



## **USA Council of Serra International -Vocations Committee**

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**TO:** Diocesan School Administrators, Catholic High School Principals and Faculty,  
Catholic High Schools in America

**FROM:** Homer Radford,  
USA Council of Serra International – VP Vocations Committee

**SUBJECT:** New Youth Program for Catholic high school students

I have the privilege to inform you about a program of the USA Council of Serra International, specifically for Catholic High Schools. Serra is a Catholic lay organization that works closely with diocesan vocation offices to support seminarians, clergy and religious vocations. As part of our apostolate, we provide support for discernment activities for Catholic youth through prayer, dedicated volunteers and financial commitment for programs offered by our Serra Clubs.

This memo is to introduce you to a Serra Club program in the diocese to form a partnership with Catholic High Schools in offering an extracurricular program for male and female students. The programs, called Venturing or Sea Scouting, are tried and true programs of the Boy Scouts of America used by the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting and the Knights of Columbus, and is one of the Catholic youth programs included in Diocesan Youth Ministry.

In 2006 the Serra International Foundation approved a grant to fund the establishment of Serra Club chartered Venturing Crews or Sea Scouting Units in Catholic High Schools. These programs provide positive experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults. Venturing reinforces the values and skills taught in Catholic High Schools. It gives a venue to make ethical choices, acquire leadership skills, and advance knowledge and skills in the areas of high adventure, sports, arts, hobbies and religious life. Venturing supplements most any activity that the school administration and students would desire.

The first step would involve a charter of Venturing or Sea Scouting units in local Catholic High Schools, as an on-going extracurricular activity. The initial funding is being provided for the start-up of these clubs, to assure success without initial monetary burdens on students' families or schools. The local Serra Club will arrange for the payment of dues, equipment and expenses, with no costs anticipated for the high school. Training of faculty and adult Advisors would include various free leadership courses and youth protection programs of the local Scout Council, as well as those required by the Archdiocese or Diocese. The program is fully qualified under the diocesan youth protection policy.

This program provides specialized extracurricular activities at the high school level. It has succeeded in activities such as cycling, hiking, climbing, sailing, rowing, scuba diving, prayer groups, community service groups, etc. At the same time, the program allows for each youth to grow in religious belief, and is open to the various outdoors, sports, and career orientated resources of Venturing and Sea Scouting. This program can work with existing programs, such as high school prayer/ministry clubs, sports related and/or other clubs, or can be adapted rather than starting a "new" school program.

Liability is covered as a B.S.A. chartered program, except for a few high-risk activities that are not approved by Scouting and Diocesan youth programs. Safety training and certifications are a part of the program for specific activities.

Religious awards, under the auspices of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, can create an arena for the young adults to be more aware of the Catholic faith in action and service. Our intent is to allow young adults to have interaction with religious leaders, clergy and local Serra members. Students could do surveys of the alumni who have been ordained, are current seminarians or vowed religious, and plan posting of their high school's religious "heroes". Through such activities, an awareness of and greater respect for Church vocations should become part of the students' lives. We believe this program should be a blessing for any Catholic High School, while Serra International, through the local Serra Club, realizes that this program will serve its mission to foster and promote Church vocations.

Of course, each Serra chartered Venturing program would be required to have a Chaplain, preferably either an ordained or a vowed religious, to participate along with the youth at Diocesan events. The local Serra Club will assist in securing a Chaplain.

The Serra Club representative listed below will call to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the possibility of starting a Venturing program in your school.

Local Serra Club Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_