

A DARFUR REPORT

The children of Cincinnati's Black Family Reunion

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At Saturday and Sunday, August 15-16 Black Family Reunion in Cincinnati, members and friends of Christ Church Cathedral participated in the set-up and management of the Cathedral's Darfur booth located near the serpentine wall at Sawyer Point Park on the Ohio River. The cathedral's booth was neighbor to other non-profits like the Underground Railroad & Freedom Center and the children's services pavilion.

As a result, large numbers of young families with children of all ages mingled in the area and were the majority visitors to our booth. In order to accommodate the youthful crowd, quick readjustments were made to the pre-planned sales pitch to fit the interest and curiosity of children.

"What happened to her?" they asked with high concern, as children viewed the Pulitzer prize winning photograph of the vulture and the little Sudan girl starving for food. "Where is she?" they demanded.

In response, the adult occupants of the booth made gentle reply, educating families and children on African geography and the severe realities of life for the little child in the photograph. Many of the families were residents of Over-the-Rhine community in downtown Cincinnati, an area included in lower-income economic statistics.

Without coaxing and in earnest attention, innately the children readily understood the comparative differences between their own lives and the child in the photograph. They had food that morning--and their water was not dirty.

And to the question "Would you like to help?" the children responded with eager shaking of the head in 'yes' reply. Some wanted to learn more. Others wanted to involve their schools. And many, seeing the

"\$1 for Darfur kids!" signage, looked up expectantly at parents asking for coins "to put in the box."

Young families emptied out their pockets in literal last-dime generosity, young fathers sorrowful at not having more--others making good their promise to return later to donate.

In sum, by end of Saturday and Sunday summer days in the park overlooking Ohio River, the children of Cincinnati Black Family Reunion had donated to the children of Darfur 37 pennies, 3 nickels, 6 dimes, 15 quarters, 65 one-dollars, 1 five-dollar and 1 ten-dollar bill.

The children "got it".

There was no hesitation or hedging---no 'buts'. No excuse concerning what's and why's of history was sufficient.

Because children naturally generalize the plight of other children to themselves, they care nothing for high commissions or congressional resolutions. They are not impressed by political argumentations or erudite theses---states' settlement for remnant versus full-blown genocide.

For these children, no child's life is expendable, the safety of children being inalienable to the very soul of their creation.

If the littlest human child is unequivocal in understanding that the killing must stop, why can't adults help them to achieve it? Who shall stand?

Dr. Bates-Mims serves as chair of Christ Church Cathedral's Ecumenical Coalition on Human Rights. She is a grandmother.