

Teen's documentary shows plight of India's 'untouchables'

CAMP HILL, Pa. (CNS)—Imagine living a life deprived of basic human rights. You live in squalor, are subjected to forced labor and violence, and have little or no access to sufficient nutrition, running water, electricity or sanitation.

Now imagine that your chances of changing your situation are slim because society denies you the right to an education, the right to possess assets and the right to improve yourself socially or economically.

For many, this picture is impossible to comprehend. But for some 240 million men, women and children in India, these conditions are a harsh reality.

They are known as *dalits*, or "untouchables," labeled by their society as unworthy of belonging to India's four-level caste system. Without education, affirmation and opportunity, most who are born *dalits* will die *dalits*. It has been that way for more than 3,000 years.

The situation of the *dalits*, who account for nearly 25 percent of their country's population, is something a 17-year-old student at Camp Hill High School wants to

make better known.

Andy McCoy, a member of Good Shepherd Parish in Camp Hill, spent two weeks this winter assisting *dalits* in India and visiting refugee camps established for people devastated by the tsunamis in December.

He used the mission trip to film several hours of footage depicting the destruction, disease and death left in the wake of the natural disaster for a documentary, "Tsunami Smiles," to educate others about the *dalits*' struggles and resiliency.

"I'm hoping to let people—especially students—know the conditions that others live in, and show them what they can do to help alleviate those problems," McCoy said in an interview with *The Catholic Witness*, newspaper of the Diocese of Harrisburg, after he showed his video during a March assembly at his school.

He explained at the assembly that even though India outlawed the caste system nearly 50 years ago, society has continued to live by it. Violence against *dalits* by other members of society has increased dramatically over the

past decade in an effort to discourage the increasing amount of human rights efforts there, he noted.

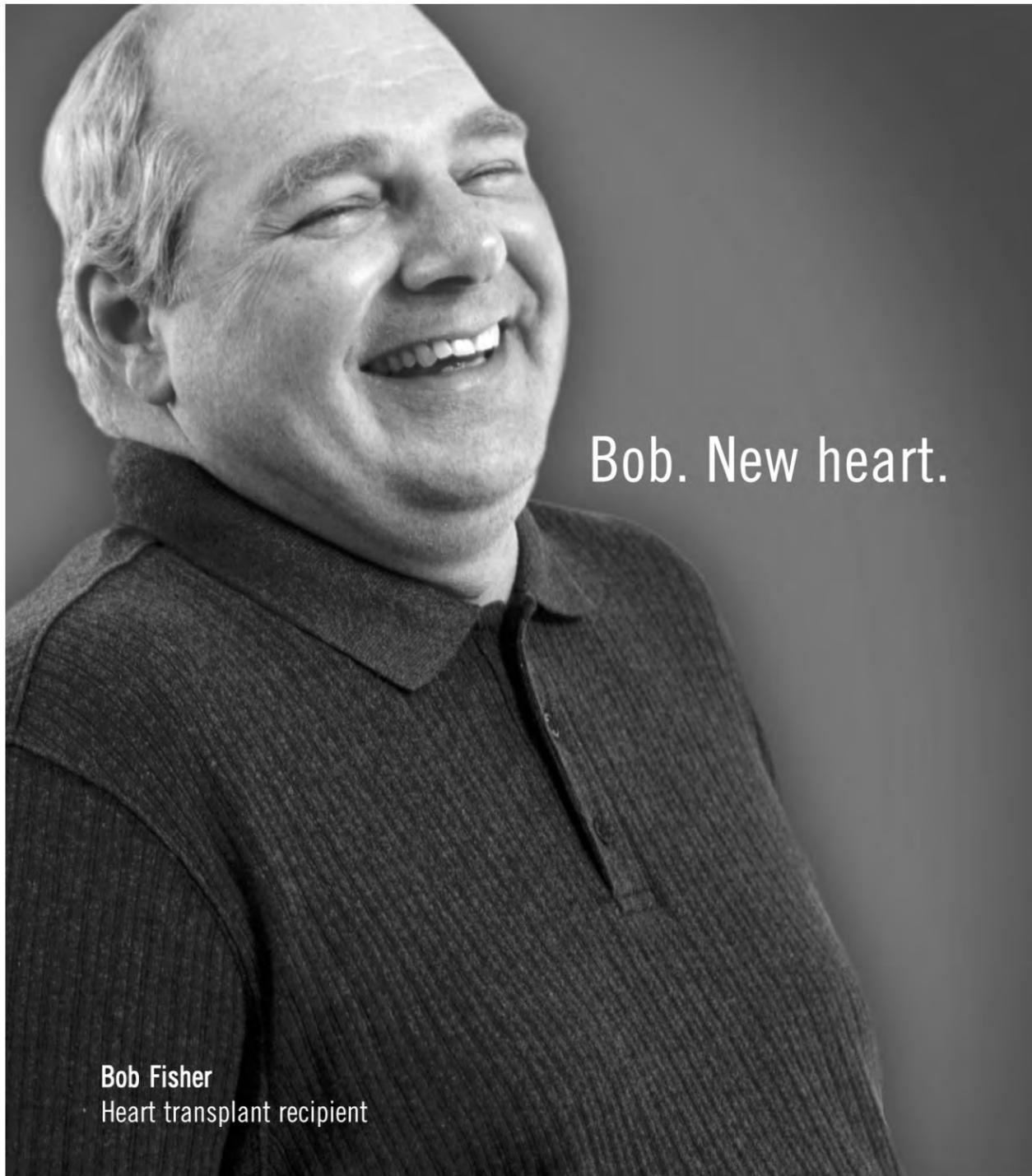
McCoy, a junior, traveled to India earlier this year as part of a mission group associated with Dalit Solidarity, an organization dedicated to providing *dalits* with education, health care, employment training and social development.

Also on the trip were Father Benjamin Chinnappan, a former chaplain at Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill; Father Devasagaya Raj, who served in the Harrisburg Diocese at St. Patrick Parish in Carlisle during the summer of 2002; and McCoy's brother, Matt, a 2004 graduate of Trinity High School in Camp Hill. Matt McCoy now teaches English at a school in India.

Father Chinnappan founded Dalit Solidarity six years ago. The priest, who now ministers as a chaplain in Chicago and visits India twice a year, said the Harrisburg Diocese's Mission Co-op and Cursillo movement have donated funds to help build two schools and a seminary in Father Chinnappan's home diocese, the Archdiocese of Pondicherry and Cuddalore, India.

McCoy's documentary shows extensive footage of St. Patrick Home, a boarding school that Dalit Solidarity established four years ago to provide education, spiritual formation and psychological support for *dalit* children, who include Christians, Hindus and Muslims.

Dalit Solidarity also established St. Mary's Medical Center, a rural hospital that assists people in about 30 villages. There, doctors and nurses provide 24-hour care and teach people standard first aid. †



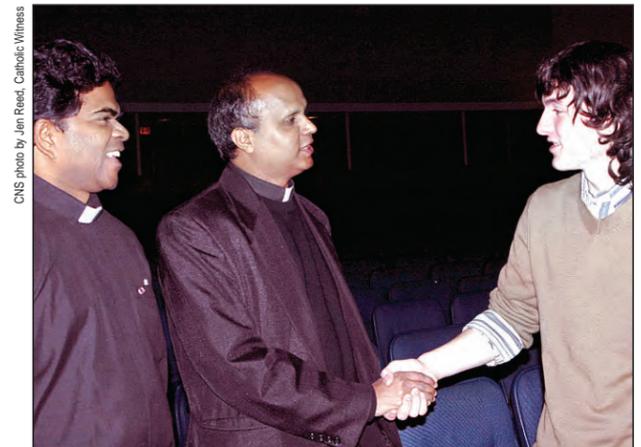
Bob. New heart.

Bob Fisher
Heart transplant recipient

In 2003, Bob Fisher of Brownsburg had his own show. The plot: transplant.

The setting: St. Vincent. And thanks to our experience in treating a lot of hearts—and treating them individually—Bob now stars in a better role:

life. To learn more about our heart care, call 338-CARE or visit stvincent.org.



Fathers Devasagaya Raj, left, and Benjamin Chinnappan congratulate 17-year-old Andy McCoy on a documentary he made about a recent trip to India, where he helped *dalits*, or those considered to be "untouchable." McCoy, a member of Good Shepherd Parish in Camp Hill, Pa., spent two weeks this winter in India visiting refugee camps established for people devastated by the tsunamis.

**Join other Roman Catholics!
Save on this Repositioning Cruise Special!
Daily Mass Celebrated on Board Ship!**

Tour Italy & Cruise
The Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Caribbean

22 Days From \$1999*

Costa Cruise Lines has to get the new "state-of-the-art" **MEDITERRANEA** from Italy to Ft. Lauderdale. Take advantage of this exclusive 'Your Man' Tours vacation package departing October 29, 2005. You will spend three nights in Rome and two nights in Florence in quality hotels with daily sightseeing including: Najad's Fountain, Aurelian Walls, Quirinale Palace, Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon, St. Peter Basilica in Vatican City, the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, the Basilica of St. Paul and more! You'll drive through the Tuscan countryside on your way to Florence with a walking sightseeing tour of Siena. In Florence 'your man' will take you on a city tour including The Cathedral, Giotto's Belltower, and the Baptistery. That afternoon you'll take a scenic drive to Pisa for a city tour including the leaning tower. On Friday November 4, your group will drive to the Italian Riviera to the town of Savona where you'll board your deluxe Italian ship. Your exciting ports include: Barcelona, Spain; Casablanca, Morocco; the Canary Islands; Guadeloupe; St. Maarten; Catalina Island in the Dominican Republic; Casa de Campo; and Nassau. Arrive in Ft. Lauderdale Sunday, November 20, 2005. *Prices per person, double occupancy start at only \$1999. Add \$348 port charges, taxes and government fees. Outside and balcony cabins are available. Add \$900 for roundtrip airfare from Indianapolis.

Space is limited. \$100 deposits are now due.

For information, reservations and brochure with detailed itinerary call 7 days a week: 'YOUR MAN' TOURS 1-800-968-7626

Carefree vacations since 1967!



the spirit of caring®