



Reflections: The Common Good's Current Leadership

Good State Team members have been a wonderful source of support and encouragement to the staff of the ODNR Civilian Conservation Corps. Our relationship with local teams is growing, and together we have the potential to impact the lives of disenfranchised youth/young adults in a dramatic way.

- Sally Prouty
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; you shall begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.

- Emerson
Submitted by Jim Bowling
Ohio Department of Education

I used to be plastic, but now I'm elastic, I'm f-l-e-x-i-b-l-e. I think that flexibility is one of the most important attributes of both successful collaborations and collaborators. We've seen this attribute demonstrated time and time again through the For The Common Good project, at the State and Local Team levels.

- Jeff Gove
Ohio Department of Education

For the Common Good has proved to be an invaluable personal resource for quality information sharing between partners. It is the essence of true collaboration, which fosters the productivity, and/or the enhancement of meaningful and lasting programs.

- Jean Sickles
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

The Common Good understands that the people we serve live lives in a continuum. The Common Good is about creating community partnerships that reach people where they live and enhance their lives.

- Joel Rabb
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

The Common Good was the first organized effort to help coordinate Workforce Development in the state of Ohio. Ohio has been recognized by the federal government as having good interagency relationships due to the efforts of the Common Good and those in the Workforce Development Community.

- Bob Haas
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Surprisingly open communication from the start (amongst State Team members) has led to the sharing of time, resources, and creativity that was not expected such that we have reached a point of refocus and new direction for members of the State Team.

- Robert Smedley
Wayne County, Common Good Team

In 1986, OBES responded to a DOL recommendation to coordinate planning for the Labor Exchange and JTPA by conducting a technical assistance blitz of 7 regional 2-day work sessions. At that time it was excruciating for both local and state staff to get just two local programs to really work together.

Recalling that effort and subsequent years of trying to improve on it, we are truly grateful for the Common Good. The value of the project design has been proven many times over by successful local linkage teams. Every time local (or state) partners have a good collaborative experience it gets easier.

The state team itself is invaluable. Having familiar colleagues to contact in other state agencies, getting the benefit of their points of view and understanding their programs are all important.



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(continued from p. 2) Beyond that, this long-term association has been and continues to be productive and rewarding. Best of all- now we're friends working together. Oh yes, the meetings are fun!

- Carol Brigham and Emma Brewer
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

The strength of the Local Common Good Teams has been clearly shown with the ability to wade through the "stuff" of WIA. Those teams that have developed a collaborative mindset have been ahead of the learning curve.

- Dave Spaulding
Ohio Department of Education

Reflections: The Common Good's Founding Mothers

Eleven years ago, existing protocol tended to discourage collaboration even within state departments as well as interagency collaboration. None of the Founding Mothers of the Common Good held "power" positions in their respective departments. We did, however, take advantage—after moving a mountain or two—of an opportunity to participate in a national institute focused on creating linkages to benefit at-risk populations. The design of our first Common Good workshop in Ohio in 1990 was based on that experience.

Lessons learned: Grit, patience, practical planning, and determination of little people can move mountains. Successful collaboration requires real time and opportunity away from the everyday demands of one's job followed by group commitment to common goals.

Although my job responsibilities changed and my own involvement with the Common Good initiative ended a few years later, I look back at sharing in the creation the Common Good as one of the peak experiences of my 13 years with the Ohio Department of Education. The impact of our efforts were far-reaching throughout Ohio. A fringe benefit has been the special friendships with members of our original committee.

I do have to chuckle recalling that as we finished assembling the notebooks for the participants in the very first Common Good Workshop, Susan Imel declared that she was never doing this again! However, the success of that workshop and the outcomes, which had real impact on local welfare recipients soon, had her eating her words! Without Susan Imel's continuous involvement and support, Common Good would be much less likely to be celebrating a 10th Anniversary. Thanks, Susan! Thanks also to Jim Bowling for his critical \$ support of the Common Good!

- Sandra Thatcher Laurenson, "Founding Mother"
Formerly of the Ohio Department of Education

In the fall of 1989, I had been in the Ohio Department of Education a year and a half. At that time there seemed to be no history of cooperation between ABE and vocational education, but to me it only made sense to become acquainted with those whose programs our adult basic learners would next seek out – if we did our jobs right. It was the programs in vocational home economics – GRADS, GOALS, Family Life Education, and others – that impressed me most, and so naturally those programs' supervisors were the people I befriended.

I don't remember when Sandy Laurenson told me about the opportunity to go to Williamsburg to develop a plan to support the education of disadvantaged adults, but I definitely remember the trip. I remember that we were at least four women in Sandy's car, crowded in with luggage and with a computer monitor, keyboard, and CPU. No one had the luxury of a laptop. For reasons I don't recall, the department didn't support our travel; we all ate meagerly so the four of us could be reimbursed within Sandy's per diem (Sandy was technically an employee of OSU rather than ODE.)



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(continued from p. 3) On the other hand, the ODHS employees all flew to Virginia. In retrospect, I think the car trip added value to the experience. I certainly remember being surprised that our team was the only team that engaged persons outside of state education agencies. We were also the only team exploring services to JOBS clients. And being surprised that, in the case of one state, the state superintendent was part of the team. The experience in Williamsburg really amounted to having content expertise available to us and having a facilitator there to help us with our planning process. We were so focused that we hardly knew she was there. I recall how she would ask periodically what she could do to help. Our answer was always, "Thanks. We're doing just fine." And back to work we would go.

When we returned to Ohio, we began to meet monthly in order to implement our plan to replicate our Williamsburg experience for county teams. I'm not sure of the sequence of events after that. At some point, we realized we had to have money to make the institute happen, so I approached Jim Bowling and asked that he devote some adult ed. coordination funds. We used the funds to contract with Susan and CETE. Soon the success of the institutes attracted some national attention – to the point that a national speaker with JTPA roots wondered publicly just why JTPA was not a required partner, along with education and human services. I guess that was a sign that we were on a bandwagon.

There were two other critical points from those early days. One was when the male supervisors of our all-female state team began to attend meetings. It was a fascinating example of different styles that almost led to the dissolving of the team. Fortunately, soon after, the next critical point occurred when an interagency agreement between ODE and ODHS provided funds to support staff positions. Enter Jeff Gove, Carolyn Gasiorik and Dave Spaulding. With those staff and with Susan focusing on implementation of a state plan, members of the state team were able to contribute to planning while being relieved of many of the tasks.

These are all memories, but you've asked for reflections. I have to say that I believe that the fact that we were women gave the Common Good effort its strong start. As activities have changed over the past ten years and as membership has changed as well, the team continues to be amazingly collegial. I suspect Ellen and I, the only original members who continue to be involved, participate in part because of the spirit of friendship on the team. Almost eleven years after Williamsburg and over ten years since the first institute, I count Ellen and Susan as among my closest friends. The Common Good experience has been rich for me both professionally and personally.

- Connie Ackerman, "Founding Mother"
Formerly of the Ohio Department of Education

*In 1988, when I was still new at the Ohio Department of Human Services, Joel Rabb suggested that I call someone at ODE to find out about childcare initiatives that might support our new federal waivers for welfare reform. I balked. Call someone in **another department?!?** Eventually I did call Sandy Thatcher (now Sandy Laurenson), and Joel and I met with her. Not long after our meeting, Sandy called to ask if I might be interested in going to Williamsburg with a group of ODE people to plan a collaborative project. Well, sure. This inter-agency stuff was starting to look up! After Williamsburg, Paul Offner of ODHS agreed to provide our first round of funding, and Sandy was tireless and steady in keeping those early meetings going. The rest is history, but I especially wanted to note the contribution of the brilliant, out-of-the-box Joel Rabb in the origins of For the Common Good.*

- Ellen Seusy, "Founding Mother"
Formerly of the Ohio Department of Human Services



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When I think about the coordination between the various State departments, and where we were in 1990 as opposed to now, I feel very proud of The Common Good and how much has been accomplished over the last ten (I can't believe it) years. I am proud to know that I was part of the group that spurred greater cooperation at the county level with the common goal of bringing our recipients to self-sufficiency through education and work experience. The commitment we shared to help the young parents we commonly served was evident in every meeting. I remember that our little group had such dedication to the cause, even though we were extremely busy, the things we agreed to do became a priority and got done. When I left the Bureau of JOBS and came to work for the Bureau of State Hearings, The Common Good was one of the more difficult projects to leave behind. In the beginning, when we, the Williamsburg six, went to Virginia and started this whole thing, no one knew what an impact it would have. I am pleased to say I played a role in its development. I still draw on the knowledge I gained through that group to help people who call.

- Virginia Ringel, "Founding Mother"
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services

I haven't been closely involved in Common Good for a number of years but I think the recent trends with the Department of Job and Family Services forming as a merger of OBES and ODHS certainly supports the thinking we had 10 years ago of collaborating and streamlining services for clients.

When the founding mothers first met in Williamsburg, VA 10 years ago at a conference during which the project was conceived, President Bush and the nation's governors were meeting at the University of Virginia to launch the national education goals. It was exciting to be in Virginia at the same time and to be addressing important issues simultaneously. While education issues got a national platform that week, perhaps we have not come as far in Ohio in meeting the national goals as we have come in meeting the challenges of Welfare Reform. The education piece will be in the limelight in the months to come, I'm sure.

- Lynne Hall, "Founding Mother"
Ohio Hi-Point JVS

Reflections: Local Linkage Team Representatives

It's very easy for me to forward positive feedback regarding "The Common Good" In my opinion, this initiative set the foundation for collaboration among local agencies statewide. Long before One Stop became popular, Common Good developed process, policy and procedure for effective and efficient collaboration. The state Common Good staff has always had a strong passion for this initiative. Their guidance and support have been awesome. Again in my opinion, For the Common Good is the most successful collaboration project Ohio has ever initiated. Much of our current success is attributed to this project. Most of our current workforce development, supportive service and other related services have been built on a foundation, which came from the Common Good philosophy.

- William Finn, Fairfield County

It's interesting to me that one of the very first projects that the Scioto County For the Common Good members initiated was the most simple yet has remained effective throughout the years. The agency, organization, and education partners identified a problem with duplication of services of some individual cases.



Reflections from the Common Good's Local Linkage Team Representatives are continued on p. 6





(continued from p. 5) We developed a Referral/Linkage Form that is user friendly yet allows us to communicate referral or service information quickly. I immediately noted a smoother process of referring individuals to other member agencies and also found we could better maintain non-duplication of services.

As For the Common Good evolved, it is apparent to me why this initiative has remained vital. Emerging as a group of agency and education representatives in Scioto County who had a common commitment with common goals for the common good of all - having a venue to discuss common problems, barriers, and successes was an achievement. Throughout the years, I have seen this initiative grow into a partnership that has effectively dealt with Ohio Works First welfare reform and is now engaged in issues such as workforce and economic development. What sets For the Common Good apart is the encouragement to develop new ideas that meet the common, individual needs of each county's constituents.

- Suzanne Shelpmann, Scioto County

The Common Good was a great starting point to prepare Delaware County to implement the One Stop system.

- Salley Sutton, ABLE/GED Coordinator

Many agencies collaborated on projects, but The Common Good brought more agencies to the table and enabled us to provide better services and more opportunities to the residents of Delaware County.

- Mona Reilly, Director
Delaware County Job & Family Services

The Common Good Linkage Team expanded the trust that was developing among key agency personnel. Knowing how to utilize each agency's strengths allows us to better serve clients setting goals. Without the Common Good Linkage, time would have been needed to develop the trust vital in today's collaborative atmosphere.

- Maureen Wright
Director of Adult Education
Delaware Area Career Center/JVS

*The Wayne County Common Good Linkage Team sees itself as an association of agencies that collaborates for a decided mission. I personally believe that there are two key elements. The first is having a good team of people who agree on an interest and generally like each other-compatible. Team building is very important. The second key related to how we defined ourselves is the word **collaborate**. To that end I don't believe we would have continued if we wouldn't have been doing something.*

The key is very much having projects on which to collaborate, on which to work together. We have had many. Trainings, workshops, the Wings classroom, retreats, designing the One Stop, Job Fair developing grants, the private non profit, undertaking challenges. The John McKnight thing was big, but not any bigger than these other things. So the key to continuance is enterprise and working on things. Without it, this agenda becomes empty, and purpose leaves.

- Robert Smedley, Wayne County

When "For the Common Good" was initiated statewide, it was only logical that these agencies assumed a continuing role for what was already in existence in Mahoning County. In addition to that collaboration, the focus started to change. With "For the Common Good" came the One-Stop concept and structure, as well as the need to expand beyond the county boundaries. The One-Stop became a computer-based linking of many agencies and services in a four-county area. This was a complete new challenge. We went from a voluntary collaborative to an organization with mandated stakeholders, and others. We went from an informal get-together to resolve problems and discuss issues to a formalized structure. We expanded from a single county to four counties. All this required a formal structure, committees, as well as some much more direct links to the State than did exist before.

 **Reflections** from the Common Good's Local Linkage Team Representatives are continued on pg. 7

(continued from p. 7) In addition to the 4-county link there still continued to exist the desire to have a local collaborative, which included more and other partners than just the ones required by the One-Stop. In Mahoning County monthly meetings were re-instituted and included new partners, such as rehabilitation agencies and work adjustment partners. Yet all this became somewhat obsolete with the significant and rapid changes taking place at the State level, such as the integration of OBES and ODHS, the new federal legislation creating the WIA boards, etc. Though many questions still exist and will continue to be raised, it will all be "For the Common Good," meaning: to assist low-income, unemployed and underemployed families become self-sufficient.

- Cor Kester, Mahoning County

Ashtabula County's Common Good Linkage Team was formally established in 1995. The "A-Team," which includes all major partners of the Ashtabula County Literacy Coalition and the Ashtabula County One-Stop, provides comprehensive and collaborative education, employment, social services and training to at-risk youth and adults.

For the past five years, directors of the partner agencies have met monthly to discuss common needs, common goals and common challenges. Team members were instrumental in the formation of the Northeast Ohio One-Stop System, which established an Internet system for partner agencies in Ashtabula, Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. Members were also involved in the design and implementation of the Ashtabula County One Stop, which was developed through WIA legislation. Most recently, Ashtabula County's Common Good Linkage Team members were recognized as "Outstanding Partners in Literacy" and members received awards at the annual Ashtabula County Literacy Coalition Awards Breakfast.

- Suzanne Bernardini, Ashtabula County

Wayne County Partners for Success

Under the direction of Program Coordinator, Kim Yost, the Wayne County Common Good team and its community partners (the Wayne County Department of Job and Family Services and County Commissioners) have recently introduced *Partnering for Success*, an employee retention and mentoring program. As outlined in its marketing materials, *everyone benefits* from the *Partnering for Success* program. The program's partners (e.g. employees) receive individual attention and support as it relates to their career development process. Mentors are provided with the opportunity to validate existing skills, while improving and developing new ones. Finally, participating companies should expect to see increased retention and productivity, while developing leadership qualities and encouraging teamwork amongst their associates. To begin the program, employer sponsors are required to demonstrate certain criteria. They include, but are not limited to: a desire to increase employee retention, employment of Ohio Works First participants, and the availability of an on-site coordinator. For additional information regarding the Wayne County *Partnering for Success* program, contact Kim Yost, Program Coordinator at 330-264-1300 or via e-mail at kyost@woostergoodwill.org.

Scioto County Helps With First Impression

Serving clients since 1998, the First Impressions Clothes Closet was started by One Stop for the Common Good of Scioto County (Scioto County's Common Good team). First Impressions serves residents of Scioto County in need of professional and occupational clothing. Many of First Impressions' clients use its services to obtain the appropriate attire for a job interview. Area agencies provide referral forms to clients in need of service from First Impressions, and that's the only prerequisite. Ann Smith, the closet's hostess is the only full-time staff-person. Her salary is paid through the local AARP Foundation Senior Employment Program. To maintain its inventory of fashionable and trendy clothing, shoes, and accessories, First Impressions relies upon donations from the community. For additional information regarding the Scioto County First Impressions Clothes Closet, write to: "First Impressions," c/o Work and Training Opportunity Center, 601 8th Street, Portsmouth, Ohio 45662 or call 740-353-2218.



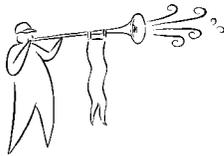
For the Common Good: Ten Years of Promoting Collaboration

Initiated in 1990 as a result of the Family Support Act of 1988, the For the Common Good project has now expanded its focus to all workforce development efforts and operates under the direction of an interagency team composed of state-level staff. Its mission is to foster collaboration among state and local workforce investment systems to ensure effective and efficient services for individuals and families. One of the project's major goals has been to facilitate the formation of local interagency linkage teams throughout Ohio. The local teams focus on improving workforce development services through the development of collaborative interagency linkages.

A hallmark of the Common Good project has been its voluntary nature. Although it was established as a means of addressing a specific legislative mandate, it has never been accountable for meeting specific legislative requirements. Rather, the Common Good has responded to the national trend of collaborative

linkages as a strategy for implementing systemic change by facilitating the development of collaborative linkage teams. It has supported local teams in their efforts to address any number of initiatives that used collaboration as a process to facilitate quality services being available to Ohio families and communities. Most of the original one-stop systems in Ohio had Common Good roots since a Common Good local linkage team formed the nucleus for the development of the collaboration required for one-stop systems. Currently, implementation of the Workforce Investment Act in some local communities is also benefiting from the collaborative foundation laid through the Common Good.

During its ten-year history, the emphasis on collaboration has increased. The experiences of successful Common Good Local Linkage teams can inform future collaborative efforts. The Common Good State Team collaborates with local Common Good teams to use these experiences as the basis for facilitating additional collaborative work at the local level.



Upcoming Conference Information

Ohio's Welfare Conference is scheduled for November 15th, 16th, and 17th at the Holiday Inn North in Worthington. Jodie Sue Kelly, co-founder of Cygnet Associates <www.cygnetassociates.com>, and author of *Job Development Made (Much!) Easier* and *Keeping the Client: A Strategy for Program and Job Retention*, will serve as a keynote speaker for the conference. For additional information regarding Ohio's Welfare Conference contact Bob Haas, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services at 614-752-7601 or via e-mail at haasr@odjfs.state.oh.us.

For the Common Good's Web Site: A Constant Resource

The For the Common Good web site <<http://literacy.kent.edu/CommonGood/>> continues to serve as a constant resource for information related to collaboration. Recent postings to the site include an updated State Team roster, and new Fact Sheets entitled Outcome Management: A Shifting Mindset (a mini-guide to The Rensselaerville Institutes concept of Outcome Management), and Local Linkage Team Case Studies (a synopsis of the 1999 case studies conducted on five Common Good Local Linkage Teams). In addition, refer to the web site for further details regarding the 10th Anniversary Celebration.

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