

## **Bridges Collaborative Group of Southern Indiana Annual Report 2007**

### **Project Objective**

*Bridges* addresses the issue of poverty from a comprehensive community approach. Evansville has all nine characteristics of communities at risk as defined by Philip DeVol, co-author of *Bridges Out of Poverty*: children leaving the community; quality of education; middle-class flight; family income disparity; losing manufacturing; deteriorating Main Street; budget problems; childcare concerns; and inadequate skill sets. This project is designed to increase the sustainability of our community while the resources still exist to address poverty in a comprehensive, community-based approach.

When all segments of a community understands the experience of poverty and respond to the issues from a united position, the entire community will change. *Bridges* addresses poverty from four fronts: (a) the behaviors of the individual, (b) human and social capital in the community, (c) human exploitation and (d) the political and economic structures of the community. Addressing poverty in this manner will lead our community to a point of positive sustainability.

### **Project Goals:**

- ④ Improve the level of understanding about the experience of poverty for community members who work with low-income persons.
- ④ Empower community leaders to identify and respond to current practices that contribute to the prevalence of poverty within our community.
- ④ Empower businesses to understand the experience of poverty and how to retain employees trying to break out of poverty.
- ④ Empower people experiencing poverty with resources and/or tools for exploring opportunities once considered out of reach in order to become self-sufficient.

### **Activities to Date**

#### ***Day 1 Training***

303 persons trained by local community trainers (286 completed evaluations)

- 66% understanding of the experience of poverty has increased
- 58% feel empowered to effectively interact with individuals experiencing poverty
- 61% had an "aha" moment that shed light on behaviors previously witnessed
- 64% will change the way he/she interacts with those experiencing poverty
- 69% will share this information with co-workers or others he/she associates with
- 70% will advocate for this information to be shared through his/her organization or community

#### ***Day 2 Training***

111 persons trained by Phil DeVol (96 completed evaluations)

- 54% believed the session helped build knowledge and skills
- 47% believed ideas, activities, and/or materials were practical and useful
- 64% believed the session was a worthwhile professional development experience
- 65% will use this information in decision making with clients and co-workers
- 72% will share this information with someone else

#### ***Consulting: Phil DeVol***

Corporate Breakfast: 36 attended

Evansville Noon Rotary: 200(+) in attendance

#### ***Advisory Group:***

The Advisory Group is reevaluating organizational structure to manage the growth that has occurred with the *Bridges* project. Committees will be formed for 2008 to focus work in four areas: Trainers/Trainings, Getting-Ahead (client based curriculum), Employers, and Community Awareness/Outreach.

#### ***Poverty Simulation:***

The Poverty Simulation experience is designed to help participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. It is a simulation, not a game. The object

is to sensitize participants to the realities faced by people with low-income. The Bridges Collaborative Group is hoping to continue partnering with United Way of Southwestern Indiana to incorporate the simulated experiences into the *Bridges* curriculum during 2008.

**Community Trainers:**

The Bridges Collaborative Group of Southern Indiana gained four more *Bridges Out of Poverty* certified trainers in 2007, adding to the two trained in late 2006. Two more persons are expected to become certified in February 2008. Each attends a weeklong training sponsored by aha! Process, Inc. and receives certification for two years. The trainers work closely together to review participant evaluations, improve training techniques, refining the Day 1 training agenda, restructure the Day 2 training content for local applications, conduct overviews of the project and curriculum, and break trainings into shorter segments of time more appropriate for a corporate or business setting.

**Outreach to Gibson County:**

An overview of the Collaborative and *Bridges* project was presented to 11 interested persons (6 different organizations) in Gibson County. This group will be seeking community support to identify and fund a community trainer to work specifically in Gibson County under the umbrella of the Bridges Collaborative Group of Southern Indiana.

**Bridges Institute:**

Evansville is just one of eleven other communities across the country that is developing a community approach to the *Bridges Out of Poverty* philosophy. Representatives from these different communities gathered in Columbus Ohio in Nov. 2006 to share experiences. During 2007, contact has been maintained with the group through an email exchange of ideas. In 2008, phone conferences and website listings are planned. The various communities participating in a community engagement approach in addition to Evansville include: South Bend, IN, Burlington, VT, Syracuse, NY, Springfield, OH, Toledo, OH, Battle Creek, MI, Menominee, WI, Inkster, MI, Minneapolis, MN, and Aimes, IA.

Advisory Board:

Mary Kay Cardinal, Southwest Indiana Network for Education (SINE)  
Sue Ann Hartig, Legal Aid Society  
Luzada Hayes, Aurora  
Lynn Hert, Deaconess Family Medicine Residency  
Lynne Imes, Outreach Ministries  
Kat Isbell, Aurora  
Lynn Kyle, Lampion Center  
Beth Pace, Vectren Energy Delivery  
Sr. Mary Ann Woodward, Aurora

Community Trainers:

Christie Hagan, Deaconess Family Medicine Residency  
Kat Isbell, Aurora  
Wendy McCormick, First Presbyterian Church  
Beth Pace, Vectren Energy Delivery  
Thelma Williams, Indiana Workforce Development

2008 Calendar

January 23	Day 1 training
March	Day 2 training
April 8	Day 1 training
July 16	Day 1 training
September	Day 2 training
October 8	Day 1 training

Financial:

<b>Bridges—a Community Response to Poverty</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
<b>2005</b>			
Foundation	\$5,000.00		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 5,000.00</b>	
<b>2006</b>			
Pledges	\$13,825.00		
Grants	\$5,000.00		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$18,825.00</b>	
<b>2007</b>			
Pledges	\$14,950.00		
Fees	\$6,348.20		
Donation	\$625.00		
<b>Total to date</b>		<b>\$21,923.20</b>	
<b>Total Income for Project</b>			<b>\$45,748.20</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>2006</b>			
Bridges Institute	\$ 254.82		
Trainers	\$ 750.00		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,004.82</b>
<b>2007</b>			
Trainers	\$ 1,276.32		
Training materials	\$ 1,139.39		
Bridges Institute	\$ 25.64		
Training supplies	\$ 4,345.94		
Consultants	\$ 4,919.48		
CEU	\$ 105.00		
		<b>Total to date</b>	<b>\$ 11,811.77</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>			<b>\$12,816.59</b>
<b>Cash on Hand December 10, 2007</b>			<b>\$32,931.61</b>

Sponsoring Organizations:

Albion Fellows Bacon Center  
 Big Brothers/Big Sisters  
 Boy Scouts of America  
 Bussing-Koch Foundation  
 CASA  
 Central United Methodist Church  
 Deaconess Family Medicine Residency  
 ECHO Community Health Care  
 Evansville ARC  
 Evansville Goodwill Industries  
 First Presbyterian Church  
 IMPACT Health Services  
 Lampion Center  
 Legal Aid Society  
 Old National Bank  
 Trinity United Methodist Church

United Way of Southwestern Indiana  
 United Way Agency Executive Directors  
 United Way Target Needs  
 Vanderburgh County Foundation  
 Vectren Foundation  
 Vectren Corporation  
 Visiting Nurse Association  
 YMCA of Southwestern Indiana  
 Youth Service Bureau