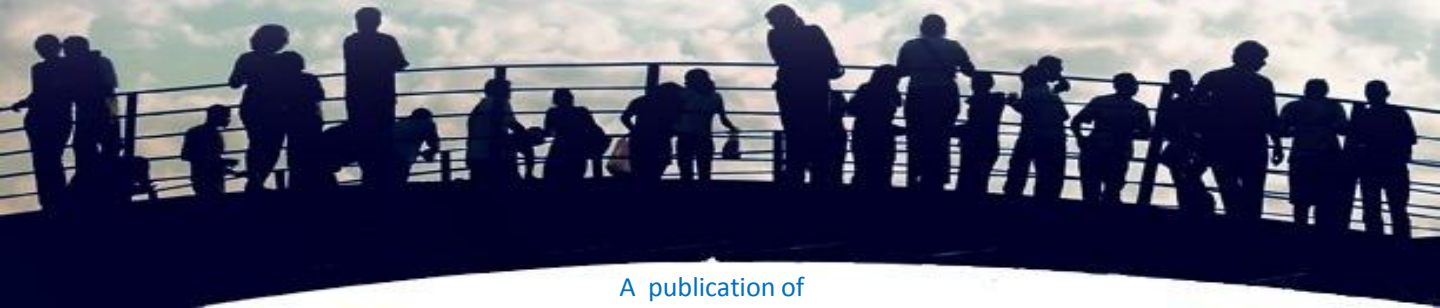


Changing mindsets. Building bridges out of poverty.



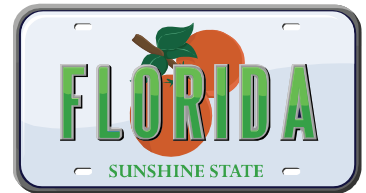
A publication of  
Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team

### Our Poverty Status

Do the math, and poverty pops into perspective. Florida counties' latest economic statistics, recently published in the 2010 Florida Statistical Abstract, are called to our attention by retired UWF finance professor Clarence C. Elebash. "Escambia County continues to fare badly in economic comparisons among large Florida counties," he notes.

When the state's 25 largest counties (of 67 counties in all) are compared, Escambia ranks between #19 and #24 in six categories. Here are those rankings (#25 is the worst ranking):

- School lunch assistance (% of students): #19, 59.7%**
- Poor people: #21, 16% of population**
- Medicaid recipients: #22, 18.1% of population, 56,600 people**
- Poverty among young people (under 18): #23, 23.1% of age group**
- Unwed mothers (% of births): #24, 51.8%**
- Population growth (from 2000 to 2009): #24, 6.3%**



Comments Dr. Elebash: "Escambia has an abundance of assets and advantages. We were once the envy of the Gulf Coast. However, our economy faltered. This happened over the long term." Among causes noted: America's decrease in manufacturing jobs, a decline in jobs at Pensacola Naval Air Station, and failure of the city of Pensacola to redevelop the waterfront, its most valuable asset.

### Jim Crow

A discussion on the book, "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," will be held at the **Unitarian Universalist Church, 9888 Pensacola Blvd., on Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15.** The book's author, Michelle Alexander, a longtime civil rights lawyer turned legal scholar, says America has not ended racial caste, but has simply redesigned it – turning blacks into second-class citizens through arrests and imprisonment, mainly through discriminatory enforcement in the nation's unwinnable Drug War. Inevitable and ongoing poverty are the result. Among Alexander's tenets:

- The Drug War is waged almost exclusively in poor communities of people of color, and most convictions are for possession, not usage, of drugs.
- Once a person is labeled a felon, it's legal to use all the old Jim Crow forms of discrimination against African Americans – in employment, housing, education, and denial of public rights.
- No other nation in the world imprisons so many of its racial or ethnic minorities – not even South Africa at the height of apartheid.



*Articles by Charlotte Crane, member, Poverty Information Group*

## ***Bridges to Circles Hosts National Circles Training***

*By Haley Richards, Bridges to Circles community organizer*

On January 31, 2011, community representatives from across the United States traveled to Pensacola Beach, FL to be trained on how to implement CIRCLES, a high-impact strategy for ending poverty in their community. The Bridges to Circles poverty initiative led by Catholic Charities of NWFL, was chosen from over 60 other community campaigns currently engaged with the National Circles Campaign.

The immersion training began Monday, January 31, 2011 with a poverty simulation, then a visit to the *Bridges to Circles* weekly community meeting and ended with a faith based community event featuring Scott Miller on Thursday, February 3, 2011. Escambia County was chosen to host this training due to the long history of *Bridges Out of Poverty* work in our community, a strong lead organization who has quickly been able to implement the Circles model in Escambia County and the unique partnerships of public, private and faith-based organizations that are supporting the campaign.

**Circles™**  
NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

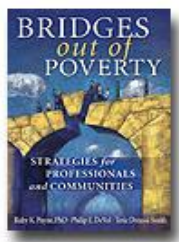


*Bridges to Circles* began in 2008 as a community-based poverty initiative led by Catholic Charities of Northwest FL, in collaboration with Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team. The initiative matches highly motivated people living in poverty with volunteers called "allies" who provide emotional support and assist with life issues. Today, major initiative successes include: a 56% increase in median income, three participants have completed educational degrees, and three participants have become first-time homeowners. As the need continues, we are excited about the increasing number of allies who are joining us in our efforts to reduce poverty in our community.

## **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.



***April 14, 2011***

***or***

***May 5, 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.

***March 24, 2011***

***or***

***April 28, 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.*

## Teen Summit

By Charlotte Crane and David Alexander

*Teen Summit* is an opportunity for parents and youth to obtain information about issues and dangers they face and remedies available to cope with or eliminate problems.

***This year's Teen Summit is scheduled for Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>.***

This is the fifth year that Capt. David Alexander of the Pensacola Police Department has organized the summit, working as a volunteer through the youth outreach program of his church, Jesus Holy Tabernacle Church. He and other church members are joined by other volunteers, 25 to 30 in all, from organizations including Department of Juvenile Justice, Community Drug and Alcohol Council and United Way.



Information will be provided on youth services such as counseling and alternative education; workshops will be held, including one on bike safety. "We're expecting Florida Youth Challenge Academy to explain their program for youth who are in jeopardy of going into the juvenile justice system or failing in school," says Capt. Alexander. The academy is operated out of Camp Blanding.

Volunteers also will distribute 400 food boxes, each to feed a family of four for a week, to designated families in need. Pensacola Boys Base raised funds to buy the food boxes from the national Feed the Children. ***Teen Summit will be held at the Jesus Holy Tabernacle Church, 212 South N St., Hours are Friday evening from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.***



## Trainers Wanted

United Way's Financial Stability Coalition is hosting a "Train the Trainer" event for teaching Basic Money Management to local residents.

***The training is April 13th from 5:30-8:30pm at United Cerebral Palsy of Northwest Florida, 2912 North E Street.***

We are also looking for program facilitators.

If you are interested in volunteering as a Basic Money Management Instructor, please call 444-7042 or email

[Financialstabilitycoalition@unitedwayescambia.org](mailto:Financialstabilitycoalition@unitedwayescambia.org).



## Leadership Luncheon Recap

On January 26, 2011, Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions team hosted a community orientation attended by Community and Business leaders. Poverty Solutions Team Chair, Tim Evans, provided a summary of Poverty Solutions team activities and encouraged those in attendance to get involved. The luncheon provided the venue to unveil "The Myths of Poverty" created by Poverty Solutions Team member Bob Gerold.

*The Poverty Solutions would like to thank Northminster Presbyterian Church and Appetite for Life!*

**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](http://www.uniteescambia.com).

*Together We Achieve More!*