

Anything But Trivial – The South Carolina Rural Communities Compassion Project Awards Sub-Grants

What state is small in size, but has a heart larger than most? South Carolina. The tremendous response to the long anticipated SC Rural Communities Compassion Project (Compassion Project) sub-grants demonstrates the boundless care and compassion the citizens of South Carolina have for their neighbors. The Compassion Project, a program designed to enhance capability and increase knowledge among faith- and community- based organizations in South Carolina, recently awarded 11 organizations, chosen from more than 150 applicants, sub-grants totaling three hundred thousand dollars. The sub-grants, awarded at a maximum of thirty thousand dollars each, are designed to help build capacity so organizations can better meet the needs of underserved individuals and families within their community.

The SC Center for Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership (Center), under the auspices of the South Carolina Collaborative for Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership and housed within the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life (Institute) at Clemson University, is one of 21 organizations in the country awarded the Compassion Capital Fund as part of President George Bush's Faith Based and Community Initiative. The Center is now implementing the Compassion Project which includes technical assistance to the state in the form of informative workshops, funding resources, the Resource Associate Network, one-on-one skills training, distance learning events, and web resources.

Anything but trivial, the 11 Compassion Project sub-grant recipient's impact can be felt across the state in the form of diverse and effective programs. Out of the 11 sub-grantees, six target at-risk youth in South Carolina, a growing population in the state with a need for resources and services, one targets homelessness and the need for affordable housing, another targets hunger, one families moving from welfare to work and two focus on capacity building. Reaching rural communities in the state, the grant recipients will provide services from the coast to the Upstate the Midlands to the Lowcountry and everywhere in between.

SC Rural Communities Compassion Sub-Grant Project Descriptions

Q: Who plans to pilot the first Community Kitchen/Culinary Arts Program in coastal South Carolina?

A: The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort, in partnership with, The Technical College of the Lowcountry's Continuing Education & Workforce Development Division in Beaufort, the Lowcountry Food Bank, and the United Way of Beaufort County

Using Community Kitchens, a nationally recognized program of America's Second Harvest that trains people transitioning from welfare to work in the culinary profession, as a model program, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort and its partners seek to employ 40 presently unemployed, low employed or welfare recipients in entry level, career building positions in the food service industry. This 16-week culinary arts training program will allow students to garner practical catering experience by preparing meals for two Kids Cafes, after-school hot meal feeding and tutoring programs for at-risk children, in Beaufort County.

Q: “Capacity Building through Outcome Measurement,” will be offered by what well-known organization?

A: United Way of Fort Mill – Rock Hill – Tega Cay and United Way of Lancaster

In order to build the capacity of faith- and community- based nonprofits in York and Lancaster counties, the United Way of Fort Mill-Rock Hill-Tega Cay and the United Way of Lancaster plan to provide the “Capacity Building through Outcome Measurement” training series. This series will assist organizations by providing skills and knowledge to develop a strategic plan, develop and implement goals and objectives and measure outcomes. The overall goal of the program is to enhance agency capacity so organizations are better equipped to adapt programs and secure funding for long-term sustainability.

Q: Which sub-grant recipient will design and create a pilot Food Bank Geographic System (FBGIS)?

A: Harvest Hope Food Bank

Harvest Hope Food Bank, a nonprofit dedicated to providing for the needs of hungry people by gathering and sharing quality food with dignity, compassion and education in 18 counties of central South Carolina, seeks to design and support a pilot Food Bank Geographic System (FBGIS) that identifies current and potential food providers and distributors with the appropriate contact information. With numerous objectives, the attainment of a FBGIS will provide Harvest Hope and other anti-hunger advocates with a replicable methodology for strategically planning and systematically expanding the distribution of food to those in need.

Q: Who plans to increase affordable rental housing in the Upstate?

A: Upstate Homeless Coalition of S.C.

Through the Building Blocks to End Homelessness program the Upstate Homeless Coalition of S.C. seeks to increase affordable rental housing in the Upstate through three main activities. One activity will involve conducting a 13-county Housing Needs Assessment to determine where the building of affordable rental housing will be most effective. Secondly, an additional staff member will be trained as a housing finance development professional in order to facilitate housing development, and finally, advocacy booklets will be designed and distributed to increase awareness and public support for the Upstate Homeless Coalition and its programs. The combination of these three activities will result in building blocks to end homelessness in the Upstate.

Q: Which organization wants to expand its services to Haut Gap Middle School on Johns Island?

A: Communities in Schools of the Charleston Area, Inc.

By implementing the “whole school” model at Haut Gap Middle School on Johns Island, Communities in Schools of the Charleston Area, Inc (CIS) will increase its reach to an additional 320 students and their families in Charleston County. Through the “whole school” approach, CIS

seeks to change the lives of at-risk students by improving their academic performance as well as knowledge and skills related to economic self-sufficiency. Additionally, CIS seeks to increase access to community services and increase involvement of parents and other caretakers. All of these goals will be accomplished through connecting students to existing resources and providing direct, on-site services such as mentoring, tutoring, life-skills training, anger management, counseling, pregnancy prevention and after school programs.

Q: What is the name of the Chesterfield County First Steps project that helps at-risk children?

A: *We Are Ready*

Many children in Chesterfield County are not prepared to enter first grade healthy and ready to succeed. Chesterfield County First Steps hopes to remedy this problem and equip children with necessary skills through the *We Are Ready* project. Through collaboration and utilization of services from Chesterfield County School District's Adult Education program, Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Environment Control, Chesterfield Library System and various faith organizations, the project will address family literacy needs and fill in service gaps.

Q: How many teen pregnancies did Aiken County report in 2000?

A: 366, ranked 8th in the state for teen pregnancies

The Aiken County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council seeks to implement the Aiken County Fostering Youth program, a sustainable community project designed to reduce teen pregnancy, promote healthy sexual knowledge, behaviors and personal responsibility among high-risk youth in therapeutic foster care. Trainings will be provided to therapeutic foster parents, case workers and group home staff as well as implementation of best-practices interventions with foster care youth in the Managed Treatment Services program of the Department of Social Services.

Q: What program proposed by Partners for a Healthy Community uses the acronym MAP?

A: Manhood Academy Partnership

Currently, four organizations (Men at Work, Young Men of Vision and Progress, East Anderson Community of Shalom, Anderson County Alternative School) in Anderson County work to impact character development of male youth ages 10 to 17. The Manhood Academy Partnership (MAP), a project proposed by Partners for a Healthy Community, seeks to unite these organizations in a collaborative aimed at creating a structure for collaboration among groups working with male youth, increase the capacity of grassroots organizations with a proven track record and become a model for educating other communities striving to make an impact.

Q: What project addresses the professional development and capacity of after school providers?

A: *School's Out Lowcountry Professional Development*

Through the creation of *School's Out Lowcountry Professional Development Institute* after school providers in the Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties will receive training on professional development to help them better meet the needs of at-risk youth. Through collaboration and partnership with key after school organizations in the Lowcountry, state and nation, the School's Out Lowcountry organization and Community Foundation of the Lowcountry, Inc. plan to improve the lives of youth in their community.

Q: What are the Foothills?

A: The rural areas of the Saluda River Valley

The Foothills Alliance for the Prevention of Child Abuse (PCA) in Anderson County plans to enable PCA to expand its prevention efforts into rural areas of the Saluda River Valley and begin building structures and community support to ensure long-term safety for children. This initiative will unite Anderson and Greenville communities along the Saluda River creating a service network that blurs the county line to bring services to children in need therefore reducing risk factors attributed to increasing child abuse and neglect.