



IN COMMON

Information for the Common Good

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The Ohio Department of Development

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The Ohio Department of Alcohol & Drug Addiction Services

and

The Ohio State University Extension

Common goals...

Common customers...

Common needs...

Common challenges...

The Wayne County Common Good:

Building Working Linkages to Create Simplicity, to Conserve Resources, and to Be Consumer Friendly

Provided by Robert Smedley and Bonnie Sander

The Wayne County Common Good got its start May 2-3 of 1995 when a group of individuals who shared an interest in improving services and the working relationships around local public employment assistance programs/services attended a statewide "For The Common Good Institute" on employment service collaborations. The group was organized by a representative of the Wayne County Schools Career Center.

During the course of this event, the Wayne County group discovered that, although all participants had discrete programs and circumstances, they were all experiencing similar pressures from public, state, and federal funding sources. Commonalities in these circumstances revolved around the public's discontent with an overly complex service delivery system. It also included the perception that future state and federal funding was going to entail the consolidation and collapse of historical funding streams in an interest of simplicity and savings.

By the end of the conference, the Wayne County group had taken on a team identity and had developed a purpose statement and an operational vision. These were as follows:

- Develop an identity to be known as the Wayne County Common Good Team in a concerted effort to create a linkages organization of public employment assistance and ancillary support programs.
- Prepare this organization for involvement in the linkages market of the future. In other words, prepare a means to capture and be driven by market forces rather than the historical service delivery agenda. It was recognized that a new era in marketing social services based on accountability and accessibility was coming—whether we liked it or not—and it would be wise to position ourselves for these changes.
- Build a public and private employment service linkage through planning, coordination, and collaboration that would be capable of marketing services to both government and private sector customers as a means to replace dollars that might soon be lost in the federal and state grant process. There was an awareness of the state's interests in creating "One Stop Shops" and welfare reforms at that time that increased our interest in linking related programs.

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Information about the following upcoming events for Common Good Local Linkage Teams is included in this issue:

- *Friday, March 12, 1999-Understanding the Workforce Investment Act presented by John Chamberlin (see insert for information)*
- *Friday, May 7, 1999-A Day at Camp Mary Orton (see article on page 4)*

- Stand firm on the position that “local control” (government) should lead the process. In as much as significant changes were coming, it made sense to put the local agenda first and allow it to drive the process of change that we were anticipating. The belief that supported this approach was a marketing one. The social service market is ultimately local in nature and local leaders in that market are capable of producing competitive linkage products in the linkage market. It was logical to take the lead by creating a competitive agenda—seen as a market—in which all levels of government could participate as equals.
- Operate on the purpose of reducing barriers to employment for shared and chronically unemployed or underemployed clients by improving information sharing, providing access to an inter system network of needed employment assistance programs, and building working linkages with business, industry, and employers.

The vision and purpose as stated were not specifically detailed during that first three days. In many ways these were just notes on paper and feelings at that point. What transformed the results of this early meaning to something more specific was the commitment of the original group to make this work. The principal factor that has been involved in this transformation is working together through a regular meeting schedule. From May of 1995 until the present, the team has never missed its monthly meeting. During many of the months there have also been numerous work committee meetings. Further it has accepted an operating philosophy that the agenda be a working agenda, full of projects to complete on agreed time lines. Early on we agreed that we were not going to be a group that just met to meet, like many we had each previously experienced. We have kept busy. This regular schedule and mind set have produced results. Some of these are as follows:

- A memorandum of understanding.
- A statement of basic goals/values to live by to accomplish the purpose and vision
- Creation of a common, customer information sharing form and agreement for use by the members. Achieved a green light for its use from the Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney.
- A design for an “automated customer information entry and sharing system” that was later adopted by the five county One Stop Proposal. Promoting this linkage with the One Stop System proved to be invaluable for the Team’s growth.
- Solid, informed, relationships with government officials, i.e., the Wayne County Commissioners, Governor, State Department Directors.
- Securement of grants and provisions to conduct linked services.
- Contract with Paul Clayton, a nationally known motivational trainer, to conduct a week-long motivational staff training event for the combined staff/clients of the Common Good membership November 4-8, 1996.

- Development of a monthly motivational workshop known as WINGS for job-seeking customers from the various members.
- Development of a portfolio for the “Common Good” or WINGS clients to carry with them to begin the “portal process,” prior to the development of a fully automated system.
- Conduct of a series of cross-systems training on member organizations, grant development and innovative service projects.
- Becoming the “local area” (Wayne County) network for the Stark, Tuscarawas, Carroll, Wayne, and Holmes County ONE STOP SHOP Wide Area Network.
- Creation of a private non-profit corporation for the Common Good, separate from the linkage, to be able to hold grants and do business for the linkage and pursue an account development strategy. The corporation is used for marketing both the program and the linkages to accounts interested in Welfare Reform and for other fruitful linkage activities.
- Development of press releases and provision of presentations to Rittman and Wooster area Rotary clubs as a means to contact local business. These activities have lead to further presentations to business organizations and served as a means to establish the private side of the collaboration.

The Common Good Team has grown from its original core of appropriate member agencies to be an important concern.

The original (charter) members and organizations were as follows:

Wayne County’s Ohio Bureau of Employment Services

Barb Black/Carol Mack

The Job Training Partnership Office

Judy Smedley

The Department of Human Services

Susan Steingass

Wayne County Career Center-Adult Education

Steve Miller/Melissa Schrock

The Wooster and Orrville ABLE Learning Labs

Mary Headings/Linda McAninch

Even Start

Bonnie Sander

The Mental Health & Recovery Board-Wayne/Holmes

Robert Smedley

Organizations/individuals that have joined since:

Goodwill Industries

Tom Police

The Wayne Office of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

Carrie Moreland

The Counseling Center of Wayne and Holmes Cos.

Wayne Lundy

Community Action of Wayne and Medina Counties

Jenny Daubenspeck

Your Human Resource Center Wayne/Holmes

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To conclude....(Continued from page 2)

The local team developed on basic commonalities of belief and experience. The team members involved were able to see a working linkage as a flexible solution to many of the process related problems each was facing. The Common Good has been a means to develop a linkage organization.

Fundamentally we realize that there are many forces that give shape to the present. The commitment that each member shares to contributing to the community's common good has made the Common Good Team an effective tool for creating an effective process. None of the members know what the future holds. Each has apprehension about the changes that are happening around us and the effects they may have. For now, the Common Good remains a useful tool. We don't have many answers to the big questions, but we have learned that collaboration and a "knuckle down, buckle down, do it, do it, do it" attitude make a difference.

Next steps definitely include helping to initiate the one stop system (locally) and helping it work, participating in welfare reform and the Work Force Investment Act, and doing what is reasonable to move into a new marketing relationship with our customers and private sector businesses. We are looking forward to participating and sharing with the state team and other Common Good teams around the state for this goal.

Resource Corner

Developing and maintaining relationships with employers is an essential component of an effective welfare-to-work system. To explore how employers in the private sector are responding to and participating in welfare-to-work efforts, the Mott Foundation funded a research project that produced the two-volume report, *Welfare to Wages: Strategies to Assist the Private Sector to Employ Welfare Recipients*. In addition to information about the study, volume one contains a discussion of the opportunities and realities in the labor market that is based on focus group discussions with employers, findings from the study, and published reports. Ten strategies for connecting welfare recipients with employers are discussed in depth, and profiles of programs that are successful in using the strategies are included. Also included in the publication are program and policy issues and key lessons for understanding and connecting with the labor market. Volume two contains case studies of eight companies, employer focus group findings, and information about the data analysis. Both volumes are available free of charge and can be obtained by writing the Mott Foundation at 1200 Mott Foundation Building, Flint, MI 48502, by calling the Publications Hotline at 1-800-645-1766, or by downloading from the Foundation's website at <http://www.mott.org/publications/index_poverty.htm>.

Need to Know

Strengthening Ohio's Leadership (SOL) is a program sponsored by the Ohio State University Extension. SOL's primary goals are to improve statewide capacity to support community-based programs to serve children, youth, and families at risk; and to improve the quality and quantity of comprehensive community-based programs for children, youth, and families at risk. SOL is part of the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) National Initiative that is designed to help families to take responsibility for their lives and enables those at risk to develop the necessary life skills to become stronger and more productive adults.

For the Common Good and SOL share similar goals and both projects operate in many of the same areas. For example, Summit/Stark Counties and Hamilton County both have SOL Sites as well as Common Good teams. SOL Capacity Building Teams are operating in the following Common Good counties: Montgomery, Jackson, Ross, Washington, Licking, Medina, and Hancock. If SOL is operating in your area, it just makes sense to get an SOL representative on your team. For further information about SOL, contact state team member, Ellen Seusy at OSU Extension, Urban Programs, 700 Ackerman Road, Suite 240, Columbus, OH 43202; (614) 292-6297; e-mail: seusy.1@osu.edu. More information about CYFAR, can be obtained at the following website: <<http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/cyfar/cyfar.htm>>.

In Memoriam

Members of two Common Good Local Linkage Teams died recently. Greene County's "Common Good Team" lost one of its strong supporters with the death of Roberta Estevez on September 23, 1998. "Bertie" worked for the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services for 29 years, serving as the manager of the Greene County OBES office during the past two years. In her capacity as manager, Roberta spent many hours meeting with the partners of the Greene County team to coordinate the team's efforts to enhance services to clients. Roberta was one of the team's representatives on the One-Stop Committee for the Greene County One-Stop Center. Roberta died doing a good deed. She climbed 3 flights of stairs to deliver food to a family. As a result of the climb, she suffered a massive heart attack. Her contributions and desire to serve others will be greatly missed. (Submitted by the Greene County Common Good Team)

Paula C. Milano, a founding member of the Stark County Common Good Team, died on December 3, 1998 after an extended illness. A life resident of the Canton and North Canton areas, Paula was employed with the Canton City School system as an adult vocational education coordinator. Paula was one of the original members of the Stark County Common Good Team and recently served as its coordinator.

News from Teams

The **Summit County Common Good Linkage Team** is serving as the umbrella organization for one of five national pilot sites for a welfare reform project called the Family Independence Initiative. The Initiative, established by the National Center for Family Literacy, and funded by a \$2.25 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, is part of a 5-year plan to develop, test, and evaluate pilot sites to create a national model that will take families from welfare to work successfully. The grant will allow the Common Good Linkage Team to develop, implement, and document a community-wide, innovative, and collaborative family literacy program that involves both public and private partners and integrates welfare to work training requirements.

One Stop for the Common Good of Scioto County is publishing a quarterly newsletter, *Good News*. To receive a copy, contact, Mary Glenn, Scioto County Department of Human Services at (740) 355-8811 or Sandra Lawyer, Shawnee State University, (740) 353-0109.

All Common Good Local Linkage Teams are encouraged to submit information for *In Common*.

State Team Plans A Day at Camp Mary Orton for Local Team

Another activity for Common Good Local Linkage Teams (CGLLTs) is under development. To take place on Friday, May 7, 1999 at Camp Mary Orton, the activity will be designed to strengthen CGLLTs. Under the direction of the staff of the Leadership and Challenge Center that is part of Camp Mary Orton, teams will experience a series of customized activities and initiatives designed to result in dynamic change.

In August 1998, many members of the CG State Team participated in a similar event, and the state team felt that CGLLTs should have the same opportunity. Registration materials will be sent to CGLLT coordinators late in March 1999 but be sure and mark your calendar now for what promises to be a fun activity that will pay great benefits to you and your team.

The Common Good Web Site:
<http://literacy.kent.edu/CommonGood/>

For the Common Good is supported by funds from the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Adult Education, Adult Education Act, Section 353. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the Ohio Department of Education nor the U.S. Department of Education and no endorsement should be inferred. For further information, contact Susan Imel, Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090; (614) 292-8606 or (800) 848-4815, ext. 28606; e-mail: <imel.1@osu.edu>.