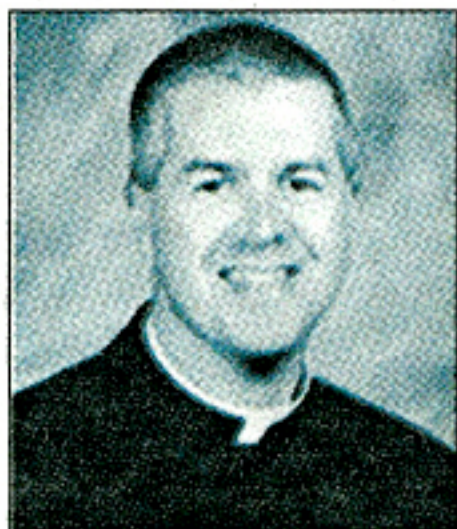
Because Labels are for Jars is run by volunteers, teenagers play a huge part in promoting the project.

"My experience is that young people are the most interested in changing the world," said O'Brien, 40, who worked with Mother Teresa in Calcutta as a young priest.

Meghan Battle, 17, of Concord, is part of a Labels are for Jars street team.

"In a town like Concord there are very few people going hungry, and if they are we don't know about it. I had no idea the extent of the problem (hunger). It raises awareness in kids. It's really eye-opening to people," Battle said.

"I think it's cool because they make people look twice," said the Concord-Carlisle High School senior. "Why is a white girl walking around with a shirt that says 'minority' on it? I think it's a really cool way for kids to take initiative."



**LABELING COMPASSION:** The Rev. Paul O'Brien created a unique fund-raising campaign.

Aside from the shirts' edgy appeal, Battle said the street team is empowering for those involved because it puts teens in control. Last year more than 80 youths showed interest in the project.

"Kids like to step outside that label they own, or be proud about it and wear a shirt that says what they are. I have friends that have had eating disorders or depression who chose to wear shirts that say 'mentally ill,'" Battle said.

To learn more about Labels are for Jars, go to [www.labelsareforjars.org](http://www.labelsareforjars.org)

**MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE:** T-shirts from Labels are for Jars come packed in a jar that can be used to collect funds for the anti-hunger organization.

