

David C. Graham

PROJECT CONTRACT FINAL REPORT

Community Economic Development Program

New Hampshire College



Title: Faith-based Initiative for Community
Economic Development

Date: December 2000

David C. Graham

**Using a Faith-Based Initiative as a Community
Economic Development Tool:**

PROJECT CONTRACT FINAL REPORT
DECEMBER, 2000

INDEX

Introduction.....	Page 1
History of the New Jersey Faith-Based Initiative.....	Page 3
Problematic Overview.....	Page 6
Background.....	Page 8
Project Goal.....	Page 11
Projective Objective.....	Page 12
Time Line.....	Page 20
Projects Results.....	Page 22
Evaluation.....	Page 25
Executive Summary.....	Page 27
Conclusion.....	Page 28
Appendix.....	Page 29

INTRODUCTION

As a kid I grew up in two states, North Carolina and New York. Of course there was a vast difference in the two states, but I loved both of them for different reasons. North Carolina for its beautiful green countryside, the smell of the fresh morning dew, birds singing, flowers blooming and fresh air. Harlem on the other hand had the Savoy Ballroom, Apollo, Cotton Club, Times Square, Coney Island, Empire State Building and the Museum of Natural History. I seem to have had the best of both worlds.

In both locations, there was one thing in common; there was always a need in the community. All over America I have seen the same things, boarded up buildings, deteriorating store fronts, abandon homes, skid rows, broken up sidewalks, vacant lots looking like landfills and most of the time, it seems that no one cares.

In the early 60's I relocated to Newark, New Jersey and, of course, the same problem existed. In 1967, a very hot summer, Watts in Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, New York, Newark, New Jersey and other cities were part of the burn baby burn syndrome. Neighborhoods were left looking like the aftermath of Korea or Vietnam. For twenty years no attempt was made to do anything but demolish and old buildings left over from the riot.

I remember my Pastor always trying to keep the area where the Church was located clean, encouraging other to fix their own properties, because if we did not take an interest, no one else would.

1976, I was placed in South Toms River, New Jersey. The area was in dire need of repair and needed much care. As years passed, we transformed an entire block into a better place. We opened an ice cream parlor, Laundromat, established a charter bus company, and attempted to motivate residents to take pride in their properties.

There is yet much to be done in the community of Manito Park and surrounding areas. Together we can build, restore, renovate and make our communities a community of pride.

HISTORY OF THE NEW JERSEY FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

In October of 1997, after conferring with many of New Jersey's religious leaders, Governor Christine Todd Whitman announced a cutting edge Faith-Based Community Development Initiative through partnership with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Public Service Electric and Gas (PSE&G), the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Center for Non-profit corporation.

The office of Faith-Based Initiative is the Department of Community Affairs. Under the Faith-Based Initiative, Faith-Based Organizations are groups who (1) have a Community Development Corporation (CDC) with a separate 501©3 nonprofit status, (2) a group created by a community of faith which is a House of Worship, (3) those who have and are making a critical impact to neighborhood sustainability and (4) those who provide services and programs to low and moderate income families.

Since the inception of the Faith-Based Community Development Initiative, eighteen communities of faith were trained extensively in community development to help better serve their communities. This training is indicative to the Faith-Based Mission Statement "To support

and encourage New Jersey Communities of Faith in their efforts to improve the quality of life of those in need.”

New Jersey’s strength is in its communities and the institutions that serve the state’s residents. Because of their stature in the neighborhood they serve and their insights into those communities, faith-based organizations play a crucial role in unlocking the potential of New Jersey’s cities and nurturing the shared sense of mutual respect and common good, civic engagement that is vital to building and maintaining strong communities among the people who live and work in them.

Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and religious institutions of all faiths played key roles in modeling, nurturing and developing thousands of new and rehabilitated housing units every year. These housing units were made affordable to low-income elderly and to disabled residents of their communities. They are also building day care centers and schools. Commercial strips in low and moderate-income communities have been developed.

The funds provided in this initiative are intended to enhance outreach and referral services to transitional support services, career counseling and development and job retention services for WFNJ Post-TANF recipient. Special emphasis will be placed on informing those individuals that have left assistance of the support services available. Transitional support services include: child support, child care, transportation assistance, housing, Medicaid NJ KidCare, food stamps, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

To further enhance the communities of faith the New Jersey Faith-Based Training Institute has been established. The purpose of this training institute is to provide training and technical assistance designed to enhance capacity building and strengthen programmatic implementation of faith-based community development initiatives, organizations and communities of faith. This institute is a partnership with The Center for Non-Profit Corporations, Public Service Electric and Gas Company, The Chase Manhattan Bank and The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Kean University – Gateway Institute for Regional Development and Rowan University. Kean University and Rowan Universities will provide continuing education units to participants who register with the academic entity and complete the required training. New Jersey holds national recognition as the first state supported Faith-based Initiative.

PROBLEMATIC OVERVIEW

There is no single initiative more compelling to our success as a nation, than the revitalization of our communities. Across the United States many communities are in trouble. Poverty, unemployment, crime, drugs, housing and education are just a few areas that challenge us in the twenty-first century. These ills within our communities must be addressed if we are to be continuous and successful in our future.

The aforementioned issues have deformed and devastated America such that the resources for nurturing collective and critical consciousness, moral commitment and courageous engagement are vastly underdeveloped. We need serious strategic and tactical thinking about how to create projects and programs to address these issues. We must then forge the king of groups and organizations that can actualize these projects and programs.

For decades Americans have been bombarded with the epidemic of these ills of society. Unemployment is still an issue. Young people face tremendous obstacles in pursuing a quality education. Crime is alarmingly high and the rate of homeownership and business ownership remain low. All the aforementioned, breed a crisis if left unnoticed. Poverty begets crime, crime begets drugs and drugs beget homelessness. Homelessness steals from the pursuit of quality education and our future as a world-class society. The warnings triggered throughout our communities are seen by incidents of crime, violence, juvenile random acts of mass killings at

schools, robberies and assaults. This is something that must be developed if our communities are ever to survive on their own.

We can no longer afford to sit idly by and watch drugs run rampage in our communities. When we enter the gates of our cities we should not see dilapidated homes, gangs holding our street corners hostage, abandoned buildings and other signs of poverty drugs and crime. Instead there must be a combative element at work that ensures that every citizen can take an active role in his or her neighborhood.

Our communities cannot afford to persist in the area of lack, want and need. We must ensure that our neighborhoods do not fall apart under our eyes. We must awaken to the needs of poverty and turn it around to prosperity.

There are very few role models in this community, which has no programs for after school or any other time. This kind of environment is not healthy for our youth of America to constantly be exposed to. This could cause these youth to lose focus on who they really are and they may never reach their full potential. Crime should not be our children's past time. Drugs should not be an alternative to our reality. Housing must be a realistic hope for people of all backgrounds and education is vital to our survival. If we are able to identify the problems, we owe it to ourselves to provide viable solutions.

Temple Community Development Corporation is working diligently to improve the community and transform the life of youth and bring senior citizens into a better environment. If nothing is done to correct the situation in the community, we will lose another generation of youth and they will foster an even greater area of poverty.

BACKGROUND

The organization to birth this project is Temple Community Development Corporation. Temple CDC, formed in 1998, is a 501c3 nonprofit organization serving Berkeley Township and its surrounding communities in Ocean County, New Jersey. Its mission is to empower local resident's quality of life through education, economic development and other revitalization strategies. Persons involved in this project are all local churches, community residents of Berkeley Township and South Toms River. *South Toms River is an urban community with a population of 3,934 persons seated in the center of a primarily rural county whose population is 453,000 persons. The racial and ethnic breakdown in percentage is as follows: European 93.62, African American 5.98, Asian, PI/AI other 1.30 and Hispanic 2.64.* Life long residents of this community have identified issues outside the traditional parameters of human services that none the less have great impact on valuable families and children of this community; poverty, lack of education, unemployment and/or under employment, which leads to families dependent on long term support sites (i.e. welfare). Other characteristics are poor housing non-existent affordable housing and areas with no public sewage and/or water. A formal presentation of the project is to be publicly presented to local churches, Concerned Citizens Committee of Manitou Park (Manitou Park is the name of the local community). *Given the history of this area, it is expected to meet with some resistance in the form of ignorance, prejudice and strong desire to be uninvolved.* The target group to be involved will be community residents who live in close proximity of Berkeley Township. The surrounding communities are South Toms River, Seaside Heights and portions of Bayville. The population of these communities is culturally and racially diverse, primarily African American, Hispanic and European Americans with income levels that are non-existent to low or moderate.

The area in question is a small community in Berkeley Township. The entrance portrays a rural community where residents seem to have become content with the way things are. This is a community where a few want change but needing the support of more residents to make things happen. As one enters the community, a chain link fence surrounds a concrete block plant (inactive) where wild shrubs are growing higher than the fence and uncultivated grass out of control. The building where blocks were once manufactured is now showing signs of abandonment, doors hanging off the hinges, five ton trucks sitting with flat tires, body rusting away, blocks sitting so long until they have changed colors and are crumbling into pieces. The gates to the entrance are unstable and held together with a chain and padlock. The fence, which was once silver is now rusted and in some places have fallen apart from the rest of the fence. Next to the block plant is an area which is owned by the GPU power company. This property was once owned by the railroad. Tracks have now been removed and grass, shrubs, small trees now occupy the land with no sign of upkeep.

Following a winding street into The Park, (Manitou Park effectually known as the "The Park") we begin to observe homes, some well to moderately kept, some in dire need of repair, painting and need of roof replacement, some with shutters hanging by one hinge, windows broken out, old clothing hanging in what once was a screened in porch, half hid by grass and scrubs growing around it. Driveways are cracked while some are only dirt and have never been paved. Automobiles are sitting in yards and on vacant lots showing evidence of abandonment.

The homes are supplied with well water which was drilled quite a few years ago and have not been updated to modern code, but they are grandfathered because of length of time. There are no

sewers. All the homes are served with their own septic systems and most lots are now outdated according to today's code. This is a community with no Community Center or any other type of recreational facility for youth to participate. The majority of resident's economic standard is very low. Public transportation does not have the market demand to support broad based route schedules because it does not have the clientele to financially support the distances it would need to travel countywide. This is mainly due to the rural nature of the area. Without access to public transportation or vehicles of their own, many residents are forced to commute to work via co-workers, friends and family. However, the transportation is not always reliable and sometimes is simply unavailable. The lack of transportation profoundly inhibits the ability of residents to access good paying jobs.

Our hope here, again, is to fulfill the mission to empower local residents quality of life through education, economic development and other revitalization strategies.

PROJECT GOAL

The mission of Temple Community Development Corporation is to empower families with resources and skills that will enable them to enhance their lives through training, education, cultural and supportive activities designed to increase their social and economic power.

The goal of this project is to provide the following:

- To provide quality job training which will enhance lifelong learning and foster the development of individuality, commitment conviction and purpose.
- To recruit and maintain residents who will be dedicated to maintaining the community at large.
- To provide services which facilitate learning and activities for youth and community members within the limits of available resources.
- To foster partnerships with community service agencies, business and government as well as collaborative programs with other churches.
- To utilize resources available to enhance the infrastructure of the community.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

To provide quality job training which will enhance lifelong learning and foster the development of individuality, commitment, conviction and purpose.

The Temple Community Development Corporation proposes S.T.E.P.S. (Starting Toward Employability and Personal Satisfaction), a comprehensive service model designed to provide a workplace readiness-training program.

STEPS will enhance the market skills of individuals seeking employment of career upward mobility or change.

Encourage family relationship through family counseling, cooperative play, conflict resolution, anger management, violence and drug abuse intervention and prevention programs.

Foster self-respect, high self-esteem, respect for others and a sense of community.

The eight-module **STEPS** curriculum will include: motivational daily presentations, interpersonal communication workshops, dress for success forums, work ethics models, business telephone etiquette, computer fundamentals, word processing, resume writing, job search techniques and interviewing skills. Dr. Lyle Woodward, Director of Multicultural

Programs at Ocean County College, is assisting us in assembling our staff of computer trainers and instructors.

Classes are scheduled for five days per week from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for a period of 90 days. Classes will be taught in an office setting to provide hands on “live” experience. Expanded childcare will be provided for younger children, for parents who do not have convenient childcare during class hours.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- To recruit and maintain residents who will be dedicated to maintaining the community at large.

A committee to be formed to solicit neighborhood residents to become involved in their own community

Pastors will encourage parishioners to become involved and supporters of the community.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

To provide services which facilitate learning and activities for youth and community members within the limits of available resources.

K.W.A.M. (Kids With A Mission) The **KWAM** curriculum offers a structured program designed to enhance participants' self-esteem by helping them develop marketable skills and by affording them opportunities for learning, self-expression and community service. It will operate as both an after-school and summer program.

Students in our after-school program will be exposed to "real world" situations designed to help them acquire the problem solving and self-management skills required in a variety of careers, including becoming an entrepreneur. It also instructs the students on personal skills necessary for self-sufficiency so they can become productive, contributing members of the community. **KWAM** kids also serve their community through such activities as visits to nursing homes and by collecting school supplies for needy children in other countries.

KWAM will be extended as a summer program four hours per day five days per week over a six-week period. The summer program will consist of activities that assist with motor skill development and cognitive development. The activities include arts and crafts, swimming, skills learning labs and field trips. A qualified teacher and one assistant will facilitate the program.

Temple CDC is in the process of collaborating with other agencies and institutions that will allow **KWAM** to provide enhanced and specialized enrichment and support services to its clients. Discussions have been or are being initiated with:

Ocean Harbor House, Toms River: This children's safe house provides crisis intervention and counseling services for troubled youth.

Kids and Family, Community Medical Center, Toms River: Counselors offer anger management and parent support programs.

Toms River School District, Toms River: We will be recruiting teaching staff to assist with our homework club and tutoring program.

The College of New Jersey, Ewing: Professor Kim Pearson will be working with us to create an online mentoring program between TCNJ students and participants in **KWAM**. In addition, we are exploring the possibility of engaging Professor Pearson and her journalism students to help our students learn to create their own web-based magazine.

America's Promise The Alliance for Youth, national non-profit organization, led by General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.), is dedicated to mobilizing individuals, groups and organizations from every part of American life, to build and strengthen the character and competence of our nation's youth.

America's Promise is committed to the fulfillment of five basic promises necessary for children to become successful adults:

An ongoing relationship with a caring adult, parent, mentor, tutor or coach;

A safe place with structured activities during non-school hours;

A healthy start;

Marketable skills through effective education;

An opportunity to give back through community service.

Sites of Promise – They are specific locations, such as schools, colleges/universities, faith communities, public housing sites, neighborhood recreation programs and community centers, where youth can access all five basic promises. “Sites of Promise” are at the heart of America’s Promise. A “Site of Promise” is a site-community collaborative in which local stakeholders (commitment makers), in partnership with site officials, deliver the five promises to young people either directly or indirectly through existing site facilities

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- To foster partnership with community service agencies, business and government as well as collaborative programs with other churches.

Continuing to revitalize our community, we will reach out to OCEAN< Inc. (Ocean Community Economic Action Now Inc.), America's Promise, Concerned Citizens of Manitou Park and neighborhood churches.

OCEAN Inc. provides Head Start and housing assistance

Head Start – Head Start is a comprehensive pre-school program for low-income guidelines from the federal government. The program is comprised of five major service areas: Education, Health, Social services, Parent Involvement and Special Needs.

Education: Every child receives a variety of learning experiences, which foster physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth.

Health: Head Start arranges for every child to receive, if needed, comprehensive health care.

Social Services: Emphasis is placed on assisting families in determining their specific needs and guiding each family to meet those needs through resources and referrals and to help them in emergency situations.

Parent Involvement: Parents are encouraged to be involved in Head Start program planning, joining the Policy Council where they have a strong voice in decisions and volunteering their time as teacher aides, social service assistants or as storytellers, cooks or clerical workers.

Special Needs: Ten percent of Head Start's enrollments are children with disabilities.

Special services offered on site include speech and mental health consultation

Housing

The purpose of the Housing Division is to expand the supply of clean, safe and affordable housing in Ocean County.

Rentals: O.C.E.A.N., Inc. is the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's certified housing counseling agency for Ocean County. The Housing Officer provides counseling to clients on several housing issues, i.e. mortgage, reverse mortgage, default, foreclosures, renter/landlord mediation, first time home buyers and other housing issues.

Concerned Citizens of Manitou Park

Because of the influence of the Concerned Citizens group, we will be able to bring together the expertise and skills to accept the challenge of revitalizing this community.

Churches

The pastor's will use their influence and appoint representatives from their churches to work with the Concerned Citizens, youth and other needs in the area.

PROJECT TIME LINE

FIRST:

Brainstorm ideas and issues in our community that we want to investigate further. A community issue can be anything that affects a person's daily life. What issues are we concerned about? What bothers us? Are other people concerned about this issue also? Is this problem something that has been going on for some time? We can talk to family, friends, teachers, etc. to see how they are affected by the issue. Create one group list of all your ideas.

(Time Frame: 2 – 3 sessions)

SECOND:

Start building a team of people who want to tackle a community issue. A good team is a make up of people who have different talents, skills and abilities. You should be able to work together. No one person should be doing all the work. Everyone on the team has to contribute to the task. Look back at the group list of issues and chose one that your team would like to work on. More than one team can work on the same issue because there can always be more than one way to solve a problem. **(Time Frame: 1 session)**

THIRD

Research, Research Research. Research your issue so that you have a good understanding about it. Who does this problem effect? Why is it important to you? How does this problem affect the community? You can contact other people or other experts to get a better understanding of the problem. After you have further investigated the problem, brainstorm different ways to solve it.

How will your need to make your solution a reality? Get the assistance from others who have more experience in certain areas if you need it. **(Time Frame: 6 sessions)**

FOURTH:

Now let's test our ideas. Based on our research and what we have discovered begin to explore possible solutions. Then design a test to see if our solution works. Run experiments to test our idea under various conditions. If our solution doesn't work, don't quite – brainstorm and see if we need to make adjustments or maybe one of our other solutions will work better. Keep testing and modifying our solutions until we reach the best possible results. **(Time Frame: 5 – 6 sessions)**

FIFTH:

Prepare the paper work. Once we have tested our idea and identified the best possible solution, it's time to write it down. Our final document should be typed and put together neatly.

PROJECT RESULT

To provide quality job training which will enhance lifelong learning and foster the development of individuality, commitment, conviction and purpose.

STEPS has proven to be a positive eight-module program. Classes are fulfilling its schedule of five days per week from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

We are successfully teaching basic computer including windows 98, Word, Excel, Access and Power Point. Motivational Speaking has really lifted the student's self-esteem. Interpersonal communication workshops, dress for success forums, work ethics, business telephone etiquette, interviewing skills, resume writing and job search techniques.

We were also able to take the female students to the "Suited For Success" clothing store. They were given up to \$200.00 play money to use in purchasing almost new and new clothing to be able to go on interviews and have business attire for the workforce. To date we have graduated about 50 plus marketable students.

To recruit and maintain residents who will be dedicated to maintaining the community at large

Our campaign has been soliciting persons from the community churches, knock on doors to get the residents to be apart of the growth and support the concerned citizens of Manito Park. We were successful in increasing membership about 15%. We felt this was a milestone, but the campaign is continuing.

To provide services which facilitate learning and activities for youth and community members within the limits of available resources.

We have been very successful in reaching our youth through KWAM (Kids With A Mission). KWAM kids serve their community through such activities as visit nursing homes and by collecting school supplies for needy children in other countries.

KWAM summer program consisted of activities that assisted with motor skills development and cognitive development. Activities included arts, crafts, swimming, skill learning labs and field trips.

KWAM also started their own greeting card business. Members of the Church ordered their cards from the kids. Cards were created through a computer program.

Second Baptist Church, neighboring church has become a Site of Promise and supporting youth from their end of the neighborhood.

To foster partnership with community service agencies, business and government as well as collaborative programs with other churches.

Ocean, Inc., one of the collaborative partners, has purchased land and built two houses, one two bedroom and one three bedroom in Manitou Park, to be rented to low-moderate income persons.

They also bought and renovated other homes. Ocean, Inc. is looking into purchasing more property in the Park to build more homes.

With Ocean, Inc. headstart program, local residents do not have to look outside the park for childcare.

We were not able to put the gated fence, lighted sign and refurbish the entrance of Manitou Park at this time. The entrance of the Park is at the exit of the Garden State Parkway. (The main thoroughfare from north Jersey to Atlantic City – Cape May). The State of New Jersey expanded the exit to ease the flow of traffic. This project will take a year and a half. When the exit of the Garden State Parkway is complete, we will continue to pursue our gate.

To utilize resources available to enhance the infrastructure of the community.

The pastors, community organizations, councilman have come together to continue to brainstorm how to continue to keep progress going.

EVALUATION

The revitalization project is designed to service the whole man. As we began to discuss the possibilities of people moving from welfare to work, TANF recipients, GA and food stamps, what can we do to ease the pain of no longer receiving public assistance. Following several meetings, Temple CDC proposed a job training program for the unemployed and underemployed. The job training consisted of basic computer, dress for success, resume writing, telecommunication skills, etc. These trainings began as twelve-week sessions and received a very favorable response from the graduates. Many have been employed and are thankful for the assistance. These training sessions were underwritten by Temple CDC through a grant from DCA Faith-Based Initiative.

Another section of the project was establishing youth programs. Second Baptist opened their doors through United Way and became a Site of Promise. Sites of Promise act as “hubs” where people from all sectors of the community can share resources and pool strengths in the fulfillment of the five basic promises. Becoming a “Site of Promise” provides benefits not only to that specific youth program, but also to the young people and adults in the surrounding community.

The idea of renovating the entrance to Manitou Park was and still is a good idea. Due to the fact that the state is expanding the exit of the Garden State Parkway, we could not pursue the gated entrance. We have not given up just, just waiting for their completion of their year and a half project.

With the insight gained from NHC, I am better prepared to present a business plan and or a project proposal for future projects. Were I am doing the same project over again, I would involve more people in the community before the project rather than add them later, although they supported. Adding them in the beginning would put less stress on both the staff and I working together.

This has been quite a challenge and I am appreciative for it.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Revitalization was developed as a result of community leaders and local residents of South Toms River, New Jersey who expressed their concern as they observed the escalation of crime, violence, drug use and sales to dangerous proportions. Poverty, unemployment, underemployment of heads of households who depend on welfare has contributed to this growing problem.

The goal of community revitalization is to meet the educational environment and economic needs of families on welfare. Through expanded educational opportunities and rewards, these families will increase in their ability to pursue higher education and/or job training. As these needs are met we will see the ethnics of civic responsibility, financial stability and a spirit of community emerge to new heights and new horizons not realized in the past.

Community Revitalization will service the community of South Toms River beginning in the year 2000 with future expansion and growth to surrounding communities expected by the year 2001. The overall budget cost to implement this program is estimated at approximately \$100,000.00. As part of the program extends out to the county, budget cost will increase by about \$20,000.00 in the year 2001.

Dr. David C. Graham
President/CEO

CONCLUSION

Historically in America and especially in the African-American community, houses of worship have been the only place working class people have been willing to invest their hard earned dollars. The church building fund has been their “mutual fund”. Now leaders of these houses of worship need to insure that people receive a return on their investment. This return should come in the form of rebuilding communities through *infrastructure, job skills training, recreation for youth and programs aimed at reducing crime.*

Leaders of local houses of worship sense the responsibility they have to parishioners. Unfortunately, many Ministers have not been instructed on how to partner with government agencies in order to provide services that the community needs. Ignorance spurs inertia. Information is always a catalyst for action. Hosea 4:6 says, “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge.” With this knowledge the potential for destruction has been remedied with the *facts necessary for houses of worship to engage in true Community Economic Development in the 21st Century.*