



THE VISION

Escambia County is a community without poverty.

Why?

"When poverty reaches the point of critical mass in a community and efforts to reverse the problem don't succeed, the people with the most resources tend to move out of the community, leaving behind enclaves of poverty. At this point the community is no longer sustainable."

– Bridges Out of Poverty

BUILDING BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED

THE CIRCLES CAMPAIGN

CIRCLES™ is a program that combines the best work of engaged community members, government and human services to help end the cycle of poverty. Based on *Bridges Out of Poverty* by Ruby Payne, Phil DeVol, and Terie Dreussi Smith, CIRCLES™ has succeeded in helping to lift people out of poverty in other communities. Interested community members are invited to the following seminar to learn more about the CIRCLES™ campaign and how the general community can take part in the campaign through volunteerism and advocacy:

CIRCLES™ creates teams of two to four community volunteers who become the allies of a family transitioning out of poverty, helping them to achieve their goals for financial stability. The team collaborates with local social service agencies and other community organizations and programs that provide information, support and resources. All participants in the Circle receive training before beginning their work together. Everyone learns how to work together across class and race lines, how to better understand the systemic barriers to getting out of poverty, and how to advocate for new policies and a new vision to end poverty.

WHAT: Introduction to CIRCLES™

WHEN: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Friday, February 8, 2008.

WHERE: WSRE Jean and Paul Amos Performance Studio, 1000 College Blvd., Pensacola

COST: Free. Lunch will be provided.

PRESENTER: Scott Miller, CEO and co-founder of the Move the Mountain Leadership Center and author of *Until It's Gone: Ending Poverty in Our Nation, in Our Lifetime*. Move the Mountain Leadership Center was established in 1992 to develop and support leaders committed to ending poverty in the United States. He has started projects around the country that directly help families out of poverty and invites the public to get involved learning about the causes and solutions to poverty.

RSVP: To attend, please RSVP by Feb. 1 to cdela_cruz@escambia.k12.fl.us, or call (850) 595-6915 ext. 221.

Visit www.movethemountain.org and www.escambiainitiative.org to learn more.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROUPS

SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND

Frameworks for Understanding Poverty helps those of us who grew up with middle class values understand the reality of being poor. It provides insight into survival mentality and helps educators, social, health and legal service providers work more effectively with those clients who live in poverty. We can begin to recognize the hidden rules of class which impact the thinking and problem solving of individuals from poverty.

Bridges Out of Poverty is a tool for service providers and businesses whose daily work connect them with the lives of people in poverty. Taking the basic concepts presented in *Frameworks*, *Bridges* focuses on solutions, and proposes solutions that partner the community members with those from poverty as they together explore the barriers faced by the poor and systematically eliminate those barriers, allowing them to develop a plan for overcoming the poverty in which they live. Additionally, *Bridges* provides guidance for communities to sustain support systems for these individuals.

The Escambia County School District has certified trainers for both *Frameworks* and for *Bridges Out of Poverty*. *Bridges Out of Poverty* training offers either an overview (2 hours) or complete training (2 days). Training will be more broadly available as more members of the community become certified.

For information about training dates, call 595-6915 (Title I Office) or e-mail mnowlin@escambia.k12.fl.us or wodom@escambia.k12.fl.us

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA)

VITA is a program of the Financial Stability Coalition chaired by Michael Thornton, Brown Thornton Pacent. The goal is to provide free tax preparation and filing for 1000 low income workers by April 15, 2008, to insure all tax credits are received. Participants will be encouraged to participate in workshops about budgeting, credit repair, etc.

For dates, times and locations for free tax prep call First Call for Help, 595-5905 or visit www.unitedwayescambia.org. For information on becoming a volunteer tax preparer, call United Way of Escambia County, 434-3157.

MENTORS

"No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship." – Dr. James Comer

Many groups and organizations in our community use mentors. There is always a need for more. Mentoring programs are listed at HandsonPensacola.org. They include Big Brothers Big Sisters, Children's Home Society, and Pensacola Habitat for Humanity.

For information about the Escambia School District Mentoring program, contact Sally Lee, Community Involvement Office Mentor Coordinator, Escambia County School District, 469-5458.

THE MISSION IN OUR MIDST

The Mission In Our Midst is a special service at Cokesbury United Methodist Church that will focus on the opportunities for ministry in our lives and area, such as AIDS, disaster relief, homelessness, children, the poor, elderly and disabled.

- WHAT:** The Mission In Our Midst
- WHEN:** Sunday, January 27 • 6 p.m.
- WHERE:** Cokesbury United Methodist Church, 9th Avenue Campus
- Guest Speaker Sue Straughn
- Special Praise Music with Combined Mass Choir
- Special Offering to Support MANNA Food Pantries

POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESS COUNT

The fastest growing segment of the homeless population is families with children. And believe it or not, the average age of a homeless person is 9.

Escambia and Santa Rosa counties obtain data for federal funding by physically counting the homeless over a 24-hour period. The 2008 Point-In-Time Homeless Count is scheduled for 3 p.m. Jan. 31 through 3 p.m. Feb. 1.

Obtaining an accurate count is not possible, but with enough volunteers, the 2008 count can be more accurate and help us obtain much-needed federal dollars to address the root causes of homelessness and aid families who want to regain stability and independence.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Point-In-Time Homeless Count, call Sue Saffran at 858-0323. If you would like contribute resources or make a donation, call Brunie Emmanuel at 439-3009 or email univisgrp@aol.com.

JOIN THE POVERTY SOLUTIONS TEAM

"Poverty is caused by both the behaviors of the individual and political/economic structures –and everything in between."
– Bridges Out of Poverty

As a community, we must develop strategies that address exploitation of the poor as well as economic, political and social policies at all levels as we continue to deal with co-existing problems caused by poverty.

David Alexander, Carolyn Appleyard, Dick Appleyard, Benny Barnes, Charles Beall, Margaret Bess, Tom Bonfield, Carol Brownell, Mattie Broxton, John Clark, Micah Danielson, Martha Desposito, Mark Dufva, Tim Evans, Daniel Ewert, Randy Fleming, Catherine Gallagher, Helen Gibson, Leo Gray, Pat Griffin, Jessica Hall, Tim House, Jeff Howard, Robert Hudson, Rita Icenogle, Latonia Jennings, Terrance Jennings, Elwin Jones, Oliver Jones, Cate Jordan, Sharon Kerrigan, Vivian Krumel, Flack Logan, Kathleen Logan, Jim Maddox, Tony McCray, Chris McQueen, Joe Mullens, Susan Nelms, Jean Norman, Pete Nowak, Marcia Nowlin, Donna Potts, Gwen Rhodes, Lon Roberts, Libby Rogers, Susan Senkarik, Terry Simmons, Shelia Smith, Irvin Stallworth, Janice Thomas, Marilyn Wesley, Geraldine Wicks, Laurie Winterberg.

Pensacola Police Department, Pensacola Habitat for Humanity, City of Pensacola, Baptist Healthcare, Salvation Army, Council on Aging of West Florida, Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen, St. Vincent DePaul, Catholic Charities, EscaRosa Coalition on Homeless, Manna Food Bank, Moore, Hill & Westmoreland, Escambia School District, Department of Elder Affairs, Project Reach, Consumer Credit Counseling Service of West Florida, United Way of Escambia, Cornerstone Church, New Life Baptist Church of Century, GCE, Department of Children and Families, Escambia County Community Services, West Pensacola Outreach, Pensacola Junior College, Waterfront Rescue Mission, United Ministries, Life Skills Center, Brownsville Assembly of God, Heritage Baptist Church, Children's Services Center, WalMart-Hwy. 29, Department of Juvenile Justice, Henry Homes, Richards Memorial Methodist Church, Workforce EscaRosa.

For more information
e-mail solutions@escambiainitiative.org,
visit escambiainitiative.org, or
call **Marcia Nowlin, 595-6915. ext 225** or **Jean Norman, 434-3157.**