



# FAITH IN PARTNERSHIP

Lessons from the Winning Models of Multi-Sector Collaboration in  
the 2005 "Partners in Transformation" Awards Program

**FASTEN**

BY AMY L. SHERMAN

*Editorial Director, FASTEN*

*Director, Center on Faith and Communities, Sagamore Institute*

# I M A G I N E T H E P O S S I B

Faith in Partnership: Lessons from the Winning Models of Multi-Sector Collaboration in the 2005 "Partners in Transformation" Awards Program  
Amy L. Sherman

Copyright © 2005 Sagamore Institute for Policy Research

The 2005 "Partners in Transformation" contest was co-sponsored by FASTEN and the Points of Light Foundation.

Published in the United States of America

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Pew Charitable Trusts or the policies or positions of the Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN). FASTEN is a collaborative initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts and includes Indiana University, Baylor University, Harvard University, Sagamore Institute, National Crime Prevention Council, United States Conference of Mayors, and Nueva Esperanza.

Faith in Partnership: Lessons from the Winning Models of Multi-Sector Collaboration in the 2005 "Partners in Transformation" Awards Program is available (free of charge) in PDF format at:

[www.FASTENnetwork.org](http://www.FASTENnetwork.org)

For additional print copies, contact:  
Sagamore Institute  
Center on Faith in Communities  
757 King Street  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
Tel: 434-293-5656  
Fax: 434-295-8728

For media and speaking engagement purposes, contact the Center on Faith in Communities office at 434-293-5656.

The author gratefully acknowledges the help of Sagamore Institute CFIC staff members Cary Brege, Mary-Kate Brissett, Leanne Higginbottom, Philip Lorish, and Rachael Green in the preparation of this report.

Design and Production by Journey Group, Inc.

ISBN 0-9773914-0-X

\$10

ILITIES



# Contents

<i>5</i>	Acknowledgements
<i>6</i>	Introduction
<i>7</i>	The Partners in Transformation Competition
<i>8</i>	Characteristics of Contestants
<i>8</i>	Benefits of Collaboration
<i>9</i>	PiT State Winners
<i>10</i>	Alabama Winner Profile
<i>12</i>	Alaska Winner Profile
<i>14</i>	Arkansas Winner Profile
<i>16</i>	Florida Winner Profile
<i>18</i>	Idaho Winner Profile
<i>20</i>	Michigan Winner Profile
<i>22</i>	New Jersey Winner Profile
<i>24</i>	Ohio Winner Profile
<i>26</i>	Oklahoma Winner Profile
<i>28</i>	Texas Winner Profile
<i>30-39</i>	State Semi-Finalists
<i>30</i>	Promising Practices: Programmatic
<i>33</i>	Innovations
<i>34</i>	Promising Practices: Multi-Sector Collaboration
<i>37</i>	Conclusion
<i>38</i>	Appendix A: Services Provided by Applicants



## *Acknowledgements*

The inaugural Partners in Transformation competition could not have been undertaken without the support of a number of individuals and organizations that provided valuable advice and assistance. The author wishes to thank:

Jay Hein, President, Sagamore Institute for Policy Research; Dr. Julie Sulc, Pew Charitable Trusts; Rev. Mark Farr, Points of Light Foundation; and David Caprara, Corporation for National and Community Service, for their critical partnership in this effort.

Our 2005 Partners in Transformation guest judges: Armando A. Contreras, Executive Director, National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry; April Kaplan, former Deputy Director, Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Colleen Cople, Weed and Seed Program, U.S. Department of Justice; Dana Reichert, Former TANF Director for the State of Louisiana; Scott Truex, Indianapolis Leadership Foundation; Larry Smith, Indiana University Center on Philanthropy; Jack Calhoun, former President of the National Crime Prevention Council; Rev. Mark Farr, Points of Light Foundation, and David Caprara, Corporation for National and Community Service.

Our 2005 State “Faith Community Liaisons:” Terri Hasdorff (Alabama); Robert Buttane (Alaska); Beth Garison (Arkansas); Liza McFadden (Florida); Blossom Johnston and Craig Parry (Idaho); Greg Roberts (Michigan); Edward LaPorte (New Jersey); Krista Sisterhen (Ohio); Brad Yarborough and Deborah Price (Oklahoma); and Beau Egert and Susan Weddington (Texas).

Center on Faith in Communities/FASTEN Staff: Sarah Barton, Cary Brege, Mary-Kate Brissett, Leanne Higginbottom, Maria Madrid, Mara Martin, and Louie Storiato.

Additional Advisors: Karen Woods (Center on Effective Compassion, Acton Institute) and Donna Oklak (Indiana Achievement Awards).



## *Introduction*

As anyone reading the newspapers knows, faith-based organizations (FBOs) are a hot topic. The White House, major charitable foundations, university scholars, and local public officials have variously lauded, criticized, examined, funded, and worried about people of faith getting more actively engaged in addressing community problems. Despite all this attention, though, one aspect of faith-based social service delivery has gone relatively unnoticed: how commonly FBOs are now joining forces with entities outside the religious community to partner in social welfare programs.

One of the more intriguing findings of a recent major study on government funding of FBOs, for example, concerned how many “new players”—that is, FBOs with little or no prior history of formal collaboration with the public sector—had begun accepting government dollars to underwrite their service programs.<sup>1</sup> Over half (56%) of FBOs with government contracts surveyed in this 2002 15-state study were new to government contracting. Apparently, the “green light” provided to public officials by the federal charitable choice rules and the general climate created by the President’s positive bully pulpit through his faith-based initiative have helped both bureaucrats and faith leaders to more readily entertain thoughts of collaboration. As former Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith noted in a recent paper published by Harvard University, faith communities have been active in social services for many years, but in recent days, “efforts by mayors and governors, and attention by the President, to these relationships has been more explicit.”<sup>2</sup>

---

1. John C. Green and Amy L. Sherman, *Fruitful Collaborations: A Survey of Government-Funded Faith-Based Programs in 15 States* (Hudson Institute, 2002).

2. Stephen Goldsmith, “City Hall and Religion: When, Why, and How to Lead,” Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

## THE PARTNERS IN TRANSFORMATION COMPETITION

In 2005, a new initiative co-sponsored by FASTEN (Faith and Service Technical Education Network, a collaborative initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts) and the Points of Light Foundation sought to identify effective models of faith-based, multi-sector collaboration. The “Partners in Transformation” Awards Program offered FBOs the chance to win \$5000 cash grants by demonstrating success in tackling social problems through meaningful partnerships with organizations outside the faith community. The contest was piloted in ten states: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Texas.<sup>3</sup> Participation in the contest exceeded expectations: 475 FBOs entered (roughly 80 percent were nonprofits and 20 percent were congregations).

Entrants provided information describing their organization (e.g., age, budget size, location) and the program they were submitting for consideration. The application sought information on the number of participants served; number of volunteers deployed; daily workings of the program; and the target audience. It also asked entrants to describe the nature of their collaboration with non-religious organizations, specifying what services/benefits the partner(s) brought to the program. Finally, the application asked entrants to articulate their desired program objectives, the outcomes achieved by the program, and the indicators by which they measured those outcomes.

We recruited a diverse national panel of 14 judges with experience in working with FBOs to review and evaluate the applications. Programs were judged using a weighted, 100-point scale that examined:

- Outcomes achieved
- “Robustness” of the collaboration
- Creativity
- Program Scale
- Transformational Character of the Program
- Clarity of Mission
- Volunteer Engagement
- Program and Collaboration Character

In the initial round of judging, the five top-scoring applications in each state created a pool of 50 semi-finalists. Each of these was notified of their status and awarded \$100. A second round of judging then commenced, utilizing additional information provided as necessary by the semi-finalists. The field was narrowed to the top two applicants in each state, then the full panel of judges reviewed those twenty applications and made final selections of the winner for each state. State winners were then awarded \$5000 cash grants to use to support their program.

Information provided by the Partners in Transformation (PiT) applicants offers a rich pool of data to mine to learn about what services FBOs are conducting, with whom they are partnering, how many people they are reaching, what their accomplishments have been, and what promising practices they have employed that could be imitated fruitfully by other FBOs. Through the competition, we have discovered that FBOs are not only collaborating with government agencies, but with police, public schools, private businesses, hospitals, prisons, civic groups, banks, and secular non-profits. ■

3. In its inaugural year, the contest was piloted in ten states as staff and financial resources were insufficient for supporting a national competition.

## TABLE 1

### ENTRANTS BY STATE

State	#
AL	34
AK	30
AR	40
FL	62
ID	31
MI	44
NJ	57
OH	102
OK	24
TX	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>475</b>



## TABLE 2

### MOST COMMON SERVICES

Service Type	%
Youth	31.6
Relief	15.9
Housing	11.3
Job Training	7
Health Care	6.3
Ex Offender	5.2
Substance Abuse	4.8
Elderly	3.5
Other (e.g. domestic violence, immigrants, parenting)	14.3
n=459	

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTESTANTS

The FBOs that entered the PiT contest were relatively modest in size, but they affect a significant number of lives. Their average annual budget was just over \$153,000 (see below). Each organization was mobilizing an average of 40 volunteers each month to serve 150 people on average each year. All together, the applicants served over 1.1 million individuals in the past year and were mobilizing over 18,000 volunteers per month. Approximately 80 percent of contest entrants were faith-based nonprofits and 20 percent were congregations.

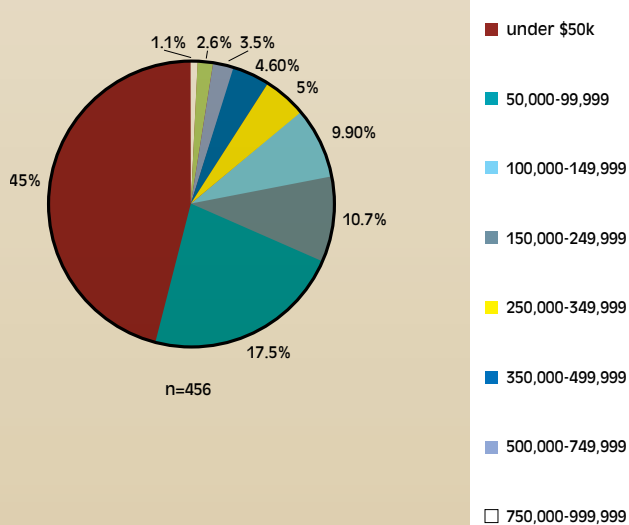
Program entrants generally had several years' experience in delivering social services (see below); the average age of their submitted program was 8.7 years. Nonetheless, a significant minority (16.1%) submitted programs just one year old. A similar number (15.6%) were true veterans, having operated their program for over 15 years.

The multi-sector collaborations in the ten states offered a wide variety of services to individuals and families in need. We identified 35 different types of services (see Appendix 1 for the full listing). The most common were youth services, relief (e.g., emergency food, clothing), housing, job training, health care, ex-offender reentry, substance abuse recovery, and elder care (see Table 2).

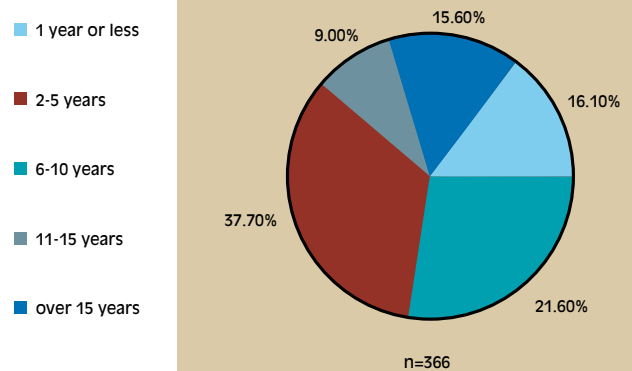
### BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

In the contest application, we asked entrants to self-assess the value they had experienced by partnering with agencies outside the faith community. Table 3 presents some of our findings. 93.8 percent of our semi-finalists (the 50 top-scoring applicants) indicated that partnering had allowed them to serve more people; over 95 percent reported that collaboration had enabled them to offer more services or program components to clients; and 93.8 percent had increased the numbers of staff or volunteers dedicated to the program. Nearly 96 percent said that collaboration was strategic: it had allowed them to focus on the service

### ANNUAL BUDGET



### AGE OF PROGRAM





components they were best suited to deliver, while their partners could operate those aspects best fitting their capacities and capabilities.

Apparently, the partnerships enjoyed by the 50 semi-finalists were particularly valuable. If we compare the benefits reported by these 50 FBOs to those reported by a large national sample of FBOs and congregations surveyed in 2004,<sup>4</sup> we see that the PiT semi-finalists were more likely to report that their programs had expanded through collaboration. In the national survey (sponsored by Baylor University’s School of Social Work), 76.6 percent of congregations and 80.4 percent of faith-based nonprofits indicated that they were able to serve more community participants in need through their collaborations. As noted in Table 3, 93.8 percent of the PiT semi-finalists said that collaboration had increased the number of participants served.

**All together *the applicants served*  
over 1.1 million individuals in the  
past year and were mobilizing  
over 18,000 volunteers per month.**

## PiT STATE WINNERS

The section that follows highlights each of the ten state winners. Their programs were diverse: some offered healthcare, others refugee services, others prisoner aftercare or youth ministry. All were relevant programs in terms of specific needs in their communities (for example, MI’s Good Samaritan Community Housing Partnership is providing homelessness transition services in a county with a high rate of housing unaffordability and TX’s Scofield Memorial Church is reaching out to refugees in a city where the number of new immigrants has soared). Though most of the programs were at least a few years old, a few were relatively new. Some are almost exclusively volunteer-operated; others have paid staff. They vary in size, but all are efficient, with impressive cost-per-participant statistics. In many instances, their outcomes are extremely impressive in the context of relevant state or national statistics. For example, NJ’s Elijah’s Promise job training program is attaining job retention rates twenty percentage points higher than the state average and AR’s Second Genesis reentry program is achieving a recidivism rate of 9 percent, versus the national average rate of 65 percent. The winners’ collaborations are rich and deep, involving frequent interaction and a strategically designed allocation of responsibilities. In short, they have much to teach us about effective community problem-solving. ■

4. Baylor University School of Social Work, Faith and Service Technical Education Network, “Report of Preliminary Findings,” (January 2005), p. 35.

## TABLE 3

### BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION Collaboration has allowed us to...

Serve more people	93.8 %
Offer participants more program components	95.6 %
Increase the number of program staff or volunteers	93.8 %
Focus on those parts of the program we are best at delivering	95.6 %
n=50	





# Alabama

## LINCOLN VILLAGE MINISTRIES OF SOUTHWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

*Key Partner: Lincoln Village Elementary School*



The members of Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama are heavenly minded—and earthly good. The most visible example of this is the giant replica of the solar system they’ve constructed for Lincoln Elementary School, where 94 percent of attending children qualify for the government’s free lunch program for the poor. Bright stars and six-foot planets bedazzle the eye as they stretch across the 2000-foot black-painted ceiling of the school’s old gym. Now the building is a giant science laboratory complete with a salt-water aquarium and terrarium. “The whole idea was to study sea, space, and earth,” enthuses Southwood’s Director of Mercy Ministries Mark Stearns. “We wanted the kids dreaming.”

The science lab’s not the only new thing at Lincoln. With help from Southwood and other churches, the school now boasts a refurbished library with a state-of-the-art computer lab and scores of new books. And in a renovated greenhouse attached to the school, Lincoln students are now busy taking horticulture classes.

These kinds of facilities may be standard fare at private, suburban schools, but they are a rarity in the school districts serving Alabama’s low-income kids. As Lincoln Elementary principal Christy Jensen says, “I don’t believe there is any other elementary, middle, or high school in the Huntsville City School District that has anything like this connection” with a congregation like Southwood.

## FAST FACTS

### LINCOLN VILLAGE MINISTRIES

Program launched in 2002

212 participants served in past 12 months

120 volunteers

Student writing test scores increased 37% in two years

PTA participation grown from 6 to over 100 parents

## Over half of *Lincoln's 212* *students now enjoy personal,* **one-on-one mentor-tutors.**

The most important service Southwood PCA has offered to Lincoln, though, hasn't been money or things. It's people. Over half of Lincoln's 212 students now enjoy personal, one-on-one mentor-tutors, thanks to volunteers from Southwood and other congregations, like Cove United Methodist, that Southwood leaders have recruited.

Studies by the U.S. Department of Education indicate that effective tutoring programs tend to have the positive impact, on average, of increasing reading comprehension by half a grade level. Principal Jensen says that reading and math scores are gradually climbing at Lincoln. In the first years of the collaboration, tutors especially focused on the kids' writing skills. Aggregate scores in this area were in the "red zone," well below expected state standards, when Jensen first arrived four years ago. Now, students' writing assessment test scores have increased 37 percent. ■





# Alaska

## COVENANT HOUSE ALASKA'S CRISIS CENTER

*Key partners: Alaska's Office of Children Services; Department of Juvenile Justice; Anchorage Police Department and School District*



According to statistics from the Anchorage School District, an estimated 3,000 homeless children live in Anchorage at any one time. Some of these are runaways, and Covenant House is the only facility in the state reaching out to provide emergency shelter to these troubled teens. The ministry's goal is to provide a safe place for youth while staff work with each kid's family to try to reunite them. If that proves impossible, Covenant House helps the teens to find their own path to independence.

Covenant House's Crisis Center was launched in 1998 following pleas for help from a special task force established by the mayor of Anchorage after several teens died of exposure in Alaska's brutal cold. In 2004, the Crisis Center served 588 youth. The ministry collaborates with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Anchorage Police Department and School District to intervene in the lives of youth who have walked out, or been kicked out, of their homes. Nearly 40 percent of the runaways are helped to return home to their families after Covenant House's initial intervention and services.

The Crisis Center program provides in-depth case management that facilitates the youth in accessing family mediation services, education in healthy relationships, substance abuse assessments, mental health counseling, employment assistance, health care, and transportation assistance. Those who remain at the Center long-term can complete the "Rights of Passage" transitional living program. Staff interact intensively with program participants—typically three times a day at least—developing strong personal relationships. Teens work on their General Equivalency Degree (GED) as needed and are helped in identifying job opportunities. An impressive 85 percent of program graduates are now employed.

## ONE YOUTH'S STORY

**D**avid (name has been changed) came to the Crisis Center at age 17. He had been running away from home regularly for over a year, staying briefly with various friends. His mother's financial situation was shaky and he could not get along with the continual string of men she brought into the house. David attempted to maintain attendance at school, but this was difficult when he had to find a new place to live every few days.

When he landed at the Crisis Center, David was personable and eager to work—but also manifested a violent temper and bouts of anxiety. Staff helped him to learn to manage his anger and to channel his energies into studying for the GED test—a necessary step for accomplishing his longer-term goal of joining the military. David passed, then stayed on at Covenant House while earning some college credits at the University of Alaska at Anchorage.

Through perseverance and determination—and a lot of practical and emotional support from Covenant House—David was finally accepted into the U.S. Navy. Today, he is stationed in Germany and using his training as a computer programmer. He is attending college classes to pursue his dream of designing robotic computers. ■



## FAST FACTS

### COVENANT HOUSE ALASKA

Program launched in 1988

Only organization in the state serving young teenage runaways

588 youth served in past 12 months

100% of youth runaways who were HS drop-outs participated in GED training

85% of program graduates are employed





# Arkansas

## SECOND GENESIS, INC.

*Key partners: AR Dep't of Corrections, HUD, Central AR Team Care for the Homeless, Jericho and Joseph Coalitions*



Twelve years ago, prison chaplain Jeanne Coyne was getting discouraged. Year after year she would hear female inmates relate how horrible the prison experience was—and how she should never expect to see them back. But time and again, the women couldn't keep that promise. With trouble finding housing, jobs, counseling, and transportation; frustrations in trying to reunite with their children; and renewed exposure to abusive or drug-infested environments, these women could not make a fresh start. As a result, many ended up back behind bars.

Coyne realized that the women needed a safe place to go upon release, where they could gain skills for and access to a new way of life. She knew they would need many services—a high majority of the approximately 1,000 women incarcerated in Arkansas prisons at any given time have drug or alcohol addictions, have been victims of abuse, and have been diagnosed with mental health issues. With determined effort, Coyne pulled together a number of people and resources and launched Second Genesis, a residential program for female ex-offenders that offers them a home for up to two years as they rehabilitate their lives. The ministry offers education in critical life and job skills, help with transportation, mental health counseling, and huge doses of encouragement and moral support.

In 2004, Second Genesis served 38 women. During Phase One of the program (which lasts 90 days), staff have intensive daily interactions with residents. The women keep busy with classes six evenings per week, full-time jobs, and individual and group counseling sessions. Each woman is also matched with a trained mentor who meets with her weekly. Second Genesis works closely with the women's parole officers and helps the women to secure and maintain employment and address any medical concerns. During Phase Two, the women (and in some cases, their minor children) move into their own transitional apartments, located in the same building as the ministry's central office. They continue to meet with their mentors and to attend a weekly support group session. In this group,

## FAST FACTS

### SECOND GENESIS

Program Launched in 1993

38 women and 50 children served in 2004

30 active volunteers

9% recidivism rate among program participants

90% of program graduates obtain stable housing

96% of program graduates maintain full-time employment

29 of 50 children successfully reunited with their mothers in 2004

The program has *achieved an impressive* 9 percent recidivism rate among its graduates (*versus a 42 percent recidivism rate* statewide for female offenders).

participants learn about parenting, boundaries, recovery issues, budgeting, and networking for resources.

Second Genesis also helps the women, as appropriate, achieve reunification with their children. Children may visit their moms during Phase One and even stay over on weekends. During this three-month period, preparations for family reunification are begun. Given sufficient progress, and the green light from the social worker monitoring the women's progress, Phase One graduates may move into transitional housing with their children. In 2004, 29 kids were reunited with their mothers.

The program has achieved an impressive 9 percent recidivism rate among its graduates (versus a 42 percent recidivism rate statewide for female offenders). Moreover, 90 percent of graduates obtain stable permanent housing through Second Genesis' partnership with the Joseph Project (a community nonprofit providing affordable housing). In Joseph housing, they continue to receive case management, their rent is subsidized, and their full-time employment must continue. With the significant support these ex-offenders have through their mentors, Second Genesis and Joseph Project staff, and on-going support group meetings, graduates have attained an impressive 96 percent job retention rate. ■





# Florida

## BRANCHES FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM OF SOUTH FLORIDA URBAN MINISTRIES

*Key partner: Miami Dade College*



If you spotted Ramon (name has been changed) on the campus of the University of Central Florida in Orlando, he might not stand out from other juniors there. But without the loving support of the Branches Family Literacy Program, Ramon may have never made it to college.

Ramon started in the Miami-based Branches after-school tutoring program in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Like most of the kids at Branches, his mom was a farm-worker, toiling in the fields outside the impoverished Florida City neighborhood picking squash, okra, and beans from sun-up to sun-down. His dad, a former drug dealer, died when Ramon was only six. The middle kid in a family of five, Ramon developed strong relationships with the staff and volunteers at Branches, sticking with the program all through his school years. When he was in high school, program director Kim Torres helped him and other immigrant kids get prepared for college: taking the SATs, exploring financial aid options, visiting schools. When he got accepted at Central Florida, they celebrated with a shopping trip to Wal Mart for school supplies.

Today, Ramon studies hard and works a part-time job, sending back money to his mom to help out with his younger siblings. He hopes to become a middle-school math teacher. Four other Branches' alumni are also currently in college and nearly 25 have graduated from high school. These are remarkable achievements in a school district where 40 percent of Hispanic students fail to graduate.

The Branches program operates under South Florida Urban Ministries, a Methodist outreach active in the migrant/farm worker community of Florida City for over a decade. The poverty rate in the neighborhood is 42 percent and over three-quarters of the residents were born in Central America. Last year, Branches served approximately 200 participants, providing tutoring and after-school programs for kids, and now, through their partnership with Miami Dade College, a literacy and ESL program for parents.



## FAST FACTS

### BRANCHES FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

Program launched in 1994

30 committed, regular volunteers

200 participants served in last 12 months

96% of students raise grades by at least one letter grade

94% of students remain in school

60% of students' parents active in literacy or GED or family enrichment classes

Torres is excited about the results she's witnessed as adults gain reading skills. For one thing, the "disciplinary dynamic" changes. When kids do all the translating, parents lose authority. As the parents become more proficient in English they are better able to establish boundaries that help keep their kids on the straight and narrow. For another, parents who learn to read gain confidence about interacting with the school. This positions them for more active involvement with their kids' teachers and facilitates their ability to learn what they need to do, as parents, to help prepare their teens for college opportunities. Plus gaining language and literacy skills increases parents' self-esteem—an important benefit among these farm workers to whom society assigns low status.

For Brent Hursey-McLaughlin, executive director of South Florida Urban Ministries, the partnership between Branches and Miami Dade is all about "being stronger" in service delivery. Miami Dade has benefited because it had long wanted to expand its adult education programs among the farm-worker and immigrant communities, but needed the right "distribution channel." And Branches has won, too. Hursey-McLaughlin says that Kim Torres' struggle all along has been to increase parental involvement; now the collaboration with Miami Dade is starting to make that happen. "We need to do more of this partnering [with non-FBOs]," Hursey-McLaughlin concludes. "It always yields benefits for both sides." ■





# Idaho

## CONGREGATION AHAVATH BETH ISRAEL'S COMMUNITY GARDEN

*Key partners: Idaho Office for Refugees and numerous Boise businesses*



One of the core values of the Jewish tradition is “g’milut chasiadin”—acts that create loving kindness. The Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel (CABI) in Boise is seeking to live out this value by offering a helping hand to its new neighbors—refugees from trouble-torn foreign lands who have immigrated to America. “We are called to reach beyond ourselves, to say that our home is also a home for our neighbors,” explains congregation member Aimee Moran.

In 2004, in partnership with the Idaho Office for Refugees and numerous local businesses, the congregation started a Community Garden where refugee families can grow supplementary vegetables for their table. “Our garden community reminds our Jewish community that though we have made a Jewish home on our new CABI campus, the land is still God’s, and God asks that we share it with those in need,” Moran says. Poverty rates for non-citizen immigrants are twice that of native-born Americans, and food from the garden can ease the budget squeeze on CABI’s new neighbors. (The Economic Policy Institute estimates that in Boise, a family of four needs an annual income of \$34,645 to pay for housing, food, health care and other necessities—a figure

well above what the refugees earn.)

So far, nineteen refugee families have participated in the community garden. Most are



from Somalia, Liberia, or Afghanistan. They live in apartment housing adjacent to the synagogue. One of the project’s goals is to provide for ease in these immigrants’ transition from agricultural life to an urban life. Project leaders report that their discussions with the refugees reveal that the cooperative

Our garden community *reminds our Jewish community* that though we have made a Jewish home on our new *CABI campus*, *the land is still God's*, and God asks that we share it with those in need.

—CABI member Aimee Moran

garden project is helping in this arena. The refugees can feel proud of applying their agrarian skills in an urban setting, and enjoy a taste of their former rural life by spending a quiet evening sitting in the garden.

With the trust the congregation has won through the garden initiative, it has now been able to launch an ESL program with participation by 20 refugees. Overall, the garden has become much more than a garden—in Moran's words, it is "an oasis for celebrating cultural diversity in Idaho." Refugee neighbors find opportunities for socialization and begin to acquire language skills.

The Jewish people throughout history have known what it means to be strangers in a foreign land. Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel has empathized with its new neighbors, enfold- ing these immigrants into the community and promoting the shalom of their city. ■



## FAST FACTS

### COMMUNITY GARDEN OF CONGREGATION AHAVATH BETH ISRAEL

Program launched in 2004

19 families (134 individuals) served in 2004 at a cost of only \$58 per person

15 active volunteers; contact with participants is 3-4 times/week

90% of immigrant/refugee families participating produced supplemental vegetables for their table

Refugee agencies report improvement in language skills, social skills, responsibility & time management

Many gardeners also participating in ESL classes



# Michigan

## GOOD SAMARITAN MINISTRIES' COMMUNITY HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

*Key partners: Community Action House, HUD, and 16 local churches*



“From homelessness to home ownership.” It makes a great slogan, but what is easy to say is extremely difficult to achieve. That’s why the Community Housing Partnership (CHP) in Ottawa County is so impressive. Eighty percent of the homeless families that graduate from their program move into decent and affordable rental housing and 20 percent have become homeowners. These are remarkable achievements in a county where approximately one-third of residents live in unaffordable housing (that is, housing that eats up more than 30% of their income). The problem is especially severe for the poorest of the poor: according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, some 47 percent of extremely low-income families live in severely unaffordable housing.

Good Samaritan Ministries began the CHP transitional housing program in 1996. In 2004, it served nearly 150 people. “Good Sam” has established a multitude of partnerships to provide a wide array of support for the families. Sixteen area churches provide transitional housing and intensive support services such as mentoring and help with transportation, childcare, and everyday tasks like grocery shopping and yard work. A secular nonprofit, Community Action House, employs three case managers that meet weekly with each of the 25-30 clients in the program. They conduct a comprehensive assessment and develop a case plan outlining short and long-term goals. Community Action House also provides a weekly life skills class and helps clients develop a working budget, reduce their debt, and repair their credit. Another local FBO, Neighbors Plus, makes IDAs (Individual Development Accounts—a matched savings program) available to program participants who enroll in their IDA course. The Center for Women in Transition provides domestic violence support groups; HUD and the City of Holland provide major funding; various counseling agencies

offer substance abuse and mental health counseling services; and CarLink, Inc. helps qualified participants secure donated cars.

With all these collaborations and 75 active volunteers, the CHP truly reflects the spirit of “partnership” that judges in the Partners in Transformation awards program look for. And as for signs of “transformation,” judges were impressed with the testimonies of life change made possible through the CHP initiative. One single mom with two kids who came to the program from a local emergency shelter was able to increase her income by 40%, begin using a budget, develop a support network, and rent an unsubsidized apartment. Brian and Marisol enrolled in the CHP with their four kids following an eviction. They joined in the IDA program, Brian completed an 18-week mechanical certification course, and Marisol began working on her GED. They were able to rent a home on the open market after 23 months in the program. A family of five that came to CHP from an emergency shelter spent 19 months in the program, repairing their credit and getting back on their feet financially. They have now purchased a home.

Building strong relationships with program participants is at the core of CHP. Good Sam believes that “when individuals connect with people who care, they are transformed.” Today, they have some hard data to back up their belief in the power of relationships. Over the past three years, the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research has conducted an evaluation of 189 graduates of Good Sam’s various mentoring initiatives. The Frost Center study found that 66.3% of program participants had begun with debt problems; this was reduced to 18 percent by graduation. Similarly, the percentage of participants with no working budget decreased from 79.8 percent at the program’s start to 6.7 percent at graduation. The number of participants lacking stable housing decreased from 31.8 percent to 9.1 percent and the number enjoying reliable transportation jumped from 25.6 percent to 80.9 percent. The numbers tell the story: change is possible. ■

## FAST FACTS

### GOOD SAMARITAN MINISTRIES’ COMMUNITY HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Program launched in 1996

145 people served in past 12 months

75 active volunteers

80% of program participants leave homelessness and move into decent and affordable housing

20% of program graduates became home owners





# *New Jersey*

## **PROMISE JOBS CULINARY SCHOOL OF ELIJAH'S PROMISE**

*Key partners: Rutgers University, New Brunswick Adult Learning Center*



**T**he New Brunswick-based Elijah's Promise has already been recognized as a leader in the fight against hunger. In 2003, this FBO was one of eight organizations nationwide awarded the World Hunger Year Harry Chapin Self-Reliance Award for "creative approaches to fighting domestic hunger and poverty by empowering people and building self-reliance." The ministry was launched in 1989 when three city groups decided to consolidate their efforts and form one centralized soup kitchen. Over the years, it has grown from providing emergency meals to a multi-program agency that helps people move out of poverty.

The ministry established the Promise Jobs Culinary School in April 1997 to address the problem of unemployment among their soup kitchen guests. Since the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 16 percent increase in jobs in the food service industry, the ministry developed a 17-week culinary arts training program, complete with an externship and on-the-job training, to help men and women gain marketable skills for this career. A trained chef and educator directs the program, assisted by a vocational counselor and a social services coordinator. Students receive instruction in math, communication, and "soft skills" in the morning, then spend the afternoons in the kitchen learning and practicing all aspects of professional cooking. They receive additional hands-on training (and paid employment) by working for Promise Catering, the for-profit venture launched by Elijah's Promise several years ago.

## FAST FACTS

### ELIJAH'S PROMISE "PROMISE JOBS CULINARY SCHOOL"

Program Launched in 1997

Over 150 program graduates

17-week culinary arts training program with hands-on externship

97% of program graduates placed into jobs

95% job retention rate among graduates

## The program's job retention rate – *95 percent* – is 20 percentage points higher than the New Jersey state average.

The program now boasts over 150 graduates. Its partners include Rutgers University, which provides much of the curriculum, and the New Brunswick Adult Learning Center, which provides life-and-job readiness skills classes. The ministry developed a Promise Jobs Advisory Board, a group of five local chefs, staff, and one program graduate, to review program guidelines, curriculum, and program progress. Executive Director Lisanne Finston explains that this is important to ensure that the school stays in touch with the needs of the industry. It also helps solidify the ministry's relationships with dozens of area chefs and restaurants that can take on program graduates as externs and employees. In part because of these connections, an impressive 97 percent of graduates have been placed into jobs.

Elijah's Promise is serving some the hardest to employ populations—individuals who have been homeless, disabled, or underemployed. Yet, the program graduates' job retention rate (95 percent) is 20 percentage points higher than the New Jersey state average. The ministry credits this to their aftercare program, which includes mentoring and job coaching to ensure a smooth transition from school to work. ■





# Ohio

## CENTRAL OHIO YOUTH FOR CHRIST'S CITY LIFE JV PROGRAM

*Key partners: Starling Middle School, Franklin County Justice Programs Unit*



According to Census 2000 data, low-income single parents head over 60 percent of the households in the Columbus, OH neighborhood of Franklinton. About 40 percent of Franklinton students graduate high school, and only 43 percent of Franklinton residents age 25 and older have completed high school or their GED. Many youth are involved in drug use and crime.

In this environment, the City Life JV program offers a different path for struggling adolescents. It engages middle school students in a variety of in- and out-of-school educational, recreational, and spiritual activities that are aimed at helping these youth to embrace positive values, grow in their sense of self-worth, and achieve their dreams. Last year, the City Life program served 150 students on the amazingly low budget of \$24,000. Even more impressive are the outcomes it has achieved: only 7 percent of involved students drop out of school and 95 percent stay clear of the juvenile justice system. These successes merited City Life first prize in the PiT contest in highly competitive Ohio, where 102 FBOs applied.

City Life achieves these results because of their intense involvement with participants. Staff and volunteers build strong relationships with the kids, seeing them typically twice a week or more. “We emphasize kids building strong relationships with caring adults whom they can trust,” says City Life coordinator Lisa Gintz. “In addition, participants are able to be part of positive peer groups that serve as an alternative to gangs and unhealthy influences.”



We have learned that *effectiveness is nearly always tied to a caring relationship*. People help people... *not programs... not government... not advertising campaigns... not rallies or big events.*

—YFC Executive Director Scott Arnold

Many kids get into trouble because they are unsupervised and unengaged in extra-curricular activities. City Life JV offers a variety of after-school, youth-friendly activities to capture their interest: camps, leadership training, community service opportunities, field trips, and mentoring, to name a few. This FBO has a presence on campus as well as off—staff speak to kids in the in-school detention/suspension program. Recently, working with their partners at Starling Middle School, City Life established a new time-out program at the school. “It allows students to stay at school after being removed from class and choose an adult to speak to. This provides an alternative to just sending an extremely volatile kid home and is one more way to help kids succeed in school,” explains Youth For Christ Executive Director Scott Arnold. ■



## FAST FACTS

### CENTRAL OHIO YOUTH FOR CHRIST'S "CITY LIFE JV"

Program launched in 1992

150 students served in past twelve months...on \$24,000 budget!

Ministry active in the community for 21 years

93% of participating students stay in school

95% of participants remain free of involvement with the juvenile justice system



# Oklahoma

## GOOD SHEPHERD HEALTH CLINIC OF MUSKOGEE

*Key partners: Muskogee Regional Medical Center, Providence Radiology and MRI Associates, and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services*



Launched in 2000, the Good Shepherd Health Clinic of Muskogee is a great example of the faith community coming together with the public sector and private health care providers to ensure that the medical needs of those without health insurance can be met. The Clinic is a joint venture of the St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church and the St. Paul United Methodist Church. There are no paid staff and the Clinic survived on the meager budget of under \$16,000 last year. It is truly a labor of love—and it is making a noticeable impact in this rural community. Last year, the Clinic mobilized 520 volunteer hours each month and served over 500 patients.

The clinic works with Muskogee Regional Medical Center, Providence Radiology and MRI Associates, and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to provide physician care, x-ray services, lab work, and prescription medicines. Six doctors and several nurses and nurse practitioners that donate their services for free staff the Clinic. Recently, the Clinic also began offering pro-bono legal consulting. Other church volunteers serve in administrative roles and as prayer partners to clients who want spiritual support as well as medical care.

Nearly 23 percent of the residents of Muskogee do not have health insurance. According

**There's a *healing* through the medical  
[*service*] and *healing* through the  
*spiritual* aspect. We do both.**

*—Good Shepherd Health Clinic Board Member  
Bill Miller*

to Oklahoma Rural HealthWorks, the annual per capita out-of-pocket expenses incurred by families for medical costs has soared from \$348 in 1970 to nearly \$6000 in 2003. In light of these challenging realities, the Good Shepherd Health Clinic is providing a vital service in its community. ■



## FAST FACTS

### GOOD SHEPHERD HEALTH CLINIC OF MUSKOGEE

Program launched in 2000

528 patients served in past 12 months

Every participant seen by at least four volunteers

Collaboration between Protestant and Catholic faith communities to meet health care needs of uninsured

100% of eligible participants receive free health care & needed prescriptions

Improvement of health status... fewer visits needed to the clinic

Clinic also provides free legal consulting





# Texas

## SCOFIELD MEMORIAL CHURCH'S REFUGEE OUTREACH MINISTRY

*Key partner: International Rescue Committee*



Many Americans see the world's traumas only via satellite: we flip on the evening news to hear reports of repression, civil war, famine, and dislocation. For many congregants of Scofield Memorial Church, though, those far away sufferings have come close to home.

From 2003 to 2004, the number of refugees admitted into Texas increased an overwhelming 226 percent. Scofield has responded with its new Refugee Outreach Ministry, launched last year. The church is located just a couple of miles from the heart of the Vickery Meadow neighborhood in north Dallas.

Approximately one-quarter of the residents of this overcrowded community are refugees, most from very poor and/or war-torn countries like Afghanistan and Somalia. Some, like Nabila Hadeery, whose arm is scarred from where she was burned by the Taliban for having shown her skin in public, have personally experienced persecution. Most have spent years in refugee camps.

The International Rescue Committee of Dallas has been active in resettling many of the refugee families, and has welcomed Scofield Memorial as a partner to assist in meeting their unique needs. So far, about 500 individuals have been served.



“My life has been changed due to my involvement with this incredible refugee population,” says Mike Self, Scofield Memorial’s Pastor of Student Ministries. “My world is a much bigger place....I want my children to grow up recognizing that friends come in all colors and from all countries.”

## FAST FACTS

### SCOFIELD MEMORIAL CHURCH'S REFUGEE OUTREACH MINISTRY

Program launched in 2004

500 individuals served in past 12 months

80% of participating students received passing grades

60% of participating students raised their grades

75% of participating refugee families became self-sufficient within 8 months

The International Rescue Committee works intensively with the refugee families to provide resettlement services, job training, and financial aid. Meanwhile, Scofield Memorial offers mentoring and tutoring services to refugee kids as well as a youth summer camp. Through this close and synergistic partnership, 75 percent of the participating refugee families have been able to become self-sufficient within eight months. Nabila Hadeery, for example, is now working full-time and has developed a support system of family, friends, and American mentors. The refugee children, too, are benefiting greatly. Eighty percent of participating students have received passing grades and 60 percent of participating students have raised their grades. ■



**My life has been changed due to my involvement** with this incredible refugee population. **My world is a much bigger place.**

—*Scofield Memorial's Pastor of Student Ministries*  
*Mike Self*

## Promising Practices: Programmatic

Enthusiastic participation by FBOs in the Partners in Transformation contest meant long, hard work by our judges. But the grading process was rewarding, since it afforded a look into the inner working of some highly effective programs. Following the awards distribution, our staff re-examined the proposals and supplementary information provided by the top 50 applicants (the semi-finalists) and conducted a number of telephone interviews with staff from winning programs. We categorized the semi-finalists' applications by program service and looked for common themes. This highlighted a number of promising practices, discussed below.

### JOBS

The programs attaining semi-finalist status that focused on employment services demonstrated impressive rates of job placement and job retention. Typically some 85 to 97 percent of participants in these programs were employed following graduation, and job retention rates were equally high. Moreover, these participants were in jobs paying well above the minimum wage: most made between \$8 and \$12 per hour. We observed four promising practices in these successful programs:

(1) The program focused on the workforce development needs of employers.

The FBOs had close connections to employers and shaped their training programs with those employers' needs in mind. The Jobs Partnership of Florida, for example, has partnered with the Air Conditioning Contractors Association of Central Florida (42 member companies) and provides many graduates to affiliated businesses. TEACH-TEC in Ohio and Elijah's

Promise in New Jersey also have strong partnerships with employers who provide paid, on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities to program participants. Many go on to full-time jobs with those employers.

(2) The program networked job seekers together, offering opportunities for information-sharing and peer-to-peer learning and encouragement.

The Christian Women's Job Corps, for example, sponsors an alumni club of program graduates. Through it, women have problem-solved on transportation and child-care issues and swapped information on job opportunities. This has contributed to job retention and career advancement.

(3) The programs had invited outside researchers to evaluate their efforts and offer suggestions for improvement. Michigan's Good Samaritan Ministries, Florida's Jobs Partnership program, and New Jersey's Elijah's Promise have all benefited from academics that have provided information on industry trends and/or conducted formal assessments of their programs.

(4) The program utilized mentors to encourage and coach participants, contributing to higher job placement and job retention rates. Through mentors' networks, program participants heard about job opportunities they might otherwise have missed. Mentors also provided crucial support to participants struggling with new jobs—talking them through the challenges of the workplace and providing practical support such as emergency transportation. Sometimes these forms of assistance meant the difference between a participant's quitting and staying on the job.

## ALABAMA State Semi-Finalists

### M-POWER Ministries "Adult Literacy Program" (Birmingham)

*This program trains volunteer tutors to teach adult learners to read; although 25% of Alabamians are functionally illiterate, 80% of adult learners in this program have progressed at least one grade level in reading.*

### Mercy Medical Ministry "Mercy Medical Clinic" (Auburn)

*This ministry provides medical, dental and spiritual care to uninsured people in Lee County. 60% of patients' needs are met through the clinic, referrals to specialists, prescription services, and spiritual counseling.*

### Trinity Lutheran Church "Faith in Action Program" (Dothan)

*This program provides volunteer caregiver support to community members with long-term health conditions. In 2004, 96% of requests for volunteer caregiver support were filled, with services ranging from respite for family caregivers, transportation, light housekeeping, simple house and yard maintenance, visits and meal preparation to 11<sup>th</sup> hour support for dying patients.*

### Alabama Justice Ministries "Jefferson County Jail Ministry" (Birmingham)

*This organization mobilizes members of local congregations to serve as volunteers in the Jefferson County Jail Ministry; to date, over 150 volunteers participate monthly in life skills training including anger management, conflict resolution, job training, re-entry issues, and aftercare services. Disciplinary measures have decreased 15% in the jail since the program's inception.*

## MULTI-SECTOR COLLABORATION IN HEALTH CARE

Approximately 20 percent of the contest semi-finalists provide healthcare services for indigent members of their communities. With some 40 million Americans lacking medical insurance, faith-based efforts in this arena are critical. Through creative collaborations, FBOs are helping the uninsured to secure medical treatment, prescription drugs, mental health services, and pre-natal care.

In Camden, New Jersey, Community Health Practice (CHP) partners with the Helene Fuld School of Nursing to provide primary and specialty medical services to the city's working poor. Nursing students gain hands-on experience working side by side with the CHP clinic's all-volunteer staff. Meanwhile, the clinic provides a "home base" for low-income adults with chronic conditions, thus reducing ER usage for acute episodes of untreated diseases. By obtaining sample medications through Our Lady of Lourdes pharmacy, CHP is also meeting 100% of patients' prescription needs.

Elsewhere in New Jersey, collaboration is making possible better care for the mentally ill. The Atlantic City Rescue Mission's Crisis Diversion Unit (CDU) seeks to divert homeless men suffering from mental illness from imminent psychiatric hospitalization by providing outpatient mental health services on-site at the mission. In 2004, 43 men were diverted from the state mental hospital to the Mission, where they received psycho-educational therapy services as a part of a collaborative relationship among the Mission, Jewish Family Services of Atlantic County, and AtlantiCare Behavioral Health.

In Ada County, Idaho, St. Michael's Episcopal Cathedral is partnering with the local hospital, the University of Idaho, and the Idaho Food Bank to decrease the incidence of premature births and low birth weight outcomes among low-income pregnant women. This forward-looking program offers future healthcare savings, since healthier babies make healthier kids. The church's "Baby Steps" program provides prenatal education and practical supports—diapers, home furnishings, clothing, books, and food—to meet moms' tangible needs. Only 1.3 percent of the Baby Steps' participants' infants were born with low birth weight, compared with 10.2 percent of all low-income Ada County births.

## ALASKA State Semi-Finalists

### **Juneau Cooperative Christian Ministry dba The Glory Hole** "The Glory Hole" (Juneau)

*This program provides food and emergency shelter for hundreds of homeless and hungry adults. Working with civic groups, the government, schools, and businesses, they provide food, showers, laundry, job and housing assistance, bus tokens, referrals, and a safe place to stay 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.*

### **Lutheran Social Services of Alaska** "HUGSS (Helping Us Give School Supplies) and Coats for Kids" (Anchorage)

*In cooperation with the Anchorage School District, Catholic Social Services, and other organizations and local businesses, this program provides children living in poverty with school supplies and winter coats. 4,577 children received assistance from this program in 2004.*

### **Alaska Police Chaplains' Ministries** "Alaska Police Chaplains' Ministries" (Anchorage)

*This program provides support, assistance, and stress management to emergency services personnel and community members who are affected by traumatic events. Hundreds of people have been served through this collaboration with Emergency Operation Centers, HHS, the fire department, and local, state, and federal law enforcement.*

### **Alaska Correctional Ministries** "Transformational Living Community" (Anchorage)

*This program is a faith-based residential therapeutic community for criminal offenders wishing to be transformed. With the Department of Corrections, Health and Social Services, and the Southcentral Foundation, the program provides such services as mentoring, counseling, tutoring, case management, and pre-release planning.*

## HOUSING

Semi-finalists engaged in tackling homelessness achieved strong outcomes: from 70 to 90 percent of their program graduates had moved into stable, decent, permanent housing. Four common themes emerged from examination of their approach:

- (1) All provided case management services to clients.
- (2) Almost all included a job training/job placement assistance component in their program, despite their primary focus on housing.
- (3) All engaged in intensive client contact: many had daily interactions and all had more than once per week interactions with their program participants.
- (4) Some pursued a strategy of “incremental independence;” that is, a graduated approach in which the client progressed through various phases of the housing program (residential, transitional, independent), each of which had a different level of supervision and support.

## EX-OFFENDER RE-ENTRY

A remarkable 40 out of the 475 applicants to the PiT contest were engaged in prisoner aftercare/re-entry programs. Six of these achieved semi-finalist status. Nationwide, estimates of prisoner recidivism hover at about 65 percent; that is, 65 percent of ex-cons released from prison commit new crimes and are sent back behind bars. By contrast, the recidivism rates reported by our semi-finalists ran from 27 percent to zero. Moreover, against the prevailing reality that up to 60 percent of ex-offenders are unable to secure steady

employment within their first year of release,<sup>5</sup> the PiT program applicants boasted employment rates among program graduates from 62 percent to 96 percent. The promising practices implemented by these groups included:

- (1) An emphasis on connecting prisoners with a new support system. Most of the programs assigned each ex-offender a personal mentor or mentoring team. Some provided a personal case manager as well. Most have partnered with churches to provide a welcoming place to enfold ex-offenders in new social and recreational activities.
- (2) An emphasis on family reunification (especially in the case of female ex-offenders). Having an opportunity to reunite with children can provide a strong incentive for female ex-offenders trying to pull their lives back together and walk the straight and narrow. Nonetheless, family reunification also presents challenges. Consequently, these successful programs had begun dealing with these issues prior to the offender’s release. In one case, this involved video conferencing between children and parents. In others, it meant specific classes and support group meetings/counseling sessions focused on this issue.
- (3) An emphasis on accountability and supervision. Ex-offenders are typically required to participate in small group meetings and/or in regular “check in” sessions with a mentor, counselor, or staff member. In residential programs, they needed to obey house rules such as curfews, avoidance of substance use, and limited visitation.

5. Harold Watts and Demetra Smith Nightingale, "Adding It Up: The Economic Impact of Incarceration on Individuals, Families, and Communities" (The Urban Institute).

## ARKANSAS *State Semi-Finalists*

### **Let Our Violence End**

“L.O.V.E.” (Little Rock)

*Responding to the growing trend of drug use and gang violence in Arkansas, L.O.V.E. partners with nursing training programs, mental health/social services and businesses to place mentors and support groups in the school system. 80% of teens counseled have shown signs of shedding negative behaviors.*

### **Arkansas Rice Depot “Food For Kids”**

*“Food For Kids” (Little Rock)  
Based on the conviction that “a hungry child cannot learn,” this organization provides backpacks of nutritious and kid-friendly food to send home with students who depend on free lunches during the day but lack food in the evenings or on weekends. Currently, the program operates in 380 public schools across the state and serves 12,000 students annually.*

### **The HELP! Foundation “The HELP! Foundation”**

*“The HELP! Foundation” (Little Rock)  
This program serves female heads of households who have been victimized by domestic violence by offering referrals, counseling, job training, housing and computer training. By the time they leave, 90% of program participants have found either temporary or permanent housing and secured jobs.*

### **Our House, Inc. “Our House, Inc.”**

*“Our House, Inc.” (Little Rock)  
This organization operates both an emergency shelter and a long-term transitional shelter. Supplementing their shelters with budgeting programs, meals, tutoring, job skills training, child care and youth programs support, 90% of their residents obtain employment and 100% receive multiple social services after intake.*



## JUVENILE JUSTICE

The most common program services provided by the PiT applicants were those targeting the needs of youth. Several entrants focused especially on those youth who had a record of interaction with the juvenile justice system. For these groups, a primary goal is to help the youngsters stay out of trouble and forge a new direction for their lives. Not surprisingly, our top-scoring applicants had achieved notable progress. Ninety-five percent of youth engaged in our Ohio state winner’s program, City Life, had avoided new involvement with the juvenile justice system. At New Beginnings Christian Community Revitalization Corporation, 80 percent of participating youth remained free of interaction with the criminal justice system. And in Texas, the Vital Impact initiative had received the best marks for lowest recidivism rates among Dallas County after-school providers. Examination of these programs highlighted several common practices:

- (1) Every program provided some kind of educational assistance—tutoring, GED prep, etc.
- (2) Almost every program provided some degree of substance abuse programming (treatment or prevention initiatives).
- (3) These programs offered creative, “horizon-stretching” recreational opportunities for youth.
- (4) These programs engaged youth in meaningful community service projects. ■

## Innovations

While examining effective program practices, we especially sought to glean ideas about innovative program design and implementation. To that end, we identified those FBOs from among our semi-finalists who attained high scores in the “creativity” category of the judging process. We then carefully examined their programmatic approach. This process yielded three interesting observations:

- (1) Some of the effective FBOs were intentional about preserving or enhancing the dignity of program participants. The Arkansas Rice Depot, for example, gives food-filled backpacks to kids who might not have dinner. What is noteworthy is that the

## PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Correlates with Frequent Participant Contact

Group	% contact 1/week +
All applicants	58%
Top 50 (Semi-finalists)	64%

## TABLE 4

FREQUENCY OF PARTNER COMMUNICATION

Group	% daily contact
All applicants	9.1%
Top 50 (Semi-finalists)	14%

## FLORIDA State Semi-Finalists

### Central Florida Haven of Hope Ministries

“Central Florida Haven of Hope Ministries” (Orlando)  
*This program works with hundreds of men, women, and children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS through collaborations with other community-based organizations, providing for their practical, spiritual, emotional, and relational needs. Participants have experienced weight gain or maintenance and relief from depression.*

### Clay County Habitat for Humanity

“Clay County Habitat for Humanity” (Middleburg)  
*This program seeks to combine their mission to eliminate sub-standard housing with job training and experience for area high school students. 300 students from four high schools in Clay County frame the houses and put on the roofs, shingles, doors, and windows. Through this initiative, 87 new homes have been built since 1987 and only one family has foreclosed.*

### The Jobs Partnership of Florida, Inc.

“Life & Work Training Class” (Orlando)  
*This program works with One Stop Career Centers, Goodwill Industries, Charity Cars, and other agencies to enable unemployed and underemployed individuals to develop the skills and assets they require to obtain a job through training, mentoring, counseling, material assistance, and case management.*

### Somebody Cares Tampa Bay

“CareFest” (Clearwater)  
*The Annual CareFest reaches about 1,000 people a year. In addition to serving Tampa homeowners, the event is a networking tool for local businesses and nonprofits who often form lasting partnerships.*

food is not distributed in plastic sacks, but in “cool” backpacks. This reduces the chances of humiliation from being identified as a needy child. In Texas, the GospelWorks program creatively uses technology to accomplish something crucial: an incarcerated mom or dad talking with his/her kids. This cuts out the potential humiliation of sons or daughters having to get in a car, drive to the prison, empty out their pockets to go through security, and be watched by cameras or armed guards as they visit their parent. Simultaneously, it accomplishes (almost) the same thing as a visit—human interaction. In New Jersey, the Elijah’s Promise “Promise Jobs Culinary School” dresses their students in chef hats and white jackets, preparing them for jobs in sit-down restaurants instead of entry-level positions at fast-food joints.

(2) High-scoring applicants treated program participants as givers, not simply receivers. In some instances, this meant that multiple programmatic aims could be accomplished for different target audiences. The Scranton Road Community Development Corporation in Cleveland, Ohio offers a terrific example. Its “Digital Connectors” initiative seeks to train low-income high school students in computer technology. Students learn relevant computer skills such as MS Word, MS Publisher, MS Excel, and website design. But it also then engages these students as teachers for adults from public housing communities who wish to learn basic computer literacy skills. M-POWER Ministries in Birmingham, Alabama provides literacy training to illiterate adults in the community and in the St. Clair Correctional Facility. But it also trains inmates to become literacy tutors for their fellow prisoners.

(3) High-scoring youth programs deliberately include fine arts and cultural enrichment activities as a central part of their program design. The New Beginnings Christian Community Revitalization Corporation operates a broad-ranging youth leadership development program for middle and high school students. Its program includes art activities, etiquette classes, gardening projects, and a summer reading program in addition to traditional youth activities such as sports and recreation. Lincoln Village Ministries in Alabama connects low-income elementary school students to the local Community Ballet Association, providing scholarships to promising students and bringing school assemblies to dance performances. ■

## Promising Practices: Multi-Sector Collaboration

In addition to identifying effective and innovative program practices, we were also interested in assessing the nature of the collaborative partnerships displayed by our highest-scoring applicants. This exploration yielded a number of insights about practices that had contributed to the strength, longevity, or fruitfulness of the partnerships.

### FREQUENT INTERACTION

The most obvious was how close the relationships were between the FBO and its partners in each of the highest-scoring programs. These are not casual relationships; they are intentional, interactive, respectful, and committed. One FBO even referred to its partnership with

## IDAHO State Semi-Finalists

### Genesis World Mission

“Garden City Community Clinic” (Garden City)  
*This non-denominational Christian volunteer organization partners with medical providers to offer medical, dental and mental health services to the poor. 100% of clients have access to appropriate health care and 95% of patients with acute chronic conditions have received ongoing treatment.*

### St. Michael’s Episcopal

**Cathedral** “Baby Steps Parenting & Prenatal Education/Incentive Program” (Boise)  
*This church works with over 20 other organizations to offer prenatal education and parenting advice for limited-income women. Although 10.2% of babies born to low-income women in Ada County are low-birth weight, only 1.3% of mothers in this program had a baby with a low-birth weight.*

### Mercy Housing Idaho,

**Inc.** “Magic Valley Self Help Homeownership Program” (Eagle)  
*This organization helps the working poor in rural towns to acquire their first home by walking them through classes on credit counseling, homebuilding and maintenance skills, mortgage assistance, financial literacy, homeownership, and asset building. They have assisted 100% of qualified families in purchasing their first home.*

### Mustard Seed Ministries

“Community Assistance Program” (Twin Falls)  
*This ministry identifies low-income families or individuals who desire to be self-supporting and provides mentoring, job training, family budgeting education, food, clothing, rental and utility assistance, dental and medical help, and needs consulting to ensure a transition to self-sufficiency.*

a local business as a “marriage.” One indicator of the closeness of these relationships was the frequency with which the partners communicated. The top 50 applicants were more likely than the rest of the PiT entrants to have daily interaction with their primary partner: 14 percent of the semi-finalists had daily contact with their non-faith partner, versus 9.1 percent of the entire pool of applicants (see Table 4 on page 33).

### CO-LOCATION

Some of the FBOs pursued a co-location strategy with their primary partners. In New Jersey, the Atlantic City Rescue Mission provided space in-house at its emergency shelter for its mental-health counseling partners, providing more convenient “one-stop” services for clients. In Orlando, the Jobs Partnership houses its office space with one of its partners, Goodwill Industries, thus facilitating increased interaction, communication, and personal relationships among staff members.

### STRATEGIC ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Another sign of good partnerships that we observed concerned their strategic division of responsibilities—crafting the relationship such that each organization focused on its areas of strength. When groups with complementary strengths and shared goals came together, effective programs resulted. South Florida Urban Ministries’ partnership with Miami Dade College is a good example. The ministry brought cross-cultural relational skills, trust/credibility in the Florida City farm worker community, and client “know-how” to the table. Miami Dade offered expertise in teaching adult literacy classes, something the ministry staff lacked. But the college had been

unsuccessful in attracting low-income migrant/farm workers into their programs. They needed the effective “distribution channel” that the ministry’s Branches program offered. By coming together, both organizations—and more importantly, the adults of Florida City—benefited. “They know the stats,” Branches Director Kim Torres says about Miami Dade, “we know the names and faces and stories. So we’re a real asset to them. But they have expertise that we don’t have.” The partnership has not only made the program possible, it has also improved it. Miami Dade teachers initially planned to use the same evaluation methods for the farm-workers as for their other adult-education courses, namely, written exams. Kim Torres helped them to realize that this approach needed to be modified; the farm-workers operated in a more verbal culture. Oral examinations are now more common.

The Adopt-A-Block project in Wyoming, Michigan is another example of each partner doing what it does best. This collaboration joins the Adopt-A-Block ministry, Wyoming Police Department, Wyoming Public Schools, and the City of Wyoming together for the revitalization of the Taft neighborhood. (Prior to the partnership, the Taft neighborhood had the city’s highest crime rate and the Taft Elementary School had been labeled as a “failing school” by the state.) Since the project’s inception in early 2004, crime in the community has decreased 40 percent, reading levels among tutored students at the elementary school have increased two grade levels, and public safety has been improved through the installation of new streetlights, smoke detectors, and traffic calming devices. Director Brian Patterson enthuses:

“The taskforce meeting location rotates among the core members.... Each of these core groups provide [sic] volunteers,

## MICHIGAN State Semi-Finalists

#### **Crossroads Farm** “Crossroads Farm Student Ministry Program” (Reading)

*Crossroads Farm works with 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders to provide educational, spiritual, recreational, and relational guidance. Hundreds of students participate, many college and adult volunteers are getting leadership training and experience, and the county is seeing grades rise, teen pregnancy rates drop, college attendance rise, and the community as a whole improve.*

#### **Adopt-a-Block** “Taft Avenue Transformation Project” (Wyoming)

*This program works to improve life in the Taft Avenue neighborhood through home visits, provision of material assistance, tutoring and mentoring of kids, Teacher Appreciation events, ESL classes, and community social events. The students’ grades are significantly improving and the neighborhood has been made safer: drug and crime rates have fallen by 40%.*

#### **Transition of Prisoners** “Transition of Prisoners (TOP Program)” (Detroit)

*This program seeks to enable ex-prisoners to re-enter the community successfully and permanently. TOP graduates are 10 times less likely to recidivate than a group receiving no TOP services. Through the program’s collaboration, ex-prisoners receive mentoring, employment assistance, church integration, support groups, tutoring, GED assistance, housing placement, employment readiness, casework, and referrals.*

#### **Coopersville Reformed Church** “Kids Hope USA” (Coopersville)

*Kids Hope USA recruits, trains, matches, and supervises church members to mentor at-risk children for one hour each week, working on academic subjects as well as emotional and spiritual issues. Approximately 80% of children in the program have increased their positive behavior, self-regulation, self-control, and academic skills.*

financial resources, and leadership for appropriate activities. For example, the school handled and facilitated the mentoring program and events like the student motivational movie trip; the city of Wyoming officials took responsibility for planning and installing the city park adjacent to Taft Avenue; and Adopt-A-Block continually builds personal relationships with the people to provide input to the task force team...The beauty of this arrangement is that each organization can do what it does best. There is no way the Adopt-A-Block group could fund building a park, but we can identify a need to improve recreation in the neighborhood which guarantees that the city spends its money well."

### COMBINATION OF FRIENDSHIP AND FORMALITY

In some instances, we noted a combination of formality and amiability in the partnerships. That is, collaborative partners demonstrated strong personal relationships—good communication, high trust, mutual respect, enjoyment of one another's friendship. Simultaneously, they took time to formalize the working relationship through written Memorandums of Understanding or other documents outlining expectations and responsibilities.

### PRE-PARTNERSHIP "SCREENING"

Healthy partnerships also seemed to be the result of good preliminary research or screening on the part of the FBO. That is, they were intentional and judicious about choosing their partners. As Brent Hursey-McLaughlin of South Florida Urban Ministries explained, "We do research before we approach other entities. We need to ensure that a relationship makes sense." Janet DeYoung of Good

Samaritan Ministries says that she looks for four key criteria before jumping into a partnership: mutual respect, shared mission passion and goals, complementary strategies, and shared core programmatic values, such as client confidentiality.

### PROGRAM "ACCREDITATION"

In FBO-government partnerships, some of the semi-finalists had successfully forged programs such that participants' completion of the ministry's program was "accredited." That is, it was accepted by the government partner as having met certain regulations or eligibility criteria that normally would accrue to a client only by completing a government program. The clearest example of this was in the Jobs Partnership of Florida's collaboration with local One Stop Career centers. Explains Executive Director Marc Stanakis: "Essentially, the One Stop accepts a number of the activities provided by the Jobs Partnership of Florida Life & Work training classes as satisfaction of WIA [Workforce Investment Act] requirements for receiving a training voucher." This is extremely beneficial for program participants, who now need not duplicate their efforts and take One Stop classes in order to obtain a training voucher. Other examples of this kind of "accreditation" are found in FBO programs collaborating with juvenile justice agencies in which youth receive "alternative sentencing" to participate in faith-based programs.

### COMBINING MISSIONS FOR THE ADVANCE OF EACH

Finally, the PiT competition uncovered some intriguing win-win partnerships where organizations with different visions came together in a relationship that helped each to advance their own mission. In Middleburg, Florida, Clay County Habitat for Humanity's vision

## NEW JERSEY *State Semi-Finalists*

**Community Health Practice**  
"Community Health Practice"  
(Camden)  
*This program uses volunteer physicians, nurses and social workers from a local nursing school to provide primary and specialty medical services to low-income families and children, averaging thousands of appointments annually and meeting all of their patients' prescription needs.*

**St. Paul's Community Development Corporation**  
"Supportive Assistance to Individuals and Families"  
(Paterson)  
*This program uses long-term Individual Service Plans to assist individuals who have reached their five-year time limit for cash assistance; to date, over half of the program's participants are no longer dependent on welfare.*

**Atlantic City Rescue Mission**  
"Crisis Diversion Unit"  
(Atlantic City)  
*This organization assists homeless men and women with mental illnesses by providing in-house behavioral/psychiatric services and a health care clinic; ultimately they divert individuals from state mental institutions to their outpatient treatment program.*

**Cephas New Jersey** "Cephas New Jersey" (Haddonfield)  
*This organization assists parolees in their transition back into the community by providing ex-offender support groups, counseling and mentoring. 73% never return to prison.*

is to provide affordable housing to low- and moderate-income families. Meanwhile, local public high schools in the County want to assist non-college bound students to prepare for good trade jobs. So the two organizations have come to together. Habitat partners with the schools to give students an opportunity to learn construction trades; students build the house frames that are later finished by professional carpenters and the families who take ownership. The collaboration has resulted in a higher number of houses being built and in many students graduating and finding good-wage jobs in the construction industry. In Ohio, TEACH-TEC's partnership with Budget Real Estate Company is putting African-American men ages 18-35 to work in new jobs. That's TEACH-TEC's mission. Budget Real Estate's mission is to run a successful property management company and make a decent profit. To do so, it needs reliable workers. Budget's owner is a busy man from California with several other housing properties around the country. Through the partnership, Budget gets a local presence (TEACH-TEC staff) that can identify potential employees and stand beside those men over time. TEACH-TEC gets an employer partner who will hire its program graduates and provide them with on-the-job paid training in fields such as maintenance, plumbing, painting, carpentry, carpet installation, and landscaping. ■

## Conclusion

The programs identified through the Partners in Transformation competition undercut some negative stereotypes of faith-based organizations. First, they indicate that religious communities are not so heavenly-minded that they're no earthly good. Across the ten states participating in the awards program, hundreds of congregations and faith-based nonprofits are active in providing short and long-term aid to those in need. Second, they show that these faith communities are not insular: they are engaged shoulder-to-shoulder with other nonprofits, government agencies, and a variety of public institutions in problem-solving in their communities. Third, they make it obvious that despite concerns about the separation of church and state, FBOs and public institutions are capable of working together harmoniously and with good results.

Moreover, they provide additional evidence to claims about the faith sector's ability to mobilize volunteers for social services: 18,000 volunteers each month is no small matter. They indicate just how important is the role of the faith community in addressing human need: without these groups, over 1 million Americans in the ten states would have to turn elsewhere for help. Finally, the highest-scoring programs reveal the sophistication, innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness that FBOs are capable of in designing and delivering social services. These groups are worthy of our gratitude and of our support. ■

## OHIO State Semi-Finalists

**TEACH-TEC** "Will Work for Money" (Columbus)

*This organization works with male ex-offenders, providing them with mentoring, job training, and job placement, leading to a 2% recidivism rate and an 89% job placement rate.*

**Lower Lights Ministries, Inc.** "Rachel's House" (Columbus)

*This program provides supervised housing, mentoring, and job and life skills training for female ex-offenders; no program graduate has ever returned to prison.*

**New Beginnings Christian Community Revitalization Corporation** "Empowering Youth 2 Win Youth Leadership Development Program" (Columbus)

*This organization serves at-risk youth through after-school and out-of-school programs in education, recreation, youth leadership development, college and career exploration, and mentoring, leading to decreases in the youths' interaction with the criminal justice system.*

**Scranton Road Ministries CDC** "Digital Connectors" (Cleveland)

*This organization works with high-achieving, low-income public high school students, providing them with technological, entrepreneurial, and financial literacy training as well as experience as computer instructors.*

## Appendix A

### COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY ENTRANTS

Service Type, # Programs, % of total applicants

Anger Management = 26 (5.7%)

Artistic Expression = 46 (10.0%)

Behavior/Character Training = 59 (12.9%)

Camp or Retreat = 31 (6.8%)

Child Care = 29 (6.3%)

Clothing Assistance = 81 (17.6%)

Communication/Relational Skills = 45 (9.8%)

Community Service = 21 (4.6%)

Conflict Resolution = 36 (7.8%)

Counseling = 176 (38.3%)

Cultural Acclamation = 10 (2.2%)

Education = 46 (10.0%)

ESL classes = 13 (2.8%)

Financial Literacy/Budget Training = 62 (13.5%)

Food Assistance = 179 (39.0%)

GED Prep/Testing = 38 (8.3%)

Material Goods = 72 (15.7%)

Health Care (medical, dental, prescriptions, etc.) = 83 (18.1%)

## OKLAHOMA State Semi-Finalists

### **Community of Hope UCC**

“Spiritual Retreats for People Living with HIV/AIDS” (Tulsa)

*This program seeks to provide the spiritual, emotional, physical, and relational support that those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS need but are often denied from their normal social and/or religious communities. Community of Hope offers a yearly retreat for long-term survivors, a day retreat for women, and a day retreat for children.*

### **YWCA of Southern**

**Oklahoma** “Bethlehem ‘House of Bread’ Shelter” (Ardmore)

*This program provides temporary housing to homeless men, women, and children while helping them get back on their feet. The shelter, directly or through partnerships, assists with food, clothing, employment (temporary and permanent), GED classes, housing, substance abuse treatment, transportation, and spiritual and emotional support.*

### **Mother to Mother Ministry of Oklahoma Co., Inc.**

“Mother to Mother Ministry of Oklahoma Co., Inc.” (Oklahoma City)

*This program supports low-income single mothers by providing material assistance, mentoring, friendship, and the resources to escape the cycle of poverty and abuse. The program is the result of a coordination of both public and private groups and includes faith-based and secular organizations.*

### **Olivet Baptist Church**

“Heart and Hand Ministries” (Oklahoma City)

*This program helps homeless mothers with children by providing housing for as long as the women are taking steps to improve their situation. In the last eight years, 750 women and children have realized the program’s goal of obtaining a job, a residence, the education they require, a support network, and the ability to remain self-sufficient and not end up back on the streets.*

In-Home Care (homebound/elderly/etc.) = 14 (3.1%)  
 Housing Placement/Assistance = 70 (15.3%)  
 Job Training/Placement (+business/entrepreneurial skills) = 154 (33.6%)  
 Manual Labor = 30 (6.5%)  
 Leadership Training = 17 (3.7%)  
 Life Skills Training = 110 (24.0%)  
 Mental Health Services = 30 (6.5%)  
 Mentoring = 177 (38.6%)  
 Monetary Assistance = 34 (7.4%)  
 Parenting Skills = 50 (10.9%)  
 Teen Pregnancy Prevention = 17 (3.7%)  
 Residential Care (shelter, rehab home, etc.) = 63 (13.7%)  
 Sexual Addiction Treatment = 2 (.4%)  
 Spiritual/Religious Activities (bible studies, etc.) = 80 (17.4%)  
 Substance Abuse Prevention/Treatment = 87 (19.0%)  
 Suicide Prevention = 6 (1.3%)  
 Transportation = 123 (26.8%)

*Note: Numbers add to more than 475 because some programs provided multiple kinds of services.*

## TEXAS State Semi-Finalists

**Gospelworks** “Video Active Parenting” (Houston)  
*Through their partnership with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the VAP Program helps inmate parents reconnect with their kids, through video conferencing, before returning home. This creative communication has been a vital part of repairing family relations in preparation for their reunion.*

**Lubbock Interfaith Hospitality Network**  
 “Lubbock Interfaith Hospitality Network” (Lubbock)  
*The Lubbock Interfaith Hospitality Network and their collaborating partners reach out to homeless families with children by providing a myriad of services including temporary housing, parent education, financial management training, medical assistance, and aid in job searches. Seventy-eight percent of families in LIHN have acquired adequate, independent housing.*

**Perpetual Help Home**  
 “Christian Women’s Job Corps” (Victoria)  
*Perpetual Help Home and Texas Workforce Solutions have come together in partnership to offer job and life skills training for women who wish to be better equipped. In 2004, 93% of the program participants obtained employment, and 25 enrolled in continuing education.*

**Union Community Development Corporation dba Vital Impact** “Services of Hope” (Dallas)  
*Services of Hope targets at-risk teens who have had contact with the juvenile justice system. Five days a week, the participating students are transported from their institutions to this intensive after-school program. From 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. the teens receive a variety of services, from dinner and tutoring to gang intervention and pre-vocational training.*



SAGAMORE INSTITUTE  
Center on Faith in Communities  
757 King Street  
Charlottesville, VA 22903  
Tel: 434-293-5656  
Fax: 434-295-8728

[www.FASTENnetwork.org](http://www.FASTENnetwork.org)

