

Changing mindsets. Building bridges out of poverty.



A publication of
 Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team

MINISTRY VILLAGE UNDER WAY

By Charlotte Crane, Poverty Information Group

“Ultimately, we will build what God allows us to build,” says Sheila Reed, fund development director for Ministry Village, a potentially \$10-million project envisioned by Olive Baptist Church, where diggers and track hoes are working alongside to lay the Village’s infrastructure by year-end. Confident the project dovetails nicely with Biblical teaching, the church has donated 6.5 acres of land and raised \$2 million in membership pledges to get it under way.

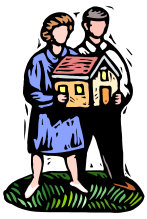
Ministry Village, says executive director Stan Lollar, dates from Vision 2020 planning launched in 2003 by Pastor Ted Traylor. It will be a community haven for the poor, the sick and the troubled. The village will expand counseling and welfare assistance long ongoing at the church and aims to fill vast amounts of unmet need. Lollar, a church member since 1975, is a retired J.C. Penney management associate and a former project manager for the social enterprise initiative of BRACE (Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies). Both Lollar and Reed, a longtime Pensacola News Journal staffer, are members of Unite Escambia’s Poverty Solutions Faith-Based Team.

The No. 1 immediate priority for the Village is a Health and Hope Clinic of 7,000 square feet, costing up to \$1 million and exponentially expanding health care currently offered by a part-time indigent clinic on Chemstrand Road. “If you had five free health clinics available, you could keep them all busy,” says Reed.

The two Village phases blueprinted so far call for 19 buildings, including the clinic, a food pantry, clothing store, classrooms, a counseling center with space for assistance in divorce and grief recovery and poverty solutions. Also included are eight new Charis houses in addition to two already in operation; the houses – for women recovering from alcohol or drug addiction and named for the Greek word for “grace” – will enable Olive Baptist to house more than 70 additional women for the two-to-three year program. There’s currently a 200-person waiting list.

A community fund-raising campaign for Ministry Village will be launched early next year.





FAMILY BRIDGED TO HOMEOWNERSHIP

By Monique Hrabak, Bridges to Circles
Circle Leader

For over two years my family has participated in the Bridges to Circles Program. It has been a trying journey like any other; complete with its ups and downs. Yet, on Oct. 27 of this year we met a huge goal of affordable housing by becoming homeowners.

My family and I watched as another Circle Leader family became homeowners last year and heard about the program they used called, The Neighborhood Stabilization Program which works with low income households to become homeowner's through federal and local grants. An ally with Bridges, Meredith Reeves Nunnari works for the Neighborhood Enterprise Foundation, Inc. which coordinates the programs for families, became an ally with Bridges and we learned more details about the program.

We were accepted into the program and now have a home of our own and a mortgage that is almost exactly half of what we were paying in rent every month.

Not only did we accomplish our goal of finding and obtaining affordable housing, but we did so by becoming homeowners. My husband, Arty, can be quoted as saying, "At the old rental house all I wanted to do when I got home was leave again, but now I all want to do is get home and stay there."

BRIDGES TO CIRCLES VOLUNTEER TRAINING

BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

Concepts orient thinking around the culture, hidden rules, familial patterns and belief systems characteristic of generational poverty. Book authored by Dr. Ruby Payne, Philip DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith offers practical strategies to better lives via role models, support systems, emotional resources and mentoring.

December 2, 2010

or

January 6, 2011

ALLY TRAINING

This two hour session presents an overview of the Bridges to Circles poverty initiative and begins to equip the individual to serve as an ally for an individual moving from poverty to self-sufficiency.

December 16, 2010

or

January 20, 2011

*Training is conducted at the Catholic Charities
Outreach Center , 1815 N. Sixth Avenue
from 6:00-8:00 pm.*

For more information, contact Haley Richards,
Bridges to Circles community organizer
at (850)429-7296, ext. 17 or email
richardsh@cc.ptdiocese.org.

POVERTY SIMULATION

A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE OF LIFE ON THE EDGE!

By Haley Richards, Bridges to Circles community organizer

Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team in collaboration with Bridges to Circles led by Catholic Charities of NWFL held an unique experience on October 13, 2010 in the gymnasium at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Approximately 48 participants assumed the identity of a family member living in poverty and for an hour and a half had to make decisions based on survival. The poverty simulation was facilitated by Elena Aldridge, Families First Network, and members of the Poverty Solutions along with other volunteers served in staffer roles.

The poverty simulation helps people understand what life is like with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress. It moves people to think about the harsh realities of poverty and is used as a community engagement tool here in Escambia County. If you missed this event the next simulation is already being planned for Spring 2011. Thank you to everyone who participated and volunteered to make this simulation a success!

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, visit www.uniteescambia.com.

Together We Achieve More!