

David Palasits

2009 Distinguished Graduate Class of 1977

David Palasits was graduated from Rutherford High School in 1977. He was a member of the National Honor Society, played basketball and baseball all four years and was co-captain of the varsity baseball team in his senior year. In addition, he enjoyed being a member of the band, chorus, and was President of the Student Council.

He attended Columbia University in the City of New York, earning a B.A. in History in 1981. A recipient of the Richard S. Kohn Travelling Fellowship, he spent his Junior Year Abroad at the London School of Economics.

Upon graduation, he joined the US Peace Corps as a rural development volunteer in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho in southern Africa. During his three-year service there, he received an Outstanding Volunteer Award from the Country Director.

After traveling through southern, central and eastern Africa for six months, he worked for three years as a research assistant and then special assistant to the President at Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, a social policy research firm based in New York City.

He then obtained a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Michigan in 1991. He interrupted his studies to take an internship during 1990 in Ethiopia working on famine relief with Catholic Relief Services, the international relief and development agency of the US Catholic Bishops.

He has worked with Catholic Relief Services full-time since 1991, holding various positions including Country Representative in Eritrea, and Team Leader for East Africa. He is currently a Director in Human Resources, traveling often to CRS offices overseas. As part of this service he has worked on emergency programs such as the post-Tsunami effort in Sri Lanka. In 2006, he received one of the Special Recognition Awards from Catholic Relief Services.

David Palasits lives in Columbia, Maryland with his wife Becky and three children, Teresa, John and Michael. In Columbia, he has been president of the middle school and high school PTAs respectively, taught religious education, co-managed the neighborhood swim team, led a Cub Scout Pack, coached little league baseball, and participated in the Appalachian Service Project.