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Will Rainford of Boise garners national honor

Out of a field of 260,000, Will Rainford was named one of Catholic Charities' 4 volunteers of the year.

BY ANNA WEBB - awebb@idahostatesman.com

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Out of a field of 260,000, Will Rainford was named one of Catholic Charities' 4 volunteers of the year.

Q: Which of your volunteer efforts are closest to your heart?

A: That's a difficult question. In terms of service, Interfaith Sanctuary is a shining star. I'm not just talking about my efforts. Catholic Charities built the framework for the shelter with help from many volunteers across many faiths. It was a true collaboration.

Q: What's the urgent local community issue now as you see it?

A: There are two.

We're looking for legislation to protect mobile home tenants. They're subjected to whims of landowners. In some cases, the housing is bad. In others, the real estate market warrants selling the land, and these people have nowhere to go.

We're not trying to bar landowners from doing what they want with their property, but if someone told me I'd be losing my home in six months, as has happened to many local residents, I'd freak out. We just want laws to protect vulnerable people.

A nonprofit organization, the Idaho Manufactured Housing Owners Association, has grown out of the effort. (For more information about the group, contact Christine Smith at Catholic Charities, 350-7486).

The second issue is the burgeoning number of families turning to food stamps for assistance. Right now, the state grocery tax credit is \$50 per person, per household, and all Idahoans can file for it.

We want to see the credit targeted to low-income households and increased immediately to \$90.

We expect the legislature to help us out, but we also want people to help by donating to food banks and helping expand school food programs.

Q: What can people do for their community that they might not have thought of?

A: Call Catholic Charities of Idaho at (208) 350-7486. We ask people to donate their time, treasure and talent. They can dive into these issues today. We can plug them in.

Q: Why do you do this work?

A: I'm a faithful Catholic and a professor of social work, so it's a ministry for me. We serve others, not because they're Catholic, but because we are.

Anna Webb: 377-6431