

MENTORING STRATEGY REPORT TO SESSION JUNE 7, 2011

The mentoring strategy committee has worked over the last five months to update our policies to be better in line with our mission that is: “with God’s help, to heal and nurture families, guiding them from desperate and dependent situations, to hope and independent living.”

Our motivation to re-examine our mentoring plan which has been in place for 11 years, was the need to move our program more in the direction of rehabilitation and away from relief services. This strategy is described in the book When Helping Hurts, which Malcolm Brownlee had introduced to the Outreach Committee and other county Presbyterian church members back in November of last year.

Unlike relief services which include food, gas and shelter money and utility bills, (that our Barritt Fund provides,) rehabilitation requires that the people being helped participate in their own plan for change and services. Rehab means developing long-lasting, time consuming relationships and education that may be emotionally exhausting. So, we minister intensely, over time, to a few. Our latest success story was our client of four years that was able to partner with Habitat and the church to build her own house this year.

Since we started this effort, other churches and local organizations have networked with us to improve the effectiveness of all of our services. These include six churches with Mission Next Door (New Providence, Bethesda, Mt. Carmel, Timber Ridge, and Fairfield, and Ashbury Methodist), Community Financial Freedom (W&L) low cost loan and matching savings plan, Social Services, and Habitat (maintenance teaching manual.)

The biggest changes to our original program include where we get our clients and our criteria for eligibility. We will not only get clients from Social Services. We will also work with Mission Next Door, Habitat, and possibly other churches. We will expect more commitment from our clients and explain to them more carefully what we can and cannot do for them. Then we will do what we seem to do best:

help people get jobs, transportation, and decent housing while we assist them with financial planning.

People on this committee include: Becky Merchant, Lai Lee, who is our strategy planning consultant, Pat Jones, Malcolm Brownlee, Elizabeth Lauck, David Dax, John and Barbara Winfrey, and Margie Page. We will continue to work over the summer to address more issues that have come up as we consult with Social Services, W&L, and other churches to refine and improve our plan.

Copies of the plan will be available online and in the church library.

Margie Page