

To the WDIV station management,

I just wanted to express my concerns about a story that ran over the weekend on WDIV featuring Dr. Frank McGeorge and his coverage of the Caring and Sharing orphanage in Haiti. The impression left by your story is that Catholic Relief Services denied food to orphans. This simply isn't true.

On Saturday, Dr. McGeorge, Mr. Studstill and a WDIV cameraman arrived, unannounced, at the CRS Port-au-Prince office requesting food for the orphanage. They were invited in and our staff took considerable time to listen to their request, explain our process and take down their information. One of our communications officers also spent more than an hour with your crew, explaining the challenges of logistics, communications and security in delivering relief to the many desperate people in Haiti.

We have people arriving at our office every day asking for food, and we respond to those requests in a timely, orderly and secure manner. This is the process: we take their information, we send a CRS staffer to their site to determine how many people need services and what they need. Perhaps they need relief supplies in addition to food, such as hygiene materials. Once the assessment is complete, they go on our distribution list and receive what they need.

Everyone who requests food from us must go through the same assessment process to ensure that those most in need got the aid first. This organization asked to get its food immediately, which would have put their request ahead of others who had asked prior to their request.

In this case, I'm happy to write that the Caring and Sharing orphanage received a substantial delivery of food today.

We are distributing tons of food, water and medicine, but we recognize that many more people are hungry. We are doing everything we can to get food to them quickly. While CRS has provided food to nearly 75,000 people and non-food items to 15,000 people within the first ten days of relief efforts, logistics, communication and security have been serious challenges. Still, food and relief is reaching people, and we estimate that CRS will reach as many as 200,000 people by early March.

Sincerely,

John Rivera
Acting Director of Communications
Catholic Relief Services