

Changing mindsets. Building bridges out of poverty.



A monthly publication of

Unite Escambia's *Poverty Solutions Team*



From the Editor

by Christy Emmanuel, Lender Processing Services (NYSE: LPS) / Poverty Information Group member

Later this year, the Poverty Solutions Team's *Poverty Information Group* will launch a 'Poverty Costs...' campaign to raise awareness about poverty in terms that are understandable, informative and compelling. We simply want you to think about *poverty costs*. If the message speaks to you, then I challenge you to consider what you can do about it. Then call yourself to action.

How does our community begin to measure the impact of poverty? Former Pensacola City Manager **Tom Bonfield** measured the costs in terms of the strain on community resources, education, the economy and buying power, health care, neighborhoods and image. His Viewpoint is posted on the Unite Escambia website at http://www.escambiainitiative.org/docs/Poverty_Costs_Issue1-August2008.pdf.

If you have an informative perspective on 'poverty costs' that could be incorporated into the media campaign we're developing to raise awareness, please contact me at 434-1094 or christyemmanuel@aol.com.

BOOK REVIEW

by Kathleen Logan, Community Volunteer / Poverty Information Group Member

People in low, middle, and high economic classes have different ways of looking at and using money. And when love brings two people of different classes together, they often find they see the world with different eyes. Payne says "statistics indicate that 40 percent of our nation's population shifts one economic class—up or down—within their lifetime."

Are you still in the same economic class in which you were raised? What about your spouse or significant other? Are you aware of the impact that class had on your views? Class differences that aren't understood

Crossing the Tracks for Love: What to Do When You and Your Partner Grew Up in Different Worlds

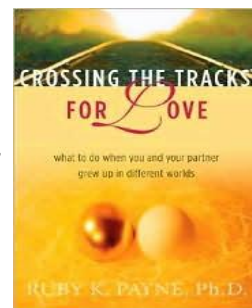
by Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.

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can lead to unnecessary stress and problems. They have nothing to do with intelligence or whose values are "right." Payne helps you understand what she calls the "hidden class rules" we all grow up with and how acknowledging them can be used to reduce conflict and enrich your relationship.



EXCITEMENT FILLS THE AIR WITH GETTING AHEAD FAIR



by Jean Norman, President and CEO of United Way of Escambia County and Past Chair of the Poverty Solutions Team

Excitement filled the gym of the Boys and Girls Club on July 25th. At one end, the little boy's body language said everything. He pointed to his chest and it was clear what he was saying. "It's mine?" He touched the shiny new bike he had just won as a door prize. "My birthday's Thursday. I'll be 8 so I can take off the training wheels."

He joined hundreds of people who attended the 2nd annual Getting Ahead Fair sponsored by the *Unite Escambia Poverty Solutions Team*. The purpose of the fair is to connect people with resources. More than 25 health and human service agencies were on hand. Four hundred families also received a 25-pound box of food, a box of toiletries and Avon products from *Feed the Children* purchased with funds raised by the *Pensacola Boys' Base*.

The youth from Boys' Base who raised the funds were also helping. When asked about Boy's Base and if you apply to get in, "No, ma'am," one replied. "We're sentenced by a judge." The 6-9 month residential program for 28 residents ages 15-18 provides structure, guidance, and education. He added, "Oliver Jones helped organized Boy's Base. Every Tuesday we work on Habitat, and every other Saturday we have a car wash. All the money we raise purchases the food given away today. Boys' Base helps us get our GED or go to PJC. We learn skills, too, like plumbing." These young men are clearly turning their lives around.

Oliver Jones, superintendent of Pensacola Boys' Base, spearheaded this Getting Ahead Fair. He explained, "We want people to have knowledge of and access to community resources. That's key to removing poverty. With proceeds from the Boys' Base car washes, we hope to raise enough money each year to bring in a truck load of food from Feed the Children." Catholic Charities coordinated the food distribution sign-up ahead of time.

Non-profit agencies present included: Legal Services of NW FL, Learn to Read, Community Drug and Alcohol Commission, Be Ready Alliance for Emergencies (BRACE), Habitat, PJC, Pathways for Change, Pensacola Police Department and Escambia County Sheriff's Office, Head Start, Council on Aging and ECAT. Judy Copeland, of Epilepsy Services of Northwest Florida commented, "This particular fair was very productive and generated interaction between residents and our agency."

Health screenings were provided by Mission in Motion of Sacred Heart Health Systems and a money management workshop was led by the United Way Financial Stability Coalition. Juice and big cookies were given out liberally by Jesus Holy Tabernacle Church members.

When asked, "Why did you come and what have you learned that was helpful?" One twelve year old boy said, "I came for the information. There are good tips. Like, I can start college while I'm in high school. And there's a lot of help for hurricane season."

Monique Hrabak from Pensacola had her two small children, Nicodemus, age 4, and Artimus, Jr., age 15 months. They planned to spend the entire morning enjoying the activities. "I learned about the fair through my *Bridges to Circles* group. All Habitat houses now come with porches. And I find out this afternoon where our Habitat house will be", Monique explained. Circles is an initiative facilitated by Catholic Charities to help motivated people move out of poverty.

And the best part for the youth from Pensacola Boys' Base? One replied, "The families, seeing them smile." It was a great community fair connecting people with resources to get ahead.



For information about *Unite Escambia Poverty Solutions Team* and how to become involved, visit UniteEscambia.com or call 479-9692.

Together we achieve more!

STEPPING UP

by Flack and Kathleen Logan, Community Volunteers / Poverty Information Group Members

Capt. David Alexander III is a native Pensacolian who was hired by the Pensacola Police Department as a cadet in 1983. He became an officer in 1984, was promoted to sergeant in 1993, lieutenant in 1998, and captain in 2002. Among his supervisions have been the department's Field Training program, dispatch and Neighborhood Policing Unit, which was expanded to the Neighborhood Policing Division in 2002.



In January 2005, the department was reorganized and the Community Services Division created. This division contains a multitude of programs that reach out into the community to help the public deal with various problems and concerns. Capt. Alexander supervises this division, which includes - among other things - the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program, School Resource Officers, and Community Oriented Policing Squad (formerly the Neighborhood Policing Unit).

Capt. David Alexander has been with the Pensacola Police Department for over 24 years, and is currently co-chair of the Poverty Solutions Team's Faith-based committee. In a recent interview, he provided a powerful quote: "The faces of poverty are not always easily recognized, and that is especially true in the workplace."

During his law enforcement career, Capt. Alexander has frequently responded to calls for police services. He has had to deal with situations that were not necessarily crimes but rather escalations resulting from a gap/failure in our community's ability to provide a solution to those who are 'at risk'.

Capt. Alexander is also a minister and he knows that the church community can greatly assist in directing resources to the 'at risk' population. If they cannot or do not, then the problems often fester and grow, and eventually present themselves in his "day job" with the police department.

It is Capt. Alexander's belief that there is not a direct relationship between poverty and crime; however, he has observed that it most often boils down to what people learned growing up. Therefore, although poverty, itself, is not a predictor of criminal activity, it is a key part of the series of events/barriers that can result in members of our community "giving up" and opting to be a part of the problem and not part of the solution.

It is the belief of Capt. Alexander that people do not want to be in poverty. Many truly desire to get off of welfare. But the barriers can and do prove overwhelming.

Our task – and he has committed to working on this issue – is to teach them a better way. He wants to work at helping to change those who have patterns of behavior that are not beneficial for themselves or for our community. He believes he is well qualified to both see and understand these issues because he sees them from both the perspective of police officer and Christian Minister.

That is why Captain Alexander has stepped up to the plate as an active member of Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team.

EXPLOIT THE POOR NO MORE!

The Poverty Solutions Team's Exploitation Committee met on July 23rd to formulate both short- and long-range goals. The Committee agreed that as a long range goal they will work in cooperation with United Way of Florida to pursue state legislation offering consumer protection to restrict/curtail abuses in lending to the poor, notably targeting refund anticipation and cash advance loans. Short-term, the Committee plans to develop a curriculum focused on exploitation issues such as payday lenders, rent-to-own, refund anticipation loans, care title loans and work at home schemes.

The Credit Abuse Resistance Education (CARE) Program is a nationwide volunteer attorney program aimed at teaching teens and young adults about the importance of using consumer credit wisely and avoiding credit card debt, and the consequences and financial problems that will result if they don't. The program was introduced by **Leslie Powell**,

Continued on next page

EXPLOIT THE POOR NO MORE! [Continued from previous page]

Exploitation Committee member with Legal Services. **Jodi Cooke**, an attorney with Beggs & Lane, is working to implement this program in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

In addition to CARE, committee member **Damaris Gonzalez** presented information on the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) program funded in part by the National Credit Union Association which is also a very broad based financial literacy education program specifically for high school students. Both the CARE and NEFE programs are very similar to the FDIC Money Smart + Money Smart for Kids. Workshops which combine elements of all the above curricula are currently being presented through Susan Senkarik and United Way's Financial Stability Coalition.

The curriculum being developed by the Exploitation Committee will primarily target teens and young adults at three local educational institutions. For more information, contact Committee Chair **John Clark** with the Council on Aging of West Florida at jclark@coawfla.org, 432-1475, ext 105.

STEPPING OUT

by Haley Richards, Bridges to Circles, VISTA Volunteer

Could you survive in poverty? Ask yourself..."Do I know how to live without a checking account?" Or..."Do I know how to get by without a car?"

These are examples of the barriers faced everyday by our Circle Leaders in the *Bridges to Circles* program. Talk of available resources is rampant every week at the Weekly Community Meetings especially when a bargain is involved.

Circle Leader **Beverly Gulley** faces a common barrier for people living in poverty, that is, seeking and maintaining employment. An infectious positive attitude and faith along with the support of her allies has enabled Beverly to create the action steps necessary to seek employment.

The Bridges to Circles community has had great discussions as a large group brainstorming ideas on how to better equip Circle Leaders like Beverly during the interview process. Plans are in the works to have videotaped mock interviews so Beverly and others can put their best foot forward when job hunting and interviewing for jobs.

Beverly's perseverance will pay off and everyone involved with *Bridges to Circles* is waiting for her announcement so we as a community can celebrate along with her.



ALLY HALEY RICHARDS BUILDS BRIDGES

by Janet Westlake, *Bridges to Circles* community organizer

In the parlance of Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team, an ally builds an intentional friendship with an individual or family moving out of poverty. **Haley Richards**, a Pensacola native, began her involvement with the *Bridges to Circles* poverty initiative as an ally in March 2009. At the time, she was substitute teaching in Escambia County and applying for positions as a high school social studies teacher. Substitute teaching opened Haley's eyes to many of the issues of children and families living in poverty.

In May 2009, Haley committed to a year of service in VISTA. A VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) builds capacity and sustainability in non-profit organizations and community to help bring individuals and communities

out of poverty. Haley's assignment is with *Bridges to Circles* and the Poverty Solutions Team. She is focused on raising community awareness; ally and volunteer recruitment and training; and establishing Individual Development Account and car donation programs for *Bridges to Circles* families. The VISTA coalition in Pensacola has 10 VISTAs working in a variety of poverty-related agencies.

Serving as a VISTA will enhance Haley's future teaching career. Interacting with families moving to self-sufficiency and with a diverse population of community volunteers brings a new depth of compassion and human understanding. Our community and future students will benefit. Building relational bridges and connecting with community resources as a VISTA makes Haley a valuable contributor to the Poverty Solutions Team as we strive to reduce poverty in Escambia County by 50% by 2020.

SCHEDULED TRAINING

Bridges to Circles weekly community meetings are scheduled every Tuesday from 5:30-7:30 pm at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, 1212 E. Moreno on the corner of 12th Avenue. The weekly session includes dinner and a program focused on individual self-sufficiency and eliminating the systemic barriers caused by poverty. All community members are invited.

Upcoming events in the Resource Room at the Catholic Charities Outreach Center, 1815 N. Sixth Avenue:

- September 10, 6-8 pm, **Bridges out of Poverty training** at Catholic Charities Outreach Center, 1815 n. Sixth Avenue
- September 17, 6-7:30 pm, **Hands-on Ally training** at the Catholic Charities Outreach Center, 1815 n. Sixth Avenue

Above events are free; RSVP to **Janet Westlake**, *Bridges to Circles* community organizer, at 429-7296, ex. 18 or westlakej@cc.ptdiocese.org

- December 14-16, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm and December 17, 8:30 am – noon, **Trainer Certification Workshop** (both *Bridges* and *Frameworks*) by Aha! Process in Pensacola with *Phil DeVol* (\$595) and *Ruby Payne* (\$795), respectively; location TBA

The **Trainer Certification Workshop** will certify participants as trainers in either *Bridges* or *Frameworks*. The *Bridges* Trainer Certification Workshop with **Phil DeVol** is for Human Resources officers from business and government organizations who will use the knowledge within their own organizations to train personnel supervisors and/or employees, and for agency staff and private individuals who will assist the Poverty Solutions Team to reach the broader community at large (minimum enrollment of 50 required). The *Frameworks* Trainer Certification Workshop with **Ruby Payne** is specifically designed for educational professionals, both teachers and administrators (minimum enrollment of 150 required).

For more information or to make reservations, contact the Institute for Innovative Community Learning at 595-0002.

Philip DeVol of Marengo, Ohio, has been training and consulting on poverty issues since 1997 and is co-author of *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities*. In 2004 he wrote *Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World: Building Your Resources for a Better Life* that helps people in poverty investigate the impact of poverty on their community and themselves. *Getting Ahead* investigations result in concrete plans and prepare people to participate in solving community problems.



Philip DeVol
'Bridges'



Ruby K. Payne
'Frameworks'

Facilitators of Dec 13-17 Trainer Certification Workshop

Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D., founder of **aha!** Process, is dedicated to positively impacting the education and lives of individuals in poverty. Since the mid-1990s she has been speaking to audiences around the world about the effects of poverty on students, families, and communities and how to better understand and support people from all economic backgrounds. Dr. Payne is the author of numerous books, including *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (more than 1 million copies sold) and *Bridges Out of Poverty*.

Send your comments, questions and suggestions on Bridges to christyemmanuel@aol.com. For more information about the Poverty Solutions Team, including our Mission, a Call to Action for both individuals and businesses, Definition of Terms, Team Descriptions / Contacts and Training Programs, view **A Primer on Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team** posted on the Unite Escambia website at www.UniteEscambia.com, and tune in to *Bridges Out of Poverty* airing on WUWF-TV at various times each week.