

# BRIDGES

Changing mindsets. Building bridges out of poverty.



A publication of

Unite Escambia's *Poverty Solutions Team*



## From the Editor

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

As I think about the growing ranks of people facing generational and situational poverty in our country and our local community, I wonder about their faith and their hope for a better future. This line of thinking leads to questioning where answers can be found, and my mind naturally leads to the role that congregations can and do play to build faith and hope in those who otherwise must feel deflated or worse - defeated. What better place to build bridges out of poverty than the bountiful congregations that dot the landscape we call 'home' here in Pensacola.

Houses of worship have stepped up to the plate, contributing space for our Bridges training and weekly Circle meetings since Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team took hold. As a case in point, notice the location of training sessions and Circles meetings listed on the following page. More often than not, congregants are stepping up to serve as Circles allies too.

As the *Poverty Solutions Team* in collaboration with *Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida* looks to expand the *Bridges to Circles* program locally, consider whether your congregation would be willing to start a Circles initiative in your place of worship. Think about the lasting benefits that could be realized by bringing together and bridging gaps between the poor and middle class among you.

Imagine the meaningful and permanent difference you could make in the lives of your fellow members by pulling together a group of Circle leaders and allies to explore and overcome the divide that creates distance, biases and even prejudices between them. You will no doubt discover that they have a lot to teach each other, and that by lending social capital via human connections and sustainable support to those in dire economic straits, you can transform lives.

Make Circles families a part of your faith-community. Help them to cope with poverty, nurture their faith and give them a reason to hope with aspirations for increased education, employment, wages and self-sufficiency. To learn more about the program, attend an upcoming Bridges Workshop, or contact Janet Westlake, *Bridges to Circles* community organizer, at 429-7296, ex. 18 or [westlakej@cc.ptdiocese.org](mailto:westlakej@cc.ptdiocese.org).



# SCHEDULED TRAINING

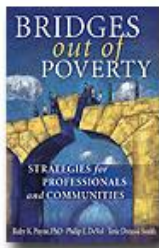
## Bridges Out of Poverty Community Programs

If you are looking to counter poverty or its impact on people and businesses in your community, explore the innovative concepts and training found in *Bridges Out of Poverty* solutions.

*Bridges Out of Poverty* is a book and an approach that helps employers, community organizations, social-service agencies, and individuals address poverty in a comprehensive way. Under the Bridges Model, we offer the ideas, structures, and concrete tools a community needs to prevent, alleviate, and reduce poverty. People from all economic classes come together to improve job retention rates.

### Bridges helps a community:

- Understand poverty's impact on people and communities
- Reduce poverty rates
- Improve retention rates
- Reduce staff burnout, cynicism, and absenteeism
- Create employment opportunities
- Improve economic development a sustainability
- Improve front-line services
- Reduce homelessness
- Start a Circles™ Initiative



### How to get started

[Attend a Bridges Workshop](#) provided by a local Certified Bridges Trainer. The \$20 fee covers the workshop and lunch.

Training in Pensacola will be held on:

- Thursday, October 29 from 9 am – 4pm at the Unitarian Church at 9888 Pensacola Blvd (.5 mile north of Nine Mile Road)
- Tuesday, November 10 from 9 am – 4pm at St. Mark United Methodist Church, 2203 N. Twelfth Avenue at Maxwell

To register, contact Janet Westlake, *Bridges to Circles* community organizer, at (850) 429-7296, ex. 18 or [westlakej@cc.ptdiocese.org](mailto:westlakej@cc.ptdiocese.org). Make checks payable to Catholic Charities for the \$20 registration fee.

*Bridges to Circles* is a program of Catholic Charities. 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.

**Hands-on *Bridges to Circles* Ally training** will be held in the Resource Room at the Catholic Charities Outreach Center, 1815 N. Sixth Avenue:

*Specific to working with children aging out of foster care:*

- Monday, October 12 – 6:00-8:00 pm

*For any age group:*

- Thursday, October 22 – 6:00-8:00 pm
- Monday, November 16 – 6:00-8:00 pm
- Thursday, December 10 – 5:30-7:30 pm

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

**Trainer Certification Workshop** will certify participants as trainers in either *Bridges* or *Frameworks*. The six-hour Bridges Workshop training is required to attend the certification course. Registration forms will be released soon.

- 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; Olive Baptist Church

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.

# FACTS ABOUT POVERTY

by Kathleen Logan, Community Volunteer /  
Poverty Information Group Member

Stephen Lendman of the Global Research Centre has written an article on "Growing Poverty and Despair in America" published online on October 6, 2009. In it, he covers "Hunger and Poverty Facts."

Lendman says: "On August 6, the US Department of Agriculture reported a record 34.4 million Americans (one in nine) receiving food stamps in May as unemployment keeps surging. It was the sixth consecutive monthly record, and every state showed an increase as economic conditions worsen.



"On September 10, the Commerce Department will release 2008 census data expected to show another 1.5 million people added to the poverty rolls over 2007 figures - a total of nearly 39 million representing 12.7% of Americans. Final numbers aren't yet in and may be worse than expected because of how bad things are for growing numbers in the country. If unemployment hits 10% (up from 9.4% now), poverty could reach 14.8% this year and rise because of jobs and homes lost, savings exhausted, and the sharpest ever decline in personal wealth between mid-2007 and December 2008."

You can read the rest of this informative article at: <http://www.globalresearch.ca> The great American middle class is shrinking...and the numbers of poor are increasing. Perhaps it has already happened to someone you know. Or to you. Let's all work to stop the slide into poverty.

# STEPPING UP

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

We recently posed this question to John Clark, President and CEO of The Council on Aging of Northwest Florida... "Why are you involved in the effort to end poverty in Escambia County?" John stated that in his view, the answer is simple: "This is a major problem in our community. We cannot just throw up our hands and



do nothing about it. We all need to be involved and doing something to improve this situation in our 'little corner of the world.'" He goes on to say, "It may seem corny but it is true that we all need to get onboard and help those in poverty to get out, now!"

It is John's experience, and he has considerable experience to draw upon, that we need to "jump start" this effort for those who are young and in poverty now, rather than waiting until they're approaching retirement age. The sooner we can assist them in becoming productive members of our community, the better. And, he has also has great concern about whether or not there will be the necessary services in another decade or so.

John is a member of the *Unite Escambia Poverty Solution Team* working to eliminate the exploitation of those in poverty in our community. One of the most important initiatives the *Exploitation Team* is working on is their effort with United Way of Florida to get legislation passed that will greatly assist the "working poor" to get the IRS refunds they deserve, and not have it go to "pay day lender types" who are diminishing their refund by charging exorbitantly expensive rates.

Yes, John Clark is working to help make our community a better place for everybody. He candidly admits that sometimes the effort required can seem overwhelming. However, he counters that the results are compelling us to continue to try. He is especially pleased with the early results of the Circles program because it is helping those in poverty who are also actively helping themselves!

# STEPPING OUT

by Estella Lee, *Bridges to Circles* Coach

Valencia Jones is a leader and a role model. Despite the fact that she was laid off and having challenging moments to find employment she keeps a smile and a good sense of humor.



Valencia started in the *Bridges To Circles* program sponsored by Catholic Charities on January 26, 2009 where she was matched with two allies. She had reservations about the genuineness of the allies and the role that they played. To her surprise she found them to be helpful, informative and supportive.

Through this process Valencia has enrolled in Pensacola Junior College as a full-time student. Valencia realized this is the way to position one's self to be more marketable for the workplace. We are so proud of the progress she has made and continues to make in her efforts to step out of poverty!

Send your comments, questions and suggestions on Bridges to [christyemmanuel@aol.com](mailto: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](http://www.UniteEscambia.com)
- Tune in to ***Bridges Out of Poverty*** airing on WUWF-TV at various times each week
- Call 479-9692

*Together We Achieve More!*

