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KATHY LIEN BORIS SCHLOSSBERG

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Cash from parish closings will help feed the hungry

By Marie Szaniszló

Thursday, September 22, 2005 - Updated: 01:25 AM EST

The Archdiocese of Boston will use \$500,000 from the sale of closed parishes to help build a soup kitchen and food pantry in the state's poorest city, church officials said yesterday.

The Cor Unum (One Heart) Meal Center will offer free groceries and three meals a day, seven days a week, when it opens next spring in Lawrence, where 75 percent of children are at risk for hunger.

"When you understand the enormity of hunger in Lawrence . . . the reality can seem overwhelming," said the Rev. Paul O'Brien, the center's chairman. "Cor Unum is the proof that people who are committed to creatively fighting hunger in the United States can achieve remarkable success."

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Last year, O'Brien and a team of volunteers decided to raise up to \$1.4 million to build the 5,600-square-foot building on a Carver Street parking lot owned by St. Patrick's parish. Individual donors, foundations and businesses chipped in \$450,000. And the archdiocese agreed to fund all construction costs beyond \$900,000 using assets from the sale of some of the 62 parishes it has closed or merged since last year due to dwindling donations in the wake of the clergy sex abuse scandal. To raise the rest, volunteers designed and sold "Labels Are for Jars" T-shirts for \$19 each (www.labelsareforjars.org) to undermine societal labeling of the poor and homeless.

"Father Paul O'Brien and the wonderful Cor Unum and Labels Are for Jars teams have made possible what most people would find impossible to achieve," said [Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley](#).

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