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WELFARE TO WORK: WHAT IS WORKING, WHAT IS NEXT?

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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WELFARE TO WORK: WHAT IS WORKING, WHAT IS NEXT?

TUESDAY, MAY 25, 1999

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMPOWERMENT,
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 2360, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Joseph R. Pitts (chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Chairman PITTS. Ladies and gentlemen, the time of 10:00 having arrived, I think we will go ahead and start. Some of the other Members are on their way. But we will go ahead and start if that is all right.

Thank you for joining me and the other members of the Subcommittee on Empowerment today for this hearing to discuss the important issue of welfare-to-work. We are privileged to have with us today several experts on this subject. During this hearing, we will examine several welfare-to-work programs in order to discover what strategies are successful in moving people from dependency on public assistance to gainful employment and, ultimately, self-sufficiency.

We all have something to gain from breaking the cycle of welfare dependency and empowering people to end their reliance on cash payments by the government. By providing education, training, job placement to welfare recipients, welfare-to-work programs strengthen our Nation's work force and, ultimately, our economy.

A recent study conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute surveyed 500 small businesses and found that small employers are seeking reliable, motivated workers with positive attitudes, and are less concerned with the limited education and job training of many welfare recipients. Additionally, 62 percent of the employers surveyed had hired someone who was on welfare, and of this percentage, 94 percent were willing to hire a welfare recipient again.

These findings suggest that since there is no shortage of employers to hire welfare recipients, perhaps welfare-to-work programs are part of the solution to facilitating the job search for welfare recipients. These programs provide training that will help welfare recipients portray themselves as successful candidates to prospective employers.

Indeed, the past few years have been a transitional period for welfare reform following the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in 1996. This law estab-

lished the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program which mandates that after 2 years of receiving welfare assistance, recipients must have a job or be participating in some type of work activity or job training.

This welfare-to-work initiative ensures that welfare recipients have the opportunity to make a long-term life improvement, by sustaining a job, in hopes that eventually they will become independent of government assistance. This is especially important since participation in the TANF program is not infinite. In fact, current law limits the receipt of welfare benefits, in most cases, to no more than 60 months in one's lifetime.

The transition from dependency to gainful employment is a life-changing experience involving education, job training, and time-management skills. All of these factors must be taken into account in order to ensure that a welfare recipient will be able to sustain employment for an extended period of time and not regress to relying solely on a welfare check. Many organizations offer comprehensive programs designed specifically to move people from welfare rolls into the labor market. These welfare-to-work programs attract, train, and assist in placing welfare recipients in jobs.

We are fortunate to have with us today a diverse panel of experts in this area who will be able to provide us with insight into welfare-to-work issue. We will hear from Mr. Charles A. Ballard, Founder and CEO of the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization who will testify about his welfare-to-work program for fathers. Mr. Robert Powelson is President of the Chester County Chamber of Commerce and Industry in my district, the 16th Congressional District of Pennsylvania. He will discuss his program which provides mentors to those entering or reentering the work force. Mr. Peter Cove, the founder of America Works will discuss his New York City based welfare-to-work program. And finally, Mr. Eric Yergan, an Allstate insurance franchisee will share his experiences hiring employees from the welfare roles.

[Mr. Pitts' statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman PITTS. We will now hear from our panel. And I would like to ask Mr. Charles Ballard, founder and CEO of the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization of Washington D.C. to make the first statement, if you would please.

STATEMENT OF MR. CHARLES A. BALLARD, FOUNDER AND CEO, THE INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY REVITALIZATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. BALLARD. Thank you, Congressman Pitts, for inviting us to be a part of this, I think, history-breaking event of welfare-to-work. And it is really interesting to know that small businesses are concerned about this area. I think it is one thing to hire someone, but it is another thing for that person to be able to have a thinking or mind-set to not only have a job, but to go beyond that even to starting a business.

I was before Nancy Johnson's committee, the Health—the Ways and Means Subcommittee, that as a fatherhood counts bill that she is looking at that would help men—fathers, to become better fathers, better husbands, and better men. So I thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this hearing today.

Last night, over 23 million children went to bed in a home where there were no fathers. I look back on that experience, and I had that same experience. Many of these children grow up, dropping out of school; so did I. Some will have drug problems; so did I. Some of these young men and girls, we have in prison; so did I.

When I was 3½, my father became mentally ill and was moved from the home. When I was 8 years of age, he died in a mental institution. So I grew up a very angry young man, angry with the world, and in gang membership, got a girl pregnant, ran away, joined the Army, ended up in prison and undesirable discharge from the Services. Got out of prison, but I came back home with a new thinking, with a new mind to be a good father to my son and be a good man to the community.

Now, if you note, I said I didn't finish high school, had a drug problem, had an alcohol problem, had been in prison, and I had been undesirably discharged. That was in 1959 before integration, where things were still tough for African males, but one who had a prison record it was almost impossible to find a job. But kind of like the bumblebee—the bumblebee really should not be flying, but no one has been able to convince him of that so he continues to fly.

So no one convinced me that being in prison, dropping out of school, undesirably discharged from the Services made a difference. So I went on to adopt my son. I took dishwashing jobs, floor-scrubbing jobs. I got my GED, went on to get a BA degree, and got a masters degree. And my son today is a grown man, and he has his own masters. He is 42 years of age.

Now I am telling that story because it takes more than a job to bring America up to where it should be. People must have a sense of entrepreneurship. They must think that this job is my business. It is not just an 8 to 5, but it may be a 7 to 6. I remember when I was told to be in at 5:00 in the morning to wash dishes, I always showed up at 4:00 in the morning. I was to get off at 3; I often got off at 5. It was amazing because I only made $23 a week.

And all I had to look for in this country were those kinds of jobs. But because of my entrepreneurship spirit and thinking I wanted more than that, I wanted my son to have more than that, so I went on, as I said before, to get my masters degree. In 1972, I decided to do something about this problem of fathers not being around. So I worked at a hospital and then later on I created the first program to reach out to fathers.

And the model is really modeled after my own life. That if you don't convince people that they are fragile, that they are broken, that they are poor, they won't act that way. But it you treat people as that they have worth, that they have something to observe, that they have a contribution, my experience has been that men will come through.

Last year we received a $4.5 million grant from the Department of Labor to put 480 fathers back to work, and in some cases to work for the first time. Men coming out of prison, men who have drug problems, men who are abusive and so on and so on.

Well, we officially started the program last September; and since that time, we have put to work over 230 fathers and mothers in full-time unsubsidized jobs. And many of them by their employers

are considered to be entrepreneurship-minded which is what we teach these young men to be.

One corporation sent us a letter saying that send me more people like this. I have this person. She has been on the job just about 6 months. Other employees look to her, look to him, for direction. And so that person got a promotion. We have a 72 percent retention rate. I think the District only wants 25 percent. But we have a 72 percent retention rate of our hard-to-place men and women, especially fathers, over ⅔ fathers, keeping these jobs. So I think if we are going to make the welfare-to-work program complete, we must emphasize the mother and the children, but there is a man some place who is in a prison, who is on drugs, who is homeless, who we must find and return him back to the home, back to the work place.

And I think our program is a model for that. And that we can work together and create this entrepreneurship thinking, this spirit of entrepreneurship where people that don't have a job to go to but they are going to a business, and which they will show up before time and leave after time and in the middle time don't take breaks. I believe that this kind of attitude and spirit is what has founded America. And I believe if we are going to bring America back to be a strong country, each one of us must have that kind of spirit. Thank you.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you very much, Mr. Ballard, for that. We will hear all of the witness statements before beginning questions.

[Mr. Ballard's statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman PITTS. Rob Powelson from my district, President of the Chester County Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

STATEMENT OF MR. ROBERT POWELSON, PRESIDENT, CHESTER COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. POWELSON. Thank you, Congressman Pitts and Members of the Committee, for the invitation to share with you some exciting developments that are taking place within our county on welfare-to-work. The program that I would like to share with you this morning is one that involves all levels of the community. And, in my very humble opinion, I think that it is fair to say welfare reform is working in Pennsylvania. The facts, since 1997, 72,000 welfare recipients have found full- or part-time employment. From a statistical analysis, this represents a 40 percent decline from 1993 levels.

In my position I think it is fair to say that we all realize that there is still much work to be done in providing meaningful employment to welfare recipients. Back in 1997, I was asked to tour our public assistance office with two of our State senators to discuss strategies on how we involve the business community in working with our department of welfare in providing outreach and job placement opportunities.

Let me share with you that I have been president of the Chester County Chamber for 5 years now. I could not tell you where the welfare office was in our county. I knew a little bit about their activities, but really didn't have an understanding of some of their outreach in the community.

After speaking with many of the case workers and other social service providers in our county, I realized that we needed to lend a helping hand to providing employment opportunities to job-ready candidates. You know, if you look at this issue, and I want to share this with you because in my line of work welfare reform is really not a politically sexy issue to talk about because in chamber work, we are more worried about the recruitment and retention of IT workers in our county, the expanse of manufacturing jobs, but when we look at this issue more in depth, you realize that this is Work Force Development 101.

When we had—when I took the tour back in 1997 of our DPW office and met with the staff, we realized that there were a group of people who did the right thing, they beat the March 3 deadline in our State, found work, and as a result of going out and finding work, their income was beginning to be means tested.

So certain benefits that they were given were beginning to kind of wean off. In many cases, we found that many of these new workers were coming back to the system or, in many cases, losing an employment opportunity for a number of reasons. So we realized that in just that one meeting we had with our two State senators along with our folks at the DPW office that we needed to design a system whereby business and the community-at-large could come together and provide a safety net for those individuals that entered into an employment opportunity but were kind of falling by the wayside in terms of staying in that job.

And from the chamber perspective, I realized that we needed to branch out to our 1,100 members which represent some of most notable companies in this country to work with them to get their employees involved in this initiative. So after our initial meeting, I sat down with some folks and said we are going to move forward in adopting a mentoring program whereby the Chester County Chamber would go out in the community, and voluntarily recruit mentors to serve as role models to individuals that have again beaten our March 3 deadline in finding work in Pennsylvania and working with them in a new relationship.

Now, there are a whole host of issues associated with our mentoring program that I want to share with you, and I will also share with you a personal experience that I have been involved in. First of all, for those individuals that again have beaten our March 3 deadline in Pennsylvania and found work, in many cases these individuals are coming from second and third generation families where there is no by-product of work.

So there are certain things that happen in the course of an employment situation where many of us in this room over years of internships or mentoring, we have learned to kind of adapt to work. But how about the case where a welfare client entering into a new employment situation is delegated a responsibility and the manner in which the manager says or delegates the responsibility is taken the wrong way. And that individual leaves the office that day very upset, outraged by that experience, and is ready to quit.

Now, realize they go back to a family structure where there was no by-product of work. In fact, in many cases the family structure, if there is one, says quit, give up. Well, the stakes are too high. And this is where we have come through in putting this mentoring

network together where that individual, where that situation may arise, can call that mentor, and talk and solve that problem.

Very powerful tool here. It is a retention tool. Because we are able to kind of bridge the gap between the employer and the employee, and the mentor is involved in that relationship.

Now, during the past 18 months we have successfully recruited 30 volunteer mentors for this program. Our goal by the year 2000, by the end of the year 2000, is to recruit 150 mentors. And I know I provided you a program narrative of how we go out and recruit mentors. And I would like to get into that a little later for our panel group discussion.

But, for the record, I serve as a mentor to a single mother who has three children. Her problems are overwhelming to the average person. I am here to tell you that we are friends and that we respect one another. And my relationship with her has included such things as redesigning her resume, to helping her kids get into a YMCA summer camp program. For someone who had little hope in making the transition, my mentee has made a commitment to change her life. In my mind, the role of a mentor is to help an individual do the right thing.

And I can honestly tell you that mentoring has been a cornerstone in my upbringing. And if you look around corporate America, the most successful companies in this country do not hire someone to fail at the work site. The Boy Scouts, the YMCA's across this country do not bring people into this system that they have designed for failure. And that is why I think mentoring is all around us. And that is why I think it is critical with welfare reform that we have type of models.

Now, when we implemented our program, we realized that we provided tremendous legitimacy to the welfare office in our county. Why do I say that? Well, for one, the chamber represents business. We have over 1100 member businesses, companies as large as the Vanguard Group all the way down to your small mom and pop organization.

Now, when we pitch a community project, again, we are asking for business community buy-in. That is exactly what we did with our mentoring program. It wasn't the social service provider saying I have got this program, I need your support. It was the business community, it was the chamber of business and industry going out and saying we are going to do this and we would like you to join us in this effort.

Now, the other thing that is very interesting, which I take great pride in along with our staff at the chamber, is when we pick up the phone and we call an H.R. professional about providing an employment opportunity, it is a much more powerful message because it is not the old case worker calling trying to get someone placed in a job. And this is a very powerful tool. And, finally, we have been able to create an awareness that many social service providers have long sought to do, realizing that we are a business organization.

I know we have a long way to go in this endeavor. However, I am really proud to report that we as an organization have moved beyond the rhetoric and have implemented a program that is work-

ing. Over the past, again, 18 months I have traveled to six of our counties in Pennsylvania to share this model.

As my Jesuit professors once taught me, you can implement the "BAA" principle with our narrative. You can borrow, add, and adapt aspects of our program and implement it in your community. That is what we are doing. We have a dialogue set up in nearby Bucks County, which is a suburban county around Philadelphia. We have also started dialogue in Montgomery County. And many counties have seen the benefit of what we are doing. Moving forward, I am confident that our program will be an adopted model across Pennsylvania.

And I want to thank Congressman Pitts and the members of this Committee for giving us this opportunity to share with you some exciting developments that are taking place in a county right outside of Philadelphia.

Thank you.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you very much, Rob, for that testimony. I am sure we will have some questions for you.

[Mr. Powelson's statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman PITTS. We have been joined by other members of the Committee, the gentleman from Indiana, Ed Pease, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Phil English.

The next statement is by Peter Cove, founder of America Works from New York. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF MR. PETER COVE, FOUNDER, AMERICA WORKS, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Mr. COVE. Thank you, Chairman Pitts and Congressman English and Congressman Pease.

I appreciate being here today. I was recently introduced at a conference in Washington by a leading expert on welfare and they said no one infuriates nor stimulates the public sector around welfare as Peter Cove. And I am not sure whether that was a compliment or not. But I often tend to be the skunk at the picnic regarding welfare-to-work even though I am probably the most optimistic person you will ever meet.

I really do believe very strongly in welfare-to-work programs. And it is why I set up America Works which is a private for-profit company operating in seven cities. Currently, we have been in business 15 years and placed almost 20,000 welfare recipients into jobs. And a recent study by the New York State Department of Labor found that after 3 years, 88 percent of the people we had placed were still off welfare with an average of 5 years on welfare prior to coming to America Works.

We will stand on that against any record out there. There is a reason for that: we run a good program. But I am not going to tell you too much about my program right now. I would be glad to when we get into questions and answers, if you wish. I am going to use this opportunity to encourage the Congressmen here and others to do something that has needed to be done for the last 30 to 35 years in welfare-to-work but has not: the government should pay for the results of welfare-to-work programs rather than pay for the process of welfare-to-work programs.

For the last 30 to 35 years in this country, we have continued to basically pay for programs in welfare-to-work, instead of paying for the outcome. By continuing to pay for the process rather than for the outcome, we are producing programs with a varying degree of success. But as we all know, in terms of getting people permanently in jobs off welfare most programs in welfare-to-work have not worked very well. And the reason they haven't worked very well is because they haven't been paid to work. They have been paid for their program. They have been paid for their process. And that continues to this day.

The Department of Labor, which has most of the welfare-to-work money at this point, continues to discourage pay-for-performance programs. And when I say pay-for-performance, what do I mean by that? I mean that a program should be paid only if it ensures that a person is still working 6 months after having been placed by the program. Otherwise, why pay for it?

In government, we certainly don't pay for a box of pencils that is half broken when we get it. We pay for the whole box of pencils. In welfare-to-work, we will pay maybe half the money or three-quarters of the money or 90 percent of the money or 100 percent of the money even if the program doesn't work for the people that it is trying to place. This continues in the United States. And this is the reason why I feel we have not had really successful welfare-to-work in this country.

As I am sure you know the reduction in the caseloads around the country has not come because of an outgrowth of fabulously new great creative welfare-to-work programs. It has come because there is a tightening of eligibility, it has been reduced because of diversion of people from welfare to other kinds of activities. It has come about because of work fare. It has come about because of a good economy where some people have moved into jobs. But it has not come about because there has been a change in the quality of the programs that we are funding to bring people from unemployment and dependence to employment and independence.

I have to give you an anecdote that happened to me. I was negotiating a contract in a major State about a year and a half ago. And I said to the contract officer, why don't you just pay me for my results. Why are you paying me for all these things along the way? I can make more money that way, I can be more successful in terms of my profitability. You, on the other hand, along with the taxpayer are not going to get what you should be getting. You should only pay me for my results. And she replied, Oh, no, I can't do that, Mr. Cove. And I asked, why. And she said, I would lose all my contractors. I said to her, I didn't know that you were in the business of propping up an inefficient marketplace, I thought you were in the business of getting people off welfare. And she patted me on the shoulder, and said, Aren't you kind of naive about that.

There is a welfare industrial complex in this country made up of organizations, very similar to the workings of the military industrial complex.

They wish to continue to be paid for their process. They do not want to be paid for their results. If there is any one thing that you could do to change the quality of welfare-to-work programs in this

country, it would be to change the way in which the Federal government allows the local government to pay for its programs.

There are all kinds of good programs out there, and there are lots of ones too. But what you will get, if you were to help to do this, would be a marketplace, a much more rational marketplace that really brought us welfare-to-work the way we really want to see it.

Thank you very much.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Cove. I am sure we will have lots of questions for you.

[Mr. Cove's statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman PITTS. We have been joined by the Vice Chairman of the Subcommittee, the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. DeMint. And we will go to the last statement now from Eric Yergan who is the owner of the Yergan Agency in New York City, an Allstate insurance franchise which employs graduates the from America Works program.

Mr. Yergan.

STATEMENT OF MR. ERIC YERGAN, OWNER, ALLSTATE—THE YERGAN AGENCY, NEW YORK, NY

Mr. YERGAN. Thank you, gentlemen, for letting me come here today on relatively short notice.

As you said, my name is Eric Yergan. I am an exclusive agent from Allstate Insurance and the owner of the Yergan Agency which is an insurance agency on the upper side of Manhattan—excuse me, yeah, the upper side of New York City.

First, I would like to tell you a short success story which—this is one of many. Allstate and many of its franchises have hired many people through America Works and other types of programs both from the private sector and from State and Federal type of programs. Through America Works, I was able to hire a young lady named Anna Rodriguez last July 29 to be exact. She is a single mother of three, divorced from her husband and had been on welfare for 5 years, 5 plus years.

We were immediately impressed with her work and her work ethic and her desire to learn. After several months we sent her to school in New York State to get an insurance license. It is quite a long, drawn-out process. It takes at least 4 weeks of classroom study and then taking a State exam.

We sent her at no cost to her while we paid her—while I paid her to go to school. When she did get her license, she did take the test; and she passed it on the first try, which is something that many people could not do.

Right away, I noticed an improved sense of her self-esteem. She, all of a sudden, had this smile and this proudness about her that she really did not have prior to that. Since then, she has, blossomed might be the word, progressed and blossomed to being a full-fledged salesperson in my office.

Her income has increased because she now receives commissions which is a good thing. The education—through the education that we provided her, she now has the opportunity to improve her life and she has a future. She is an important part of my business, an important part of my agency. And she has pride in her work, and

she will move up in responsibility in the future and in earnings. And things continue the way they plan to be, she will end up with an ownership stake in the agency.

Secondly, I would like to tell you about why the current strategy of America Works and other such, I guess, vendors in the welfare-to-work programs works for me and other employers. It saves us time, gives us a product in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

What do I mean? Potential employees are prescreened. Only one that meets all hiring objectives are supplied to us for interviews. Additionally, a working relationship develops between employers and such vendors where they include training that we require as part of their programs.

As importantly, they also serve as a middleman, so to speak, in the beginning period of transition for that welfare recipient as they start to work, you know, through their counselors and other staff who works for America Works. If we have a concern or a problem at that beginning of a new employee, I speak to the counselor. That counselor speaks to the employee.

And what that does, that enables a good working relationship to develop without it being poisoned by oh, no, the boss is getting on my back again, oh, no, you know, he is always saying I am not up to speed. We work with the counselors to get that person up to the level where we need him to be. And I think that is probably one of the most beneficial aspects as an employer for that.

You know, additionally, it appears that programs such as this instills pride into the participants, pride of improving their own fate, pride of moving off welfare. This pride that gets established and gets reinforced by the positive experiences of both the vendors of such programs and positive work experiences is priceless. It is just priceless to those participants.

It is this pride that will keep them off welfare forever. It is this pride that will make them grow as productive members of the work world. It is this pride that gets established in these individuals. As far as I am concerned, programs like this should continue. You know, the people change. They start to work. They bloom. And they just feel rewarded just from an emotional standpoint and hopefully, also from a financial standpoint.

And I would just tell a quick little story, a situation the other day in my office. I am blessed with this lady, Anna Rodriguez. I also have another person who I recently hired from the school—from the Board of Ed School of Cooperative Education. And I have another person who is a welfare recipient who works part time.

The contrast of the people who have been through such programs versus the people who have not is just totally amazing. As a matter of fact, I stepped out of office the other day, which almost never happens, but I actually was out. When I came back in they were in the middle of somewhat of an argument with the person who is currently on welfare who was explaining to Anna. Well, Anna, you still qualify for food stamps. You still should get them. You have three kids, you know, your income is not high enough now. You could still get that money.

And Anna was in the process of saying, I don't care. I am not going to do that. This is where I am going to work. I am going to earn what I get, and I am going to take care of my family. And

that pride, that anti-welfare pride, whatever you want to call it, as far as I am concerned, makes programs like this—and that is something they help instill in the person, priceless. I thank you very much.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

[Mr. Yergan's statement may be found in the appendix.]

Chairman PITTS. We will proceed now with the first round of questioning and start with Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Ballard, how does the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization partner with TANF agencies or other community programs to achieve the high job retention rate that you mentioned? I think you said 72 percent is your job retention rate. What is the key there?

Mr. BALLARD. Well, I think the major key is that we hire people from the community. We take a married couple that we have trained, and we move them back into the high-risk community so they live among the people they are going to be working with. We have a very intensive door-to-door campaign. We knock on doors, we meet mostly women. And from these women we get the name of the fathers. We go in there and find these fathers. We do a 2 to 3 weekday visit at their homes.

Many of these men have never had jobs before, or they are on drugs or alcohol. And they are not going to come to us so we have to go to them. And we live a risk-free life-style, no drugs, no alcohol, no cigarettes and the like. And that life-style is different than what they have experienced. So the modeling piece, plus the very intensive counseling piece about who they can be in the world, we think has probably made it a success.

Mr. Cove said earlier about this idea of getting paid for what you do which is what the community doesn't understand. But when they grasp it, my experience has been when they are getting paid for what they have themselves earned, they feel much better. And we believe that programs that are worth anything don't mind being put up against men having outcomes like these. We believe that when the people are treated with respect and they are expected to succeed and they see a model of success around them, they come to the forefront.

We do that work with TANFs around the country. We have six centers around the country, Tennessee—Nashville, Tennessee; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Yonkers, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; and the District. And we work with community organizations; we work with businesses. We work with, I guess, well over 100 organizations around the country at this present time that are asking us for these kinds of people.

And what they say is essentially someone who will come to work on time, someone who will work when they get to work, and someone who will leave work as well. And they ask us to send them more fathers, expectant fathers because they believe by getting a father to the work place they can reduce crime and other kinds of problems.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Mr. Powelson, you mentioned in your testimony that mentoring forms the basis of your program. Is it a major factor in long-term employment success for welfare recipients?

How do you create your mentors? How do you match them up with participants?

Mr. POWELSON. Our program is very straight forward, Congressman. What we do in—the chamber will go out to its 1100 members—and I think I have enclosed in there an enrollment form with a cover letter that goes out on my stationery asking a chamber member if you would be interested in becoming a mentor.

[The information may be found in the appendix.]

Mr. POWELSON. We also take a full-page ad in our local newspaper. And in that ad we invite them, we invite community folks to a meeting. We bring those individuals together.

I should share with you our first meeting we had over 50-some people. As a result of our first training session—and I forgot to mention all mentors go through 6 hours of training. So I have been trained to understand this clientele. As they get—the clientele also gets trained. When we bring these individuals together, or, excuse me, for our first organizational meeting some people said right away this is not for me. And as a result we kind of narrowed our group down.

How do we match them? Well, we have been blessed in our county to hire a professional trainer who worked for Dr. Leon Sullivan at OIC. She lives in West Philadelphia, has worked with this population for 25 years, and she trains our mentors and works with my staff and I on matching individuals. That is basically how we do it.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Mr. Cove, you mentioned that programs should be paid for outcomes and results, not process. Could you tell me a bit about the payment schedule at America Works, when do you accept payment and what is the process for that?

Mr. COVE. It differs from city to city and contract to contract. What I would like to see is not what exists in most of the cities. What we would like to see is a situation in which we were responsible for moving a person from welfare into a job, and after 6 months be paid for that outcome.

Instead, we are paid along the way. And, again, it differs from city to city. For instance, we are paid a portion of the money just for enrolling a person at America Works, some portion of the money. And then we may be paid another portion of the money for the person completing a classroom activity. And then we may be paid some portion of the money for the person being placed in a job. And then we may be paid a further portion of the money for the person being there for, say 30 days. Finally, we may be paid the final portion of the money if the person is there after 3 months or whatever. The fact is we can earn most of the money and the person can drop out after 2 or 3 months, and the program has been a failure. That isn't what happens, but that is what can happen. And that is what happens in many programs.

Chairman PITTS. I am sure we will have more questions. I want to complete my turn with a question for Mr. Yergan. Would you have even considered the possibility of seeking to hire welfare recipients if you didn't have the relationship with America Works?

Mr. YERGAN. I would have considered it, it would never have happened. You know, maybe just from my own personal back-

ground of a belief that one gives back certain things to the community, that would have been a desire; but would it have happened, would I have taken the time to go search out such a welfare recipient and interview 20 of them to find one instead of interviewing three? The answer is no.

I am a business person. Time is my biggest problem, is my biggest concern. And trying to make the business profitable and, of course, make money. But the reality, it would not have happened because the process would not have been there. And I would not have gone through a bureaucratic process for it to happen.

So it is the speed and the efficiency, it is just a series of couple quick phone calls. And I don't mean it the way it sounds, to tell them what product I wanted and to get that product delivered and quick and easy and efficient. And that is probably my biggest desire in life is efficiency and time.

If you can somehow give me 6 more hours in the day, you got my vote.

Chairman PITTS. All right.

Thank you. We will go to the other Members.

Mr. BALLARD. Mr. Pitts, if I may, please, let me show you the power of outcome-driven organizations. Now, our success is because the people who live in the community have been trusted to bring the community back. And so they go out and knock on doors to find these fathers. We are planning to move to an entrepreneurship mentality or spirit by paying our workers for the number of fathers he places and are retained for 6 months.

Now, this was given to us by one of our employees who we hired coming out of prison, who—we hired him, we trained him and he has done great, but he is saying make us earn our money. So I think we need to go full force. The Bible says, if I man does not work, he shouldn't eat. So if a company doesn't work for outcomes, it shouldn't get paid.

But also I think what can drive that is having employees thinking the same way. That if I can put five fathers, ten fathers into the work place and he is there for 6 months, I should get a benefit from that. Now, I should also say if he gets married, which makes a stronger family, the kid has a better parent, he gets another point. If the man is on a job for a year he gets another point. So I think if we can do this thing if we work hard together with it, both the government and the community to bring America to a point where it works for all of us.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Mr. English.

Mr. ENGLISH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This panel has been most enlightening, and I think this hearing occurs at a critical time. I serve on the Human Resources Subcommittee of Ways and Means, and we are endeavoring to look into the same subject. What I particularly wanted to focus on in my questions was some of the tax policy that goes along with welfare-to-work.

I notice, Mr. Cove, toward the end of your written testimony you suggested that we should change our tax policy considerably, move away from the current work opportunity tax credit and the President's welfare-to-work tax credit and move towards something else.

I wonder if you could—first of all, elaborate on the problems you see with the current tax credits, and second of all give us a suggestion as to where you would like to see tax policy go to encourage the hiring of people out of the welfare system.

Mr. COVE. I have never really been a major supporter of tax credits to the private sector for hiring of difficult-to-hire people. And that would sound funny since I am a private-for-profit company, you would perhaps expect me to be in favor of that.

But I have not seen it work to significantly increase the up-take in hiring by private companies of dependent populations. And the reason is employers are not stupid. They know what is going on. If you are giving me a tax credit, you are giving me a problem. You are in effect asking me to solve a problem for you. And you wouldn't give me the tax credit otherwise.

And as Mr. Yergan said, there are issues that have to be dealt with. There are areas where when people are moving from welfare-to-work, they need to be assisted. And the private sector just hasn't got a lot of time to do that. Consequently when our sales staff go out to sell our services to private companies, we mention tax credit as an icing on the cake. It really is not the significant issue for the companies.

Although I cannot go into too much details as I am not entirely familiar with the issues, I can tell you that a significant number of people are disallowed any tax credit by Labor Department. There are various reasons behind this decision including lack of records, duration on welfare, etc.

Often people are being told that they are eligible for the tax credit. And the private sector is being told these people are eligible for tax credits. But, in fact, the departments are disallowing that. That is happening in New York quite significantly.

Mr. ENGLISH. If there would be some method, then, by which there could be some certainty as to eligibility for the credit, would that improve the way the system works?

Mr. COVE. It sure would improve the way the system works. But as my opening statement indicates, I am not sure whether it really makes a significant difference in the up-take and hiring of welfare recipients. I think the testimony on the targeted job-tax credit originally back when it was being sunsetted, pretty much indicated that. I think that it really didn't seem to be making a significant difference in the hire.

Mr. ENGLISH. I am very familiar with that testimony. As you know we dramatically changed the way the credit was structured in part through the efforts of my colleague, Mr. Holden.

Mr. Powelson, what are your thoughts on this? Does the tax credit assist in the process of moving people from welfare-to-work?

Mr. POWELSON. Well, I have a personal story to share with the committee. Our program has evolved in such a way that we envision the most powerful mentoring is where we are going to go within companies and get mentors so you will have on-the-job mentors. About 4 months ago, I was invited over to one of our larger employers, they sell things on television, QVC network. The head of H.R. said, I want to meet with you. Our CEO is well aware of what you are doing, we need to talk.

He said, Let me tell you what our problem is, and we want to work with you. Yes, we take the tax credits to hire. We will take 15 people. They better be job-ready. And I don't want to hear about transportation, day care, and the other issues. They have to show up to work on time. We will get them here.

I tell you what I am going to do. I am going to take the tax credit, but I am going to recruit 15 people at QVC to become mentors. And what I am going to do with the tax credit is for those 15 individuals that volunteer to be mentors to those new employees that we have taken off public assistance, we are going to pay their Federal income tax for volunteering. That is the most powerful, I don't know of any other model in this county. So they are taking the tax credit, okay, you are getting about an 18 month subsidy in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and they are going to say to that employee you are empowered now. If you volunteer to do this, we will reward you for it. And I think that is very powerful. We are working it out.

And our DPW office is very excited. It is kind of a carrot and stick. I mean the tax credit for QVC, I mean they are going to get 18 months of subsidized wage, but they are also to get people at the job to be mentors. I think it is very powerful. We will see if it works.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Yergan, you are in the private sector. Do you have a thought on this?

Mr. YERGAN. Well, I think the tax credit was a consideration. I think the tax credit is a good thing. However, I think the majority of the tax credit does find its way back to the—in this case to my Anna or to my welfare recipient, or ex-welfare recipient. In regards to—I am aware of this tax credit that I will get, but this also allowed me to make the decision that I am going to send her to school for 4 weeks. Although Allstate did the training, I still had to pay her, you know, her normal salary, and it really became like 5 or 6 weeks.

So knowing I was going to get that tax credit, the gamble that yes she will stay with me for more than a year, yes that she will get licensed, yes she will become a productive member of my company or my agency was done with the awareness of the tax credit. So helps allow me to fund the program, so to speak, that gets it to where I want it to be. So that money is not going to find its way into my pocket directly because it will, in essence, be filtered down to her, to reward her, to motivate her, and also to pay for that overhead expense.

Mr. ENGLISH. Well, that is very thoughtful. And let me say, Mr. Chairman, I am coming to the conclusion that while I think this is an important area of tax policy and it is still important to have these credits, we should be looking at their structure to make sure that they actually do have a positive impact. I want to thank the panelists for their contribution.

Mr. BALLARD. Mr. English, if I may address it from a different standpoint. If a mother works for any of us and she makes $10,000 a year she would get an income tax credit in a year of $3,800. If her boyfriend or child's father does the same thing, he gets the same amount of money.

So that is $7,600 they get together. If they get married, we take away $1500 from each one of them, they lose $3,000 just for getting married to give this child a future by the importance of marriage. And I would like to see—I have no problem of giving the business the money, but I think we can invest in the community. We need to give people a chance to make it. And when you penalize marriage, you say to the poor community, we don't care about your future, we don't care where you are going to go, we just want you to get out of our faces.

But when we leave the money in place, and just—this is a powerful example here. We have $7,600, if they get married and keep the same amount of money. If they get involved in an IDA program, Individual Government Account, to create asset, and let's say they take that money and go over to a company that will give them $2 for one, they have got now over $20,000. Now, that has to boost that family's not only income, but boost their esteem. So our government gets into not only giving out tax dollars to corporation, but it gets into building communities, building marriages, good marriages, sound marriages. And you are going to build a future that we all want.

Mr. POWELSON. Congressman English, I would also like to make a pitch. My organization, we have just hired someone off public assistance. And I had the opportunity—in fact yesterday I met with my mentee, and we met for our weekly meeting. And I had my new person sit in on it.

Here I am as a C–6 organization doing the right thing and we are investing in this person, but as a nonprofit we get no credit. So I mean we are—in the nonprofit community, believe it or not, there a lot of job opportunities out there whether it be United Way, YMCAs, and we are not getting the benefit of the tax credit. So there might be some legal room there in the code to provide nonprofits some relief there. Because there are job opportunities there.

Mr. ENGLISH. Those are two excellent points, the first one being that we ought to be taking a look at how tax policy affects lower-income people as far as the marriage penalty. One part of the marriage penalty debate that is largely forgotten is how this affects the earned income tax credit, which unfortunately has not attracted enough attention on our committee, Ways and Means. I intend to try to rectify that.

Your point that nonprofit organizations also should have some incentives to do the right thing is also a powerful argument.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, as your mentee, for the opportunity to extend my time.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Mr. DeMint.

Mr. DEMINT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank the panelists as well. It is really encouraging to hear about the progress.

I have been concerned for years with the problems we have created in this country by creating so much dependency and how much we have taken from the lives of many Americans and to hear that you are beginning to restore some of that self-esteem and self-worth by letting people have the opportunity to earn their own income, it is exciting to hear the progress.

I really appreciate the ideas that have been offered about the marriage penalty, the nonprofit tax credit. And that is really what I am after this morning is a few more ideas that we can change at the Federal level that can make these programs work better and better.

As you know, the further we go with welfare-to-work, the more people that we are picking up who are more and more difficult to employ. Now, those that were ready for work are probably back at work. So this job is going to get harder and harder and it is increasingly important that we continue to provide whatever incentives or remove whatever obstacles are necessary to make your programs and others continue to work.

I have got many friends in business. I have talked to them about this welfare-to-work. A number of them have tried. They have mentioned things like the real problem with reliability. If they hire someone there is a risk they may have a lot of difficulty remembering to come to work and to stay at work once they receive their first paycheck, as well as the risk of them going on disability. Many of them have been briefed before they get to work on how they can take advantage of employers.

There is very little flexibility in employment law on how to deal with folks that might require a great deal of expense in the beginning. And so the way the tax policy is set up, the way the Federal guidelines about employment are set up, are there some obstacles that we can remove within reason that would make it easier, less risky for employers?

I am sure, Mr. Yergan, you had to think of that possibility. Every one you hire, you have some liability attached to that. What can we do to make the system work better and better in addition to the ideas that you have already mentioned?

Mr. Cove, we will start with you. You look the most anxious.

Mr. COVE. Well, I didn't describe our program at all. And our program does really help to get at the issues that you were just speaking about.

So if I could just quickly mention how it operates. What we do after a company has an opportunity to interview a couple of people and select someone, if they want, they have no obligation, the person stays on our payroll for 4 months. And during that period of time the transaction looks a bit like a temporary agency transaction.

We bill a company on an hourly basis for the hours worked by the welfare recipient. The welfare recipient stays on welfare. Although the grants get reduced, they still are eligible for some of the benefits of welfare. If the company hires them after 4 months, then they go off of welfare. Although some other benefits, such as food stamps may continue depending on how much money they are earning.

But what that does and why the companies love it is it gives them the opportunity to get past the issue that you were just raising, Congressman, which is that they stay on our benefit package. We assume all responsibility just as a temp agency would. And the company gets a chance to try before they buy, which companies really like very much.

So a process in which an individual is essentially tried out and "temped" out for a period of time as a program idea really works. And I think if you had the kind of changes that I suggest in pay-for-performance, you would find many more companies following America Works' lead in putting people in a temp position for a period of time and then being hired into a permanent position.

Mr. POWELSON. I would just like to reiterate what was just stated. Over the last year, I have become a professional grant writer. And I can tell you that there is a feeding frenzy within our State for organizations that are going—and I commend our governor and our State legislature—all our grants now are competitively bid out.

So there is going to be an end result that you better attain in meeting a goal. And I can tell you in this social service provider bureaucracy that is out there, many of the dollars haven't gotten back to the recipients or helping really advance a meaningful cause. And it gets tied down in administrative costs. And with our program we are able to—through private and public dollars, we work this program off about $110,000. We have—we will have one full-time welfare-to-work coordinator, another very powerful statement that a Chamber of Commence would have someone out there doing that.

And I have taken a barrage of phone calls that—here is a classic one. Your organization stole my money; your organization isn't involved in work force development. Well, you know on those two points alone I beg to differ with the audience that I have had. It bugs me to no end because I have seen this happen.

And in the old system it was like, Chamber of Commerce, could you sign a letter of support for my grant? And now that we are engaged in this, it has changed radically. And I have realized that there are organizations out there that have just kind of, you know, they have taken money off this trough that is out there.

And the rules have changed. And they should continue to change.

Mr. BALLARD. Mr. England—I am sorry, Mr. DeMint, I would like to address your question in several ways. Number one, we hire people who are high risk, high risk for drug addiction, high risk for incarceration, because most of us have been there. So we are not hiring what we call goody two shoes. We are hiring people who have a real problem but who have overcome and now look to people who have overcome.

There is a bill that we worked with last year called the Fathers Counts; and this bill is a non-punitive approach to do intensive work with fathers in particular, very high-risk fathers; and I would suggest strongly that you support that bill, Nancy Johnson's bill, that it gets through.

I think in that bill should be that organizations should support good, strong, loving marriages. They should support men having good-paying jobs so that they can take care of their family, get them off welfare. They should support men thinking what I call entrepreneurial thinking so they don't just want to own a business, they want to treat the job like it is a business.

When I came out of prison, I wasn't called a deadbeat dad. I wasn't called a dead-broke dad. I know things were said, but the government wasn't saying those kinds of things. I think the government has done us a disservice by calling men deadbeat, dead broke.

They are not good terms, and children don't feel good when their dads are called that way.

I would suggest we take out of our language these what I think are very punitive approaches to getting men to pay child support. You can force a man to pay child support. He will pay it for a while, and he will go and hide. We need a better approach to getting to these men, and we need to kind of back off the bully pulpit mentality.

These are fathers. They love their children. They want to be involved. There are a lot of problems they are going through. I think that as we look at the pain they have experienced, some men didn't even have fathers as they grew up so they have no idea how to be fathers unless someone leads them in the direction.

So I think we have a great opportunity here to do some great things with this Fathers Counts bill, and I would appreciate if you could give Nancy Johnson support around it.

Mr. DEMINT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Mr. Cove, you mentioned that 88 percent of participants in your program remain off welfare rolls 3 years later. That is an outstanding success rate. Do you have any data of what percentage of America Works participants go on to, for instance, enhance their education by getting a GED or college courses? Do you see continuing education as a factor in keeping people employed and off welfare roles?

Mr. COVE. We really don't have but anecdotal information on people and how they have either been promoted or moved into other educational opportunities. I know that it happens, but to be honest, if happens randomly.

What I would suggest is that, if I had any druthers in terms of Federal policy, I would take the tax credits that are given to the private sector, the work opportunity credit and others, and I would convert that money into vouchers for individuals or for companies to upgrade welfare recipients who have been placed in jobs. To me, that would be a much better use of public monies than the use of the monies for tax credits. I know there are differences of opinion on this panel regarding tax credits. But my experience over 35 years has been that they are not terribly successful.

I would love to see an opportunity where welfare recipients, once getting a job, had a voucher available for upgrading in education or training; alternatively if that was not available that voucher being given to a private company for them to then use for upgrading that individual. That, to me, would be significant.

Our job has really been to get people into the marketplace and keep them there. Unfortunately, we really haven't worked on that other side.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Mr. Powelson, I know another facet of your program is the establishment of a loan pool for your clients. Who would be eligible for such loans and on what terms and what role, for instance, have community banks played in this process?

Mr. POWELSON. Our program, as designed some 18 months ago, we have in working with the DPW office realized that there are

emergency needs that are identified where cash assistance just cannot solve the problem.

An example, if I—actually, I took public transportation, but if I were driving down to Washington today, and I had a blown tire, between the credit card, a checking account, a savings account, I am going to fix that problem, and I am going to get to this hearing on time.

Imagine this scenario. The welfare client going to work. If they have transportation, blown tire, entered into a new work situation so there is no roll of accumulated savings during the first 6 months of work, that situation arises. As a result of the blown tire, they have—the axle breaks. For that individual, it is catastrophic. And what happens is that is not communicated back to the employer. The employer gets a little weary of the individual.

Wouldn't it be nice, we said, if that individual could access for that emergency need as identified by the mentor presented back to our program coordinator, could go to a local community bank and access a loan. The loan guidelines, as we have established them now, they can borrow up to $1,000 but not at a 16 percent APR like a Visa or a MasterCard—at maybe 2 percent.

They go into a local community bank. They sign a note, teaching the individual fiduciary responsibility. Those monies are used to help that emergency need. As a result, we figured that the community bank loves it because they get a CRA for servicing that population.

So that is what we have been able to create. We haven't really promoted it. We don't want to make the clients too aware of this fund that we have set up, but there are many programs out there. There is one I think in the State of Minnesota where a local community has done the exact same thing. It is remarkable that we have this, because there are situations that come up.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Mr. Ballard, is the cycle for dependency on welfare more likely to be broken when a child has a working parent as a role model? What I am interested in knowing is what is the most immediate benefit for a family when a parent successfully completes your program?

Mr. BALLARD. Someone had said that more is caught in the world than taught. I think when people and children see their parents living a certain lifestyle, whether it is good or bad, they are going to model that. In fact, the Bible says that the sins of the father will follow the children to the third generation.

One of the reasons I think when I came out of prison I went to work was because my grandfather who worked on a farm in southern Alabama taught me how to work. He said, if you work, you will always have income.

I think children will see their parent doing something. My son, who is now 43, has a master's degree. He talks about how I raised him. He said, my dad would take any kind of job that was honest just to make a good living and take care of me; and he feels that that modeling of seeing me go to work is what has kept him as he is today.

Many children tell us that their parents are in bed at 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, even at noon; and they go to school many times not dressed

properly. They go to school hungry. So how can we model that kind of concept and expect people come off welfare and make it?

We have to have parents to become good parents, and good parents mean getting married. Good parents mean having good-paying jobs, paying their taxes and contributing to society and raising your children right. I think as children see modeling of good parenting they will grow up and themselves become good parents.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Mr. Yergan, you mentioned a success story, Ms. Rodriguez I think it was. Could you describe in a little more detail the changes you have seen in Ms. Rodriguez since she has been employed by your company?

Mr. YERGAN. Yes. As I was saying earlier, she is a mother of three, divorced from her husband who left her about 5, 6 years ago, went on to welfare because that was the only way she could survive. She is probably the most conscientious person in my office in regards to—sometimes including me—of getting there exactly or early for work. She is supposed to be there at 9:00; she is there at 8:30. When the clock, so to speak, ticks at 6:00 and she is supposed to leave, she is not running out the door. She is finishing what work she has to do before she goes. And if it is 6:06, 6:08, she signs out at 6:00.

It is not like she is trying to get every little minute from that standpoint, but it is also maybe just the little ways that she carries herself, the way she interacts with people. On the phone initially, you know, very maybe meek might even be the word and now joyful, laughter, but also then says, well, do you want that policy or also then relating it to what a salesperson is supposed to do.

And I think from what I have heard, that is carried out, you know, in her—maybe her relationships outside the office. She is more assertive. She is more demanding of what she is seeking out of life.

And it is just, you know, a similar evolution of what we see as, you know, our children as they grow. You see them as they progress. Not relating her to a child but just in regards to that evolution of life. And, you know, I am sure there will be times when she will become more demanding to me about when is that next raise going to be, when am I going to have something more to do, and I know that is coming, and I am going to beat her off at the path, so to speak. But I have rewarded her increasingly since she has been there, and I just think she just walks taller, so to speak.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

We have been joined by the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Moore. Do you have some questions?

Mr. MOORE. No, sir, I don't. I regret that I was here late, and I don't want to ask questions that have already been asked. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BALLARD. If I could just make a comment. I can't remember your name, sir. But he talked about mentoring, and mentoring to us is like modeling, and we believe that there is not enough good mentoring going on. And his program sounds like a really good model to do that. By living in a community where the people are—by going to their homes, we are doing some of the same things. We are actually showing them how to live and how to carry them-

selves, and I think this is a very good approach to provide this whole mentoring concept to the community as well.

Chairman PITTS. All right. We will take just a few more questions before we wrap it up.

Mr. Cove, what type of companies do your sales representatives establish contact with?

Mr. COVE. From the largest companies like Aramark Food Service, an international food service company that has hired, until now, close to 500 people from us to small little companies, ma and pa stores. It really depends where the openings are.

The easiest way to think about it is to think about, first of all, the range of jobs that are available up to about $12 or $13 an hour where most of the people—not all but most of the people will go into. And it can be anything from a Barnes and Noble, where we have placed dozens of people in cashier and other positions, to manufacturing, or customer service. It really is a wide range, because there really is a wide range of experience and potential of people on welfare.

It ranges from modest, entry-level jobs to quite interesting jobs that would probably surprise the members of the Committee that welfare recipients would be able to move into. But it really is a vast range of companies, from the smallest to the largest.

Chairman PITTS. Mr. Powelson, in your partnership with the private sector and government, what role has small business played as part of your program either as serving as mentors or in hiring clients?

Mr. POWELSON. Our biggest mission with small business is to take the fear out of hiring; and, you know, I guess again the carrot and stick approach uses—is educating them on tax credits that are made available to them. Many of our employers, small businesses that have hired, share with us the horror stories, so it is kind of changing the mindset; and then when we are working now more closely with the DPW office, we make darn sure when that resume comes back to the Chamber and we are going to make that call to get someone into a job, that that person has been screened, they are job ready, really ready to hit the ground running. Because the old saying, you never get a second chance to leave a first impression.

And some of the things that we have done is it has been a leap of faith, and I am putting my reputation as a head of the Chamber on the line in some cases. I was burned once, and I am learning from some of these situations.

Chairman PITTS. Mr. Ballard, what in your experience are the most significant barriers to long-term retention and what does your program do to confront or overcome these obstacles?

Mr. BALLARD. Over the past 30 years has been drug use, alcohol, behavior problems, people responding to employers in ways that are inappropriate. We address these by, once a person is placed in a job, our office contacts the person once a week and we contact the employer once a week. And employers have said to us if every company does this, this kind of follow-up, the retention is much higher.

We model risk-free lifestyles. We believe that if a person drinks and does drugs, he cannot maintain a job very long, so we work

with them in this 30-day period. It is a very intensive one-to-one in his home to help him overcome drugs. We also make referrals to drug programs when necessary.

But the idea is to counsel him about the importance of a risk-free lifestyle, having a good attitude and also modeling that same attitude.

Chairman PITTS. Mr. Yergan, based on Ms. Rodriguez's success, do you anticipate that you will continue to hire participants from America Works or other welfare to work programs?

Mr. YERGAN. Yes, I do.

If I could go back to Ms. Rodriguez, after you asked me the question, some things came to mind and how it affected her. I remember after she had been with me about 2 or 3 months, I said, now I want you to go to school to learn about insurance and get a license. The look on her face, the beaming that she had when she went home and explained that to her family and her mother and her aunts and uncles, it was just like a whole tremendous avalanche of feelings in the family.

Then when she actually started school and had homework every night and had to come home—she had to go to school from 9:00 to 5:00, and then she had to study. She was able to sit down. While her kids were doing homework, she had homework. So it was, oh, I am doing my homework with mommy. And her daughters would say and her sons would say—or son—I am doing homework with mommy, and that helped them also see the importance. So there was like a spillover effect of that.

And then once she actually took the test and passed it the first time, where many people with college don't necessarily pass this test the first time, and she did; and that had a positive effect not just in herself, in her own feelings, but also in her whole family.

Now she had told me her son is applying for, I guess, a scholarship or a certain exam to get into Stuyvesant, which is one of the best public schools in New York City; and it was something that he hadn't really thought about before he saw—this is according to her—before he saw that a mother could move from where she was, that there were certain things that his mother was achieving. So now he has set his own goals higher. So that is from your last question.

Now to answer this question. It just kind of took a while to come back to me. Yes, as a matter of fact, at one point, you know, I did speak about America Works to another full-time person. Turned out that that person, who I wanted, I wasn't able to hire because another employer also thought highly of her and was willing to pay her considerably more than I was. And at the same time, the training program that I was trying to hire for was postponed, so it kind of fit my timing.

So, yes, I would use them again. I have in other agencies within Allstate.

As I said, in certain ways we are like franchises. They are finding out about America Works, and we are spreading the word, and they will be using that type of organization.

You know, more recently, I just hired someone from the Board of Education School of Coop Ed just because it was four blocks away. That was a little risky to me because, in that case, they are

on my payroll from the start; and if they don't work out, I have got to fill out all that paperwork and the whole process and that person doesn't work out, however they are, I then would have been at a disadvantage if—compared to if I used America Works, where it is on their payroll, and it is just easier.

I guess, really, our concern is just time and what is easy, to get the person who can produce. We are kind of in that pressure environment where, day in and day out, every day is another day.

Mr. COVE. I just wanted to reiterate something that the other members of the panel have been talking about. Again, I didn't go into a description of America Works' program, although it is in my written testimony.

The major reason that America Works has the retention rates that it does is because we send a staff person called a corporate representative to the work site at the private company every single week. This is the kind of mentoring that my colleagues have been speaking about this morning. That person is there to make sure that the line manager at the company and the worker are positive that it is working out.

If the person is coming in late, we immediately move in to find out what the issue is. Is it a day care issue? Is it a problem of just being able to wake up on time? What is the issue? If there is an abusive mate at home, we immediately get involved with that person with victims' services and get protective orders or whatever are necessary.

We believe very strongly people lose their jobs not because of what they don't know but because of their inability to fit in in the workplace. I call it the static in their lives, the kind of things that my colleagues were talking about today. The staff person who intervenes in the work site is known as the corporate representative (the equivalent of the mentor). The involvement of the corporate rep is critical to the success of these kinds of programs as it is he or she who takes away some of the issues that could prevent a good worker from succeeding in the workplace.

Again, if government were to pay for results, you would find much more of this going on because, as you are hearing today from the people on the panel, that really makes a difference.

Chairman PITTS. Mr. Powelson?

Mr. POWELSON. Congressman, if I may, I would like to share with you, just as a tie-in to one of the other panelist's comments. I have found in my mentoring experience with my mentee, in my initial meeting with her, I could tell you right from the start that an individual in her situation is living day to day, where someone in my position or your position or anybody in this room probably has a game plan where we are going to be 6 months from now, a year from now, wherever. Some people, I just found out, have a 35–year plan.

My point is, we needed to start thinking the way I think and others think in terms of planning, and this is—I mentioned it in my testimony. My mentee had no idea that there was a resource in the community where she could get her kids involved in a summer camp program. That little pick up the phone, get the paperwork filled out and getting it done meant so much to her self-esteem and to provide that for her kids.

Her initial reaction when I brought it up is, I can't afford that. It wasn't about affording it. There are resources in the community. Someone in my position and many in this room, we know our resources. That is where we get around. And, you know, it is the struggle of life and providing those resources, that insight has been just the little thing that I do to help her. And she has got to help herself has meant a lot to her and has built up this self-esteem, as you have heard.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

Any members have any other questions? Mr. DeMint.

Mr. DEMINT. Thank you.

Mr. Cove, what are the incentives for private businesses to do what you are doing? Where do you make your money? How does it work that we could encourage others to do what you do?

Mr. COVE. Sure. What the government should do is decide what it is worth to get someone off welfare, set a market price for what it is worth or at least go to the marketplace and try to figure out what it is really worth to get someone off welfare. This is never done. It is calculated all kinds of other ways.

But that way of saying—it is costing us, let's say, in New York State 20,000 or more dollars per year to keep a mother and two on welfare. What is it worth to the taxpayer to get the person off, guaranteed? What is it worth? And come up with some figures that make some sense.

Once that is established, and I think it should be done in conjunction with the marketplace: a fair market value is set, then the government should say to the private sector and not-for profits, now, give us your plans. Incidentally, this is very well done in England. Tell us what you plan to do, and as long as your plan is a good plan, go right ahead and start taking people and placing them in jobs and getting them off welfare: We will then pay you that fair market value at the end of a period of time which is deemed long enough by the government to increase the likelihood of that person continuing in the job and off of welfare.

The way we make our money is a combination of two major sources of funding. One is that money that we do receive from the government to get someone off of welfare, though it is usually not paid in the preferred way, i.e.: at the end and for a job well done. The other source comes through the differential we charge Allstate and others on an hourly basis a little less than it would have cost them to keep the person in that job. Out of that we use the money to pay the wage of the workers, as I indicated. The person is on our payroll during the period of time they are working for the company, that 4-month period. So there are two sources of funds.

Ideally, ideally it would be a company such as ours, although our program I don't think is the only way to do it. I think we have a great program, and it delivers at the end, but there are lots of ways of doing that.

But what the government should be doing is paying for the programs for a period of time for individuals to be "temped" out, for instance, the way we do it with Allstate and with other companies around the country. Then, at the end, the government should pay for the results. You would find a marketplace boom. You would find, instead of the reaction I got in my anecdote earlier which was

"we can't pay you for performance at the end, because we would lose all our other contractors." What you would find is the development of a private marketplace that really delivered welfare to work.

Mr. BALLARD. I would say, treat nonprofits the same way. Whatever incentives you give to businesses, give those to us and make us compete. Make this a competitive environment the way it was when we first came to America and fought against the wilderness. That spirit needs to come back, and we need to help people understand the importance of not only working but working good.

So I think that if we are given a challenge and we could do partnership with America Works, that we would find the fathers, we would prepare him for the workplace. We would place the father and together we would retain—we could have a 90 to 100 percent retention rate, not just in 3 or 4 years but forever. So I think we need to find better ways of doing business in America.

We have made America dependent, even corporations, on taxpayers' dollars; and we need to find a way where taxpayers are paying for what they are getting; and today that is not happening.

Chairman PITTS. Thank you.

The gentleman from New Mexico has joined us during the last round, Mr. Udall.

Are there any other questions from the panelists? If not, this has been an excellent panel with many good ideas, excellent testimony. This will be a very important record to the members of the Committee, and we will keep the record open for 5 legislative days if any of you would like to submit any further testimony.

We thank you very much for taking time to meet with the Subcommittee today; and if there are no other questions, this hearing is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

EMPOWERMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
Hearing on "Welfare to Work: What is Working, What is Next?"
May 25, 1999

CHAIRMAN JOSEPH R. PITTS- OPENING STATEMENT

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for joining me and the Members of the Subcommittee on Empowerment today to discuss the important issue of welfare-to-work. We are privileged to have with us today many experts on this subject. During this hearing, we will examine several welfare- to-work programs in order to discover what strategies are successful in moving people from dependency on public assistance, to gainful employment and ultimately self- sufficiency.

We all have something to gain from breaking the cycle of welfare dependency and empowering people to end their reliance on cash payments by the government. By providing education, training, and job placement to welfare recipients, welfare-to-work programs strengthen our nation's workforce and ultimately our economy. A recent study conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute surveyed 500 small businesses and found that small employers are seeking reliable, motivated workers with positive attitudes, and are less concerned with the limited education and job training of many welfare recipients.

Additionally, 62% of the employers surveyed had hired someone who was on welfare and, of this percentage, 94% were willing to hire a welfare recipient again. These findings suggest that since there is no shortage of employers to hire welfare recipients, perhaps welfare-to-work programs are part of the solution to facilitating the job search for welfare recipients. These programs provide training that will help welfare recipients portray themselves as successful candidates to prospective employers.

Indeed, the past few years have been a transitional period for welfare reform, following the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, in 1996. This law established the *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families* (TANF) program which mandates that after two years of receiving welfare assistance, recipients must have a job or be participating in some type of work activity or job training. This welfare-to-work initiative ensures that welfare recipients have the opportunity to make a long-term life improvement, by sustaining a job, in hopes that eventually they will become independent of government assistance. This is especially important since participation in the TANF program is not infinite; in fact, current law limits the receipt of welfare benefits, in most cases, to no more than 60 months in one's lifetime.

The transition from dependency to gainful employment is a life- changing experience, involving education, job-training, and time management skills. All of these factors must be taken into account in order to ensure that a welfare recipient will be able to sustain employment for an extended period of time, and not regress to relying solely on a welfare check. Many organizations offer comprehensive programs designed specifically to move people from the welfare rolls into the labor market. These welfare-to-work programs attract, train, and assist in placing welfare recipients in jobs. We are fortunate to have with us today a diverse panel of experts in this area who will be able to provide us with insight into the welfare-to work issue. We will hear from Mr. Charles A. Ballard, Founder and CEO of the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, who will testify about his welfare-to-work program for fathers; Mr. Robert Powelson, is President of the Chester County Chamber of Commerce and Industry in my district, the 16th district of Pennsylvania and he will discuss his program which provides mentors to those entering or re-entering the workforce; Mr. Peter Cove, the Founder of America Works, who will discuss his New York City- based welfare-to-work program; and finally, Mr. Eric Yergan, an Allstate Insurance franchisee, will share his experiences hiring employees from the welfare rolls.

The ranking member, my distinguished colleague, Ms. Millender- McDonald, is unable to be here today. She will however, be offering a statement for the record.

Testimony of Charles Augustus Ballard
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization

House Empowerment Subcommittee
10:00 a.m. May 25, 1999

Thank you Chairman (Joseph) Pitts. I am very pleased that this Committee is convening this hearing today on the issue of responsible fatherhood initiatives and the vital importance they have in achieving welfare to work objectives. This indicates that the Nation has begun to realize this is the vital next step in our welfare reform campaign.

The most powerful job creation program in the nation is to turn the heart of the father toward his children and family. I will describe following my introductory remarks how our high performance in the Labor Department's Welfare to Work program has validated this principle.

When I founded the Institute over **17 years ago** in Cleveland, OH, I knew that "turning the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers" would provide the foundational basis to restore safe and secure family environments. Independent evaluations of our work by Case Western Reserve University and the University of Tennessee have attested to our results, and reinforced the vital importance of re-establishing role models of loving and compassionate marriages in our inner cities.

Key elements of our program are:

1. Targeting 16,000 mostly female head of households in high urban areas.

2. Re-seeding the targeted community with loving and secure, married couples (managing partners) who model a risk-free lifestyle. (No drugs, no tobacco, no alcohol, no violence).

3. All managing partners and support staff must live in the target community.

4. All staff must be available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to provide services.

5. All staff must be willing to go directly into the people's home in order to provide services, working with one father at a time to resolve family problems and other related issues.

Once we engage the father in our program, we use a "Comprehensive 5-cylinder" model of intervention:

1. Enhanced Intra-personal Development: This cylinder leads the father to a sense of self awareness, self control, self worth and a desire to be well and in good mental health.

2. Enhanced Family Development: This leads the whole family to create a therapeutic environment in order to support all family members in a positive manner.

3. Enhanced Community Development: Fathers take responsibility for their own behavior and work to assist their neighbors in doing the same.

4. Enhanced Educational Development: Fathers learn the importance of education for himself and his children. Our experience is that children whose fathers are in our program experience an increased letter grade. Some have gone from an F to an A in a period of only six months!

5. Enhanced Entreprenuerial and Employment Development: African-American males have the highest jobless rate in America. Much of this is brought on by educational failure, a prior conviction that may have led to incarceration and a poor work history. The success of this cylinder has resulted in fathers being employed and retained at a rate as high as seventy-two percent (72%).

In 1998, the Institute was awarded a $4.4 million grant in Round I Welfare-to-Work (WtW) for a six-city pilot initiative, ***Reconnecting Fathers to their Families and to the Workplace.*** Cited by the Labor Department's own Office of Performance Audits, the Institute has implemented a cutting edge demonstration with the following innovations and results to date.

- Placement that exceeded original expectations and time frames in the IRFFR grant proposal;
- Model collaborations between state TANF agencies, PICs, and community-based programs;
- A responsible fatherhood technology embodied in the principle of "changing hearts" and attitudes of non-custodial fathers. The Institute has proven to be capable of transforming long-term welfare dependent individuals with histories of drug abuse, unemployment, domestic violence and other issues;
- State of the art Management Information System (MIS) which calculates 70%-30% eligibility;
- Extensive field monitoring manuals, financial control systems, and accountability mechanisms.

According to the Department of Labor, our organization is the top performer in recruiting non-custodial fathers for placement into the workforce under this program. From September 1, 1998, to March 30, 1999, we have screened 764 fathers and 766 mothers for WTW eligibility. Out of this pool of low-income individuals we enrolled 258 fathers and 189 mothers who met the Labor Department's program eligibility requirements for extreme hardship. Thus far, we have placed 143 fathers and 79 mothers into un-subsidized employment, with a retention rate of seventy-two percent (72%).

This success is a direct result of our intensive one-on-one fatherhood approach involving married couples and outreach workers from the local community who recruit and work with fathers on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week availability. Our program is founded on the principle that connecting a non-custodial father to his children with an emotional bond creates within the father, not only the need, but also the desire to work to support his family.

The target group we serve, primarily hard to place males, are characterized by multiple barriers to employment including teen parenting, illiteracy, school drop out, limited or nonexistent work experience, substance abuse, criminal records, dysfunctional relationships within their own families and with the mother(s) of their children, and low self worth.

The Institute's WTW program provides proteges (clients) with Job Readiness and Placement, Post-Employment Training, Employment Activities and Support, and Job Retention Services. To enhance the effectiveness and success of these activities, proteges participate in Inductive Outreach Modules which assist them to visualize the possibilities of what can be and actively pursue the opportunities that allow those visions to manifest into reality.

The Inductive Outreach Modules are designed to assist proteges in resolving core issues which contribute to the barriers which have impeded their active and constructive participation in their families and society. Inductive Outreach Modules are self paced sessions covering fathering attitudes and feelings about one's self, his father, his child(ren)'s mother(s), his child(ren), the educational system, the welfare system, and the justice system. Resolving these issues create an environment for the protege to experience self awareness and individual responsibility. This foundation sets the framework to assist proteges to acquire skills, behaviors, motivation, and knowledge to maximize job placement, job retention, and increased earning potential.

We realize that the father, the mother, and the child is one complete unit and not a division of pieces. Any approach to create healing and move a family from TANF rolls must be comprehensive, inclusive, and address the father's fundamental issues which lie at the core of employment barriers. To overcome these barriers, the Institute believes that the individual must be strengthened in seven areas to develop strong work habits:

(1) Spirituality: creating a core belief system of what is right, good and fair for self and all mankind.

(2) Identity: creating a sense of individuality and personal identity with the ability to work interdependently with others.

(3) Belief system change: creating the ability to manage one's thoughts an attitudes. Recognizing that how one thinks is often how one acts.

(4) Purpose: creating the understanding that one has a reason to be here; that one is placed in this world, this society to be a contribution to the lives of others. That when one finds and focuses on his life plan; the world will become a better place to dwell.

(5) Ability to perform: creating a paradigm that causes one to recognize the importance of going beyond just having a purpose, but, to actively and vigorously perform successfully.

(6) Behavior: creating the ability to take responsibility for how one interacts with the world. Recognizing that one's behavior is the first of one's thoughts. Being strengthen in this area will assist one in creating appropriate behavior for positive relationships, and;

(7) Environment: creating the ability to take responsibility of one's environment and not blame the environment; one discovers that he creates the environment not the environment him.

Children brought up under such wise and loving guidance will have no desire to wander around in search of elicit pleasure and companionship. Gangs will not be attractive to them. Their characters are molded in the home and they form habits and principles that will provide them with a strong defense against drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, violence and school failure. They will go forth from the home to bless the world.

Because of our success in not only reaching fathers, but moving them successfully back to their families through our program and supporting them in becoming responsible fathers, we have received hundreds of phone calls and letters from across America to expand our services.

We at the Institute would like to begin the process of reaching other cities in order to help children across America smile because their fathers are involved in their lives. Ask a child, what do you want most from your father? He will tell you, "I want him to love me and be kind to my mother." It is this kind of father that the Institute works to develop. It is these kinds of fathers who will make our homes and communities safe again.

I would like to commend Congress for its examination of ways to provide adequate funding as in the Fathers Counts Bill to help community-based programs like ours to expand our work into the many high-risk communities that have sought our services.

The Fathers Counts Bill and the attention given to this issue by Congress and the Administration will not only aid groups like ours in helping fathers to be responsible from a nuturing and economic standpoint, but it will also promote self-sufficiency, good health and a reduction in crime by allowing us to empower fathers to be there for their children and wives – 5, 10,15 years and beyond.

This issue is not only an economic one; we must be concerned with the child's health and safety, teaching men to become good nurturers who are very compassionate and responsible. Responsibility cannot just stop with child support, but must encompass the father's care for the family and child.

At the Institute, we believe the best gift a father can give to a child, is to love, honor and respect the child's mother, as he models a healthy, risk-free life style and supports his family with love and compassion. In closing I would like to make several recommendations:

(1) Create a National Enterperneural Spirit Program: Having an entrepreneurial spirit has very little to do with owning a business. It has more to do with owning an attitude, a way of thinking like the job is your business. This will create a stronger work force and help business owners last much longer.

(2) We should work to get men into the lives of children as nurturers and as caretakers. This will assist men in having a greater reason to work and live.

(3) Creating an entrepreneurial business plan for both mother and father to work together.

Thank you for your leadership in bringing this vital issue to the attention of Congress.

About the Organization

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization is a nonprofit agency that was founded in 1982 as the brainchild of Charles A. Ballard. The Institute's leadership role in the fatherhood initiative is supported by its successful history of working with at-risk fathers to address core belief systems, and assisting them to move toward more positive and risk-free lifestyles. Since its inception, the organization has served the needs of thousands of fathers and their families through innovative outreach, education and intervention. With program sites in Cleveland, Ohio; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Nashville, Tennessee; San Diego, California; Washington, D.C.; and Yonkers, New York; and its National Offices headquartered in the Nation's Capital, the program also provides services to children, mothers, grandparents and significant others in an effort to help strengthen and support the overall family structure.

OUR MISSION

The first organization of its kind to recognize the needs of fathers, The Institute seeks to create and maintain an environment in which fathers can develop the parenting and life skills they need in order to be the fathers they want to be. As strong, responsible and loving partners and parents, these fathers create nurturing, healthy and stable families for their children. In these environments, children not only flourish, but also are guided along life's pathway by the positive example and presence of their fathers.

ABOUT OUR STAFF

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization is staffed by professionals that include expertly-trained outreach staff, interns, and volunteers who provide outreach, support, and assessment, as well as recruitment of the organization's protégés (recipients of The Institute's services). Many of the outreach staff are former protégés who have overcome major challenges in their lives and are now excellent role models, providing support and service to their communities.

ABOUT OUR SERVICES

To promote the creation of therapeutic and self-empowered communities, The Institute has developed an innovative, non-traditional outreach and service delivery strategy. The technology is based upon the principle that a father's life has tremendous impact on the lives of his child(ren) and the mother of his child(ren). Improving the quality of life of a father, *while simultaneously integrating or re-integrating him into the lives of his child(ren), the mother(s), and other key family members who directly affect and impact the father (e.g. grandparents)*, is directly related to an elevated life quality for his child(ren), the mother(s), et al.

The following program areas are highlighted in The Institute's service delivery:

- Services to Fathers
- Services to Mothers
- Services to Incarcerated Fathers and Their Families
- Education Enhancement and Support
- Connecting Fathers to the Workplace

"*Because of this agency, I can be the kind of father to my child that I never had.*" J.D., 17 year-old father

SERVICES TO FATHERS

Fathers receive a variety of services including home-based, inductive outreach; fathering education and parenting skills; health and nutrition information; pre and post-marriage outreach support; and job-seeking and employment preparation. Paternity establishment, the process by which a child is legally acknowledged and takes on a father's name, is an integral goal of the services provided by The Institute.

- Father Support Focus Groups: Fathers and their male friends meet once a week for support and discussion. Topics include:
  - Respect and Support for the Mother(s) of Child(ren)
  - The Most Important Role Model Your Child Will Ever Have – You!
  - Creative Discipline
  - Overcoming and Eliminating Violence
  - How to Create Safe and Secure Environments for Personal Development
  - Support for Overcoming Substance Abuse/Addiction
  - Men Supporting Men

"*The most important thing to me now is not drugs, gangs, and getting over; but education and making a bright future for my family and me.*" B.M., 23 year-old father

SERVICES TO MOTHERS

Designed to address the special needs of female heads of households and their children, The Institute provides individual and group support focusing on pertinent parenting issues and the integration of positive male role models into the lives of children.

- Mother Support Focus Groups: Mothers and their female friends meet once a week for support and discussion. Topics include:
  - Understanding the Role Fathers Play in the Lives of Their Children
  - Creative Discipline
  - How to Create Safe and Secure Environments for Personal Development
  - Support for Overcoming Substance Abuse/Addiction
  - Women Supporting Women

"My role to my son is not to be a mother and a father, but to be all the mother I can be and assist him in finding positive male role models." A.B., 32 year-old single mother

SERVICES TO INCARCERATED FATHERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The focus of these comprehensive services is to improve the health and well being of fathers who are incarcerated. Emphasis is placed on assisting and supporting them to improve their family relationships, with a special focus on the relationship between these fathers and their sons, particularly their teenage sons who may be fathers themselves, and/or who may be at risk of becoming fathers.

EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT AND SUPPORT

Education is the key that will unlock many doors. This is the guiding principle of The Institute's services to fathers in the education arena. Assisting a father to realize that the quality of his life is profoundly impacted by the lack of a solid educational foundation, and then supporting him to understand that the educational success and life quality of his child is directly related to his own success – or failure – very often is the lynchpin for his return to school, or getting a GED, and/or even matriculating to college.

CONNECTING FATHERS TO THE WORKPLACE

The Institute is committed to the principle that everybody *wants* to work, but not everybody is *ready* to work. Our staff has worked in the community and developed relationships with people and organizations that can assist fathers in getting and keeping a job. And not just any job, but one with advancement and career opportunities to provide an economically secure environment for himself and his family. Assisting fathers to become better parents and role models for their children creates an environment where work is an accepted responsibility that will improve the quality of life for his child(ren) and their mother. The Institute's program services in this area assist fathers to develop a positive work ethic and to find and maintain employment. Long-term, self-sustaining employment permits fathers to support their children financially, which helps to create a safe, emotionally stable, and secure environment for the child, the family, and the community.

"This program has taught me that being a single parent is not the end of everything. I can create my own future through education, training and the appropriate use of information." D.M., 18 year-old single mother

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Prodigal Dad

How We Bring Fathers Home to Their Children

Charles Augustus Ballard

I see a lot of angry kids in my work, but none can match the anger of a boy I knew years ago. He was the second-youngest of six children; his mother was a housewife, his father a coal miner. He lived in a cinder-block house about a block and a half from the mouth of the mine. As a child, no more than three years old, he used to wait for his father to come up from the mine after his shift.

Then one day, his father was gone. His long bouts of illness had grown worse, and he was taken away to a mental institution, an asylum. The shame at that sort of thing was strong in those days. The little boy was never told where his father went, and he never saw him again.

Without his father around, that boy's life got a lot harder. He used to go into the woods and throw rocks into a pond. Some days, he pretended the rocks he threw were aimed at his father.

When the boy grew up, he left school before he graduated, and fathered a child with a girl he had no intention of marrying. To run away, he joined the Army, but he got into trouble and ended up in prison. That angry young man is someone I knew well, because that man is who Charles Augustus Ballard used to be.

Today, I see many young men on the street, a lot who have children, but few have families. Few share a home with their sons and daughters and their children's mothers. As a society, our approach toward these invisible fathers is a mix of anger and indifference: we condemn them for their flight from responsibility and pursue them for child support. Otherwise, we look right through them. For 16 years, I've been helping these fathers.

INVISIBLE MEN

Sixteen years ago, in the heart of Cleveland's Hough neighborhood, I founded The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization. Today, there are few other programs aimed first and foremost at helping fathers find their way back into their children's lives. In a social service universe where trillions of dollars are spent on overlapping and interlocking programs at the local, state, and federal levels, I'm still astonished at how few programs attempt to connect fathers and children.

The vast majority of assistance programs, both public and private, which span the gamut from social services to support payments, are targeted to young mothers. At best, fathers are rendered irrelevant – invisible men, drifting in and out of their children's lives. At worst, fathers are a presence that can disqualify a mother from receiving government benefits. Fathers, especially teen fathers, get the message: they are a problem an obstacle in the path of a system built to help single mothers cope.

I sometimes wonder whether any of us appreciate the racial experiment we are conducting in the inner cities of America. In all of history, we have never seen a stable society without fathers actively present and participating in the lives of their children and their families. Yet, it seems that the goal of our social policy is to create just such a society.

SEE WHO SURVIVES

To me, the father isn't the problem. He's the solution. Look at the social pathologies that plague us today: drug abuse, homicide, gang violence, and crime. Now, survey the youth that fall prey to any or all of these calamities; ask them where their fathers were when their lives took a turn for the worst. Or, visit our prisons and ask the men locked up what role their fathers played in their lives. You'll find too many who say, "*No role at all.*" Then, survey the survivors, the success stories who came up through the poorest neighborhoods in this nation. Often, the single difference that sets them apart is the presence of a good father in the home.

Even in a city's poorest neighborhood, you can see a difference from one street to the next when the fathers are home. On the street where you see a father playing catch with his son, another mowing his lawn, and one fixing a screen window, you'll see a safer street. That street will experience less crime and have fewer 911 calls. That street won't have a crack house on the corner or a stripped car at the curb.

Most important, chances are that having a father in the family means children won't have children of their own. I learned that almost 22 years ago when I was working as a social worker in a hospital in inner city Cleveland. Every day, I saw young women – many of them still teenagers – struggling to cope with their newborns. Many already had several children.

The more I looked, the more I noticed there was rarely a father in sight. So, while it had nothing whatsoever to do with my job at the time, I began to ask the women where were the fathers? In the hallways of the hospital, on the city buses to and from work, wherever I saw a pregnant woman or one with a baby, I asked the question. To my surprise, many of the women

told me their stories. In time, I realized that I was conducting an informal sociological survey into the causes and the consequences of fatherlessness.

Sometimes, the mothers even gave me the names and addresses of the absentee fathers. I knocked on the doors and talked to the men I saw on the street corners. Once I went up to a group of teenage boys on a playground. After we talked for a while, I asked how many of them had children. The hand of almost every boy went up. Then I asked, "*Okay, now how many of you are fathers?*" And the hands wavered and fell.

Since then, I've learned all the statistics, for example, in 1950, only 9 percent of homes were headed by females. Last year, in many inner city communities, two out of three children were born out of wedlock. If we don't find a way to reverse the trend, that number will grow to 70 or 85 percent by the year 2000.

But I don't need statistics to know how many fatherless boys wind up on dope, in gangs, in jail, or in the morgue. Or, how many fatherless boys end up fathers themselves, extending their legacy of hopelessness to a new generation.

TEACHING FATHERHOOD

Where do you start teaching a boy to be a father, a boy who never had one, who never knew his father's name?

The Institute has a very specific goal: teaching men to be good fathers. I don't waste my energy running down the social service system, but also I see no value in mimicking failure. The Institute and the social service system are coming at the problem from two different directions. The system will give you a welfare card and food stamps; it will give you a place in a shelter or an apartment in the projects. But the system only treats symptoms.

We are doing something different. We can't give you food stamps or a card for the free clinic or an AFDC check twice a month. We work at one thing: giving children their fathers.

We call the young fathers and mothers we help through our program "protégés." It's a word that many of the teens we help have never heard before; more than once, I've pushed a dictionary across my desk to let someone look it up. Webster says a protégé is a man under the care and protection of an influential person. But the word also means a man who is being groomed as an heir; a protégé is a man with a mission in life.

I was a protégé myself once – back when I was in prison – although I didn't know it at the time. There was an older prisoner in my cellblock, a man who spent his day turning the pages of the Bible. For a long time, he kept his distance, steering clear of the young hothead who challenged guards and got into fights. But after one episode, he came across the cell, sat down next to me and began reading the Bible aloud.

Before long, I was the one with the Book. One day I came across a verse in Malachi, *"...and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers."* I thought of my own son, and I formed the idea that when I got out of prison, I would find him.

When that day finally came, my boy was five-and-a-half years old and I hardly knew him. He was already nearly twice as old as I had been when I saw my own father for the last time. His mother had two children with another man whom she planned to marry. She had a new life of her own; eventually, when she saw I was serious, she agreed to let me adopt my son.

My life with my son wasn't like the fairy tales where people "*live happily ever after.*" There were times when I had no idea what to do. Many times, my only refuge was the knowledge that for all my faults as a father, I was better than nothing.

I took work where I could find it, as a busboy, as a dishwasher, and later in a laundry at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. It was here one day that Mrs. Edwards, the college's registrar, talked to me about going back to school. "*Why aren't you a student?*," she asked. "*You're bright enough.*" It was a question I couldn't answer. So, I enrolled. It took me six years, but I got my degree.

The night I graduated, some of the professors held a dinner for me and a few of my fellow students. I was feeling quite pleased with myself. After all, how many of them had survived prison, held down a job, raised a son, and worked their way through college the way I had? I was busy patting myself on the back for how far I'd come in six years' time. As I was reminiscing about my many accomplishments, one of my professors broke in. "*Yes, Charles, but where do you see yourself ten years from now?*"

That's a question we ask often in our program. It is critical to get a protégé to look forward, both for himself and for his children. We call it future pacing, a fancy name I'd never use when talking to a young father. We walk out 5 to 10 years, and work backward. In the files we keep for each of our protégés, we chart one-year objectives, and break those down to 90-day plans.

The average age of the fathers in our program is 23. They come to The Institute from a variety of paths. Some of them are referred by social services offices. Some hear about us off the grapevine or from a neighbor. Some come in because a sister or grandmother has been pestering them to come in. But, however they find us, when they come to The Institute, they are treated with respect. Even the youngest teen parent is called Mr., Mrs., or Ms. I don't wait to see how

others treat me; I first show respect to others and that tells them I expect respect for myself.

These fathers need of all kinds of help, and following up with them and their families is a big job. Being on our staff requires stamina and self-motivation; no one at The Institute knows what a 40-hour workweek looks like.

Most of the time, our staff is visiting protégés' homes; they spend long days on the road doing home visits. Sometimes they find an empty house or apartment; or maybe a child gets sick and the parent doesn't have a phone to call and cancel. Sometimes we get referred to another relative who may be keeping the children. On Tuesday and Thursday nights, we hold separate group sessions for fathers and mothers; once a month, we have a combined group session for both parents. Seeing couples working together, agreeing together, very often for the first time, is intensely gratifying.

NO HANDHOLDING

We think about living in poverty as living in deprivation, and it is. But what people may not see is that for all the comforts that it lacks, poverty offers young men one thing in abundance: absolute freedom. The young men I meet with can get up at 2 o'clock in the afternoon; they can stay out all night; and they can disappear for days. No one can tell them where to be, whom to see, what not to do. In their world, planning ahead is measured in minutes, subject to change at any moment.

IN ALL OF HISTORY WE HAVE NEVER SEEN A STABLE SOCIETY WITHOUT FATHERS. YET; JUST SUCH A SOCIETY SEEMS TO BE THE AIM OF OUR SOCIAL POLICY

What passes for responsibility is often a notion twisted beyond any recognizable meaning of the word. I talked to one 16-year old boy in our program (the boy was a gang member and a drug dealer when he came to us) about what crossed his mind when he heard his girlfriend had given birth to his daughter. First, he said he'd make a quick visit to the hospital, then he needed to get out on the corner and "*take care of business*" – sell more cocaine to make sure he had the money to buy his baby nice clothes – and enough left over to have his fun.

That's what we have to break through. We ask these young men, who have no idea where they'll be tonight, "*Where will you be in 5 years? 10 years? Tell me where you'll be, anything, anywhere at all. But wait a minute, you have a child, right? So make sure you tell me, whatever you're doing, how it will let you care for your child.*"

To help these young men turn their lives around, we concentrate on four things:

(1) Developing a sense of self-realization; leading them to reconcile the hurt and the pain in their hearts left by their fathers; decreasing their high risk behavior; creating a new paradigm; having new ideas; becoming the kind of father to their child that their father never was to them;

(2) Dealing with issues about their child and the mother of their child; creating a new sense of family that he never had;

(3) Addressing the issue of education and the positive impact completing his education will have on his own child and on the future generations of his family; and

(4) Stressing the importance of caring for his child by getting any kind of job as long as he is independent and able to care and provide for his child with the kind of presence his father never provided for him.

WE'RE READY TO CONDEMN INVISIBLE FATHERS FOR THEIR FLIGHT FROM RESPONSIBILITY, AND PURSUE THEM FOR CHILD SUPPORT. OTHERWISE, WE LOOK RIGHT THROUGH THEM

None of what we do at The Institute is handholding. Most of it is simply directing these men to do what they've already decided to do. If we talk with them, and listen carefully, we see that they know where they went wrong, and how they can get back on track.

LISTEN, DON'T TELL

We don't do anything to make it easy for these young men to get their lives together. We don't bundle them into a bus to take them down to the county courthouse to find the clerk in charge of birth certificates, or to the Board of Education to get copies of their school transcripts. We don't even hand them a slip of paper with the phone numbers they need. We talk to them, get them to think out loud about this thing they say they want to do, and how they can get it done.

There's a reason we do things this way. The young men we deal with are used to being acted on, being told how to live their lives. I share with my staff that we must be the ones who listen rather than tell, who ask rather than answer. If we believe that every individual has the potential to control his life, then we must treat each person with respect borne out of that belief.

If I hear a father in front of me mention school, or that his lack of education is holding him back, I jump in. If he tells me he doesn't know how to get back into school, I ask why doesn't he go back to his school, find a teacher he liked, talk to the principal or his counselor or

a coach. I ask him: "*What do you think they'll do if you tell them you want to finish school? They'll have a number to call, or the right form to fill out.*" While we make it a practice not to spoon-feed our protégés, we do intensive follow-up. I can guarantee the next time I set eyes on the young father who's thinking about going back to school, my first question will be: "*When is your first GED class? If you don't know, when will you find out?*" If he tells me it might take him a month, I will talk with him about where his school is, how long he thinks it would take to stop in and get his information – and, I will be sure to ask him at length and in detail about the other things he's made a priority over his desire to finish school, which have made it impossible for him to find time to visit his old school for a whole month.

But even while I am questioning that young man, I always follow my own rules. I never tell anyone what to do. And, I never do anything a person can do for himself. There's a practical reason for this: later on, when school gets difficult, or when sitting in an evening GED class is the last place one of our protégés wants to be, I don't want to be blamed. I want to be able to ask: "*Why? You told me school mattered. What's made school less important?*"

Is there a faster way? Of course there is. I could post a phone number on the wall for the county office where birth certificates are filed; I could schedule GED sessions after hours in our offices. I don't care about the fastest way. I don't care about the way I'd do it if I was them. I was them once. I stumbled; I ran into a few dead ends; I wandered for years; but eventually, I found my way. I got there. I want them to get there, too. On their own, with our support allowing them to fall, then to get back up and try again.

CAGED BIRDS SING

I used to meet with a group of young men who could not come down to our office in Hough; we met on the second floor of the Detention Center, me in my suit and tie, the young men in blue prison-issue smocks.

I NEVER TELL ANYONE WHAT TO DO, AND I NEVER DO ANYTHING A PERSON CAN DO FOR HIMSELF.

These were young men with hair-triggered tempers. Pass them on the street, and even the way you looked at them could give offense; the way you touched them may have cost you your life. But when I entered that room at the jail, we shook hands. When I sat next to them in our circle, in the midst of our conversation, I sometimes found myself placing my hand on the shoulder of the young man next to me. No one ever shrugged it off. We didn't sit down with a specific topic in mind, or some big issue to wrestle with. Mostly, we talked about what got them put in prison and how they could stay out. It was foremost on their minds; in prison, you don't have a lot of other things to think about. We talked about life on the outside, the code of the street, the rules of respect and revenge – these things were all that were real to these young men.

Once we started the discussion, these young men were anything but sullen. They talked, they disagreed. One youth, especially, seemed to welcome poking holes in the things the others said. He was letting me know that whatever I was about, he didn't take it seriously.

WE CAN'T GIVE YOU FOOD STAMPS OR A CARD FOR THE FREE CLINIC OR AN AFDC CHECK TWICE A MONTH, WE WORK AT ONE THING – GIVING CHILDREN GOOD FATHERS.

I asked the group why they thought we get so hung up on what someone says that we have to react. Across the room a boy responded.

"*If I want to stay out, I got to walk away.*"

What he said hung in the air. No one in the circle was eager to endorse this strategy. Where they came from, men didn't walk away.

"*What if they diss your mother? You just walk away then?*"

The boy across the circle answered, "*Does he know my mother? If he doesn't know my mother, then what he says doesn't hurt her.*"

"*Then your mother is going to hear a whole lot of trash.*"

"*What would your mother say?*" asked the boy across the circle, leaning forward. "*Would she say, 'yeah boy, step up – go take him out?'*"

"*No.*"

"*Your mother is going to tell you to walk away. Don't bring trouble.*"

"*Then everyone will be talking about your momma.*"

"*So you're going to take them all out? This one, that one?*"

He sprawled back in his seat.

"*Man, you're going to be busy!*"

I had my own question.

"*What if your mother was in Japan, and she couldn't even hear what the boy said about her?*"

Although the boy was sitting right next to me, he swiveled his chair on the linoleum floor so that he was facing me.

"*I still do what I had to do.*"

"*Why?*"

"*To respect my mother.*"

"*But she wouldn't know. She's in Japan. Did she hear what the boy said about her?*"

"*No.*"

"*Did she hear any rumor? Did some Japanese person come tell her on the street?*"

"*No.*"

"Are *you worried someone would call Japan and tell her?*"

"*No,*" he laughed and shook his head.

"*So, if you go after him and take him out, who are you doing it for?*"

Silence.

"*For her – or, for you?*"

Silence.

"*Is this about your mother? Or is it about you?*"

"*I'm not messing with you, man.*"

With the wave of his hands, he turned his plastic chair away from me and backed toward the circle, and slumped, defeated. "*You've got all the answers.*"

He was wrong. In our entire conversation, I never told him anything. What I did was ***ask him*** things, question after question. The answers he heard in his head were his own. As he sat in his cell, as we met every Wednesday morning, he heard these answers over and over. And, he'll continue to hear these same answers until one day, for the first time, he'll decide on a course of action different from the life that put him behind bars.

OFFERING HONESTY

Near the end of our session, around the circle, each young man asserted he will never again see the inside of a jail. To my left, a sleepy looking young man, totally silent through all our discussion, suddenly spoke up. "*I will try not to be back. No one can say they won't.*"

This young man, this boy of 17, had just said something important. He was offering me his honesty.

"*What if you decide not to come back?*" I asked. Again, in a quiet, even tone, but just as emphatic, "*I will try not to.*" He did not look at me as he spoke but into the eyes of the other boys who claimed to be so confident that this prison term would be their last.

"*Is there anyone who can help you stay out? What about your daughter?*"

The question caught him by surprise.

"*She's only two.*"

"*Okay, so let's say it's 10 years from now. She's 12. What will she say, 10 years from now, when she's in school and they go around the class and ask every child, 'Who is your father? What can you tell us about him?'*"

Suddenly, he saw his daughter, no longer a baby but 12 years old, standing up beside her seat, facing the teacher at the front of the room.

"*Responsible.*" One word, thrown out into the circle of boys in prison smocks.

"*Will she really say that? 'My dad's responsible.'*"

"*No.*"

Silence.

"*She'll just say that I take care of her. She'll say that I have a job, that I'm there to do things with her.*"

He and I both knew that there was one thing he could not bear to hear his daughter say, "*My father? He's in prison.*"

What was true for that man is true for every father – certainly for the many fathers I have met with who are in prison or out – the key to changing their lives is through their children.

Over the years, as I ask teen fathers to plan five and ten years ahead; I've learned not to worry about what they say they want. I had one young man, a school drop-out, with no job, two daughters and a string of girlfriends, who was quite certain he would own – not just work in – not just one, but a chain of hair salons. The whole thing seemed wildly improbable to me, and I had to work hard not to tell him so. But, he got his GED, he got a job in a salon, he gained custody of his daughter, and he is working his way, methodically, to managing the shop he's in, and one day to owning a shop of his own. When he got married, I was invited to his wedding.

BUILDING DADS

Building good fathers is what we've been about at The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization for 16 years now. In the past 3 years, The Institute has progressed from a local office in Cleveland to a national program with sites in 5 additional cities across the country including San Diego, California; Washington, D.C.; Nashville, Tennessee; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Yonkers, New York. Each one of these sites is managed by a married couple who believes that the very best environment for a child, for the child's mother and for the child's father is a loving, compassionate, hard-working and secure marriage.

Over the course of the next ten years, my goal is to bring this program to every city in America, as well as to other countries.

Does what we're doing work? It does according to a study conducted by Case Western Reserve University in June 1993 that (1) examined the impacts of services offered by The Institute on protégés served during 1984 through 1992, and (2) empirically tested the efficacy of The Institute's non-traditional outreach/counseling model:

- Before entering the program, only 14 percent of our young male parents had 12 years of education. By the time they left – about one year later – 38.5 percent had completed 12 years of education. And they stayed on course: 8 years after our program, 70 percent of our former protégés had completed 12 years of school.
- Prior to the program, 74.2 percent were unemployed. By the end of the program,

unemployment was down 10 percent. By our 8th year, however, 62.3 percent of our former protégés were working full-time and another 11.7 percent had part-time jobs.

- Before entering the program, only 7.8 percent of our protégés had acknowledged their children as their own. In a year, 84.4 percent had legitimized their children. And since then, 75 percent have had no additional children out of wedlock; 97 percent now provide financial support for two or more dependents – when nationwide, just one in five never-married men pay child support.
- Perhaps the biggest surprise of all for those of us who spend each day talking with protégés about going back to school or getting a GED – 11.5 percent of our past protégés have completed at least one year of college.

DON'T REMEMBER ME

I'm proud of our program and of all of our protégés who have made it work. It may sound strange, but I don't want to be remembered by the young men I help. I cannot help them if I'm so big that the focus is on me. I want them to see through me to their families. To see through me to the things that matter in life. To marry the mother of their children, if that's right. To be civil and respectful, and to do right by their children.

Always.

CHARLES AGUSTUS BALLARD *is founder and CEO of the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization in Washington, DC.*

Mr. Ballard was born in Underwood, Alabama in June 1936. At the age of 17, he became a young father and joined the U.S. Army as a paratrooper with the 101st Airborne, "Screaming Eagles" Division. After leaving the U.S. Army in December 1959, he returned to his boyhood hometown of Bessemer, Alabama; adopted his five-year-old son; and moved to Huntsville, Alabama.

In 1963, Mr. Ballard moved to Oakwood College, a Seventh Day Adventist institution designed to prepare Christian African Americans for service to their fellow man. He enrolled in the college as a full-time student in 1966 and graduated in 1970 with a B.A. in Sociology/Psychology. Later that year, he entered the masters program at the School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University on a full scholarship. In 1972, he completed the masters program and received his M.A. in Social Welfare Administration.

Mr. Ballard went to work at a local city hospital in Cleveland, Ohio in 1976. While there, he conducted research involving some 400 fathers, ages 14 –25. This study showed that in many ways, the father's presence had a profound effect on the mother and their children. Upon completion of the research, Mr. Ballard came to the realization that "in order to increase life opportunities for mothers and children, comprehensive, non-traditional services must be provided for them."

In 1978, Mr. Ballard incorporated the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization and moved the national headquarters to Washington, D.C. While there is national and international interest in and support of the program, Mr. Ballard's Vision is to replicate the successful 16-year model program that began in Cleveland, to other cities in the United States as well as other countries across the globe.

The Institute's primary mission is to build bridges between the generations and Mr. Ballard feels the best way to carry out this mission is to create environments that are father-friendly, child-friendly, and family-friendly; thus making the work of The Institute a valuable and valued resource in the community.

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization is a 501 (c) (3) Not-for-Profit Organization

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Black Males And Responsible Fatherhood In The Community

By Alvin Peabody

Charles A. Ballard, founder of a grassroots organization that focuses on interventions to support fathers, presents a clear and convincing picture on the many problems facing Black males and the issue of responsible fatherhood.

"To me, the father isn't the problem; he's the solution," contends Ballard, president of the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, which has served more than 3,000 fathers since its founding in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1982.

Look at the social pathologies that plague us today: drug abuse, homicide, gang violence and crime. Now survey the youth who fall prey to any or all of those calamities, and ask them where their father was when their lives took a turn for the worse.

Or, visit the nation's prisons and ask the men locked up what role their father played in their lives. You'll find too many who say, 'no role at all.' Look at the survivors, the success stories who come up through the poorest neighborhoods in America. Often, the single difference that sets them apart is the presence of a father in the home.

Edward E. Fisher is one of those survivors Ballard speaks of. Born in nearby Alexandria, Virginia, Fisher and his wife, Linda, are somewhat "successful" — he, a D.C. public school teacher and administrator and Linda, the executive director of the D.C. Community Prevention Partnership. For the past 20 years, the Fishers have been homeowners in the Deanwood community of northeast Washington, D.C.

Edward Fisher, sitting, is surrounded by family members, including sons Gary, kneeling, and Eddie, standing by his mother, Linda.

Photo By Maurice Fitzgerald

"Our children are very fortunate to have a household with two parents," said Linda. "But my husband must take the credit for being a role model to his children; he's consistently involved in every aspect of their lives, allowing them to grow up and make their own mistakes. Yet, he is still there and supportive of them in whatever they choose to do."

Take 14-year-old Gary is a member of the East of the River Steel Band who is about to graduate from Jefferson Junior High. Thereafter, he is expected to enter Dunbar High's engineering program. "My father simply laid out my options for me and allowed me to make my own decision," said Gary, one of two of the Fisher's natural children.

The other is Eddie, a graduate of Eastern Senior High School who is now enrolled at Hampton University. Now a sophomore, the 18-year-old is studying business management. "I can't put into words how I

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Fisher

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really feel about my father. But I can tell you that at a very young age, he taught us the values of respect and determination," he said. The Fishers also have an adopted daughter, Stephanie Wilmer, who is a graduate of Washington, D.C.'s Duke Ellington and Denison University in Granville, Ohio.

Ballard's argument on the issue of fatherhood continues: Even in a city's poorest neighborhoods, you can see a difference from one street to the next when the fathers are home. On the street where you see a father playing catch with his son, another mowing his lawn, and one fixing a window screen, you'll see a safer street.

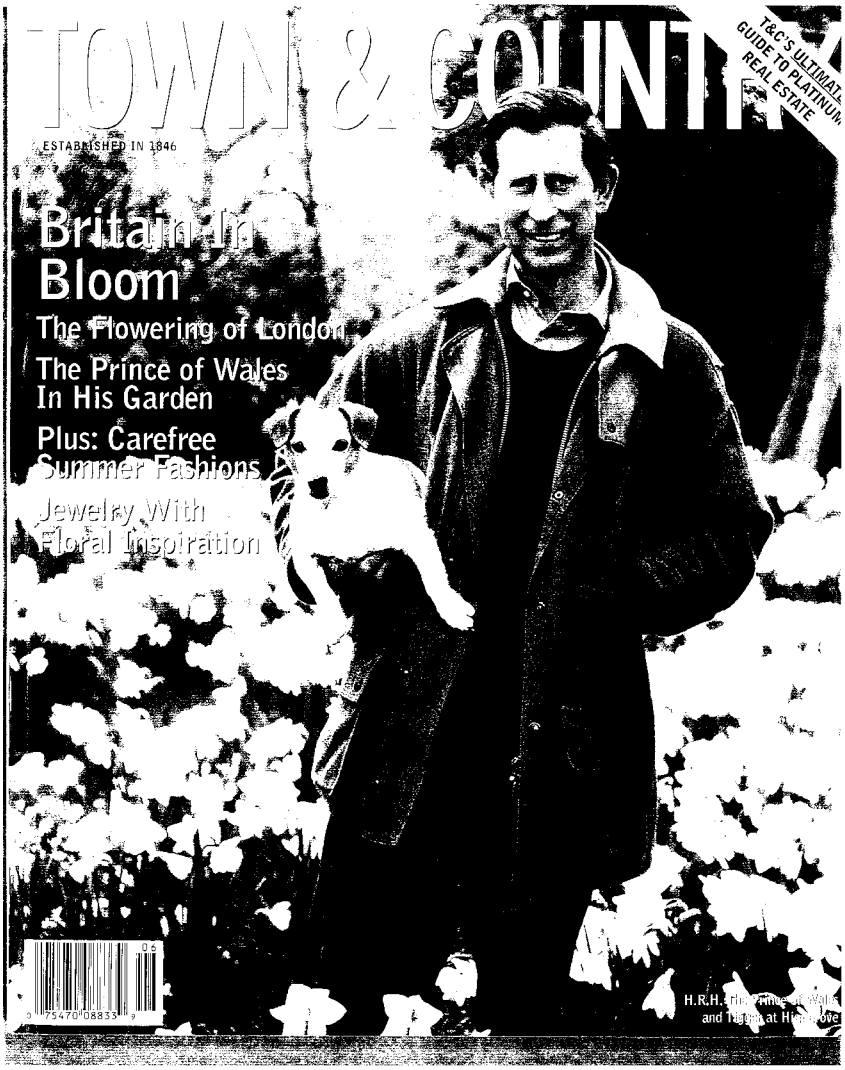
Edward Fisher lives in a neighborhood where there are scores of absent fathers. "My husband has been a role model for neighborhood kids when their fathers were not in their lives," said Linda Fisher.

"The best thing a father can do for his child is be there for or with that child," said Edward Fisher, a board member of the Washington, D.C. chapter of Concerned Black Men, Inc. "Yes, there will be times that a father cannot be with that child, but I think you have to always be there for them."

A 23-year DCPS veteran, Fisher also firmly believes that, "fatherhood is more than financial giving, which is still good. But I also think that fatherhood is about wisdom and having a loving spirit."

"Fatherlessness is a condition and a critical problem in our nation," said Ballard, adding that "it is also one that we must address every single day."

Charles Ballard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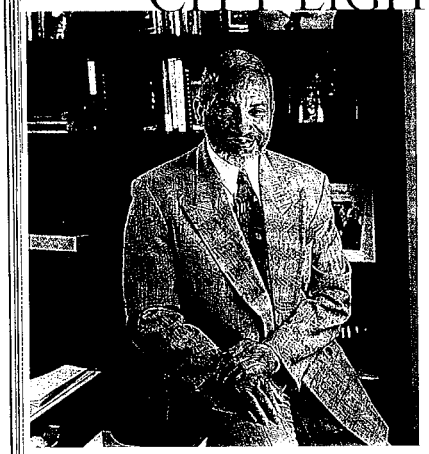
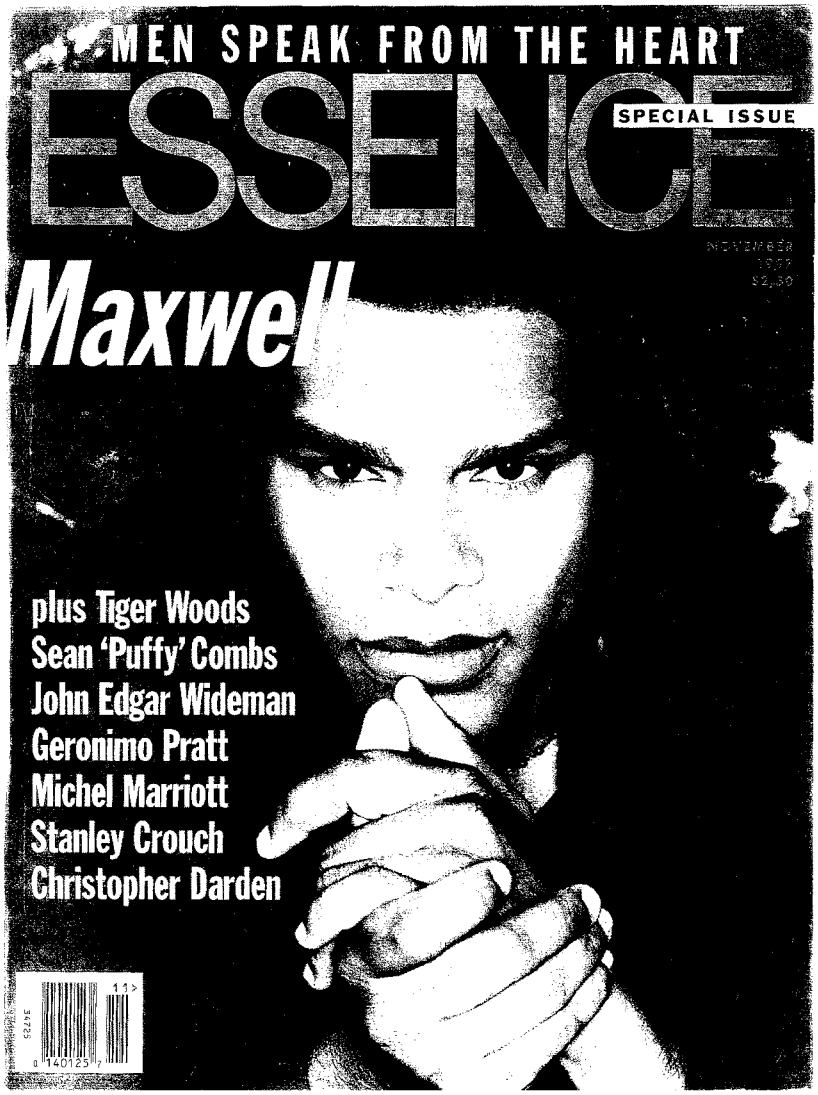
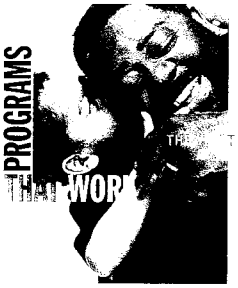
Jewelry With Floral Inspiration

CITY LIGHTS: Charles A. Ballard



Father's Day has special meaning for Charles A. Ballard, who runs a unique program for men who are ill-prepared to care for the children they've fathered. Since 1982, his Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Responsible Fatherhood has helped break the cycle of neglect for an estimated 5,000 families by tailoring its counseling and referral resources to the individual needs of its clients. Ballard explains his "SWAT team" approach to making dads out of deadbeats: "We don't wait for young fathers to come to us. We go into the communities where they live. We knock on doors, talk to neighbors. We ask them, What can you start doing *now* to ensure that your child grows up with a dream? We build a plan for each young man—try to get him out of a gang, off drugs, into a job. We keep in constant contact. After six months he usually has a job and is helping to support and care for his children. If you listen carefully to these young men, you see that they know where they went wrong and how they can get back on track." *1146 19th St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036; (800) 732-8437.* J.B.


MEN SPEAK FROM THE HEART
ESSENCE
SPECIAL ISSUE
Maxwell
plus Tiger Woods
Sean 'Puffy' Combs
John Edgar Wideman
Geronimo Pratt
Michel Marriott
Stanley Crouch
Christopher Darden



essentials

THE INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY REVITALIZATION

Charles A. Ballard's empathy for fathers estranged from their children is what led him 15 years ago to create Cleveland's Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, an organization that has since helped 4,000 men accept their responsibilities as fathers. Ballard, 61, grew up without a dad, and when he became a father himself at age 17, he fled his responsibilities by joining the army. Later he abused drugs and ended up in prison. With the help of an older inmate he accepted God, and after his release from prison, he reconciled with the mother of his child and became involved in his son's life.

While working at a Cleveland hospital, Ballard, who had obtained a master's degree in social-welfare administration, noticed a pattern: Most of the mothers and children who used the hospital's services came alone, without the children's father. He talked to some of the mothers, obtained the names of the estranged fathers and tracked them down to speak with them. "Many of them didn't have a loving father themselves," Ballard says, "so they didn't know how to be loving."

In 1978 Ballard created a service for fathers at a community health center, and four years later started the institute. Today the program is based in Washington, D.C., and has a $1.8 million annual budget and 50 employees at sites in six cities. The institute's field employees seek out fathers in communities with high rates of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and encourage each father to undergo intensive one-on-one sessions that deal with his attitudes and feelings about himself, others and the agencies that impact his life; group counseling is also available. Because the institute takes a holistic approach to uniting families, there are also outreach programs for mothers and other family members.

"The aim is to build self-esteem," Ballard says. "If a father loves himself, he is going to love his children."

For more information, contact the organization at 1-800-7-FATHER. —MARK RICHARD MOSS

Weather

Today: *Mostly sunny, breezy and cool. High 75, Low 56.*
Friday: *Sunny, warmer. High 80, Low 64.*
Details, Page **D2.**

The Washington Post

FINAL

Inside: The Weekly, Home
Today's Contents on Page 12

121st Year No. 279

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1998

25¢

Program Gets Grant to Put Fathers on Right Track

BY JOHN W. FOUNTAIN
Washington Post Staff Writer

One heart at a time. One mind at a time. One man at a time.

That is the aim of a national organization working to build strong African American families by leading fathers back down the road of responsibility.

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization announced yesterday that it has received a $4.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to train about 500 non-custodial fathers across the country over the next year and to help them find jobs or, in some cases, better jobs.

At a news conference at a Northeast Washington housing complex, Charles A. Ballard, the institute's CEO and founder, said the federal welfare-to-work grant gives a boost to the group's existing Employment Opportunities Program.

"The whole idea here is to reduce the welfare roll," Ballard said. "This is a put-men-to-work program. It's not just finding him a job, but finding him a new attitude."

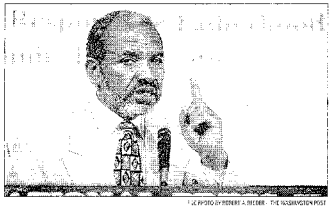
The new campaign will focus on men who live in targeted "high-risk" areas of the six cities where the institute has offices. In addition to the District, the cities are Cleveland, Milwaukee, San Diego, Nashville and Yonkers, N.Y.

Many of the men who will receive training are without steady employment experience and lack education or job skills. Some are ex-offenders and former drug addicts.

Ballard said the $4.5 million price tag is a fraction of the cost to incarcerate for a year the same number of men it intends to train.

The campaign's kickoff was announced at Paradise at Parkside Apartments on Hayes Street NE. Among those in attendance was Mayor Marion Barry, who commended the group for its effort to help at least 80 jobless or unemployed fathers in Ward 7 qualify for and find gainful employment.

See WELFARE, A7, Col. 1



FILE PHOTO BY ROBERT A. BRODER - THE WASHINGTON POST

Charles A. Ballard, in a 1997 photo, founded the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, which will use a grant to help 500 fathers.

Program Receives $4.5 Million for Job Training, Counseling

WELFARE, *From A6*

The end result, organizers insist, is not simply to help men find better jobs, but to help them begin to see themselves through the prism of possibility.

"There are jobs out there. The problem is with the heart," said Bruce M. Jenkins, 42, who manages the institute's office in Northeast, which has been targeted. "Employers say: 'People we can get. But people with the right mind is what we're looking for.'"

Organizers say their Employment Opportunities Program aims to succeed where similar job-training programs have fallen short. In some similar programs, Ballard said, men have completed training courses and received certificates only to find no jobs waiting.

The institute will provide the link to employment, working with the American Institute for Full Employment, a national organization that provides support for job placement.

Part of the initial task in training participants is to create a "comprehensive master plan" for each man in the program after he has undergone a needs assessment, officials said. The training will incorporate such topics as professional attire and etiquette, in addition to placement assistance and follow-up counseling once a person lands a job.

Although the program's welfare-to-work campaign wasn't announced officially until yesterday, officials said they began working under the new mandate in July and already have helped 10 men get jobs.

The institute, which is based in Washington, has gained national recognition for its success in encouraging men to be good fathers and in reuniting fathers with their children.

The program provides counseling, support groups and mentoring by successful fathers. Under the program's guidelines, men who participate must establish paternity, finish their high school educations and get jobs.

Its office in Northeast Washington opened in May 1995 and has worked with more than 100 men, 75 women and 150 children, officials said.

"My relationship with my son is better. I got in touch with myself," said Leroy Ware, 47, an ex-offender who sought the services of the institute two years ago.

"Some of the teachings made me more aware of the situation with myself," said Ware, adding that he now counsels female ex-offenders. "It's like a light bulb."

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Two Outstanding Fathers Honored For Commitment To Family

By Alvin Peabody

As millions of African Americans honor their fathers this Sunday (June 15), two prominent fathers were saluted early this week for their demonstration of commitment to their children in a "compassionate, loving and nurturing way."

At a Father's Day Luncheon sponsored by the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, Rodney Slater, the first African American to head the U.S. Department of Transportation, was honored along with Ben Johnson of the White House Public Liaison Office.

Rodney Slater gets support from daughter Bridgette, and wife Cassandra during recent swearing-in by Vice President Gore.

Photo By Dazine Kent

During the first Clinton term at the White House, Slater held a sub-Cabinet position as head of the Federal Highway Administration. "I share the belief that public service is about more than mere problem-solving. We must, through our vision and vigilance, also provide the necessary leadership to build a better future for today's generation and for those yet unborn," said Slater, a native of Arkansas. He and his wife, Cassandra, have one daughter, Bridgette.

Johnson and his wife, Jacqueline, have four sons. But in May of this year, the White House official met his 29-year-old daughter, Nancy, for the first time. An entire Johnson family gathering is expected in July.

"I think the real heroes are Nancy's adopted parents," Johnson said in an interview Tuesday. "They do deserve all of the credit for having raised a fine lady from birth."

As fathers are honored this weekend, Johnson made this observation: "We have to become fathers to our young children, especially in the African American community. Furthermore, we need to get of the real of just fathers; I think it's equally important for parents to get involved in the lives of their children as a unit; as a family and certainly as a people. We have to take on that responsibility if we're to survive."

"These are individuals who have turned their hearts to their children," said Charles Ballard, president of the Institute, which is a national grassroots organization that has served more than 3,000 fathers since its founding 15 years ago.

Ben Johnson

The Washington Times
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1998

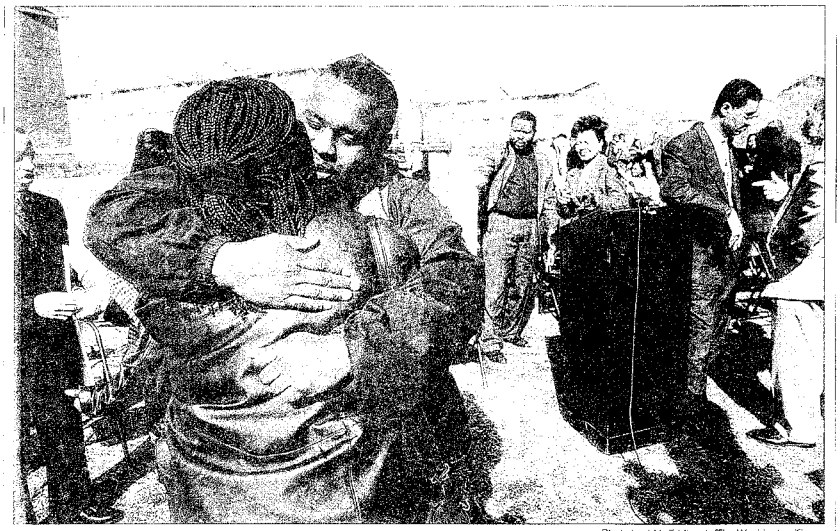

Photo by J.M. Eddins Jr./The Washington Times

Rodney Wright hugs a friend after describing how the institute got him off drugs and made him a better father.

Institute revives fallen fathers

Plans include $2 billion neighborhood program for men

By Cheryl Wetzstein
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Just four months ago, Stacey Wright was fed up with Rodney, her alcoholic, unemployed husband.

Then one day as the Nashville, Tenn., mother of two listened to a gospel station, she heard an advertisement for the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization.

She called the institute and to her amazement, within the hour counselors were at her door.

Over the next several weeks, the institute's counselors spent hours with the Wrights, praying with them and talking about parenthood, loving marriage and communication.

Most importantly, the counselors — a married couple — embodied the values and behavior they were talking about.

Yesterday, Mr. Wright, 26, stood before a microphone with his wife to say that he has given up smoking, drinking, drugs and swearing. He now has a job and will take his high school equivalency exam next month. And in addition to caring for his two children, he has custody of one of the two children he had fathered out of wedlock.

"Family does work," he said.

"I'm very proud of him," said Mrs. Wright yesterday as her husband turned to offer a hug to institute founder Charles A. Ballard and Rep. E. Clay Shaw Jr., Florida Republican.

Architects of the 1996 welfare reform law, including Mr. Shaw, maintain the changes have worked but that it is now time to move onto the next step — returning fathers to their families. The Florida lawmaker spoke to a gathering of institute leaders on a playground near the institute's offices in Northeast Washington.

The House Ways and Means subcommittee on human resources is drafting a bill to create a $2 billion "Fatherhood Counts" block-grant program, said Mr. Shaw, the panel's chairman.

The bulk of the money must be used to fund independent groups that work with low-income fathers in their neighborhoods, he said. Its purpose: to "help men to become better parents and help them find better jobs."

The source of the funding for the five-year program hasn't been determined, but the money will be found, the congressman said later.

"We should hang our heads" if the problems of the disintegration of the family are allowed to fall to the next generation, he said.

The block-grant bill is "precisely the right policy at precisely the right time," Wade Horn, founder of the 4-year-old National Fatherhood Initiative, told the gathering.

Since the 1960s, the number of children who live with both parents has dropped from 90 percent to 76 percent among white families and from 67 percent to 33 percent among black families.

"Father absence" has fueled numerous social problems, Mr. Horn and others contend.

Mr. Ballard's program was founded in Cleveland in 1982. A 1993 evaluation of the program found high levels of financial support, improved family relationships, positive attitudes, schooling and employment among the men who participated in it.

The core of the program is to "plant" loving married couples with professional skills into high-risk communities, said Mr. Ballard, who runs the program with his wife, Frances.

"The best way to talk about marriage is to show it," he said.

The Washington Times FINAL

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PAGE A21 FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1998 The Washington Times

CULTURE, *et cetera*

Fathers teach men how to be fathers in landmark effort

Mentors bring program to District

By Cheryl Wetzstein
The Washington Times

Charlene's temper rose like the mounting heat in the brick public housing building where she lives.

The single mother, who asked that her full name not be used, had got bus tokens she needed for her trip to the welfare office in a drawer.

But when she looked for them the next morning, the tokens were gone. She was "99.9 percent sure" that her live-in boyfriend, the father of one of her four children, had taken them as he left for work.

"He knows how much I need them. Now how am I going to get to the welfare office tonight?" she roughly asked Bruce Jenkins, an outreach worker with the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization who was sitting in her living room with her.

"Well, pretend I'm him," said Mr. Jenkins, a forty-something father of three. "I'm walking in the door. What are you going to say?"

Charlene stammered.

After a little role playing, Mr. Jenkins got Charlene to agree to speak her boyfriend calmly and ask him about the tokens "without cussing and fussing."

Mr. Jenkins also helped her realize that even if the tokens were gone, there were other ways to solve her travel dilemma.

"You have two numbers to call," Mr. Jenkins said, tapping his pager and pointing to his wife, Cosalia, who sat nearby.

"We can take you. You just call," he said. Charlene relaxed and a smile crept across her face.

Later that afternoon, Charlene found her missing tokens elsewhere in her home. When her boyfriend returned, she told him about her visit with the Jenkinses and her resolve to change.

Most important, the boyfriend "was so impressed, he called to make an appointment to talk too," said Mr. Jenkins, adding that reaching the father had been the goal all along.

The Jenkinses are among dozens of outreach workers with the institute, which was founded in Cleveland in 1993 by Charles A. Ballard.

Today, Mr. Ballard's group is one of the largest and best known in the burgeoning field of programs that encourage unwed fathers to establish paternity and support their children emotionally and financially.

Interest is so high in this issue that some Republican House leaders are working to pass a $3 billion program to fund neighborhood programs that reconnect men with their families.

Mr. Ballard's institute is now in six cities and has served around 5,000 men. Its goal is to serve 20,000 men and families by the year 2000.

Its hallmark is focusing on men's intrinsic importance as fathers.

When a child is asked what he wants in a father, he doesn't talk about money, says Mr. Ballard, a father of five who turns 62 today and has been married to his wife, Frances, since 1950.

"Instead, a child says, 'I want a dad who cares about me, who is tender, loving and kind, who shows up when I need him, who loves and respects my mom and who loves me,'" Mr. Ballard says.

The institute sprang from Mr. Ballard's desire to see men take care of their children — even behaviorally — as he did years ago when he went looking for the child he fathered and abandoned years earlier.

"When I decided to take care of my son besides all odds, with or without a job, focusing on healthcare, it was then that my heart was linked to my child's heart and life changed," Mr. Ballard says.

His program, which is supported by state and private funding, uses married couples instead of therapists to model marriage and parenting in high-risk neighborhoods.

"The best way to talk about marriage is to show it," Mr. Ballard says.

The institute's mentor couples must live where they serve and uphold high personal standards, e.g., no drinking or smoking or other improper behavior.

They address men as "Mr." and women as "Miss" or "Mrs." The men stand when a woman enters the room. The couples listen but allow the people their counsel, when they call "prompts," to decide what actions to take.

The mentor couples work with a protege and his family for 60 to 90 days, with the goal of seeing tangible improvement in family relationships and educational and employment goals.

To facilitate, mentor couples agree to be available 24 hours a day.

"If you didn't believe in this, we couldn't have done it," adds Mr. Jenkins, who has more than 10 years of mental health expertise.

The work is demanding and often discouraging — the couples hear about all kinds of wrongs, from flatlights to grandmothers who put liquor in baby bottles to keep infants quiet.

As a result, staff turnover can be high. In the District, an early mentor couple had to step down when their own relationship unraveled from the pressures of the work.

A second mentor couple also found the stress too much, as the husband relapsed into his addictions. The institute helped pull the family up again, but now the husband has decided to pursue school and another career, while the wife continues working at the institute.

About 80 percent of Mr. Ballard's staff are former proteges. Hiring graduates of the program is risky but important, he says.

His reasoning is simple: redemption. And Mr. Ballard points to his own example.

He was a high school dropout, with a stint in prison and dishonorable discharge from the Army and "a lot of people wrote me off," he says.

"By the grace of God, I was able to grow in my life and overcome tremendously," he says. Years later, as a result of the institute's work, "I've seen between 2,000 and 3,000 fathers turn their lives around. And many of them have come to work for us," he says.

Despite the program's growing pains, its efforts appear to be paying off. A 1995 study of 200 fathers in the Cleveland program found that 90 percent had rationalized paternity and 50 percent had found jobs. Incidents of domestic violence and child abuse had fallen 90 percent. The cost to help each family was $3,700, the institute said.

Outreach workers realize they are fighting the results of generations of fatherlessness.

"A lot of the gentlemen we see haven't had fathers in their lives," said Reginald McAlpine, one of the mentors at the Cleveland site.

To counter this, he asks men how they felt growing up without a father and what makes them think their children will feel anything different.

"When we provide thought in these areas," Mr. McAlpine said, many men will take action.

Outreach workers also reach men by diagramming their "family trees," which shows marriages with solid lines and broken relationships with lines that look like railroad tracks.

Many people see their family trees and say, "I don't want to do that with my life" or "I've got to stop the cycle," said Mr. Jenkins, who recently renewed marriage. Mike Johnson's complicated chart with him.

The institute has "re-educated me on the true meaning of fatherhood," Mr. Johnson said. "I think the men are ready to do this message."

Mike Johnson (right) goes over his family tree with Bruce Jenkins, a mentor with the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization

Photo by Roger Ballard for The Washington Times

THE INSTITUTE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY REVITALIZATION

GENERATIONS

A Publication Dedicated To The Staff and Their Families

1st Edition -Volume 1, No.2 - Final — *1999 January-March*

Charles A. Ballard
Founder & CEO

Ruth Collins-Martin
Editor

Frances H. Ballard
Publisher

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER...
Charles A. Ballard, Chief Executive Officer

It's been a while since I've had the opportunity to speak to you, so I'll begin by extending *greetings of peace and love*!

Again, let me highlight the urgency of our work. The United States is now the world's leader in fatherless families—and the consequences are tragic— in spite of how far our efforts to advance the cause of responsible fatherhood have come since we first opened the doors of the Institute in 1982. As we continue to do this most powerful work, doors continue to open for the Institute. I expect, within the next 90 days, to continue, at a fast pace, our **national expansion project**. This anticipated prospectus is due to: (1) the accomplished and dedicated work of the Institute's *Managing Partners* and *Outreach Specialists* — **'the soldiers in the trenches'** — who lay the foundation upon which the Institute's technology becomes reality in the hearts of men; (2) the continued availability of the 'foot soldiers' to assist the fathers, whom they take as 'protégés' and train in the ways of fatherhood—employing the use of the Institute's technology to 'jump start' the self examination (analytical) and the reasoning (cognitive) capacities of the protégés; the 'foot soldiers' lend their personal attention to the lives of the fathers, and to their families who participate in the Institute's 'fatherhood' program and the *Welfare to Work* process; and, finally, (3) the 'foot soldiers' special efforts to ensure that we meet the **Department of Labor's** quotas for *Welfare to Work* and beyond!!!!! Because of our **demonstrated success** in the implementation of the *Welfare to Work* program and the retention of workers placed in employment, the Institute has been designated 'the lead agency' for the implementation of the *Welfare to Work* Program by the **Department of Labor's**, *Office of the Inspector General*, and *Office of Employment and Training Administration*. (Our retention status exceeds 77.2 %, when DC government's Welfare to Work formula Request For Application (RFA) only requires 25%). For us to have continued success, our offices will need to be equipped with loving, compassionate couples who are committed, first and foremost, to revitalizing fathers and families across the nation. I encourage you to continue to identify these individuals, particularly married couples. You may forward to Mrs. Simon the information necessary to secure employment applications. I trust that all is well in your cities, communities and your homes.

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS...
Frances H. Ballard, President/COO

The first quarter of the year has come and gone!! Can you believe it? Here we are on the rise of the twenty-first century—year 1999, and facing the millennium 2000! There is much to be done as we plan and move forward with the work of the Institute.

Undertaking the new initiative of the *Welfare-to-Work* program in July 1998 has brought many new challenges. The development of new

manuals and methodologies; additional staff training; the recruiting, screening and hiring of new staff; a five protégé per outreach specialist strategy; and, an intensive service delivery modality.

With great anticipation and excitement I look forward to this year and our success as we work together as a team. The work and service the Institute provides is like that of no other social service agency. We are unique not only because of our home-based approach but also because of our technology—specifically our "drawing out" method; the process whereby we assist our protégés to be their own heroes and heroines.

Someone asked the question, "Has the Institute changed it's focus? Absolutely not! We are still the same organization, going after the same outcomes. The only difference is, that we have intensified our efforts to get more rapid outcomes as we assist our protégés in obtaining long term career orientated employment. It has been said that, "The harvest is truly plenteous, but the labourers are few." As we await more labourers, let us go forward with a zest and zeal that will ensure that every child will have a father who is loving and kind; who keeps his word; respects his child's mother and provides for his family. **A father who they can count on.** *A Responsible Father !!!!!* As always, we at the National Office stand ready to support your success. Let us go forward!

National NEWS & Programs

Don't Take It Personnel
By ***Aneisa Simon,***
Personnel Administrator

WELCOME!!!
TO OUR NEW STAFF

National Office

- **Mr. Darnell Thomas**
  Entrepreneur/Employment Development

Cleveland, OH

- **Mr. & Mrs. Earnest (Felicia) Dailey, Jr**
  Managing Partners
- **Mr. Antoine Wilson**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mr. Sherman Cook**
  Outreach Specialist
  (Formerly O.S. in Nashville, TN.)

Milwaukee, WI

- **Mr. Maurice Lawrence**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mr. Leon Pettis**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mr. Kenith Sandifer**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mrs. Scyretty Sandifer**
  Administrative Assistant

Nashville, TN.

- **Mr. Tyrone Armstrong**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mr. Michael Walker**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mr. Dynell Pugh**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mrs. Ifetayo Smothers-Pugh**
  Outreach Specialist

San Diego, CA

- **Mr. Walter Smith**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mr. Irvin Torian**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mrs. Betsy Roman**
  Outreach Specialist

Washington, D. C.

- **Mr. Thomas Fulford**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mr. Emanuel Muschette**
  Outreach Specialist

Yonkers, N. Y.

- **Mrs. Alisha Griffin-Baez,**
  Administrative Assistant
- **Ms. Pamela Cheatham**
  Outreach Specialist
- **Mr. Terry Williams**
  Outreach Specialist

Happy Birthday Staff Members
December 1998 through March 1999

National Office
- Alan Inman - April 29th

Cleveland, OH
- Antoine Wilson - Feb. 13th
- Joanne Palmer - Feb. 16th

Nashville , TN.
- Willie Mae Taylor - Feb 12th
- Martin Brodie - Feb. 20th
- Marcus Taylor - Mar. 10th

San Diego, CA
- Venus Anders - Jan 1st
- Anthony Anders - Jan. 5th

DC Office
- Marjorie E. Beach - Jan 22nd
- Marie Mann - April 6th

Yonkers, NY
- Enrico Cross - Feb. 21st
- Nadine Marcano - April 25th

Happy Anniversary

National Office
- Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Simon
  Mar 1st - Married 2 years

San Diego Office
- Anthony & Venus Anders
  Jan 3rd - Married 1 year

Renewal of Wedding Vows

Nashville Office
- Mr. & Mrs. Marcus Taylor - Feb. 28th
- Mr. & Mrs. Martin Brodie - April 3rd

The Strong Hold of Finance

By ***Dora Moore,***
Director of Finance

Savings are coming with the 403B Plan

☞ For those who have not joined the **Institute's 403B** pension plan, the opportunity is still open.
☞You may set aside dollars for retirement and reduce taxable wages. For instance, if you chose to have $50 withheld from your wages, the net effect after taxes may only be a reduction of $35.00 from your wages (since no taxes are deducted).
☞ Save now—for your future. Notify either me or *Mr. Calvin David* if you wish to join.

Health Insurance Premiums

☞The cost of Health Insurance premiums have increased across the board, and the employee 30% share of this increase must be passed along to the employees.
☞You will be notified, in writing, of the new amount which will be deducted from your check each pay period, for the employee's share.
☞ We are currently looking at several new health insurance plans and will make a decision soon regarding this effort. Affordable cost, access to care, and the quality of care will be the major considerations in the selection.

Time and Wages

☞ To all of you who send your *Employee Bi-Weekly Activity and Time Reports* in by 12 Noon the Monday of the payroll week, I want to thank you, and remind those who are not meeting this deadline, to please do so.

Reimbursement Requests

☞Please keep sending your *Mileage Reimbursement Requests* in by the 7th of each month, for the prior month. Make sure beginning and ending odometer readings are included in reports.

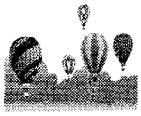
☞ Please do not send a facsimile copy of the mileage request. Send the original copy—signed by the employee, with approval and signatures by the Managing Partners.

Costs, Savings and Blessings

Please use our **1-800-7-FATHER** (1-800-732-8437) number to call the National Office. Many are not following this **cost saving measure**. Continue to pray for blessings and miracles for the financial foundation of the Institute and for its programs.

Welfare to Work Program

By ***Alan Inman***,
National Project Director



It Is not just hot air... WtW Second Quarter Continues To Fly High!

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, WtW Project continues to enjoy ongoing success with the progress in job placements and activities at the regional sites. The Managing Partners and Outreach Specialists in each location make up what becomes the unique character of each location. From Washington D.C. to San Diego, CA. the IRFFR shows up with dedication and commitment beyond the ordinary. It is that level of fidelity and reliability that allows IRFFR to continue to excel in service delivery for the Welfare-to-Work Program.

As the second quarter of the grant concludes, IRFFR continues to expand its strategic partnerships that serve as a model for the entire welfare-to-work field by forming coalitions with grassroots community-based service agencies and workforce development entities, state and county TANF agencies, Private Industry Councils, and professional job staffing firms.

IRFFR's *WtW* team has conducted, (1) a complete grant monitoring and needs training program for personnel at five of the six field offices, (2) completed design and managing partners training for its new performance Management Information System (MIS). In connection with this process, we have (3) produced guidelines as well as a state of the art, protégé data base, and, (4) developed a MIS Manual.

During the second quarter, the Institute's *WtW Program* was reviewed by the **U.S. Department Of Labor**, *Inspector General's Office of Performance Audits*. The review was considered a front-end assessment to ensure compliance with DOL grant requirements. The Inspector General's report, issued on December 3, 1998, confirmed that the Institute is one of the nation's leaders in demonstrating the efficacy and outcomes of responsible fatherhood.

The Inspector General's report registered the following statement: "In our opinion, management, delivery and reporting systems in the grantee's Washington, D. C., Nashville, TN, and Yonkers, NY offices provide reasonable assurance that grant funds and assets will be properly managed and protected and that program activities will be consistent with those outlined in the grant agreement. Based on our examination, the IRFFR has in place an adequate internal control structure governing grant assets, financial and programmatic systems, and the capacity to properly administer the WtW competitive grant in accordance with regulatory requirements. Our survey was performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards."

IRFFR is ahead of schedule and has achieved over 100% of job placements of the number of program participants that was projected in the original grant application implementation schedule for the period ending December 31, 1998. During the third quarter (ending March 31, 1999), 1,398 low-income individuals were screened, and 568 were enrolled (pre-certified WtW) in the Institute's program. From this number 220 were placed into employment— 142 fathers and 78 mothers.

During the third quarter, the IRFFR team completed the following key development phases of the program: (1) a second phase national training conference which included intensive Managing Partner Breakthrough Training and MIS protégé data base user orientation; (2) conducted monitoring visits at five of the *Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization* six regional offices to ensure grant program compliance; (3) initiated an entrepreneurial assessment program which will lead to the selection of a limited number of protégés who can be trained and self-disciplined to become independent business owners; (4) distributed brochures to potential employers and parenting agencies; and, (5) purchased computer hardware and software for field and headquarters offices to support protégé tracking and reporting procedures.

In general, my tenure with 'The Institute' has been a very eventful one. Basically, I would characterize the spirit of the organization as being that of a campaign mode. I've been involved with many campaigns. The campaign of the Institute, however, is quite different from political ones. The Institute's campaign is rooted in a mission. Simply put, that mission, which is to reconnect misplaced fathers with their children, is discovered in the heart of the founder, Charles Ballard. The way he sees it, "We have a long way to go and a short time to get there."

Funding and Resource Development

By: *Frances H. Ballard*

Full Speed Ahead!....

This year holds such promise for the Institute! We will be working very diligently to help turn that promise into profit. I am sure those of you who came to Washington in December for the Holiday Celebration that was hosted for us by *The Washington Times*, will agree that the Institute ended the year with a wonderfully strong show of support.

We have continued the momentum of that event and at present, are moving forward with the organization's 1999 fund-raising drive. One of the most creative fund-raising strategies is the Institute's First Annual Benefit Gospel Concert engaging some of the greatest 'Choirs and Gospel Artists of the Washington Metropolitan' area. **"Choirs in Praise for Scholarships",** the first in a series of event to be presented by the Institute, is tentatively scheduled to take place on Father's Day, Sunday, June 20th, 1999 at 6:30 p.m., in Ward 8. The same day, *Mr. Ballard* will be guest speaker for the 11:00 a.m. worship services at a church in Ward 7.

Mr. Tom McDevitt, consultant, is assisting the IRFFR with a direct mail donor drive. A direct mail package will be sent to approximately 100,000 individuals in each of the Institute's program cities. The package will contain a letter from the founder, a survey, brochure, and pledge card. We are anticipating a 2% to 3% return.

On the proposal front, we are focusing on three specific areas: (1) general support funding; (2) *WtW* matching/continuation funding; and, (3) funding to develop ***The Institute's National Training and Technical Assistance Center*** (NTTAC).

The Institute is looking to broaden its funding base as we bring corporations to the table as partners and supporters. This is a particularly good time to do this, since many of you are developing solid relationships with private employers as part of you WtW focus. So, if you have specific recommendations or a corporate contact in your area, please let us know!

The Institute is committed to following every avenue to secure the fiscal resources needed to do our work. We are looking forward to that day our Founder, Mr. Ballard, referenced; "when the Institute will have all the money it needs, and will not accept any more."

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From The Field....

Community Awards and Honors

OUTSTANDING PROTÉGÉS
JANUARY - MARCH
1999 QUARTER

Ms. Marquita Barnett's Success Story

Anita Neal, Outreach Specialist

Mr. Curtis Winston, supervisor, Warrens Industries, Inc., (working in agreement with Bridges to Work, transportation providers) was surprised to get a call from the Institute's Milwaukee Office, Outreach Specialist, *Anita Neal*. Ms. Neal called to get a weekly report on her protégé's progress and employment status. *Mr. Winston* thought it ironic that she called right at that time. He was about to call *Ms. Neal* to let her know he had just presented her protégé, ***Ms. Marquita Barnett***, with an *Employee of the Month Certificate*, and promoted her to a lead position in management over other employees in his department who have longer tenures. He told Outreach Specialist *Anita Neal*, that ***Ms. Barnett*** had a very positive attitude and was balanced in her decision making and leadership qualities—noting that other employees looked to her for guidance and instructions. He shared his pleasure of working with a young adult who is so willing to do what it takes to produce a quality product and provide premium service. He said, "Because of her attitude about herself and others, management decided to give her a raise and a certificate of outstanding performance." He thanked the OS for calling and said, "I wish all my employees were assigned an Outreach Specialist who would help them deal with their 'issues', and see themselves as their own heroes. I can truly say, from my observation of ***Ms. Barnett***, that she is her own hero!"

Mr. Henry Harper's Success Story

Jerrod Johnson,
Outreach Specialists

Mr. Henry Harper, (Cleveland site protégé) an employee at the **Wyndham Hotel,** was presented the *Employee of the Month Award* for January 1999! He was also **promoted** from his entry level position as a dishwasher, **to Banquet Reception Coordinator**. Congratulations, Mr. Harper!

LOCAL SITE NEWS from across the country

Cleveland, OH Regional Site

Earnest and Felicia Dailey, Managing Partners

Personal Notes From Cleveland

Pastor & Mrs. Palmer were off to London, England on March 4th to conduct a Youth Week of Prayer in that city. They returned to Cleveland on March 18, 1999. The word is that some of you requested souvenirs. We hope *Pastor and Mrs. Palmer* were able to ***'see what it would take'*** to make that happen!!!

Shelton Palmer continues to perform well in school. He passed in all areas on the proficiency test and entered the ninth grade a year early. Everyone is SO proud of you Shelton!

Kuirie Palmer just joined karate classes and is working to kick her way to the top.

Partnerships And Coalitions

The Cleveland office had developed a partnership with **Vocational Guidance Services** for employment and referrals; and, has established a relationship with **The Ohio Adult Parole Authority** for potential protégé referrals; and the **Child Support Enforcement Agency** for Paternity establishment.

Milwaukee, WI Regional Site

Karl & Glenda Ward, Managing Partners

Partnerships And Coalitions

The Milwaukee Office has joined with **Renew Counseling and Optimum Resources** which provides direct contact with **WtW** eligible men. They also provide a temporary job service for our protégés. The *Wards* are establishing a referral base with **Family Courts** through the **Child Support Agency**. In January 1999, several agencies asked the Institute to hold its protégé group meetings at their organizations. These session yielded many protégés, who have since joined the Institute's program.

A Milwaukee Success Story

Mr. Anthony Sampson, a 23 year old African American and the father of three children, came to the Institute on September 22, 1998. He drop out of school after the 10th grade; smoked a pack of cigarettes a week; used drugs four to five times a week; drink alcohol and was unemployed. Today, *Mr. Sampson* has his GED; and, he is employed with *The Milwaukee Americorp Program*, learning a trade. He earns $327 per week. He is spending time with his three (3) children and is well **on his way to living a risk-free life style**. His change made such an impact on the mother of his three children, that she was inclined to participate in the Institute's WtW eligibility assessment, and was also hired at *The Milwaukee Americorp Program*. She also earns $327.00 a week.

Nashville, TN Regional Site

Eric & Angelia Hall, Managing Partners

Personal Notes From Nashville

Eric Jerome Hall, Jr. was awarded the American History and Language Scholarship because of his academic grade point average! Congratulations Eric!

James Lee Hall's Buena Vista Bears Basketball team won its first game since the team has been established!! Way to go Buena Bears!!

Jeremiah sold over fifty dollars worth of sweets so that his school could purchase a computer. Keep up with the big guys, Jeremiah!

San Diego, CA Regional Site

Sammie & Sherwin Collins, Managing Partners

The Spirit Of Christmas Past

The San Diego Office held its 2nd Annual Fathers & Families Christmas Party on December 21, 1998. The event was a tremendous success. Annual awards were presented to: *Mr. Walter Smith*, Father of the Year; *Dr. Jimmie Hubbard*, Community Booster of the Year (Individual); *Jacobs Family Foundation-Jacob Center for Non-profit Innovation* (JCNI), Community Booster of the Year (Business or Organization). Gifts were given to over 200 IRFFR (protégé) families. Gift certificates, provided by stores and restaurants in the community, were given as door prizes; dinner and songs of the season added to the festivities and fun. The party was held at the *Jacob Center for Non-profit Innovation*, which is located in the community.

Washington, D. C. Regional Site

Bruce & Cesalie Jenkins, Managing Partners

Partnerships And Coalitions

Bruce and Cesalie Jenkins, Managing Partners, Washington, D. C. Office met with ***Mr. John Simmons***, Program Manager, *District of Columbia Housing Authority, Family Investment Center* (FIC) to acquaint him with the work of the Institute. After hearing about the Institute from ***Mr. Charles Jones***, *DC Housing Authority*, Section 8 Manager, *Mr. Simmons* was anxious to meet with *Mr. & Mrs. Jenkins* to "see" the Institute for himself. During the meeting *Mr. Simmons* shared his experiences of placing fathers in jobs 'without a change of heart'. His efforts had been futile, because their "stuff" showed up over and over again. He said, "*The Institute for*

Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization is the only organization that is working to 'change the heart of the fathers'. At the conclusion of the meeting, *Mr. Simmons* made a commitment to refer non-custodial fathers to the Hayes Street site, effective March 1999, (after a memorandum of agreement is adopted.) When questioned by *Mr. & Mrs. Jenkins* regarding how many fathers per month would be referred, *Mr. Simmons'* response was, **"Approximately 25-30 fathers."** Their silent reaction—Wow! What a start.

A Wonderful Family Reunion

Since moving his family from California back to the East Coast *Bruce Jenkins* has had but one desire—to see, reunite and re-establish a relationship with his father. Repeated attempts, failed! *The Jenkins* traveled to Ohio; twice, making phone calls to the home of *Mr. Jenkins'* father, leaving messages on the answering machine—all to no avail—the calls were not returned. Every year, his father, *Mr. Leon Jenkins*, spends the Christmas holidays with one of his two sisters; either in Brooklyn, New York or North Carolina. Brooklyn, NY was his choice for Christmas 1998. The 'Sister' decided to surprise her brother with a visit from his son and his family. When *Mr. Jenkins and his family* arrived at the home of his Aunt on New Year's Eve, there was much excitement. Cousins and other relatives stopped by to see the family they had heard such wonderful things about. For *Bruce Jenkins and his family* to see his father (and, the grandfather of his children) after 11 years, was a blessed occasion. *Mr. Leon Jenkins* said, *"Seeing my son and his family made my holiday complete."* A good time was had by all, as fond memories of the past were articulated and revisited through the sharing of family anecdotes and the delicious recipes that were prepared for the Christmas dinner.

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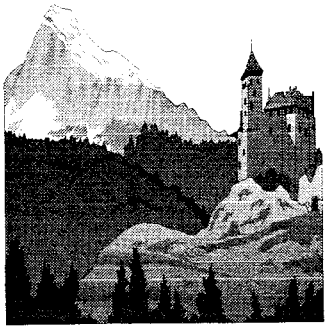
EDITOR'S NOTE: Having decided that GENERATiONS would published quarterly, The Institute did not publish separate editions for January, February and March 1999.

To include your local office and Institute related community news, all copy, announcements, etc. for the next quarterly edition must be submitted to the Editor by COB, June 30,1999. The next Edition of *GENERATiONS* will be issued July 1999.

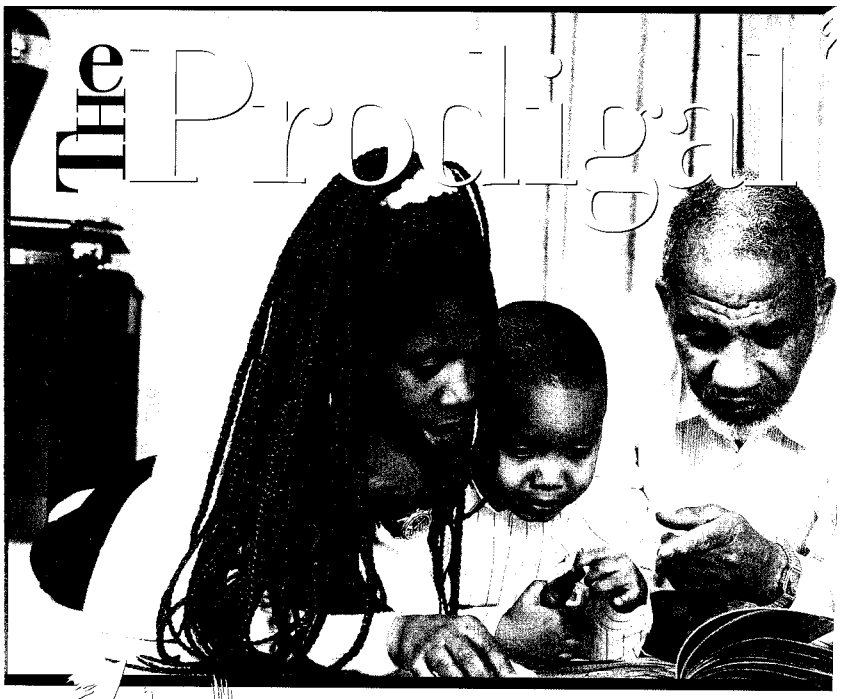
Thoughts



Good day, this is *God*! I will be handling all your problems today, and if you will allow, all of the year.
I will NOT need your help!
So, have a blessed day.

<<<◇>>>

CELEBRATING 100 ANNIVERSARY
THE ADOPTION OPTION
Opening homes for abandoned children
TO SPANK OR NOT TO SPANK
The difference between discipline and abuse
The
CHILDREN, the Real Teachers
Late lessons learned in reading children
Mending and building relationships between fathers and children
FOUNDATIONS
Our True Roots



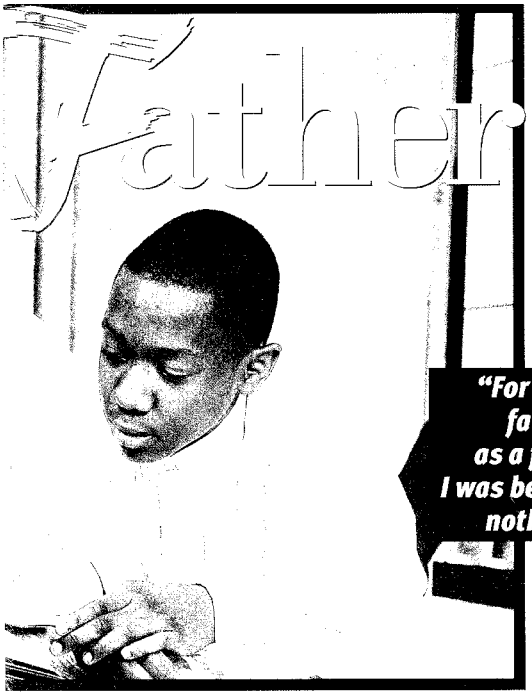
The Prodigal

WHEN CHARLES BALLARD WAS A child, his father, a coal miner, was taken away and committed to a mental institution. Ballard never saw him again, and no one ever explained what had happened.

KEMYSHA ROPER
PHOTOS BY

At the tender age of 3 he was fatherless. His mother did the best she could to take care of her six children in their small cinder block home in Dogwood, Alabama, but she could not be a father. She could not teach him how to be a man. In light of this, he became a troubled youth who describes himself during these early years as angry and disconnected.

"I often lashed out at people and didn't know why," says Ballard, whose life spiraled out of control as he turned to drugs and alcohol to fill the void and numb the pain. When his girlfriend became pregnant, he dealt with it by running away. But try as he might, he could not run far enough. He could not get away from that scared little boy in desperate need of a father who stared back at him from the mirror. Like the biblical story of Jonah, 22-year-old Ballard found himself deep in the belly of a whale. Ballard's whale, however, was prison. There he wrestled with his demons and spent countless nights tormented by nightmares. Yet it was there, in the midst of his turmoil, he finally found what he'd been searching for—peace.



"For all my faults as a father, I was better than nothing."

"I had no interest in Jesus," says Ballard. "From the pictures I saw of Him, He looked like a wimp." Nevertheless, an older inmate continually approached him about God and Christianity, trying to convince him that Jesus was the only one who could bring peace to his life. Ballard repeatedly rebuffed the man's overtures, unwilling to admit that the frail man pictured on the chapel wall could do anything for him.

Then one evening, after a particularly violent confrontation with a prison guard, Ballard lay on his bunk seething with rage. The older prisoner began softly reading Psalm 103: " 'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.' " The next day Ballard didn't remember much of what was read, because he had fallen fast asleep. When he awoke that morning, he realized that for the first time in a long time he had slept through the night without having nightmares.

Though unwilling to admit his curiosity, Ballard found himself sneaking peeks at the Bible, trying to uncover the secret to its power. There was something within those pages that kept him coming back. The more he read, the more he wanted to read. This Book that he had shunned for so long was drawing him, comforting him, changing him, until at last the power of God completely enveloped him with a peace that passes all understanding.

Ballard's perception of a "wimpy" Jesus was shattered. "He made me [more of a man] than I ever could be on my own!" A new man, Ballard's first order of business was to own up to his responsibilities as a father. After serving eight months, Ballard was released from prison and immediately sought to track down his son's mother. Eventually he began the arduous task of being a father to his 5-year-old son.

"There were times I had no idea what to do," explains Ballard. "[My] only refuge was the knowledge that for all my faults as a father, I was better than nothing."

Ballard discovered that caring for his son brought healing to his own pain. Though it was not easy hearing his son talk about his first five years without a dad, it helped him come to terms with the negative feelings he had toward his own father. Ballard determined that his past would not become a part of his son's future. He had to break the cycle of anger and resentment by teaching his son that "life is so much richer when the Holy Spirit is allowed in."

Ballard went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, and a master's degree in social welfare from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. No doubt inspired by his own history, Ballard began a study of issues and problems facing African-American fathers. From the results of extensive research conducted between 1976 and 1978 with 400 fathers, Ballard created a service model for fathers at a local Cleveland community health center. Out of this program grew the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, Ballard's brain child to bring prodigal fathers home to their children.

Continued on page 30

PRODIGAL FATHER *Continued from page 17*

Restoring Prodigals

The institute selects a community (usually focusing on 16,000 households at a time) with what it deems a high risk factor: a large number of female heads of households. Outreach specialists, usually married couples, live in these targeted communities. Most of these outreach specialists have dealt with many of the same issues faced by the families they serve, which makes them ideal role models for demonstrating the feasibility of having a "happy family."

Many fathers are referred to the institute by girlfriends, wives, family members, or friends who have either participated in the program or heard about it. Ballard says most of the young men they work with have come willingly—not by force. "The average [young father] wants to be a good dad," says Ballard, who adds that "[our] being sensitive to their needs [is crucial to their success]." Therefore, unlike traditional outpatient counseling methods in which the client meets with a counselor in an office setting, the institute's "office" is the homes of its clients. The staff is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Counselors have each father, or "protégé," describe their ideal father. Then they write down things they think they need to become "the best father in the world." A young man is never told what to do or say; he is merely asked to think about his situation and the steps necessary to remedy problems. He is then provided with support and encouragement, which builds his confidence in himself and his abilities.

"I tell my staff we must be the ones who listen rather than tell, who ask rather than answer," says Ballard.

The items written down are formulated into a work plan that starts protégés down the road to reconciliation. In their own living rooms fathers design life plans aimed at helping them care for their children and families. From there they move toward their goals of becoming legitimate fathers, of obtaining education and employment, and of maintaining healthy, risk-free lifestyles.

A Happy Ending

There have been many happy endings. For instance, after his son's mother referred him to the institute, Joe,* a 21-year-old Black man, completed high school and found better employment. Initially Joe didn't have any feelings for his son, because he felt he'd been tricked into fatherhood. Consequently Joe visited his 1-year-old son infrequently and made child-support payments inconsistently. Since becoming a protégé, Joe has established a better relationship with his son's mother and is building a loving, nurturing relationship with his son.

A 1993 study conducted at Case Western Reserve University found that 97 percent of participants spent more time with their children and were providing financial support. Ninety-six percent experienced improved relationships with their children's mother. Seventy percent completed their high school education, and almost 12 percent finished at least one year of college. Sixty percent of participants are employed full-time, and 11 percent are employed part-time.

The institute began in Cleveland, but has since expanded services to Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Nashville, Tennessee; San Diego, California; Washington, D.C.; and Yonkers, New York.

The sad story of an angry and confused little boy also has a happy ending. Today Ballard is a successful husband, father, grandfather, *and* great-grandfather. However, it was not because of his abilities alone that Ballard found success. Most of the credit belongs to God—his heavenly Father. ■

*Name changed.

KEMYSHA ROPER *is a freelance writer and promotion assistant at the local Fox affiliate television station in Huntsville, Alabama.*

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STATEMENT OF

ROBERT F. POWELSON
PRESIDENT
CHESTER COUNTY CHAMBER

AT THE

MAY 25,1999 HEARING

OF

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SUB-COMMITTEE

ON EMPOWERMENT

17 E. Gay Street, P.O. Box 3127, West Chester, PA 19381-3127 ■ Phone: (610) 436-7696 ■ Fax: (610) 436-7610

THANK YOU, CONGRESSMAN PITTS AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE INVITATION TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS THAT ARE TAKING PLACE WITHIN OUR COUNTY ON WELFARE-TO-WORK. THE PROGRAM THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU THIS MORNING IS ONE THAT INVOLVES THE COMMUNITY AT ALL LEVELS.

IN MY VIEW, I THINK THAT IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT WELFARE REFORM IS WORKING IN PENNSYLVANIA. FACT SINCE 1997, 72,000 WELFARE RECIPIENTS HAVE FOUND FULL OR PART TIME EMPLOYMENT. THIS REPRESENTS A 40 PERCENT DECLINE FROM 1993 LEVELS. HOWEVER, WE REALIZE THAT THERE IS STILL MUCH WORK TO BE DONE TRANSITIONING CLIENTS INTO MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT.

BACK IN 1997, I WAS ASKED TO TOUR OUR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OFFICE WITH TWO OF OUR STATE SENATORS TO DISCUSS STRATEGIES FOR INVOLVING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AS A PARTNER IN WELFARE REFORM. IN SPEAKING WITH CASEWORKERS AND MANY OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS, I REALIZED THAT WE NEEDED TO LEND A HELPING HAND TO PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO JOB READY CANDIDATES. WE ALSO NEEDED TO PROVIDE A SAFETY NET FOR THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO BEAT OUR STATE'S MARCH 3 WELFARE DEADLINE BY PROVIDING THEM SOME JOB RETENTION TOOLS. FROM A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PERSPECTIVE, I REALIZED THAT WE HAD A ROLE TO PLAY IN HELPING THE DPW OFFICE MOVE FORWARD WITH THE REFORMS OUTLINED BY ELECTED OFFICIALS IN HARRISBURG AND WASHINGTON.

AFTER OUR INITIAL MEETING IN THE SUMMER OF 1997, IT BECAME APPARENT TO US THAT THIS WAS A CRITICAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ISSUE. IF WE COULD PARTNER WITH THE DPW AND PROVIDE VOLUNTEER MENTORS TO HELP CLIENTS IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE AT WORK, WE COULD ALSO HELP CASE MANAGERS FIND WORK FOR JOB-READY CLIENTS. ACCORDINGLY, WE DESIGNED AND SET-UP A VOLUNTEER MENTOR NETWORK TO HELP THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY FOUND WORK, BUT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS HAVE NOT ADAPTED WELL TO THERE NEW EMPLOYMENT SITUATION.

DURING THE PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS, WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY

RECRUITED 30 VOLUNTEER MENTORS FOR THIS PROGRAM. OUR GOAL IN TO BRING 150 MENTORS INTO THE PROGRAM BY THE END OF THE YEAR 2000. FOR THE RECORD, I SERVE AS A MENTOR TO A SINGLE MOTHER WHO HAS 3 CHILDREN. HER PROBLEMS ARE OVERWHELMING TO THE AVERAGE PERSON. I AM HERE TO TELL YOU THAT WE ARE FRIENDS AND THAT WE RESPECT ONE ANOTHER. MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HER HAS INCLUDED SUCH THINGS AS REDESIGNING HER RESUME, TO HELPING HER KIDS GET INTO A YMCA SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM.

FOR SOMEONE WHO HAD LITTLE HOPE IN MAKING THE TRANSITION--MY MENTEE HAS MADE A COMMITMENT TO CHANGE HER LIFE. IN MY MIND, THE ROLE OF A MENTOR IS TO HELP AN INDIVIDUAL DO THE RIGHT THING.

I CAN HONESTLY TELL YOU THAT MENTORING HAS BEEN A CORNERSTONE IN MY UP-BRINGING. WHEN WE IMPLEMENTED THIS PROGRAM--WE REALIZED THAT OUR WORK HAD A TREMENDOUS IMPACT IN PROVIDING LEGITIMACY TO THE LOCAL DPW OFFICE. WHY DO I SAY THAT?

WELL, FOR ONE, THE CHAMBER REPRESENTS BUSINESS. SO, WHEN WE PITCH A COMMUNITY PROJECT WE ARE USUALLY ASKING FOR BUSINESS COMMUNITY BUY-IN. SECOND, WHEN WE PICK-UP THE PHONE AND CALL AN HR PROFESSIONAL ABOUT A JOB OPPORTUNITY IT ISN'T THE DPW CASEWORKER CALLING. THIS IS A POWERFUL TOOL. AND FINALLY, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CREATE AN AWARENESS THAT SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS HAVE LONG SOUGHT TO DO. IN CLOSING, I WOULD THINK THAT

WE STILL HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO. HOWEVER, I AM VERY PROUD TO REPORT THAT WE HAVE MOVED BEYOND THE RHETORIC AND IMPLEMENTED A PROGRAM THAT IS WORKING AND HELPING WITH JOB RETENTION LEVELS. MOVING FORWARD, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT OUR PROGRAM WILL BE ADOPTED IN OTHER COUNTIES ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA. WE BELIEVE THAT WELFARE REFORM WORKS WHEN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER. AS YOU CAN SEE, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A PROGRAM THAT INVOLVES THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS. MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS HEARING.

JAAM

Jobs And Advancement through Mentoring

Staff photo by Larry McDevitt

Sen. James Gerlach, left, listens to Rob Powelson, the Chester County Chamber president.

County mentor program helps transition from welfare to work

By GRETCHEN METZ
Staff Writer

EAST BRADFORD – Welfare-to-work-to-success is the operating goal of the new Chester County Job Mentoring Program announced Tuesday by Sen. James Gerlach.

The 44th District Republican from East Brandywine has secured $30,000 in state grants from the Department of Community and Economic Development.

It will work through a partnership with the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry – who will recruit and train mentors – and the Chester County Office of Public Assistance – who will identify clients.

"The goal is to take individuals at their first job, their first time in the world of work, and provide additional assistance," Gerlach said.

"The mentor will interact with the welfare recipient, help them deal with their problems."

Individuals must have a job to participate, Gerlach said.

The mentoring program was developed to pick up where the other state assistance programs stop. It will be a one-to-one relationship between mentor and client for one year.

The Chamber is in the process of recruiting mentors from its 1,100 members.

The goal is to have 25 mentors in place for orientation by

See WELFARE, Page C5

Welfare

(From Page C1)

the first week of August so the program can roll out by Labor Day, said Rob Powelson, Chamber president.

Powelson and Gerlach want to get the mentoring program up and running before March 1999, when the 1997 federal welfare reform law will move healthy adults off the welfare rolls and back to the workforce within two years becomes effective.

"February 1999 will be a very volatile month," Powelson said.

The Chamber goal is to recruit mentors who "walk the walk, talk the talk. People who understand what it is to work, someone who could help the client assimilate into the workplace, be on time, handle conflicts."

Mentors must be employed, be open-minded and be willing to participate in a training program.

Twenty-five mentors will be recruited for the first six months, 25 will be added during the next six months and at least 75 mentors will be needed for the program during the next three years.

For more information call the Chamber at 436-7696.

About 17,000 people are on public assistance in Chester County.

A key element of the program will be the formation of an emergency loan program.

The chamber is in the process of establishing a $10,000 loan pool whereby a client could access a loan for an approved emergency.

That fund has been established with Downingtown National, First National Bank of West Chester and First Fidelity of Downingtown.

It is rare that an individuals just off welfare would have built a saving account, Powelson said.

So something as simple as a blown tire or sudden child-care expense can be catastrophic and send someone new to the workforce astray. Most don't come from nuclear families. Rather many have family units who say "quit, give up" at the first hurdle, he added.

The mentor's job is to talk the client through the problem, Powelson said, and to sign off on the client's low-interest loan through the program.

"There's nothing like this in the state," Powelson said. "(Chester County) Mentors are volunteers. Philadelphia pays their mentors up to $400 a year."

The Chester County Chamber will administer the program.

The goal is to keep break the cycle of dependency on the welfare system.

"We don't want people quitting, and we don't want people fired," Gerlach said.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Robert Powelson, President
Chester County Chamber
(610) 436-7696

June 12, 1998

Chamber of Business & Industry Makes A Commitment to Welfare Reform: Job Mentoring Program Launched

West Chester, PA— A first of its kind partnership between private industry and government is now a reality in Chester County. The Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry has launched a job mentoring program with the County's Public Assistance Office. The focus of the job mentoring program (JAAM) is to work with TANF clients who are currently employed in the County and provide them advice and counsel on such issues like: life skill training, problem solving, employment coaching and basic social skills.

The JAAM program is a proactive, multi-tiered approach to welfare reform, which encourages success for both the business partners and the clients. State Senator Jim Gerlach states, "We have worked for over a year planning this program. It is our objective to help clients deal with any obstacles that would hinder job retention and educate local businesses about the benefits of hiring former welfare recipients."

The role of the Chamber will be to recruit and train mentors. The Chamber has enlisted the help of some its of 1,100 members to act as mentors for the program. To date, a number of small and large business representatives have volunteered to serve as mentors. A key element of the program will be the formation of an emergency loan program. This fund will be established in collaboration with local community banks. Currently, we are looking at establishing a $10,000 loan pool whereby a client could access a loan for an approved emergency.

Speaking on behalf of the program, Chamber President Rob Powelson said "The Chamber is extremely excited to begin work on this innovative public-private partnership. We are very committed to getting beyond the rhetoric and developing this program. More importantly, this is an opportunity for the Chamber to pull resources in the community together to help the lives of many. For that, we are committed to making a difference." For more information on this program or to volunteer to serve as a mentor, please contact the Chamber at 436-7696.

The mission of the Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry is promote and provide business leadership in achieving the full economic, political and social potential of the Chester County region.

Mentoring Program Enrollment Form

The Jobs And Advancement through Mentoring program is the business community's effort to provide positive role models and assistance to welfare recipients who find the transition into the job market difficult. You are invited to become a mentor in the Jobs And Advancement through Mentoring program. **There is no fee for participation.**

In order to be considered as a potential mentor, we ask you to answer the following questions.

____ Yes, I am interested in becoming a mentor.

____ Yes, I am currently employed or retired and have a minimum of five consecutive years of steady work history.

____ Yes, I am willing to participate in a training program for mentors.

____ Yes, I am willing to be interviewed by an oversight committee.

____ Yes, I have experience working with welfare recipients.

We would like to know more about you. Please complete and sign the form below and attach a statement about why you are volunteering. Please type or print clearly.

Name_____

Company/Business Name_____

Business Title_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____ County_____

Telephone_____ Fax_____

E-Mail Address_____

Signature_____

If interested in volunteering, please fill out this form and return it to the Chamber by mail or fax:

Chester County Chamber
17 E. Gay Street, P.O. Box 3127
West Chester, PA 19381
Fax: (610) 436-7610

We'd Like To Know

Welfare-to-Work Partnerships

Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey.

Are you aware of the tax credits and other benefits available to companies who hire public assistance recipients?

_____ Yes _____ No

Have you hired at least one person from public assistance witho displacing current employees?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please tell us your success story or any problems you fac

_____

_____

Would you consider hiring a public assistance recipient?

_____ Yes _____ No

Would you be interested in receiving information regarding the benefits of hiring a public assistance recipient?

_____ Yes _____ No

Completed By:

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____ FAX: _____

E-mail: _____

Please return this form by April 24 to:

Kelly Jester
Chester County Chamber
17 E. Gay St. • PO Box 3127 • West Chester, PA 19381
(610) 436-7696 • FAX: (610) 436-7610
e-mail: kelly@cccbi.org

Program Narrative

The Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry, and Senator Jim Gerlach in collaboration with the Chester County Assistance Office, West Chester University and the Chester County Office of Employment and Training seeks funding for the Chester County ***Jobs and Advancement through Mentoring Program(JAAM)***. This request is for program years January 1998 through December 2000. The need for a three year commitment to the program allows for start up activities, growth of activities, and an aggregate study to determine program effectiveness.

Through a recent study, employers indicated that the five most important traits of a successful employee are dependability, attitude, appearance, willingness to learn and motivation to work (Garder, Sass, 1995). The welfare population has a variety of barriers which may prevent an individual from successfully reflecting these traits to employers. Typical barriers include such things as long term welfare dependency, histories of substance abuse, emotional problems, dysfunctional personal relationships, lack of budgeting skills and lack of overall problem solving skills (Brong, 1996). Also, a large percentage of the welfare population has limited job experience and may come from generations of non-working households.

Through various welfare to work programs in Chester County, many clients successfully overcome these barriers, complete job searches and training programs, obtain the sought after job, only to quit or be fired during the six month probationary period. This is primarily due to attitude and attendance problems, often related to their home situations and transportation issues. Often, the first time a client hits a roadblock while in the new employment phase, they have no where to turn for advice and, because of the stressful situation, become ineffective in problem solving. The easiest solution is to quit the job. The *JAAM* program's intent is to provide a contact (mentor) who has solid work experience and can be a role model. The *JAAM* mentor's role during the six month relationship is to provide emotional support and assist the client in problem solving.

Secondary to the mentoring process, but an integral part of the program, is the need for a small emergency loan fund. The purpose of this fund is to provide a loan in the event of an emergency that would keep the client from going to work that day such as a flat tire or other car or day care problems. It is the responsibility of the mentor to assist the client in identifying possible solutions to the problems he/she face, however if there is a monetary barrier, the mentor would be able to utilize the emergency loan fund. The fund will be administered by a local bank and repayments by the client would be made directly to the bank.

JAAM Program Outline

I. Purpose

A. to support the client as he/she moves towards self sufficiency after obtaining employment;
B. to increase job retention and decrease the recidivism rate;
C. to provide a support network and resources in times of crisis;
D. to increase community involvement in the employment of prior welfare recipients;
E. to enable, through this supportive environment, opportunity for continued learning and personal growth which enhances an individual's job opportunities;
F. to educate the local business community on the benefits of hiring former welfare recipients.

II. Target Audience

A. Former TANF clients, and other clients referred by the County Assistance office who have recently obtained employment.
B. Twenty-five clients will be selected initially to participate in the first six months.
C. At least fifty clients will be served during the first year. In subsequent years, the goal is to have mentors available as clients obtain employment, therefore the number of clients served will vary relative to the numbers obtaining employment.
D. Referral to the mentoring program will be by the client's caseworker.
E. Participation although highly recommended, is voluntary.
E. A control group matching the demographics of each of the two initial groups of twenty-five will also be identified. These individuals will not be assigned a mentor, however their job progress and retention will be monitored and they will be asked to participate in a focus group and to respond to a written survey during the six month period. Their status will then be compared to the mentored group so as to ascertain the impact of the mentoring program.

III. Mentors

A. Qualifications:

1. Must be currently employed or retired and have had a minimum of five consecutive years of steady work history ;
2. Must be open minded, respectful, non-judgmental, and committed to working with this population;
3. Must complete an application, write a statement about why he or she is volunteering, and be interviewed and approved by the oversight committee (LMC).
4. Must be willing to participate in a training program for mentors.

B. Quantity:

1. Twenty-five mentors will be recruited the first six months.
2. During the next six months, a second group of twenty-five mentors will be added.
3. At least seventy-five mentors will be identified to meet the ongoing needs of the program during the three year period.

C. Recruitment and Training

1. Recruitment of mentors will be the responsibility of all the members of the LMC and the *JAAM* Program Coordinator through Chamber contacts, the Job Link Advisory Board and each members' personal business and community networks. The LMC retains the right to not accept a volunteer as a mentor if for any reason the members of the LMC feel that the individual would not be an appropriate role model for the client.

2. Prior to being assigned a client, a mentor must be interviewed and approved by the LMC members and participate in a short training program conducted by the *JAAM* Program Coordinator.

3. Training will cover:

- *JAAM*'s expectations and responsibilities for mentors;
- appropriate responses;
- conflict resolution;
- guidelines for handling non work related situations
- TANF and other related terminology as well as an overview of the welfare system and
- review available resources within Chester County and appropriate referral processes.

D. Responsibilities:

1. The mentor will be assigned to a client (of the same sex; please note that this was an item discussed
at length by the group and we believe that in some cases, having a male mentor for a female client
may create stress in the family setting) for the client's first six months on the job.

2. The mentor's main purpose is to help the client overcome any obstacle that would hinder the client's job retention. When issues arise that are not work related, the mentor should refer to the resource list provided during their training.

3. The mentor will be supplied with the client's name and phone number and will make the initial
contact. The mentor is to provide his or her personal work history and urge the client to do the same. This disclosure will help to form the relationship between the individuals. The goal is to try and find points of commonality to help foster experience sharing and provide support for the client if difficulties at work occur.

4. The mentor will contact the client a minimum of once a week, but no more than three times, unless needed. The parameters for calling are from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

V. Emergency Loan Fund

A. An emergency loan fund will be established at a local bank in the amount of $15,000. This fund would be maintained by the interest it generates.

B. Access to this fund is only through the *JAAM* program coordinator by means of a debit / credit card.

C. Access is upon recommendation by the mentor.

D. Clients will not be told about the existence of the fund; its use is a last resort.

E. Upon recommendation of the mentor and the decision by the JAAM Program Coordinator to access Emergency Funds for the client, the client will be asked to sign a commitment letter confirming their intent
to repay the fund and to meet with a volunteer financial planner to establish a viable personal budget.

(Plans for the development of this emergency fund and its management are being led by the president and CEO of a local community bank. The group consists of representatives from banking institutions located throughout the county and the project has their full support)

VI. Coordination

- A. Program coordination will be handled by the *JAAM* Program Coordinator. This position will be fully funded by the grant and be responsible for all aspects of the implementation, reporting and review of the mentoring program. The program coordinator will work out of the Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry and will report directly to the Chamber's president on a daily basis; however, recruitment, selection, review and accountability for program oversight will be under the direction of the Local Management Committee (LMC).

  The Program Coordinator is responsible for directing the implementation of the JAAM program. Specific duties include:
  - work with the LMC and Chamber representatives to identify and recruit potential mentors and business supporters
  - develop all aspects of the JAAM program as outlined and any necessary policies and procedures as identified by the LMC
  - assess problem areas and recommends alternatives to LMC
  - develop and schedule an interview process for mentors
  - develop a process to match mentors with clients
  - develop a computer file system / database for tracking mentors and clients
  - develop training program for mentors, including a resource guide
  - develop, plan, and implement monthly meetings for mentors and clients to come together to discuss the program and any issues.
  - oversight of emergency loan fund
  - maintain accurate accounts, budgets and files and prepare reports as requested
  - all other related duties as assigned by the LMC

VII. Evaluation

In conjunction with West Chester University's Psychology and/or Social Work faculty, an aggregate study will be conducted based on information gathered from both groups and compared to available national and regional data on job retention of prior welfare recipients. This will be used to evaluate the success and further continuation of the program.

Welfare-to-Work: Tax Credit Fact Sheet

When you participate in hiring welfare recipients, the following benefits are available:
* A substantial tax break * A substantial wage subsidy
* Support services available to minimize employee turnover

Employment Tax Credit
Employment Incentive Payment (EIP) Program

Qualification Criteria
Eligible employees are:
* Welfare recipients on the first day of work (on Pennsylvania cash assistance in the AFDC/TANF/GA categories)

Impact/Benefit for Employer
Up to $1800 PA Business Tax Credit per employee in year 1:
* 30% of first $6000 wages paid

Up to $1200 PA Business Tax Credit per employee in year 2:
* 20% of first $6000 paid

Up to $600 PA Business Tax Credit per Employee in year 3:
* 10% of first $6000 wages paid
* If the employer provides or pays for a child of an employee, the employer can receive an additional tax credit of $600 in the first year of employment, $500 in the second year, and $400 in the third year

How to Apply
File EIP Tax Credit Certification Determination Form

County Assistance Offices, Job Centers, Job Training Partnership Act Offices, Tax Credit Unit (717) 787-8851 * 1-800-345-2555

Welfare-to-Work Tax Credit

Qualification Criteria
Eligible employees are:
* Long-term family assistance recipients who begin work anytime after 12/31/97 & before 05/01/99
* Must be employed 180 days or 400 hours

Impact/Benefit for Employer
Up to $3500 PA Business Tax Credit per employee in 1st year of employment:
* 35% of first $10,000 wages or benefits paid

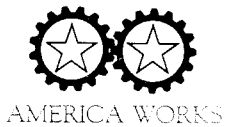
Up to $5000 PA Business Tax Credit per employee in second year of employment:
* 50% of first $10,000 wages or benefits paid

How to Apply
* File within first 21 days of hiring IRS form 8850 & 8861, www.ustreas.gov/
* Individual Characteristics Form, ETA9061, www.doleta.gov/

Other Tax Credits
Federal Empowerment Zone Wage Tax Credit for businesses located in the Empowerment Zone:
* Up to $3000 federal tax credit for hiring Empowerment Zone residents

State Job Creation Tax Credit
* $100 business tax credit for creating new jobs equaling at least 20% of existing workforce that utilize advanced technology

17 E. Gay Street, P.O. Box 3127, West Chester, PA 19381-3127 ■ Phone: (610) 436-7696 ■ Fax: (610) 436-7610



LESSONS LEARNED: WELFARE-TO-WORK

TESTIMONY TO THE SUBCOMMITTE ON EMPOWERMENT OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

MAY 25, 1999

My name is Peter Cove. I am the founder of America Works, a private for-profit welfare-to-work company with seven offices nation-wide. America Works currently serves welfare recipients in four States out of offices in New York City, the Bronx, Westchester County, and Albany, New York; Baltimore, Maryland; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Miami, Florida. We will open four more offices this year, in Oakland, California; Dallas, Texas; Atlanta, Georgia; and Washington, DC. In the future, we look forward to the opportunity to place welfare recipients in Chicago, Los Angeles, as well as in many other vital American cities. Since opening our doors in 1984, America Works has removed over 15,000 people from the welfare roles by placing them in full-time jobs. As we expand, soon America Works will place that many welfare recipients each year. I would like to thank the Committee on Small Business and the Subcommittee on Empowerment of the House of Representatives for inviting me here today to speak to you about successful strategies to facilitate the transition from welfare to gainful employment.

WHO WE ARE

General Approach & Range of Services Available

America Works places the hard-to-serve welfare population and has jobs for all skill levels. The average TANF (AFDC) recipient that we successfully place has been on welfare for 5 years and scores academically at the 8th grade level. Half do not have a GED/high school diploma. The New York State Department of Labor has determined that 88% of the people placed by America Works remain off the welfare rolls three years later. Our Supported Work model is largely responsible for this success rate.

Job Readiness

America Works pioneered the now nationally adopted work-first approach to welfare reduction. Clients first participate in up to four weeks of training, focusing on soft skills like communication, getting along, developing a positive attitude and overcoming fears. We prepare clients for interviews, let them brush up on clerical or non-clerical skills, match them with job openings and arrange interviews with potential employers. America Works' Job Readiness services prepare participants for jobs with the specific companies at which we place, with curricula geared to the specific soft and hard skills that our employers demand. America Works tailors its 4-week curriculum to the unique training procedures and needs of selected employers thereby giving our participants a competitive advantage when competing against outside applicants for positions.

America Works of New York, Inc., 575 8th Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10018 (212) 244-JOBS (5627) FAX (212) 244-5625

Job Placement

Employer relationships and intensive follow up support are two key elements of our Supported Work model. America Works' ability to use a seasoned private sector sales force to get participants quickly into jobs separates us from the competition. Companies want to work with us and want to hire our TANF clients. Sales Representatives compete amongst each other to place participants in well-suited jobs, with performance bonuses awarded to sales representatives who consistently make placements that work and last.

Nationwide, America Works places participants in a wide range of clerical and non-clerical positions, at an average nation-wide starting salary of $8.50/hour. Each office brings in over 50 new position openings per week and places over 20 participants per week. Having many jobs and a wide variety of jobs allows us to place people carefully according to their skills and their interests, a strategy that translates into higher long-term retention rates.

Supported Work

Clients are placed at companies for up to a four-month training period, called Supported Work. Supported Work is a countable work activity under TANF regulations, like OJT or Work Experience. Supported Work allows us to provide 4 months of training at no additional cost. During Supported Work, companies pay participants an hourly wage, thereby matching funds provided through government contracts. During Supported Work, America Works is the employer, which allows us to play a hands-on role during the crucial initial training period. This extra support up front improves our retention rates in the long run, by getting the welfare recipient off to a strong start. Supported Works typically lasts for four months, after which unsubsidized employment is secured at the same site. Not every participant engages in Supported Work; some go directly on to the company payroll in unsubsidized positions, if the company requests it.

Unsubsidized Placement

After completing the Supported Work trial period, the candidates are hired permanently onto companies' payrolls. Companies sign contracts with America Works stating that each participant with a satisfactory performance record will be hired into an unsubsidized position at the end of the Supported Work period, at the companies' discretion.

Case Management

A personalized Case Manager mentors candidates on personal and professional issues, by visiting them and their supervisors on the job and meeting with them during non-working hours. This allows America Works to continuously assess the job match to ensure it is ideal, and provide clients with additional support services as required. The Case Manager acts as an advocate, partner, mentor and supervisor, helping candidates confront the challenges to entering the workforce, whether professional or personal. The Case Manager works with a small caseload of 20 participants, allowing them to provide clients with intensive and cohesive one-on-one counseling. Case Managers also help coordinate social services with work obligations, making sure that clients receive the counseling and services necessary to ensure long-term workplace success. Case Managers continue to counsel and assist clients for an additional 6 months once unsubsidized employment is obtained, and indefinitely as needed.

Job Retention Services

The America Works Case Manager meets at least once per week with each participant. The Case Manager makes work site visits and conducts evaluations with the on-site supervisor, coaching the participant on workplace skills and behaviors. In addition, the Case Manager coordinates the provision of social services through CBOs during non-working hours, monitoring attendance and personal improvements. The key to the success of our case-management retention services is that the same coach monitors success both on the job and off, providing a level of continuity while teaching TANF recipients how to manage the demands of the workplace with the competing demands of their home and personal lives.

This method is the reason why America Works ensures at least 6 months of retention at unsubsidized jobs – support is consistent and integrated. The wisdom of this strategy is proven by retention statistics yet to be paralleled by any of our competitors.

Supportive Services

America Works recognizes that the barriers to employment among TANF recipients are often daunting and debilitating. For this reason, America Works collaborates with a range of social service providers who tend to the wide variety of client needs. In addition, America Works ensures that those supportive services are coordinated with the work schedule of participants.

Advancement Services

America Works likes to make sure that participants realize growth opportunities by urging them to continually develop improved work and personal skills. The majority of the positions in which we place participants offer room for growth and advancement.
In addition, America Works' Case Managers encourage participants to take advantage of training and educational opportunities available in their communities to improve their market value for future advancements and salary increases. Historically, those programs have included GED, ESL, college credits, and vocational training. We enroll participants in an array of educational and training programs, based on community availability. Again, such services are coordinated with work schedules, with the Case Manager acting as the liaison between the school and the client, monitoring attendance and achievement.

WHAT WE LEARNED

The following is a summary of what we have learned at America Works and suggestions for new workforce policy initiatives.

*** PEOPLE GET JOBS NOT SO MUCH FOR WHAT THEY KNOW, BUT FOR WHO THEY KNOW.**

Welfare recipients need help finding good jobs. The network of contacts available to others is almost non-existent for the poor. America Works uses a seasoned sales force that strives to assist people by *connecting* them to employment for one simple reason: people get jobs through networks. America Works becomes that network, connecting people to jobs they would not know about or would not have a chance to get, were they to apply for them on their own. Good technical skills, personal presentation and a well-organized resume will only help after a network contact has opened the door. As the adage goes, "It's not what you know, but whom you

know" that gets you a job. America Works implements this simple truth by providing job seeking assistance that helps participants identify the necessary contacts to get themselves in the door.

This lesson, simple as it is, has broad ramifications for policies designed to attach disenfranchised people to the labor market. Programs that stress attachment to the labor market are more effective than those that stress technical skills or educational upgrading. Not that education and training are unnecessary, but that they are more helpful when preceded by work. Training seldom has an effect as a first strike in moving people from dependency to independence.

*** PEOPLE LOSE THEIR JOBS NOT SO MUCH FOR A LACK OF SKILLS, BUT FOR THEIR INABILITY TO SOCIALLY INTEGRATE WITHIN THE WORK PLACE.**

This can be due to cultural differences or outside problems (i.e. an abusive mate, an intrusive welfare bureaucracy). This lesson, again, has profound implications for program policy. Most employment efforts focus on up-front human capital investment. Little is offered once the person gets a job. This would be reversed with intensive on site job support, rapid intervention off the job for problems that might force the person to quit, and minimum initial investment in programs designed to improve the individual. As with the above, get them working and stable, then work on the skills.

*** INTERVENTION OF A COMPETITIVE MARKETPLACE FORCES GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE.**

There is a profound impact on Government by the intervention of free market outcome-driven forces. Bureaucracies are forced to concentrate on measuring outcomes as successful results instead of as service processes. This has occurred already in some of the places America Works is operating. In New York State, since contracting with America Works, the Department of Social Services insists that all its contracts be performance-based. Similarly, in Indianapolis, the child welfare system is going to start using totally performance-based contracting.

The positive impact of this is to ensure that Government is competitive and is a player in the successes and failures of its contractors. Government becomes accountable. In Albany, America Works insists that the county welfare commissioner give referrals to our office and sanction recipients who do not cooperate. If that does not happen we would have trouble meeting our contractual goals for job placement. Linking America Works' success to the local commissioner and holding him accountable assured success for both organizations.

This lesson of learning to create performance driven marketplaces goes beyond making Government accountable. It breaks up the monopoly of process and forces competition between outcome and process-based programs. For America Works it helps welfare departments recognize the foremost goal of getting people off of welfare. It redefines success for an agency.

Empowering Government to compete or join with the private sector in providing services has significant ramifications. In addition to becoming more efficient, as David Osborne documents, it can act as a catalyst for attracting more people to public service. The idea that an entrepreneurial public-minded person could enter Government and not be bound to some of the archaic practices of the past certainly would be appealing to many of those who currently turn away from public service.

*** WELFARE TO WORK PROGRAMS FAIL, IN THE MAIN, BECAUSE THERE IS NO INCENTIVE FOR THEM TO SUCCEED.**

Government-operated programs seldom create incentives to reduce the rolls through job acquisition. Processing paper and protecting the jobs of the bureaucrats prevents a strong work policy from emerging. When contracts are let to private non-profit and profit organizations there are little, if any performance standards strictly based on job finding and retention. Simply, vendors can get most if not all of their money for running a program regardless of how many people get jobs and stick with them.

Of the lessons learned by us at America Works, this is the most important one as we rethink employment policy. The implications for policy would demand no less than a paradigm shift in our thinking and support for interventions that might really work to get people to work.

HOW TO ESTABLISH SUCCESSFUL WORK POLICIES

1. STIMULATE A COMPETITIVE MARKETPLACE.

This country has been built on private initiatives stimulated and tempered by the public will. When it comes to welfare, it is the public's will organized and operated by government that powers our efforts. However, it is the private marketplace that we expect to absorb people and provide work. Yet business is hardly in the play to increase hiring and reduce the rolls. Inexplicably, the private sector plays a neglected role in welfare to work programs but is expected to do the hiring and to provide all the jobs. The fact is that except for a few specific tax breaks like the WOTC, or involvement of low level business people on Workforce Development Boards, the private sector is absent from the debate and the play of welfare policy and, most important, its implementation.

HOW WE COULD CHANGE THIS PARADIGM

First, we can develop a competitive marketplace to place disenfranchised workers. This is what government does with America Works, but we are tiny and have limited power to effect government policy. Consequently there has been little done by government to build on this competitive model.

The largest employer in this country is Manpower Inc. Its sole purpose is to act as the middleman for companies who need labor and workers capable of being employed. This market developed because of a need by private companies that could not be met internally, and they were willing to pay for it. Central here is the broker function. They get the jobs for people because of who they know. Even for the skilled workers they place, job finding would be difficult. Manpower Inc. facilitates the job finding and match.

Why not establish a similar network for disenfranchised workers? However, in this case, some of the reward or incentive would come from the public sector. Let the government create and administer the incentives offered to vendors only if they succeed in getting people jobs, not for their program's efforts. The government would determine how much it was worth to get an unemployed person working so it receives a reasonable return on its investment. Private

entrepreneurs, assessing that the reward is worthy of their initial up front investment, would start ventures. Using this competitiveness model the welfare bureaucracy could be a player as well.

The advantages to this approach are numerous:

*Private capital would flow into an otherwise publicly supported effort.
*Many models would be experimented with. Government would not dictate one-size-fits-all policies.
*Those that place people will continue to do business; those that don't will fold.
*Competition would force efficiencies not encouraged in present day welfare programs.

1. FINANCE THE NEW MARKETPLACE PRINCIPALLY THROUGH REINVESTMENT OF WELFARE SAVINGS.

Fund only those programs that get paid for each person placed and retained in a job. Calculate the savings to the government. Reinvest all or a portion of the savings into new job placement activities. (There is precedent in other program areas to do this at the State level.) Since the payment by government is made only when the savings have begun to accrue, the investment and return by government is guaranteed. Entitlement transfer payments are, in effect, used to finance a reduction on dependency.

2. CREATE A PACKAGE OF TAX AND OTHER MONETARY INCENTIVES TARGETED TO THIS NEW MARKETPLACE.

Presently those that exist are directed toward the companies that will finally hire the workers. The fact is, though, most private companies know that with the tax breaks like the Workers Opportunity Tax Credit, or a wage subsidy, like those for OJT, come a series of problems. These include hard-to-integrate workers, difficult-to-train employees, and government intrusion. It is why most of these efforts have failed. Placing the incentives squarely into this new sector would encourage the development of programs geared to deal with hard to place workers rather than expecting the permanent employer to take the risk first.

These recommendations require government action. The paradigm shift requires a radical restructuring of the way poor people are given access to the work place. Demonstrations documenting the results of a competitive marketplace for job placement are needed.

Eric Yergan
Owner
Allstate - The Yergan Agency
226 East 89th Street
New York, NY 10128

May 25th, 1999

Subcommittee on Empowerment of the House Committee on Small Business

My name is Eric Yergan, an Exclusive Agent with Allstate Insurance, and the Owner of the Yergan Agency, which is an insurance agency on the upper east side of New York.

Firstly I would like to give you a short success story, which this is one, of many:

Thru America Works I was able to hire, Anna Rodriquez, last July 29th, 1998. She is now a single mother of three, who had been on welfare 5 years plus.

Immediately impressed with her work ethic, and her desire to learn. After several months, we sent her to school, 4 weeks full time, (no cost to her), where she studied to get her insurance license.

Anna passed on 1st attempt (and I noticed improved self esteem). Since then she has progressed and bloomed into a full fledge salesperson, her income has increased, because she also now receives commissions.

Thru education we provided her, she now has opportunity to improve her life and a future. She is important part of my agency, and has pride in her work and a future. She will move up in responsibility and in earnings, and could end up with a ownership stake in my business.

Secondly, I would like to tell you why the current strategy of America Works, and other such vendors in the welfare to work programs works for me and other such employers:

Saves us time, provides us a product, in a efficient and cost effective manner.

What do I mean? Potential employees are pre screened, only ones that meet hiring objectives are supplied for interviews. Additionally a working relationship develops between employers and such vendors where they include training that an specific employer needs. They also serve as a middleman, so to speak, in the beginning period of transition, thru their counselors, between the employer and the new employee, ...enabling feedback and improvements in the new employee - employer relationship in a non combated way, thus not poisoning future working relations with that employee.

Additionally, it appears that programs such as this instills pride into the participants, pride of improving their own fate, pride of moving off welfare. This pride that gets established, and re-enforced by positive experiences of both the vendors of such programs, and positive work experiences, is priceless to those participants....its this pride that will keep them off welfare forever...its this pride that will make them grow as productive members of the work world. It is for pride that programs like this should continue.