



# Beck Institute on Religion and Poverty

Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service

## Summer 2016 | Newsletter

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### The Beck Team 2016

**Dr. Anita L. Lightburn**  
Director

**Dr. Amanda Sisselman-Borgia**  
Director of Program Evaluation

**Angela Belsole, MA**  
Grants & Special Projects Officer

**Sue Groman, LMSW**  
Program Manager

**Vincenza Corcoran, LCSW**  
Student Coordinator & Consultant

#### Consultants:

Sarah Franek, LMSW  
Donald Garner, ABD  
Linda Ryan, LMSW

#### Doctoral Students:

Linda Woodbine, PhD  
Donald Garner, ABD  
Patricia Dawson, ABD  
Devonne Allen, LCSW, MEd  
Patrice Barnes, LMSW  
Jamie Jones, LCSW  
Erica Ponteen, LMSW  
Lashawn Smith, LMSW

### The Beck Institute

Fordham University  
Graduate School of Social Service  
400 Westchester Avenue  
West Harrison, NY 10604  
Phone: (914) 367.3436  
[lightburn@fordham.edu](mailto:lightburn@fordham.edu)  
[www.fordham.edu/beckinstitute](http://www.fordham.edu/beckinstitute)

### Who is our neighbor? By Anita Lightburn



This newsletter is about our work in the face of myriad concerns and challenges about **how to best become neighbors.**

**We report** on meaningful change for returning citizens, survivors of domestic violence, homeless persons and veterans, all who have found a **place to belong.**

**We celebrate** congregation leadership and volunteers - who report building bridges between different worlds, opening doors and hearts. MSW interns, Fordham graduates and doctoral candidates give voice to new perspectives and commitments, deepening compassion and action.

**We recognize our generous financial partners.** This year we give special thanks to Kathy and Brian MacLean & Trinity Wall Street, with continued gratitude to our anonymous donor, as together we fulfill our responsibility as members of a Jesuit University.

**Work with the faith community over the past six years** has taught us how difficult and challenging it is to overcome fear of the other. We recognize how we insulate ourselves, living separate lives. Cowed by our sense of what it means to carry the responsibility and burden of relationships with those living on the margin, we seek distance from the knowledge of their difficult life journey. Rarely is there a personal face to social injustice for those entangled in the justice system. And yet, we have learned that the challenge of connection, though formidable, is definitely possible.

In our **Restorative Communities Collaborative (RCC)** we embrace these neighbors. Relationships with "the other" is personally transforming for us, as well as those with whom we serve. Many now are known to us, their life stories inspiring action. We recognize through the men and women who seek belonging, what the realities of injustice, trauma, exclusion and unaddressed disparities based on race and class has bred. We understand how the current exploding outrage is, in so many ways, retaliation for lives overwhelmed by abuse and neglect in the face of unresponsive, privileged communities.

**Our ongoing research** has shown these vulnerable individuals to be exceptional people, no stranger to hardships, with complex needs. Few have known a caring community, most people would not welcome them to their table. These same individuals seek education, jobs, and decent places to live. They yearn for family, people who will have their back, to be there to extend forgiveness, and offer faith and belief in their worthiness.

**Who, then, is our neighbor?** -Is our neighbor one of the growing numbers of individuals released from jails, state or federal prisons with felony records that make regaining a place in community nearly impossible? Are our neighbors the despondent and isolated women we serve who are survivors of domestic abuse? Do we welcome them back to communities where there is limited provision for them; first for safety and then, means for them to rebuild their lives? What is their hope for a second chance when they have unmet physical and mental health needs? Most of these men and women have also never experienced a caring community. **These are the neighbors who have joined us in community, teaching us how restoration changes all of our lives.**

In the aftermath of this summer's horrific tragedies in our country, Father McShane emphasized a **need for national healing.** As "injustice prevails for significant numbers of our communities," he implores the university community to consider **who our neighbor is** and **what our responsibility is** as a member of our **Jesuit community.**



In 2016, The Restorative Communities Collaborative (RCC) was adopted as our new name describing our work with the faith community to develop leadership and capacity to support the restorative life practice programs. Congregations are invited to join the collaborative that supports programs for the post-incarcerated, survivors of domestic violence, veterans and homeless persons.

## What Is Our Responsibility?

At its heart, we exemplify the Fordham mission: an institution focused on service with all of its various parts seeking to engage the world on the side of the poor. This approach, called **cura personalis**, begins with a deep respect for the individual and their potential.

The **Restorative Communities Collaborative**, our new name for the Learning Collaborative of the past four years, supports restorative life practice where spiritual traditions engage people in transition. The same deep respect and hope for their future is foremost with the synergy possible in community life that makes restoration possible. We have made progress in developing a replicable, restorative life practice program that is based on a model developed by Catholic Charities and the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing over 25 years ago.



We are grateful for our many partners who have taken time, used their resources and created fellowship for those on the margin, offering the support required to bind their wounds. We share their stories of understanding about what trauma from violence has wrought, and how their response has created the transformation that makes the “beloved community” possible.

## The Legacy of Bertram M. Beck

**Dr. Bertram Beck** came to Fordham in 1985 as a professor of social service, lecturing on social policy. His first-hand knowledge of social services, enthusiasm and optimism led to his appointment as Associate Dean in 1987. **"He was a real Renaissance man"**, said Dean Quaranta.

**A charismatic leader with great vision, integrity and curiosity,** Bertram Beck's distinguished career in social work began with a Masters in Social Work from the University of Chicago in 1942. Recognized for his energy, commitment and service, Beck was given the honor of *Social Work Pioneer* by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).



**In 1996, as Special Assistant to the Dean, he was instrumental in creating the Managed Care Institute and the Religion and Poverty Institute, which was later named in his honor.**

Beck was elected to the original board of NASW and became its first Deputy Director. The author of two books and numerous journal articles, he was the recipient of many awards. He left an enduring legacy for the Institute and New York City, where he engaged and inspired the faith communities to become social advocates for the poor and marginalized.



See the Beck Institute Webpage for more information on their careers.

## A Tribute to our Retired Associate Director

**Dr. Dale Lindquist** was appointed Associate Director of the Institute in 2007. An important contributor to our mission, Dale was critical to the renewal of the Institute's work. His outreach to congregational leaders resulted in fruitful collaboration for conferences and seminars bringing attention to the faith community's contribution on behalf of the poor. Beck's advocacy vision was supported in partnering with the GSS Alumni for the successful conference: the State of the Urban Family.



Since 2013, creative solutions to feeding the poor are highlighted with Dr. Lindquist's documentary on faith-based emergency food programs.

**Our Daily Bread: Feeding New York's Hungry**, is a prize-winning film focusing on the Brooklyn-based St. John's Bread and Life, Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen of Chelsea, and the West Side Campaign Against Hunger at the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew. An important testament to the unique contribution of these programs, the film provides inspiration for faith and community organizations to follow suit.



## Enriching Our Community

**West End Presbyterian Church (WEPC)** in Manhattan began a new ministry with **Panim el Panim**.

**Panim el Panim** After four cycles in an advisory role, WEPC pastor, Rev. Alistair Drummond, has deepened both his practical and spiritual commitment to the **Panim el Panim** program. In Spring 2016 he was the program's coordinator and co-facilitator.

Which in Hebrew means face-to-face, to remind us that communication happens between human beings

A program for the homeless continues the traditions developed by Catholic Charities and supported by the Interfaith Assembly for Homelessness and Housing.

Alistair embodies the "bridge" between congregation, program, and community. He has fostered the growing participation of church leaders with the program so that the congregation can live its



May 2016 The Panim el Panim graduates pictured with mentors and program leadership

mission as **"a ministry of spiritual friendship .. inclusive, forward thinking, generous of spirit, supportive of the community .. making a presence."**

### Alistair reflects,

"I know on an authentic spiritual level that both I and my congregation are healthier and stronger through involvement with Panim. The place of meeting, sharing and mutual encouragement that these programs provide makes for healing in all who commit to the process. All our relationships are strengthened as a result. The program has truly become deeply embedded in the life and mission of WEPC."

While Alistair now returns to an advisory role, his influence has enabled the congregation and program to organically form a new team.

## New Leadership Brings Innovation

### Xavier Mission Partnerships:

It was an exciting year of "firsts" for three Life Skills programs—L-STEP, the Veterans Homecoming Program (Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries) and the Riverside Re-Entry Coming Home Program.

Last fall, the **Homecoming Program** was selected - for the first time - to participate in America's Day Parade, the largest Veteran's Day parade in the nation. **Pastor Tiffany Triplett Henkel of Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries, led Homecoming's participants** on the two-mile walk up historic 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It served as a great vehicle to honor our participants for their distinguished service to our country and as a means to re-engage alumni members.

During the spring cycle, **Xavier Mission** organized its first-ever social outing for the participants and mentors from all three programs. Over 60 members from the programs attended the celebrated off Broadway show, "Alive! 55+ and Kickin'!" that highlights the healing power of personal storytelling and celebrates resilience—cornerstones of all programs. This was a great opportunity for our participants and mentors to bond and to expand their social support network.

**Riverside Coming Home** implemented a new meal service program partnering with Project Renewal. As part of their jobs program, currently homeless and formerly incarcerated persons receive training in the culinary arts. The meals produced by trainees are delivered to businesses and nonprofits throughout New York City. The end result of this partnership was reliable meal service, a significant reduction in the cost of food, and a direct line of communication with the recruitment team for the culinary arts training program—a great benefit for our alumni who are interested in pursuing a career in the culinary field.

### New Leadership Role for Rachel

**Johnson** who began as a Fordham (2014) MSW intern at Xavier Mission, LSTEP Program. Upon graduation she became the program facilitator and this past fall has become the Program Director for the three L-STEP Programs in collaboration with Riverside Church and Metro Baptist Church.



### Rachel reflects:

"When I was offered this position, I immediately accepted because it spoke to my heart and to my head. It appealed to my heart because of the psychological, spiritual, and physical transformations I am privileged to witness each cycle. The position spoke to my head because of the results, which have been borne out by the important research being conducted by the Beck Institute. I'm honored and proud to work in support of the clients served by Xavier Mission and the vital work of the **Restorative Communities Collaborative.**"



Rachel Johnson with the Xavier Mission Programs

## Coming Home Program for Women

### Reflection from Janet Donat, Program Coordinator

For the second time, the Reformed Church of Bronxville hosted the Coming Home program specifically for women returning from a period of incarceration at the Valhalla Correctional Facility.

Dr. Dawn Ravella, Director of Mission, heads the Coming Home team supporting the weekly 24-session program. While, at the National level, politicians were sparking fear, anger, name calling and division, we found unity in our diversity, and truth in **Rev. Dr. Cornell West's words, "Justice is what love looks like in public."**

Each person involved was moved by the power of love, friendship, connection, acceptance, and forgiveness that are integral to the Coming Home Program.

2015 distinguished graduates are pictured below who have been an on-going inspiration to this year's **Coming Home Program.**



Whether the connection was made through the preparation and serving of meals, providing an informative workshop, or engaging as a participant, mentor, coordinator or facilitator, the experience of healing and growth touched us all.

## Graduate School of Service (GSS) Builds Community for Our Neighbors



In remarks from Fordham News, Dean McPhee states:

**"A program like this [the Beck Institute's Restorative Communities Collaborative] really represents the best of what GSS is about. It involves research, student engagement, social justice, interdisciplinary collaboration, and service with society's most disenfranchised."**

At Beck we are grateful for the support of our Dean, Debra McPhee who shares our commitment for social workers to build community in promoting social justice!

## A Masters in Social Work (MSW) Journey



We welcome **Sarah Franek**, LMSW, Fordham class of 2015, as one of our consulting team.

Sarah shares her journey here. Interning with Beck's Coming Home program in Ossining, NY as a first-year MSW was her first exposure to community work.

enveloped our participants in a sphere of compassion.

When a participant had a break through "a-ha!" moment, we would glance around at each other and it would settle upon us like a collective harmonic chord that lingered. It was palpable and beautiful. What made it even more so was experiencing it collectively. For staff and participants alike, Coming Home demonstrated that we connect when we quietly show up, listen, allow ourselves to be moved by the story of someone else's human experience of hardship. Boundaries blurred. We were no longer black/white, male/female, former inmate/mentor, intern/volunteer. We became "WE." And our "we" grew to be a restorative community celebrating strengths, joys, and hopes for the future.

To look into the eyes of someone who was so recently a stranger and see their truth awash on their face, and bear witness to their shame, is to taste your own shame, but on a newly minted palette of mutual connection. This connection and recognition created a ripple effect and transformed us from strangers to a communal "we." And our "we" grew to be a restorative community celebrating strengths, joys, and hopes for the future. My Clinical Concentration meant being well-versed in understanding how a "holding environment" could contain a client's experience and cultivate healing. But, multiplying this environment exponentially by the inclusion of mentors,

### Special Contributors!

#### Rye Presbyterian Coming Home Staff



Darryl Varlack-Butler, (left) with Dr. Peter Vaughan (right) | Photo courtesy of: Stefan Radike

**Dr. Peter Vaughan**, Dean Emeritus Fordham GSS, joined the staff to support mentors. **Darryl Varlack-Butler, MPS, MSW** a recent graduate of Fordham's MSW program & the Reformed Church of Bronxville Coming Home, was Rye Presbyterian's program case manager & graduation speaker.



## Celebrating New Coming Home Programs!

**Rye Presbyterian Church** began its inaugural **Coming Home Program** in January 2016. A new dimension of Rye's prison ministry, this addition brought an "at home" experience to their significant support for men and women in prison. Of note is their development of **Exodus Transitional Community**, founded in 1999, and **Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison**, founded in 2000, providing college education in prison. (see their website for inspiring details of other programs, [ryepc.com](http://ryepc.com))

The Rye congregation under the leadership of Rev. Dr. John Miller, generously supported the Coming Home Program. **Janet Donat** reflects:

"For 18 weeks this program provided delicious home cooked meals, thought-provoking conversation inspired by reflections from participants, committed mentors and inspirational speakers. Our six participants were steadfast in their commitment to the program. The engagement by the congregation was inspiring. All who gathered on Thursday evenings throughout the winter and spring had the honor of experiencing what Dr. Martin Luther King referred to as "Beloved Community." Agape love: the love of God operating in the human heart has been described as the core value of Dr. King's Beloved Community.

With this love as a guiding force, those who gathered at Rye Presbyterian Church slowly began to open up to one another and gradually, during the program, trust took root allowing for vulnerabilities to be shared, accomplishments celebrated, and support given. Several participants spoke of the healing power of laughter and the experience of joy, something that had been strikingly absent from their lives and that they eagerly looked forward to each week in the conversation around the table. A mentor recalls, "I was blown away by the wisdom of the participants. We discovered that we could all relate to brokenness, even if our brokenness was not equivalent...and we all came to know that we were held together in a web of healing and mercy in the Coming Home Program in Rye."

The **Poughkeepsie community** created a new level of awareness for survivors of domestic violence and the post-incarcerated. **The First Congregational United Church of Christ and The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship** have provided an incredible restorative healing experience engaging 20 mentors, graduating 15 participants with 55 meals served.

**Over 26 Poughkeepsie congregations and well over 100 community members** prepared the weekly meal while decorating, blessing and "breaking bread" with the participants each week. These programs have been a catalyst for expanded consciousness of social justice in action.

Financial support for the programs was raised at 3 congregation-sponsored events: 2 coffee house/poetry fundraisers and the 11th



2016 Rye Presbyterian Inaugural Coming Home Graduation, photo courtesy of Stefan Radike .

### Community in Action:

As Rye's Coming Home Program Coordinator, Janet Donat brought experience from coordinating the Bronxville Coming Home Program. She was joined by peer facilitator Brenda Falu, also from RCB's program. Janet brings an important connection with Westchester Family Services who is working to support these programs.

### Spring 2017- New Program

Housing Plus partnering with the First Unitarian Congregational Society of Brooklyn for a program for formerly homeless women in transition.

**Lisa Velazquez, LMSW** (Fordham, class of 2007), is the coordinator/co-facilitator of the Poughkeepsie Coming Home Program. She has worked closely with the community including the Exodus Transitional Community where she is collaborating in program development.

Lisa and Sarah Franek will continue their partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie this Fall as they launch their second cycle of the Coming Home Program.

Annual Peace Story Circle. Local healers and artisans, including EAGALA healing with horses, SoulCollage® with Judith Knauss, and local potter, Reed Asher, who also served as a Coming Home mentor.

Multiple community agencies collaborated with the programs including the Department of Family Services (DFS), Exodus, and the Grace Smith House. Inspired by the work we are doing, Mayor Rob Rolison and Senator Sue Serino presented certificates to honor our

2016 graduates, welcoming returning citizens.

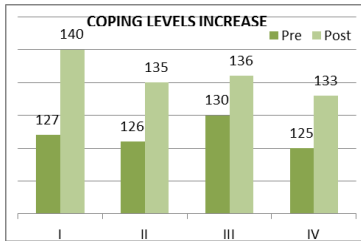
Data outcomes for our domestic violence survivors indicated increased feelings of *empowerment*. Our post-incarcerated participants reported feeling *socially supported*.

Given that disempowerment is highly correlated to women who survived domestic violence and that recidivism is highly correlated to feelings of isolation and alienation, this is an important mark of healing.

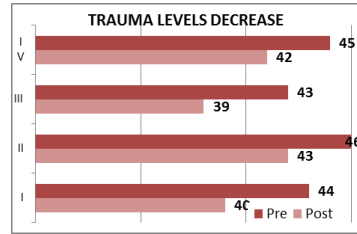


## Program Outcomes

For each program cycle (as labelled I-IV in the inset charts), information was gathered at the outset, program completion and six months later. Statistical analyses indicates that the contribution of the 24-session programs are important outcomes for participants that, among a number of measures,



show increases in coping and reduction in post-traumatic stress symptoms.



Results from the past few years show improvements in understanding, management, and the meaning participants give to their lives as key contributors to improvements in coping, as well as reductions in trauma symptoms.

Of note is the participants' progress six months after program completion, as coping and trauma measures remained constant, an important achievement in supporting healing and new life direction. ~Dr. Amanda Sisselman-Borgia~

**A retention study** by Jamie Jones, our doctoral research assistant, was completed during 2016. This study enables insight into what interferes with program completion.

While most participants succeed in completing the 19 to 24 sessions, much is to be learned about absences and why some leave the program. A small percent (7%) from all programs left early on, as the fit was not right for them. In the middle of the program, 9% of all program participants had dropped out due to illness, moving, gaining a job, or family death, with one re-arrest. We look forward to continuing this study in 2016-17. A report of this study is available on the Beck website.

### The Lived Experience of a Caring Community



**Congratulations to one of our Beck Team, Linda Woodbine on completing her dissertation.** *“Coming Home: Post Incarcerated lived experience of a caring community.”* As one of our GSS 2016 doctoral graduates, Dr. Woodbine is the Director of Business Development for Exodus Transitional Community.

Dr. Woodbine's study illustrates the complex dimensions of the emotional and collective lives of returning citizens, as well as the personal transformations that Coming Home programs have provided to participants and congregations alike. The study looks at programs serving the post-incarcerated at Riverside Church, Bronxville Reformed Church and ComALERT at the Brooklyn District Attorney's office.

Dr. Woodbine describes the experience of program participants who developed effective coping and adaptive skills, felt positive emotions, a reduction in trauma symptoms, emotional connection, sustained relationships and the ability to give and receive care. Many participants gave instances of how their transformation was made possible through community care they described as “a spiritual experience.” From her in-depth phenomenological study, she concluded that caring communities can be a vehicle of strength for persons returning from incarceration where caring is a reciprocal process shared between participant and program volunteers during moments of trust, safety, welcoming, witnessing, sharing, inclusivity, accountability and empathy.

Participants shared countless examples of how their Coming Home groups became their ‘family’ through experiences of unconditional love and acceptance, where belonging to the group eased the shame from isolation and loss of dignity during incarceration. Participants often noted the association of meaning with something larger than themselves resulted in an emphasis on “other” rather than “self.” As a result, regardless of life circumstances, participants grew in faith, hope, and love during the incredibly difficult transition period of coming home.

## A FIDELITY STUDY: AN EXCEPTIONAL COLLABORATIVE EFFORT!!

### Supporting Program Replication

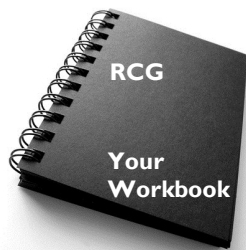
A foundation of Beck's work is the study of program fidelity and resulting refinement of the life skills program. A fidelity study examines how program components are implemented. Five years of research documenting the ways congregations and staff work together has influenced modifications including renaming the program model from life skills empowerment to restorative life practices that emphasizes how men and women reclaim their lives in community.

Successful replication depends on consistent provision of the program model. Devonnie Allen, our Beck Institute Research Assistant, took on the challenge of examining fidelity in each program, working closely with the Beck Team, including program coordinators and doctoral research assistants: Erica Ponteen, Donald Garner, Lashawn Smith, and Patrice Barnes. Their report provided the central focus for this May's Learning Collaborative retreat where representatives from ten programs took on the task of developing implications from the study's findings.

A productive daylong seminar helped us understand the implementation of core program components: what was consistently provided, what were the challenges, and what innovations needed to be considered? The challenge was to refine the restorative life practice model for the coming year.

Progress steps include an updated Best Practice Manual – the Restorative Communities Guide – which will support program fidelity in 2016-17. Careful consideration of the fidelity study has made it possible to provide a much more comprehensive guide for best practice across programs, targeted toward improving participant outcomes.





The **2016 guide** includes detailed descriptions of the program core. Developed from our collective review during the May 2nd Retreat, it has distilled critical information to support strong replication of the program's core curriculum.

Based on three years of learning since the development of the first Best Practice Study, this guide offers support for all major aspects of program provision. The guide includes an appendix with information, guidelines, exercises and handouts.

This guide is a loose-leaf workbook, to track what works and descriptions of innovation. Re-

storative integrative practices such as: trauma informed, empowerment, solution-focused and mindfulness are given special emphasis. These practices, when integrated with specific curriculum sessions, can then be utilized throughout the program.

The goal is to help participants discover and use life practices that will be a foundation for their continued development and healing.

### Announcement!

The Restorative Communities Guide and the new Mentors Restorative Life Practice Workbook will be available to support the Fall programs. Stay tuned for information on how to receive your copy.

A calendar guide for all RCC Learning Collaborative trainings is posted on the website.

**A Coming Home Mentor Reflects:** *"I was sort of dragged into this program feeling like I had nothing to contribute. How could an older white woman living a protected middle-class life possibly be helpful to anyone from the incarcerated population? Well, I soon found out that I did, and I also found out that they were not the scary individuals that I presumed them to be. I think I learned more from everyone else in the program than I was able to impart, and I am very grateful for the experience, and would gladly do it again. I really hope we can find the resources to do this."* -Reed Asher, Poughkeepsie

**Mentors** offer an indispensable opportunity for shared discovery and an important personal connection to the participants. Over the last five years of programs, nearly 600 volunteers have served as mentors. This past year alone, over 100 men and women were essential supports to their mentees.

Stories shared at graduations celebrated their special relationships in walking together, witnessing hard-won steps forward.

For many programs, the Beck team provides training and a mentor's manual, as a support for mentorship. Our mentor manual is under renewal with

a workbook-style manual being piloted as a companion for mentoring.

**Linda Ryan, LMSW (2015)**— a new member of the Beck Team, will provide mentors with ways to support restorative life practices as a means for reducing trauma and increasing coping.

Specific emphasis will highlight a mindfulness stance that is a foundation in responding to the significant stressors from participants' traumatic life histories, including ways to encourage motivation and empowerment with solution-focused dialogue.



## 2015 & 2016 Learning Collaboratives

This year marked another opportunity for our community of providers to come together and learn.

**Story-telling:** George Horton of Catholic Charities, EOP Program shared his extensive 25 years of experience in story-telling and how to assist our participants to construct and tell the story that needs to facilitate healing.

**Trauma Reenactment:** Sarah Yanosy, LCSW Director of the Sanctuary Institute at ANDRUS presented The Sanctuary Model: Recognizing and Disrupting Traumatic Reenactment.

Successful trauma-informed interventions address the impact of trauma. "Re-scripting" reenactment can help participants, their families and program staff as an

effective way for dealing with difficult behaviors caused by reliving traumatic experience.

**A Solution-Focused Perspective:** Dr. Anita Lightburn guided us in exploring the benefits of this approach. As solution-focused staff and mentors, we not only take into account a participant's skill and abilities, we also affirm how they have survived difficult life situations. Solution-focused communication emphasizes potential and their strengths, it does not limit possibilities. With this shift in thinking, we realize that participants have many skills needed to fulfill their aspirations.

**The May 2nd Retreat** marked a major collaborative effort! Together we learned from the Fidelity and Log studies, examined core

components, affirmed what is replicable across programs and defined the next steps for the Restorative Communities Collaborative.

### Upcoming 2016/2017

#### Learning Collaboratives include:

- MSW Student Orientation
- Working with the Curriculum
- Group Facilitation
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Utilizing Program Evaluation

Please see the Beck Website for dates.

### Anne Teicher



Anne has begun her second retirement! We are most thankful for her steadfast contribution to mentor trainings that began when she mentored in the Living Well Program. Anne led our coordinators, provided insight into supporting volunteers, taught goal-setting and was an important mentor to everyone.

Her generous contribution of time and spirit to all that we have done lives on. We already miss her!



The Bertram M. Beck Institute on Religion and Poverty's mission supports the historical faith community's tradition to embrace and respect the poor, marginalized and oppressed members of society.

The Beck Institute provides congregations with the necessary support services for a successful program including: mentor training, leadership development, program management support, social work interns, program resources, education, evaluation and participant outreach, selection and development.

### MSW Interns 2015-2016

- Patricia Brown
- Mirla Done-Torres
- Damaris Edwards
- Keisha Ford
- Adriane Hill
- Isabelle Magliore
- Barbara Muratore
- Anna Myavec
- Sterling Robinson
- Don Rooks

### Our MSW Supervisors

- Cassandra Agredo
- Gail Davenport
- Alison Hughes-Kelsick
- Rainer Orth
- Margarette Tropnas
- Suzanne Wiedel-Pace

## The Beck Institute

Fordham University  
Graduate School of Social Services  
400 Westchester Avenue  
West Harrison, NY 10604  
Phone: (914) 367.3436

[lightburn@fordham.edu](mailto:lightburn@fordham.edu)  
[www.fordham.edu/beckinstitute](http://www.fordham.edu/beckinstitute)

## Honoring Our New Contributors



Special Thanks  
to Our Sponsors

Kathy and Brian MacLean, both Fordham Class of 1975, matched an anonymous grant for the next two years, supporting "capacity building" and research that evaluates the model's effectiveness with survivors of domestic violence, homeless persons, veterans and returning citizens so that it can be replicated in other congregations.

Trinity Wall Street has provided two years of support for developing re-entry programs in the greater NY area with our Restorative Communities Collaborative congregational partners.

## Research Assistants Reflect...

This past year as a research assistant with the Beck Institute has been invaluable to my growth and development as a researcher and budding scholar. Participation in the various steps necessary for the fidelity study enhanced the knowledge and concepts discussed in the course curriculum and made the practical application more concrete. The opportunity to apply knowledge and practice skills nicely complimented the learning experience and purpose for pursuing the PhD degree.

However, the most rewarding aspect was the opportunity to use such skills to contribute to the vital work provided by congregations. It was great to be a part of a team that worked towards helping faith communities increase their capacity, improve effectiveness, and accomplish the goal of becoming a true community resource.

As a PhD student, and a person of faith, it was a delight to observe how faith-in-action could really serve to increase coping and the development of life skills for participants as demonstrated by the Restorative Communities Collaborative. Lastly, the potential for positive impact by faith communities to support and strengthen those in need was encouraging and hopeful both professionally and personally.

- Devonne Allen

The Beck Institute research assistant (RA) opportunity has been a great learning experience during my doctoral studies. Specifically, my research interest in the bio-psycho-social adjustments of female veterans propelled me to take on this challenging opportunity. This experience has also enhanced my knowledge in how to conduct more effective hands-on research in Restorative work. I am able to apply my classroom research knowledge and field research experience to assist me as I further refine my research interests.

In addition, this RA experience gives me a unique research experience often envied by my colleagues. I've learned varied research processes ranging from facilitating data collections, SPSS data entry, and the facilitation of focus groups.

Throughout the years, I have been able to meet many wonderful program directors and participants. Despite being faced with adversity, the participants have often provided me with life nuggets and words of encouragement. I appreciate every interaction and am most grateful for their kindness, such as participants sending me well wishes and encouraging me to complete my studies. Overall, working with the Beck Institute has been a transformative experience, academically and personally.

- Erica Ponteen

## Peer Facilitators Step Into New Leadership Roles

**Letitia Butler:** In 2014 Letitia graduated from the Living Well pilot program in Poughkeepsie at First Congregational United Church of Christ. In 2015 she became their peer facilitator for the 2nd cycle and a true leader to her peers.

**Brenda Falu:** A graduate of the 2015 Bronxville Reformed Church Coming Home Program, she emerged as a leader and a strong support to her peers in the program. She recently completed peer leadership of the first Rye Presbyterian Coming Home Program.

**Karen Lee:** Panim el Panim was delighted to have a recent graduate of the Metro Baptist Living Well LSEP as peer facilitator. She made wonderful connection with participants, and was a great inspiration to the whole group.

**Teresa Coyle:** A 2014 LEAP Bronxville Reformed Church graduate, Teresa has stepped firmly into her role as group facilitator for the Coming Home Program, strengthening the group, reminding them weekly what hope, transformation, and empowerment feel and look like.

**Sharae Turner:** A graduate of the 2014 Metro Baptist Living Well Program, became their peer facilitator and assisted in the writing of the administrative Living Well Program Manual with MSW intern Anna Myavec.

**We welcome our new 2016 PhD research assistants:** Patrice Barnes, Sue Groman, Temitayo Pedro and Alexandra Pierre.