



Beck Institute on Religion and Poverty

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

BECK UPDATES — IT HAS BEEN A GREAT YEAR!

by Anita Lightburn, Director

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.

Continued on page 4

Summer 2013

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
 ★ "My mentor is always ★
 ★ there and this place is a ★
 ★ source of refuge when I ★
 ★ need help. That gives me ★
 ★ the initiative and drive to ★
 ★ try new things. I can go ★
 ★ out there and try because I ★
 ★ have people to support ★
 ★ me." ★
 ★ —Participant in the Coming ★
 ★ Home post-incarceration ★
 ★ program ★
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Program Evaluation

Evaluation Process

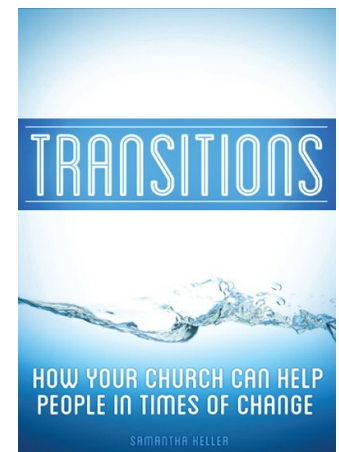
- Process evaluation 2010-2011
- Initial Pilot with 4 programs Jan 2012 to February 2013
- Demonstration Evaluation with 8 programs (total 12 cycles) July 2012 to December 2013
- Larger Demonstration Evaluation with 12 to 15 programs to focus on capacity building and sustainability June 2013 to September 2014

Fordham (GSS) Beck Institute 2010 – 2011

Fahs-Beck Fund for Research and Experimentation 2012

New York Community Trust (Lois & Samuel Silberman Fund) 2012-2013

Anonymous Donor 2013 to 2014



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Special Insert:

Celebrating the Journey

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 here 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.

Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan died from injuries sustained in a car crash on May 30.

*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.

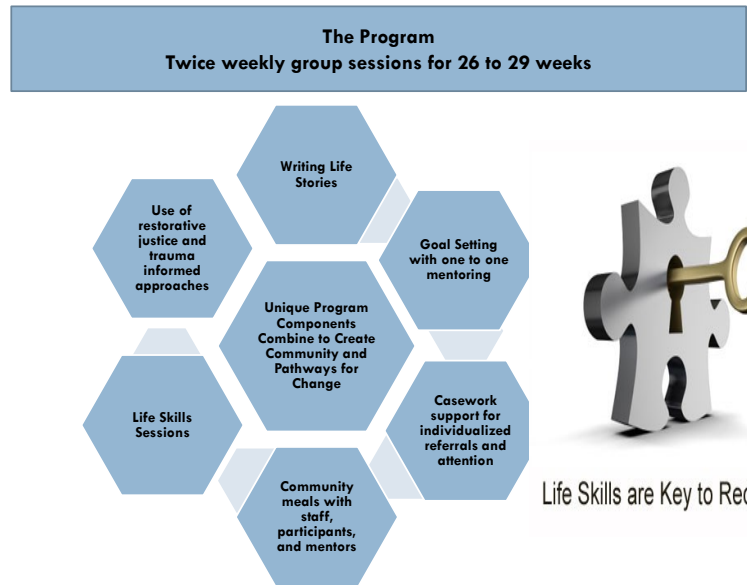
This past year saw the inception of two new programs: Riverside Church's Coming Home program for formerly incarcerated individuals and Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing's Homecoming program for homeless veterans. Bronxville Reformed Church shifted their prison ministry to focus on women 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 a n d 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 accomplishment, 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.



HOT OFF THE PRESS - PROGRAM & MENTOR MANUALS!!

Intense activity has resulted in a number of publications to support "best practices" across all of the programs. In October a *Mentor's Manual*, funded by the Reformed Church of Bronxville, was developed by Mercedes Riley and Anita Lightburn. Mentors are indispensable, contributing to the unique synergy that participants say is one of the reasons the life skills community programs provide hope and direction for their futures. Printed just in time for Beck's first mentors' training, the *Mentor's Manual* was inspired by the requests of mentors from all of the programs that I had the privilege to interview during 2011. They sought information and skills to enrich understanding and work with program participants (their mentees). Mentor training guides were contributed by all the programs highlighting the traditions developed over the past twenty plus years.

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The Bertram M. Beck Institute on Religion and Poverty is an ecumenical institute that partners with New York City interfaith religious and lay leaders who are moved to alleviate poverty in our affluent society. We are committed to preparing leaders who promote social justice and serve the poor.

This newsletter is dedicated to all those who have joined our journey of promoting social justice, fighting hunger and promoting all those aspects of a life that create safety, health, and dreams of a future. Our journey will continue through publications, media projects, research, and coursework.

George Horton Remembers Bishop Sullivan

George Horton, a fellow Beck Advisory Board member shares his reflections on 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."

Hot off the Press.....continued from page 3

GSS supported the development of two *Program Manuals*: one for returning citizens from prison and one for survivors of domestic violence. Amanda Sisselman and the Beck Team has completed the task of developing them; they are now "in press"! As adaptations of the original programs, manuals integrate specialized knowledge concerning the needs of participants in the different programs. Similar to the *Mentor's Manual*, these are a work in progress.

Recent Publications and Presentations:

Lightburn, A. & Sisselman, A. (2013) Innovative trauma informed community group practice for marginalized people in transition. XXXV International Symposium, Association for Social Work with Groups Conference: A Bridge to the Future. Boston, MA

Lightburn, A. (2012). Supporting Practice Innovation with a Bottom-up Top-Down Synthesis. *STUDI ZANCAN*. VOL. 12:2.

Lightburn, A. Garner II, D. & Mullin, D. (2012). An innovative program model for two forensic populations in transition: Individuals post-incarceration and survivors of domestic violence. National Conference for National Organization for Forensic Social Work, Baltimore, MD, April.

Sisselman, A. & Hill, J. (2012). Case presentation of a life skills program adapted for survivors of domestic violence. National Conference for National Organization for Forensic Social Work, Baltimore, MD, April.

Director.....continued from page 1

MSW Students Excel

Education is a fundamental part of Beck's mission that focuses our work with students as an essential means to build capacity for service with the faith community and the poor. This year we are pleased to recognize eight Fordham GSS MSW student interns who have made significant contributions to the community projects. Their commitment and involvement in the programs' success have been appreciated by all involved and we congratulate them on achieving their MSW degrees! Amanda Sisselman, one of the field supervisors and an educational coordinator for these projects, provides a perspective on their achievements in this newsletter as well as celebrating our collaboration with Empire College through her work with undergraduates.