



bridges

WINTER 2016-2017

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Indianola Promise Community: Improving Academic Outcomes in the Delta

By Deborah Moore

Across the U.S., several Promise Neighborhoods have been established under the legislative authority of the Fund for the Improvement of Education Program. Since its inception through the Harlem Children's Zone, the program has become a widely heralded public-private partnership that provides education and community services to low-income parents and children.

In 2010, the Delta Health Alliance (DHA) received a planning grant from the U.S. Department of Education to begin building the infrastructure needed for the Indianola Promise Neighborhood (Community). Indianola was poised for this work to mirror many aspects of the Harlem Children's Zone in regard to need and demographics. The implementation grant received in 2012 allowed DHA to create a continuum of services for children and families in Indianola to support their success.

Indianola is a small city located in rural Sunflower County in the Mississippi Delta. Historically, agricultural and manufacturing industries were

the employers of most residents; many of these jobs have either moved out of the country or simply no longer exist because of changes in agriculture brought on by technological advances. As a result, many economic, education and social disparities exist in Indianola.

Almost 80 percent of city residents are African-American, with over one-third living below the federal poverty level. The annual median household income is \$27,941. Indianola Promise Community (IPC) has 3,000-plus children under 18 years of age in its footprint. IPC targets the four public schools in Indianola with approximately 2,200 students.

DHA, also located in the rural Mississippi Delta, is the umbrella organization for IPC. DHA is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that seeks to change health care and education in the region by improving access to health services, promoting healthier lifestyles and expanding educational opportunities. DHA has been a leader in supporting and operating community-based clinics that serve as a medical home for patients;



Indianola Promise Community and Sunflower County Consolidated School District Kids' Showcase: As part of IPC Week, students from Carver Elementary participate by demonstrating dance, music and athletics.

implementing new technologies such as electronic health records, health information exchange networks, and telehealth diagnosis and treatment centers; managing innovative education programs in community settings; and creating robust home visitation programs that address neonatal and early-childhood education challenges.

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Bridges is a quarterly publication of the Community Development Office of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. It is intended to inform bankers, community development organizations, representatives of state and local government agencies and others in the Eighth District about current issues and initiatives in community and economic development. The Eighth District includes the state of Arkansas and parts of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee.

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Calendar

MARCH

23 **CRA Roundtable: Increasing the Availability of Small-Dollar Mortgages**
Memphis, Tenn.

Sponsors: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis—Memphis Branch, Barret School of Banking, Community Development Council of Greater Memphis, FDIC, OCC
Visit: www.cvent.com/d/vnqxpx

23-24 **Strong Foundations: The Economic Futures of Kids and Communities Tenth Biennial Federal Reserve System Community Development Research Conference**
Washington, D.C.

Sponsors: Federal Reserve Board, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
Visit: www.minneapolisfed.org/2017CDResearchConference

28 **Banking and the Economy: A Forum for Women in Banking**
Midwest City, Okla.

Sponsors: Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, Community Bankers Association of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Bankers Association
Visit: www.kansascityfed.org/events/2017/women-in-banking-3-28-17

29 **Promise and Peril: Managing the Uncertainty of Rapid Innovation and a Changing Economy 10th Annual Risk Conference**
Chicago, Ill.

Sponsors: Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, DePaul University Center for Financial Services
Visit: www.chicagofed.org/events/2017/risk-conference

APRIL

6 **Community and Economic Development for Community Foundations**
Indianapolis, Ind.

Sponsor: Council on Foundations
Visit: www.cof.org/event/community-and-economic-development-community-foundations

18 **The Financial Conditions of U.S. Households**
St. Louis, Mo.

Sponsor: CFA Society of St. Louis
Visit: www.cfasociety.org/stlouis/Pages/Events.aspx

MAY

2-4 **Accelerating Ideas into Action**
Indianapolis, Ind.

Sponsors: Asset Funders Network, Citi Foundation, JPMorgan Chase & Co., MetLife Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Wells Fargo
Visit: www.afnconference.org

JUNE

11-14 **Big Skies, Bold Partnerships: Moving Mountains Together 2017 CDS and NACDEP Conference**
Big Sky, Mont.

Sponsors: Community Development Society, National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals
Visit: www.nacdep.net/2017-cds-nacdep-conference

14-17 **2017 NCDA 48th Annual Training Conference**
Miami, Fla.

Sponsor: National Community Development Association
Visit: <http://ncdaonline.org/2017-annual-conference>

22-23 **2017 Policy Summit on Housing, Human Capital, and Inequality**
Cleveland, Ohio

Sponsors: Federal Reserve Banks of Cleveland, Philadelphia and Minneapolis
Visit: www.clevelandfed.org/en/newsroom-and-events/events/2017/policy-summit.aspx

27-29 **Community Development Conference: Putting Faith to Work**
Evansville, Ind.

Sponsor: Memorial Community Development Corp.
Visit: www.memorialcdc.org
Contact: 812-423-2500

Indianola Promise Community

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DHA serves as the central authority for IPC, contributing operational stability and fiscal control. The success of this work is strongly dependent on DHA having a comprehensive view of the work of all organizations.

IPC includes over 30 programs that provide children with the opportunity to succeed in school, graduate and attend college. It is a partnership between schools, community and faith-based organizations, clinics, hospitals, early-learning providers and after-school partners. The overarching goal of IPC is to build a pipeline of care to make sure that young children are healthy and kindergarten-ready, and that children who need extra support get it quickly. When this goal is achieved, young people are prepared to graduate from high school, thrive in college and have a career with good pay.

IPC has helped to build a culture around collecting and using data in Indianola with the community, its partners and the school system. IPC has modeled how to use data, including analyzing and assessing the data, to make informed decisions about progress toward goals. IPC has also emphasized the responsibility to report data results back to the community, allowing community members to take ownership of the project. This evidence- and results-based infrastructure is now in place and should be available to the community for many years to come, with or without IPC.

In order to solicit ideas and opinions from the community, IPC staff members conduct annual door-to-door neighborhood surveys of close to 350 Indianola residents. Moreover, in partnership with the school district,

IPC conducts similar surveys of all middle and high school students. The findings from these surveys are used to improve programs and to share with community, youth and parent groups as a way of inviting their engagement with IPC, in discussing issues that confront families and children in the community, and to jointly craft solutions to these issues.

Prior to the Promise Neighborhood work, there was an absence of a cohesive unit that aligned key education strategies in Indianola. Organizations and individuals worked in silos while providing services. IPC has been instrumental in coordinating services and aligning the activities and goals of child care centers, the pre-K program and Head Start. As a result, across all the key constituencies in Indianola and Sunflower County, partners coordinate their curriculum and assessment. The alignment activities that now take place are systematic and structural; child care centers, the pre-K program and Head Start all use the same evidence-based curriculum and assessment, and memoranda of agreement are now in place between these partners to allow for data sharing and for interprogram referrals.

IPC has been very successful:

- More children are coming to kindergarten ready to learn: 48 percent of kindergartners were ready for school at the beginning of the school year in 2016 compared with 25 percent in 2013.
- Not only is IPC contributing to students arriving ready for kindergarten, gains are now being sustained in kindergarten through second grade. In the fall of 2016, over 70 percent of first- and second-grade students in target schools were reading at grade level—a dramatic increase since the inception of IPC.

- 73 percent of children aged 0-5 have access to a medical home, including a place where their parents go regularly, and a personal doctor or nurse for the parents to ask questions when they need advice about their child's health.
- The graduation rate has risen from 61 percent in 2014 to 71 percent in 2015.
- The IPC Fellows program, a literacy intervention targeting struggling third-grade readers, contributed to a 23 percentage point increase in the pass rate for at-risk students on the third-grade reading gate (36 percent to 59 percent pass rate).

After three years of doing this work in Indianola, DHA has learned several things about initiating a major grant like this in a low-resource school system:

1. The community will buy in when they realize that programs are being funded and managers are being hired based on objective measurement of outcomes rather than on perceived cronyism or nepotism. IPC is a data-driven, results-based organization; decisions that drive programs are based on quantifiable outcomes. Consequently, it is important to have a system of data collection, data sharing and program measurement at all phases of the pipeline. The community began to see higher-quality results and more community participation when it became clear that IPC used data and outcomes, held program managers accountable for performance and worked with partners in strategic ways.
2. Through a three-year leadership development process with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, IPC

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Indianola Promise Community

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leaders are now practicing results-based leadership. Because of this culture, it is also important to have accountability among partners. IPC leaders believe that progress can be maintained, long after the actual project ends, if Indianola continues to focus on institutionalizing performance measures and accountability systems.

3. Achieving meaningful improvement requires layers of programs that touch these students and their families. There is no silver bullet. There is no one program or project that can turn a nonreader into a reader, or a potential dropout into

a successful graduate. It takes multiple programs working in different ways with each student and family members all along the school trajectory. Because of this finding, it is singularly important that the organizations, institutions and constituencies that help these children and students have their own missions and programs aligned and working together. This is why IPC funds 30 different programs.

Even though DHA has learned a lot and has made great progress, there are still plenty of challenges, including:

1. Lack of coordinated services in other areas of the pipeline— Though IPC has been successful in coordinating and aligning services

in the education process, a lot of work still exists to coordinate these same efforts throughout the latter part of a student's academic career.

2. Sustainability—To build sustainability for the work, it is increasingly important that other organizations share in the responsibility. Many organizations lack the capacity to share in the backbone functions, which leaves IPC holding this role.
3. Poverty—Poverty remains the greatest challenge. Along with poverty comes the instability of the family unit, low incomes, meager local resources for schools, single-parent homes, high teenage pregnancy rate and crime. IPC is addressing many of the challenges in Indianola related to education and has also begun addressing many of the health and social needs of the city's families. This is a generational problem that will take a lot of time and resources to overcome.

Despite the challenges, Mayor Steve Rosenthal said, "Poverty in the Delta is generational, but I see the Indianola Promise Community as being our one shot at shifting a change from generational poverty. It has helped the community come together to uplift themselves. The Indianola Promise Community has been our quarterback to bring services together; gaps are now being filled so that people can move forward." As for the future of the IPC, he said, "It's the one program that increases our odds at being a successful community."

Deborah Moore is associate vice president of community relations at Delta Health Alliance.

Top row, left: Indianola children enjoy the KaBOOM! Park built in 2010 by IPC staff and over 350 volunteers.

Top row, right: Youths learn healthy cooking skills in an IPC summer camp.

Middle row, left: IPC's annual Literacy Event at the Library allows students and their families to participate in literacy activities, including story time. Students wear their PJs and enjoy cookies and milk.

Middle row, right: Students participate in IPC's Spring Fling over spring break in partnership with the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center, learning about music and constructing their own instruments.

Bottom row, left: Students participate in the B.B. King Museum's "The Art of Living Smart" summer camp; in partnership with IPC, they enjoy literacy-infused art activities.

Bottom row, right: Indianola youth participate in Community Garden Day at the IPC Freedom Garden.



Working Together to Address the Wealth Gap

By Jobi Cates

“...Absent intervention, it will take Latinos 84 years to amass the wealth white families currently enjoy, while for African-American households, it would take an astonishing 228 years to amass the wealth whites have today.” (Racial Wealth Divide Initiative, Corporation for Enterprise Development)

“Women of color experience both a gender wealth gap and a racial wealth gap. The historical legacy of the racial wealth gap in combination with the women’s wealth gap leaves women of color with the least amount of wealth. Single black women have a median wealth of \$200 and single Hispanic women \$100, less than a penny for every dollar of wealth owned by single white non-Hispanic men.” (Women and Wealth: Insights for Grant-makers, Asset Funders Network)

As these excerpts indicate, we continue to see mounting evidence of the complexity of wealth inequality in our communities. That said, we live in a time of unprecedented access to resources, networks and proven strategies to create opportunity. Those who work in philanthropy, banking and community development are poised to work together to address the complexity of wealth gaps.

The [Asset Funders Network \(AFN\)](#) was founded in 2005 to bring together grant-makers passionate about promoting economic opportunity and financial security for all through targeted efforts to reduce wealth gaps and to connect households to market tools that do not strip wealth. Regardless of whether their grant-making targets health or community development,

education or housing, microenterprise or workforce, if funders are giving money to increase individual financial security, AFN serves them as a resource.

AFN’s founders use philanthropy to stimulate the proliferation of asset-building initiatives as keys to unlock opportunity and upward economic mobility. While asset-building practitioners and their funders sit on opposite sides of a grant proposal, sometimes with limited opportunity to share information and resources, the content and knowledge-sharing vehicles developed by AFN for funders are designed to be useful for anyone in the field, regardless of which side of the grant proposal equation they work on.

Among our members, asset building is defined as any program, policy or institutional practice that enables individuals, families and communities to build a strong foundation of resources they can draw upon to meet more than their basic survival needs. Financial savings and long-term asset building create the capacity to invest in and plan for the future, and to achieve security, stability, upward mobility and well-being.

Children’s savings accounts (CSAs) are a good example of an asset-building initiative that promises to help close wealth gaps. “CSA” most often refers to a savings account opened for the benefit of a very young child—at birth or by kindergarten age—into which a third party, such as a city, nonprofit, foundation, parent or others can deposit funds that are to be disbursed for postsecondary education expenses. Historically, new CSA programs have required early support

from philanthropy to create momentum for broader adoption.

Recent research by the Institute on Assets and Social Policy posits that, “If a universal CSA program had been established in 1979, and if that program had included as part of its design a progressive public investment reaching \$7,500 for low-wealth households with incremental declines to \$1,250 for the highest-wealth households, median wealth holdings for younger black and Latino households today

Definitions: Moving toward Opportunity

ASSET POVERTY: A family is asset-poor when it does not have enough financial assets (outside of home or business equity) to cover three months of expenses at the federal poverty line.

ASSET SECURITY: A family is asset-secure when it has sufficient financial assets to cover three months of its average living expenses.

ASSET OPPORTUNITY: A family is able to invest in opportunities for mobility when it has enough assets to be secure and additional assets that can be used for investments to help build its future security and wealth, such as a down payment on a median-priced home, startup costs for a small business, or tuition for two or more years at a public college.

could have been significantly higher (by \$7,450 and \$6,100, respectively). Meanwhile, the wealth gap between black and white households for young adults would have decreased by 23%, while the wealth gap between white and Latino households for young adults would have declined by 28%.”

While CSAs are a strong model, there are many more available solutions in both policy and practice to

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Case Study: Philanthropy Seeds Work that Has Promise to Close Wealth Gaps

Research from the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis indicates that a child from a low- or moderate-income household with school savings of up to \$500 before reaching college age is more than four times more likely to graduate from college than a child with no savings dedicated to education. CSAs give all children the opportunity to kick-start financial asset building and to believe in the possibility of their bright future.

In 2008, Maine became the first state to launch a universal CSA program: the Harold Alfond College Challenge (Alfond Challenge). The Alfond Scholarship Foundation (ASF) launched the challenge with the goal of increasing the likelihood that Maine students will aspire to and attain postsecondary education. In 2014, ASF began automatically opening a savings account for every child born in Maine, seeded with a \$500 grant for future education expenses at a university, community college or vocational school. The CSA program is made possible through the foundation's strategic partnership with the Finance Authority of Maine, an independent state agency focused on higher education and business financing programs. The Alfond Challenge is integrated within the state's NextGen 529 college savings plan. Families are encouraged to contribute to their child's NextGen account and can qualify for state matching grants to substantially boost savings.

Working Together to Address the Wealth Gap

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reduce wealth gaps. AFN has developed resources to shed light on both policy and programmatic solutions. Resources include briefs on equity in business [enterprise lending to people of color](#) and [people who are formerly incarcerated](#) with case studies on microenterprise from across the nation. AFN's work [examining the scope of the financial coaching field](#), as well as how coaches measure and can improve impact, help both financial institutions and community-based organizations discern the relative effectiveness of financial coaching programs in differing contexts.

In May 2017, AFN will host its [biennial funder conference](#) in Indianapolis (see Calendar entry on page 2). We will engage funders in dialogue about how to accelerate progress in eliminating the wealth gap. Our keynote speaker will be [Rev. Starsky Wilson](#), who may very well

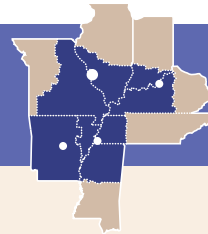
be the personification of “funder-community partnership.” As the CEO of [Deaconess Foundation](#) in St. Louis, he also heads up [Forward through Ferguson](#), one of the most challenging on-the-ground efforts to reduce inequality in the nation.

In 2017, AFN will release new reports on the integration of immigrants to increase community economic health and prosperity, the bidirectional relationship between health and wealth, and youth entrepreneurship. We will launch a new website to make this material easier to access. While AFN was created to be a resource to funders, we hope that our investment in knowledge will benefit everyone who shares our belief in economic opportunity for all.

Jobi Cates is Midwest program officer at Asset Funders Network.

SPANNING the Region

The region served by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis encompasses all of Arkansas and parts of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee.



Housing Market Conditions Report—2016:Q4

The St. Louis Fed's *Housing Market Conditions* report provides a snapshot of conditions in the U.S. and in the Eighth District states and MSAs. View the most recent report, as well as archives of previous reports, at www.stlouisfed.org/hmc. You'll also find [Housing Market Perspectives: On the Level](#) with Bill Emmons, an analysis of the quarterly report by Bill Emmons, an assistant vice president and economist at the St. Louis Fed.

Federal Reserve Board Announces Community Advisory Council Members

The Federal Reserve Board has announced the new members of its new Community Advisory Council (CAC).

The CAC is an advisory council comprising individuals with consumer-, community development- and workforce-related expertise. The CAC will provide information, advice and recommendations to the Board on a wide range of policy

matters and emerging issues of interest. The four new members of the CAC were selected from a pool of candidates who responded to the Board's public invitation to express interest in serving on the council.

The CAC is scheduled to meet May 26 and November 3, 2017. A summary of the meetings will be posted shortly thereafter. To learn more about the CAC and its new members, visit www.federalreserve.gov/aboutthefed/cac.htm.

Community and Economic Development: Around the Globe and Back to the Mississippi Delta Region

By Grover Ainsworth

In 2015, I began working as a regional economic and community development officer for the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), a federal-state partnership created in 2000 tasked with building communities, creating jobs and improving the lives of the people living in the 252 counties and parishes in the organization's eight-state region. Previously, most of my professional work had been primarily focused on international development. Since my return to Mississippi, I have considered how my past experience—the challenges and struggles, strategic approaches to problem solving and potential solutions—may be applicable to domestic development work.

For a bit of context, my work as a development professional began when I became a Peace Corps volunteer. The three goals of the Peace Corps are pretty straightforward and have guided me in my professional approach to development:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women;
2. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans; and
3. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.

My first placement was in the coastal city of Malindi, Kenya, at Malindi Handicrafts Cooperative Society, the second-largest woodcarving

cooperative in the country. Over 600 wood carvers were keeping this skilled craft alive and thriving as a profession and art form. My job was to increase market access for wood products, gain new international clients and improve exporting efficiency. Shortly after my first year of service, a contested presidential election caused major civil unrest throughout the country; hundreds of thousands of people were killed or displaced. For the first time, Peace Corps Kenya had to temporarily suspend the program; volunteers were evacuated from the country.

I returned after eight months to a new placement in Marikani, Kenya. LifeWorks Shukrani was part of a larger public-private partnership that included General Motors East Africa, Unilever, Deloitte, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Family Health International. The partnership was created in part to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.

One of the first income-generating activities set up was a textile factory, LifeWorks Shukrani. “Shukrani” means “thanks” or “appreciation” in Swahili. The factory name included this word by design and was chosen by the first factory workers. These individuals were very much in need of assistance and were committed to the positive impacts a successful factory could bring to them, their community and the region. The factory was created as an alternative livelihoods component of the USAID-sponsored Regional Outreach Addressing AIDS through

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Grover Ainsworth is the regional economic and community development officer for the Delta Regional Authority. He grew up in a relatively small town and was anxious to leave Mississippi and search for adventure to the ends of the world.

His first expedition was to Providence, R.I., for undergraduate and graduate studies at Johnson & Wales University. Between degrees, he served for five years in the Army Medical Corps, where he had the opportunity to travel to South Korea and experience that country's vibrancy and stunning growth and development. He worked for three years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya and then as a foreign service officer with USAID in Afghanistan for three years before returning to his native Mississippi.

Development (ROAD) program. It aimed to provide alternatives to risky behaviors and survival strategies through education, training, skill creation, protection and alternate income-generating activities.

My last placement was with the Samburu people at PEAR Innovations (Participatory Education, Awareness and Resource Innovations) in Maralal, Kenya, a small yet thriving city in the northwestern part of the country. The Samburu are a seminomadic tribe. As with many nomadic people of the world, the Samburu suffered from a lack of government investments in their home areas. Since the very nature of nomadic people is to roam from place to place, governments are usually not

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Delta I-Fund Launched

The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) and Winrock International have launched a first-of-its-kind, multi-million-dollar investment fund focused on helping Delta-based startups and entrepreneurs compete on a global scale. The Delta I-Fund, which includes an initial \$1 million investment from IBERIABANK as well as another \$1 million from the DRA, will target local entrepreneurs across the eight-state Delta region and provide key training, mentoring and capital investment to help them build their businesses. Learn more about the fund at <http://dra.gov/newsroom/press-release/news-delta-regional-authority-and-winrock-international-launch-investment-f>.

Tennessee Governor's Rural Task Force—New Website

Tennessee Governor William "Bill" Haslam created the Rural Task Force to bring resources together from a wide range of organizations to advance rural communities and economic development throughout Tennessee. The task force's new website features a wealth of information for rural community leaders, including a searchable database to find the right resources. Learn more at <http://tn.gov/ruraltaskforce>.

>> **More Have You Heard content is available online**
www.stlouisfed.org/publications/bridges



Malindi Handicrafts, Malindi, Kenya.

Community and Economic Development

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able to tax and collect much revenue from them. In response, governments often do not invest back in the areas where these people live.

At PEAR, my primary job was helping Samburu women improve, market and export the particular type of basket for which the tribe is well known. PEAR clients engaged in food security and economic growth activities such as basket weaving, beading, camp site management and website design. Additionally, I had the opportunity to work on tourism with women's and community groups throughout the north.

After my Peace Corps service, I became a foreign service officer working with USAID in Afghanistan. One of my roles was serving as the USAID infrastructure officer for 14 eastern provinces. It was in this role that I learned just how important and critical various infrastructure systems are for a nation. Effective transportation infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, rail) and utility systems (e.g., electricity, gas, phone, broadband, water, sewer) are the bones of a successful, healthy and economically competitive place. They provide the foundation on which economic development, public health and almost every other development sector activity can build.

After my service in Afghanistan, I settled back in the U.S. and began work at the DRA, where my experience allows me to make observations about development work in general to further build my body of knowledge. In many ways, my work mirrors what I have been doing over the last eight years around the world.

Development work means many things to many people, and it can be

applied in a domestic or international context. The development may be focused on economic, health, education, gender equality, rule of law, governance and/or agriculture sectors; the work may seek to solve local or national issues and provide solutions to communities of all sizes at a micro or macro level. Often, development solutions require a multisector approach to solve or address complex challenges or even prepare or recover from conflict or disaster.

From Kenya to Afghanistan to the Mississippi Delta, I have observed many of the same issues plaguing cities and towns of all sizes. An area in Kenya may struggle with food insecurity created by ongoing drought. A community in Mississippi may have food insecurity because the lone grocery store moved out of town and people have limited resources and transportation to get to the next closest market. The lack of a paved road for an area in Afghanistan may shut off that part of the country from economic, health, education and other opportunities. In the U.S., lack of critical infrastructure may present the same outcomes for small and large towns and cities. Solutions that work for one place may not work for another because the cultural or societal norms and perspective are not properly aligned, or because all the other required tools are not in place to properly address the problems.

In my experience, first assessing these challenges and developing successful models to overcome them are somewhat similar, no matter where in the world the challenge presents itself. A few principles that I have learned internationally that have helped to guide my work in the Delta are:

- Be culturally aware and immersed in the community as much as possible to gain perspective and context.

- Build trust and work with community leaders and influencers as much as possible at all steps of project/program development and deployment.
- Partner and collaborate with as many different stakeholders as feasible.
- Consider and include all development disciplines (economic development, education, health, agriculture, etc.) when developing strategic plans as these areas may often overlap.
- Focus on community-led solutions.
- Transfer skills and diffuse knowledge.
- Think sustainability at every phase of project development and deployment, and work to secure local buy-in.
- Know community strengths and assets and utilize them.

Many international models can be replicated and scaled up or down to allow for targeted and impactful development to take place in the U.S. The development and improvement of an economy or society takes time, dedication and a concentration on understanding the context of the area where development is being discussed. Models, projects and programs can

be adapted and lessons learned can be used just about anywhere, but the development intervention should be aligned with the needs of each targeted area or community.

Both internationally and domestically, I continue to be inspired by the work of dedicated people working to define and improve their communities. With every business recruited, every worker properly trained and every city center beautified, these leaders and community stakeholders are establishing the conditions necessary for success today and for future generations, in the Delta and beyond.

12 Steps to Financial Success: Empowering At-Risk Adults

By Ben Joergens

As director of financial empowerment for Old National Bank (ONB), I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand how financial education can change lives. This is especially true of the education workshops I have conducted within the prison system. We aren't just bankers; we're educators. I feel it's part of our job to enlighten those we touch, especially those who have struggled in the past.

Working with incarcerated individuals and helping them break the cycle of financial dependence that contributed to their incarceration motivated me to help create the *12 Steps to Financial Success* program in 2014, in partnership with the Henderson County Detention Center. This unique program was developed to address the singular circumstances and challenges of incarcerated

nonviolent offenders who desperately need the tools, confidence and training to successfully re-enter society. The opportunity to partner with these at-risk individuals allows ONB to provide valuable financial education while reaching a demographic that is not normally an audience for our products and services.

This 12-week program includes one- to two-hour classes per week and encompasses a variety of important personal financial topics. Participants learn the 12 steps they can take to change their financial lives for the better. Topics covered include financial psychology, account management, budgeting, credit, identity theft, jobs and careers, entrepreneurship, taxes, investments, and retirement.

The partnership with the Henderson County Detention Center is the first of its kind for ONB. In the

first two years of the program, we reached about 150 female inmates at the facility who were incarcerated for substance-abuse crimes. Building on the success of this alliance, ONB partnered with Volunteers of America Inc. (VOA) to provide financial education courses at HOPE Hall, a VOA-managed rehabilitation facility in Evansville, Ind. This partnership assists ex-offenders find a place to live once they complete financial education classes taught by ONB and supplemented by one-on-one counseling from HOPE staff. We have also been working with other bankers to reach more areas throughout our footprint—in Henderson, Evansville, Dubois County in southern Indiana and Indianapolis. Soon we'll be bringing it to Michigan. In Henderson alone, there are now more than 100 inmates participating in the program.

ONB recognizes how crucial financial education is, which is why we have made financial literacy a core organizational focus. We have seen

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12 Steps to Financial Success

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the significant social and economic benefits from our involvement in the community. *12 Steps to Financial Success* provides extensive financial education to those who are very unlikely to receive this guidance otherwise. Participants are presented with realistic scenarios pertaining to budgeting, cutting down on their expenses and other financial situations. They are able to set short- and long-term goals for themselves that can be reached during their time in the detention center and after they are released.

Those who complete this program are provided with the knowledge and resources necessary to re-enter society as more financially responsible citizens, with greater economic security and opportunity, which can lead to a better lifestyle for graduates and their families.

One of our graduates spent the better part of a decade behind bars for drug-related offenses. She says that the program completely altered her life's trajectory. Now clean and sober, she is the manager of a popular hair salon in her hometown. She opened a certificate of deposit and took out a loan at a local bank—two things she never imagined being able to do.

How Do We Measure Success?

Program graduates ultimately return to their communities with far greater self-esteem and financial confidence, making them more likely to open a bank account, save for college, create an emergency fund and purchase a home. The program is cost-effective and sustainable. This particular at-risk population is very underserved; the risk (and cost) of reincarceration can be substantially



ONB completion coin awarded at graduation.

reduced through the tools and knowledge provided through the *12 Steps* program. Considering that the average cost of reincarceration is approximately \$25,000 annually per inmate, this program could provide significant savings for the state if it were implemented more broadly.

Additionally, helping these individuals grow and change—in some cases breaking a cycle of negative actions and consequences that has followed them throughout their lives—helps sustain and improve the communities where they work, live and support families.

Currently, we are administering pre- and post-testing to gauge the success and knowledge gained by participants. In our most recent classes, more than half of the graduates scored 80 percent or higher, and 20 percent of the women scored above 90 percent.

12 Steps allows the inmates to achieve something that they may have never achieved before—the completion of a program. At graduation, ONB awards completion coins to the students as a token of their accomplishments, along with a certificate. The coin serves as a reminder to the inmates of all they learned, symbolizing the partnership between the detention center and ONB. They are

encouraged to keep this coin with them when they are out of jail. Anytime they encounter a tempting financial situation, the coin will serve as a tool for reflection on what they have learned and a reminder to make smart, sound financial decisions. One of our graduates told us that she showed the coin to a banker in her hometown and explained what it symbolized. This inspired the bank to take her on as a customer, despite her previous credit problems.

The graduation ceremony is always touching. A few inmates have let us know that this program was the first time they have ever completed anything in their life. They assured us that they would use their new knowledge to help better their finances and empower others around them. Some of these women have been involved in gangs, faced death multiple times and have truly had a tough life.

National Recognition for the Program

In 2015, ONB was awarded the American Bankers Association (ABA) Community Commitment Award for Financial Education for *12 Steps to Financial Success*. In addition, the ABA Foundation presented me with the George Bailey Distinguished Service Award, given to a non-CEO bank employee who demonstrates outstanding initiative, commitment to their customers and community and inspires others.

For more information on ONB's financial education programs, visit www.oldnational.com/about/community/educating.

Ben Joergens is the director of financial empowerment at Old National Bank.

Memorial Community Development Corporation: Putting Faith to Work

By Rasheedah Jackson

The Beginning

Pastor Adrian Brooks Sr. redefined the role of Memorial Baptist Church (MBC) in the center city of Evansville, Ind., 23 years ago. At that time, the church had a small membership of about 50 people and the community was distressed. Church members were diligent in meeting the spiritual needs of the community, but it was apparent that people were living in despair. Blight, poverty and addiction were just some of the challenges that they were facing. MBC, with its strong roots in the community, was called to be an agent of change. Pastor Brooks and his 50 faithful members made a commitment to be public servants and to create a church that would be involved in every facet of peoples' lives. From that commitment was born the Memorial Community Development Corp. (MCDC), with the purpose of creating enriching opportunities in economic development, health services, housing, education, financial services, social services and youth development. MCDC would be vital to the transformation of Evansville's center city.

The Harvest

Within the first five years of its ministry, MBC and MCDC experienced an abundance of growth. Church membership grew to over 1,200 and there was an emergence of center city revitalization. Blocks of dilapidated housing and abandoned warehouses were eliminated and replaced with the new Memorial Baptist Church, two senior housing complexes, a health center, child care facility, multifamily townhouses and

a Subway restaurant. In addition to development, more than 50 ministries providing various supportive services were available. MBC established itself as a pioneer for holistic ministry in action. The people began to look to the church as a solution to their issues. To date, we have developed over 100 units of affordable housing; built and sold 13 single-family homes; employed hundreds of youth; supported children and families through our child care and educational programs; provided repair services to homeowners; and delivered access to fresh produce through our Urban Market.

Enriching Opportunity in Evansville

MBC and MCDC have accomplished a lot. We have demonstrated the impact a church can make in the community through faith and hard work. In 2013, we began to re-evaluate the economic condition of our community. We found that more than 10 percent of the households were earning less than \$10,000 per year, lacked transportation and had limited access to basic professional services such as insurance and banking. Concurrently, a 40,000-square-foot commercial building was becoming an eyesore in the community because the structure had not been properly maintained. It housed a full-service grocery store, a Family Dollar Store and additional space that was not being used and had potential for development.

The leadership staff of MCDC developed a plan to transform the building into a community asset and resource that would meet a need for the neighborhood. In 2014, the process of

acquiring the building began. The owner and board of directors found MCDC to be a solid partner with a well-thought-out vision for the facility. They agreed to sell. The total project cost was \$450,000, which included the acquisition and renovation of the facility. MCDC used various financing vehicles to close the deal: a grant from Evansville's Department of Metropolitan Development, a donation from Old National Bank and a loan from IFF, a community development financial institution. In August 2015, MCDC and the community celebrated the opening of Memorial Shopping Plaza, which provides rental space for:

- The Downtown Market, a locally owned grocery store
- Family Dollar, a convenience goods store
- Metro PCS, a cell phone store
- Gatricks, a soul food restaurant

MCDC has plans to continue renovations of the facility so that additional businesses will see the benefit of locating in the community. Memorial Community Federal Credit Union, which will open by the summer of 2017, has already made plans and begun renovations to open in the plaza. Through our newly established Black Chamber of Commerce, we are also seeking to engage current and aspiring minority business owners to participate in this development. The competition for resources continues to increase, but we are diligent in our pursuit of partners that have a shared interest in empowering people.

Rasheedah Jackson is the child care and development director for Memorial Community Development Corp.



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Resources ● ● ● ●

Small Bank and Intermediate Small Bank CRA Examination Video

This Federal Reserve System video explains the Small Bank and Intermediate Small Bank (ISB) CRA Examination in practical and understandable terms. View the video at www.richmondfed.org/community_development/resource_centers/cra or www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjsjTbGHMIA.

Peer City Identification Tool

The Peer City Identification Tool (PCIT), developed by the Community Development and Policy Studies division of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, is a data comparison and visualization instrument that can help policymakers and practitioners understand a municipality in the context of peer cities. Drawing on city-level indicators from the American Community Survey and historical Decennial Census records, the PCIT performs a cluster analysis to identify groups of similar cities along economic, demographic, social and housing dimensions. The 300 cities included in the dataset had a population of at least 50,000 in 1960. Today, they have a median population of just over 100,000. All cities meeting this historical criterion are included in the tool, with a few cities excluded due to data consistency concerns. The tool is available at <https://chicagofed.org/region/community-development/data/pcit>.

Experiences and Perspectives of Young Workers—Report Available

Young workers in the United States experience higher rates of unemployment than the population as a whole but are nonetheless generally optimistic about their job prospects, according to the Federal Reserve Board's new report. The report, which presents data collected in 2015 as part of the Board's second *Survey of Young Workers*, provides a snapshot of the educational attainment, employment experience, job market outlook and financial self-sufficiency of 18- to 30-year-olds. Overall, the survey reveals that 61 percent of respondents are positive about future employment opportunities, compared with 45 percent in 2013. It also shows that respondents with postsecondary education and those who are currently employed are more likely to be optimistic about future job opportunities. The report is available at www.federalreserve.gov/econresdata/2015-experiences-and-perspectives-of-young-workers-201612.pdf.

Access: A Community Development Podcast from the Federal Reserve

The Community Development departments of the 12 Federal Reserve districts have developed a new podcast series that addresses important social issues like economic mobility, affordable housing, small-business development and community reinvestment. Each episode will showcase successful program models that provide access to opportunity for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. They are available on the [Access website](#), [iTunes](#) and [Stitcher](#).

Engaging Workforce Development: A Framework for Meeting CRA Obligations

This guide from the Federal Reserve banks of Dallas and Kansas City is designed to give banks—and organizations interested in partnering with them—tools and information to engage in workforce development activities in ways that may help them fulfill their obligations under the CRA. It includes a Performance Context Template for banks to use in telling their CRA story. Appendixes include resources and workforce experts from around the Federal Reserve System. The guide is available at www.dallasfed.org/cd/EconDev/workforce/2017/workforceCRA.

Uneven Opportunity: Exploring Employers' Educational Preferences for Middle-Skills Jobs

Is a bachelor's degree necessary to get a decent-paying, middle-skills job? It depends on where you live. This new report by researchers at the Federal Reserve banks of Atlanta and Philadelphia investigates the level of education preferred by employers for four "opportunity occupations"—jobs that pay at least the national annual median wage and that historically haven't required a four-year college education. Read the report at www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/publications/cascade-focus.