



A special bounty: Sealed and fresh, retrieved food gets the quality check after an adventurous night of dumpster diving.

By day they build web pages,
but after hours...

Young CEDC Staffers Live the Gospel on the Streets of Washington, D.C.



You have a vague idea of what to expect when you approach a place known by an acronym and staffed by gen-exers who work on web pages. Computer geeks. Alt-music heads with shallow souls and a taste for veggies. But what if those veggies come from a dumpster?



www.youtube.com

In the dumpster, Ryan Rodrick Beiler hands Laryn Bakker a food hand-off from its unusual storage place while CBS reporter Alison Smith takes note.

Your stereotypes will die in that same dumpster soon after you meet the young missionaries who pose as high tech operators at the CEDC, the acronym behind the unwieldy title of Center for Educational Design and Communications at 821 Varnum Street. With a realistic, gritty reflection of the charisma of the Society of the Sacred Heart, the CEDC staffers practice what others may just preach.

You see it in the love of the Heart of Jesus that breathes through the work of these people. Consider Laryn Bakker, whose business card says he is a “senior designer – web, graphics and new media.” And he is, and one of the best. But his priorities and those of his CEDC colleagues seem far from the comfy offices and humming computers.

You see the contrast on posters throughout the building: images and slogans often created by the CEDC for its clients, calling for social justice for people barely subsisting on the margins of society. Food for the hungry. Living wages for workers. Decent shelter for the homeless.

These aren't just stylized ideals, fancy talk for wanna-be Dorothy Days. Laryn and his co-workers walk the talk of these posters. Or even dive if they have to.

Hands-On Christianity

It is in the evening, “after” work, that Laryn can be seen practicing what is rather rudely referred to as “dumpster diving,” pulling bags of discarded food from behind various retailers in the D.C. area, some of them fairly high-end food retailers. That's the easy part.

Then it's off to his home where he and his wife Janel and friends go through the food to ensure its freshness and make “care” package to distribute in the community, and sometimes for themselves if anything is left. It is not all serious work, and *continued*



Top, Ryan Rodrick Beiler and Janel Kragt Bakker sorting retrieved food for shipment to the needy. Above, Laryn Bakker in a light moment at his desk at the CEDC.

It is part recycling and part charitable giving, Laryn said.