

# CASA CESAR CHAVEZ

Salvatorian, Fr. Bruce Clanton, SDS works to positively influence youth in Racine, Wis. by reaching out to at-risk high school students. Through his ministry, he helps them find constructive ways to communicate and react to the world around them.



For a more interactive look into Fr. Bruce's ministry friend him on his Facebook page:

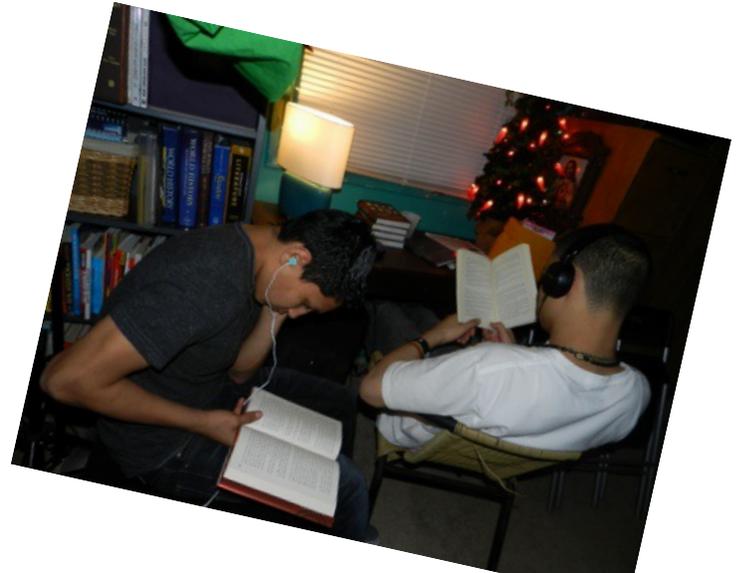
## BACKGROUND:

Fr. Bruce recalls that when he entered the novitiate in 1965 there was an understanding that you had to find or create your own work. By the time he was ordained in 1978 he was a member of Modern Liturgy's editorial board, ministering as a parish liturgist, and doing national storytelling workshops.

He arrived in Racine more than 30 years ago and began his work as a campus minister at St. Catherine's High School. Within ten years he became a member of the community interacting with Latino kids and their families. By fall 1995 he moved into and established his current residence and outreach center, Casa Cesar Chavez, named after Cesar Chavez. Fr. Bruce describes the casa as a drop-in, work-from center primarily for Latinos, but noted it has always been, more importantly, "a small vision of the church in the urban environment. It's about living among and working FOR the poor."

Today his ministry is aimed at kids in high school. He spends four days a week at Park and Case High Schools in Racine where he works with ELL (English Language Learners). Kids like the chance to be with friends where they can feel comfortable and talk more freely— balancing that with being productive is significant.

Fr. Jordan's "all ways and means" message embraces how the church can make the most of what people are doing to reach them, and make Jesus known. Today's kids are entrenched in social media such as Facebook and YouTube. Asking the right questions and being attentive is important when you hear a story about a kid having a bad day or facing an issue. Fr. Bruce shares "I have been around so long that kids know who I am. I try to be honest with them in my personal observations and find opportunities to respond."



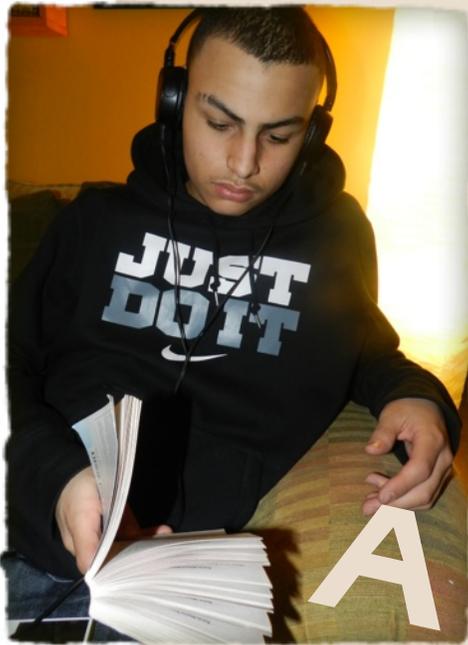
Top: **READING4CASH** Artemio Juarez and Robert Diaz

Bottom: **Monday FILM** nights

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"Sometimes I can be pretty pointed or humorous," he said. "But if I listen to their stories and affirm the positives I can teach without being preachy. You want them to do the right thing. I subscribe to the classic theory of James Gabarino from 'Lost Boys': that 'every kid needs one person who is crazy about him.' I try to be crazy about as many kids as I can be."

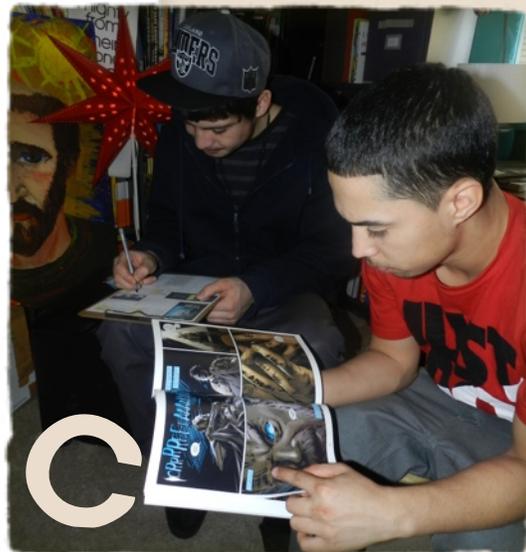
I needed to get an early foto/report to Racine Community Foundation for the grant they gave me for \$4000 in December last. It is, as you know, the only grant I write because such activity is just not my cup of tea. And I don't have real time for such things. Although I wrote about Robert in the last issue and will spend a great deal of time on DBSaturdays in April, I decided to use the moment to thank you for your recent gift to our work and do a little PR for the good people at RCF at the same time. It also gives you--in simple terms--the reasoning behind my paying young people to do what many of us older folk do for personal pleasure.



Robert Diaz (A) of Park High School reads All Quiet On the Western Front at Casa Cesar Chavez, his third book in the last three months assigned by his junior English class. Robert finds--as we have experienced over the last decade of offering audio reading--that he more easily follows the text and understands its meaning. Proof of that in the first two books came when he scored highest in the class on quizzes that followed the reading. He receives \$10 for two hours of reading. Robert came over just yesterday to begin his third novel; I just happened to like his very appropriate tshirt.



Fourteen students (B) were in attendance at the casa's Monday FilmNight. The show was the amazing 'Erin Brockovich,' Julia Roberts' fictional telling of a real woman's work to reverse the the plight of families decimated by an industry's neglect of water standards. The casa shows films to young people to compliment its interest in film and to acquaint them to films and subject matters they would never get to see were it not for a \$5 stipend. We used to do a double film night using a good TV episode to teach reading skills, but we--like everyone--have to cut back on spending to keep going.



Jesus Montes and Cesar Hernandez (forward) (C) read and reflect on a graphic novel of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Tell Tale Heart.' They are a part of a group of six who are experimenting in Casa Cesar Chavez' DriveByShooters Film School. Saturday version. Normally a weeklong summer project, Saturdays--twice a month, noon-7pm--focus on a specific film (in this case, 'Raven' that came out last fall). Educational activities, fun (raven mask-making this time), backstory insights into the filming of the movie from the film's DVD, and a new TV series where a serial killer links his choices to Poe...all help to make the film (and the great Poe) something larger than the school classroom. Participants receive \$25 for the day's work.

**GRACIAS**

Thank YOU for assisting my mission and helping me keep my place open to do such good things as these.