Collaborations

2012 has been an extraordinary year for collaboration, with important new partnerships, including major foundation support from the New York Community Trust’s Fahs-Beck and Silberman Funds and an Anonymous Donor that is supporting program evaluation and capacity building with the faith community.

This newsletter celebrates the many facets of developing an evidence-based program for people in transition from homelessness, domestic violence, prison, and veterans experiencing the challenges of homecoming. As you can read in the insert, some of these faith-based programs have a long history, others began in the last few years. Supported by their congregations and in collaboration with Catholic Charities and the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office they all are making an incredible difference in people’s lives. The table below accounts for Beck’s involvement over the past few years. The leadership of the programs are members of Beck’s Program Advisory Group. They are an integral part of our collaboration for ongoing program development and replication. We value their work and commitment to people with troubled life journeys, in need of supportive communities for healing and new direction. Members include George Horton from Catholic Charities, Marc Greenberg from Interfaith Assembly for Homelessness and Housing, Cassandra Agredo and John Langdon from the Xavier Mission, John Chaney from the Brooklyn DA’s Office ComALERT Program, Dawn Ravella from the Reformed Church of Bronxville and John Delfs from the Riverside Church.

Our work together over the past few years has resulted in a replicable program model providing encouraging findings from outcome evaluations of those in transition. Begun in 2011 with a process evaluation, our studies show how these programs contribute to better coping, less trauma, connections to community and opportunity. The story of this work is shared in a number of the news items in this issue. We are grateful to this extraordinary group of leaders who have made it possible to serve those struggling to recover, heal and grow while discovering meaningful lives in community. Be sure to read the insert, “Celebrating the Journey”, to note their accomplishments during this past year.

Our First Documentary

Applauding a significant achievement – we congratulate Dale Lindquist, Associate Director of Beck, on completing three years of work in the development and presentation of the documentary “Bread of Life”.

As Beck’s first documentary, we welcomed a diverse community of attendees at our Lincoln Center campus for an inside look at how the needs of New Yorkers are being met by the faith community. It was a stimulating evening of discussion inspired by the documentary and the exceptional leadership of the programs reviewed. The take-home message was clear from those present: hunger should not exist in our city. Because it does, we have unique and meaningful opportunities to partner with those in need. We look forward to our Westchester Campus premier of the film and will announce plans for distribution in the fall.

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Our Daily Bread: Feeding the Hungry in New York

Dale Lindquist, L.C.S.W., D.Min., former documentary film maker, Associate Director of the Beck Institute, and Director of the GSS Online MSW Program, combined his passion for social service with his love of film, to direct, shoot and edit, Our Daily Bread: Feeding The Hungry in New York City. This 45 minute documentary shown on Thursday, May 2, 2013, at Fordham’s Lincoln Center Campus, profiles three emergency food programs in New York City, all organized and run by churches and their affiliates.

Our Daily Bread focuses on the Brooklyn based St. John’s Bread and Life, Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen in Chelsea, and the West Side Campaign Against Hunger at the Church of St. Paul and St. Anthony.

Lindquist selected these three for the film because they are the largest faith-based emergency food programs in NYC. "In a city where it is estimated that one in five New Yorkers use emergency food services, such programs bring hope and comfort to those who don’t know where their next meal is coming from,” said Lindquist. Through an organized set-up of soup kitchens, food pantries and mobile kitchens, the three faith-based programs feed more than 1 million hungry people per year.

“These are very innovative programs providing unique approaches to offering services while simultaneously honoring the capacities and dignity of those being served. These are qualities that can readily be replicated,” said Lindquist, who hopes the documentary encourages both support of existing programs and provides inspiration and ideas for faith and community organizations to follow suit.

Recognition of Service and Transitions

Heartfelt Thanks & Best Wishes

Summer 2013 is the beginning a significant transition for the Beck Institute and for Dean Peter Vaughan as he retires as Dean of the Graduate School of Social Service. We have valued his indispensable support and leadership, believing that the mission and work of Beck brought together the capacity of the faith community with service provided by social workers to meet the needs of those beset by poverty. His work with us has strengthened our community collaborations and work with our colleagues across the University. He has been a faithful steward of Beck, keeping the original vision alive, patiently and concertedly promoting new initiatives. The significant strides forward of these past years have been possible because of his investment and faith in us.

President McShane, S.J., presented Peter with the University’s highest honor, the Presidential Medal, at the conclusion of our May 20th diploma ceremony in Avery Fisher Hall. President McShane called Peter a “wise, patient and loving patron saint”. We agree that this award is a fitting tribute to Peter’s life of service and leadership. “Pray for us, Peter,” Father McShane said as he concluded the celebration, a request we echo as we also give thanks for his work with us, and our anticipation of the next chapter of Beck built on the strong foundation he has helped us establish.

**“...for his collaborative and visionary leadership as an educator, and for his lasting impact on the University’s ability to lead well and serve wisely in the years ahead.”**

In Memorial

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan, who was a founder of the Beck Institute and a source of inspiration and support over the years. As Chair of the Beck Advisory Board he was instrumental in shaping the mission and forwarding the work of the Institute. His life mission was advocacy and service to the poor. He received his master’s degree from Fordham’s GSS in 1961, and has said that becoming a social worker “was the best thing that ever happened to me”. Marc Santora of the New York Times reported that Bishop Sullivan became the executive director in 1968 of Catholic Charities in Brooklyn and Queens, where, “under his leadership that organization would become the largest Roman Catholic human services agency in the country”. For more than five decades he was a tireless advocate for the most “frail, neglected and impoverished citizens.”

For all who knew him, this is a tragic loss. The contagious vision and compassion he communicated lives on. He is quoted in a 1999 New York Times interview as saying that he could not imagine a better life. “I really think of this job as heaven on the way to heaven...It doesn't come at the end. It begins here.” We all will miss his extraordinary way of embracing the challenges of each day with faith and hope entwined.


May he rest in peace!

George Horton remembers Bishop Sullivan. See page 4.
Collaboration at Work by Anne Teicher, Program Consultant

As Program Consultant to the Beck Institute’s evaluation study of the Life Skills and Empowerment programs, I had the very exciting opportunity to work with program staff, participants, mentors and students in the eight programs. While I had a fledgling knowledge of Marc Greenberg’s life skills programs during my long tenure in homeless services, getting up close, looking at how the core components combine to create the life-altering impact on the participants and everyone involved can’t help but be inspiring.

This past year saw the inception of two new programs: Riverside Church’s Coming Home program for formerly incarcerated individuals and Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing’s Homecoming program for homeless veterans. Bronxville Reformed Church shifted their prison ministry to focus on women who had experienced incarceration and violence. While the participants in all the programs share many of the challenges of transition: reintegrating into a community, finding jobs, training, housing, re-establishing relationships with family, children, friends, they also have their unique needs. The challenge to the programs continues to be adapting their approach and curriculum to meet the specific needs of each group.

Of course the bottom line of any program’s success is the impact. The eight programs graduated 103 men and women during 14 fall and spring cycles, representing an 81% graduation rate. Since graduation requires that participants miss no more than three sessions, this is an excellent outcome for individuals with multiple challenges. Those who leave the programs before completion often do so because of employment opportunities, health reasons, or sometimes because they are not ready. Not surprisingly, quite a few return at a later time to continue and graduate. In providing evaluation and support to the eight programs, Beck Institute sought to identify and strengthen the core components or “pillars” of the program: life skills curriculum, mentoring, case management, storytelling, peer facilitation, fellowship/community that make these programs unique and effective.

- A Learning Collaborative of program leaders, facilitators, students and Beck staff, came together regularly. Trainings were provided in trauma informed care and group facilitation skills.
- Fordham student interns were involved in recruitment of participants and mentors and case management that helped address personal challenges.
- Mentor training provided opportunities to learn about the programs, the challenging worlds of participants, and training and practice in listening and feedback skills. Mentor groups were supported in their work with participants.
- Mindfulness meditation and art activities tapped into participants’ nonverbal expressions, particularly important for people affected by trauma who cannot easily express themselves.

One has only to attend a graduation to know that these programs change lives. To hear a graduate talk about who they were when they became homeless, and who they are now: recounting their strengths and accomplishments, their goals for the future, and crediting the love, strength and support from the community of participants, facilitators, students, who believe in them, is to know, without doubt, the power of community.

Like everything in life, we are always learning and always a work in progress. Beck and the life skills programs will continue to work together to learn and develop ways to maximize impact on the people they serve and replicate these programs so they can serve others. In that process, we all, coordinators, facilitators, students, mentors, congregations, staff gain so much more than we ever give.

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George Horton Remembers Bishop Sullivan

“Although I had known Bishop Joe Sullivan for many years through my work at Catholic Charities, where both in the Brooklyn Diocese and nationally he was a revered leader of the Catholic Charities movement and a powerful advocate for people who are poor, I first had the opportunity to work closely with him on the founding Advisory Board of the Beck Institute on Religion and Poverty. As chair of the Advisory Board, he led our discussions as we worked to assist the university and religious institutions to build community for and with people who are poor. The fruit that has been borne of the work of the Beck Institute and its support of the Education Outreach/ Life Skills Empowerment Programs owes much to the formative guiding presence, wisdom, and dedication of Bishop Sullivan.

Throughout his life he understood the centrality of the Sermon on the Mount to the mission of the Church as expressed in the teaching of a preferential option for the poor. He often found himself as a minority voice among Church leaders in insisting on the priority of this Church teaching. He was at home in interfaith collaboration and was a deeply human and compassionate man who led not because of his position, but by the power of his faith, commitment to others, and his always inclusive pastoral way of working.

Over the past few years our time together has been limited to brief visits before the annual Good Friday Walk conducted through midtown Manhattan by Pax Christi, a Catholic peace organization, at which for years he offered the Walk’s opening prayer. Again this year we shared a brief moment, catching up on our lives and as always with him, I felt his sense of joy, his celebration of life, his humor and humanity. Bishop Joe Sullivan was a great gift to all who knew him. By his example he helped us all to be better.”

Recent Publications and Presentations:


