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Residential Support Services



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Introduction to Bridges Out of Poverty

Bridges Out of Poverty is a national and international educational and community-building process that examines poverty in terms of building sustainable communities for all people.

With the economic downturns of recent years, more and more households world-wide are experiencing the kind of crisis-oriented lifestyle that has characterized poverty for decades. As businesses trim their workforces and governments tighten their belts, public services, social services, education, health care and other programs dependent upon governmental resources are also functioning in a belt-tightening crisis mode.

Bridges Out of Poverty provides a mechanism to draw people from all corners of the community together to address the problems of chronic poverty, short-term crisis thinking, and to develop the personal and community resources necessary for a healthy, productive community.

The GETTING AHEAD part of the program is designed to assist low-income persons in examining their current lives and experiences and building toward a better future by learning how the world outside of poverty works. The institutions and policies they interact with in schools, services, neighborhoods, transportation, employment are also part of their study. Change needs to occur on many levels.

Bridges Out of Poverty is not just for the poor. Low-income people taking steps to improve their lives need support and encouragement to make good decisions, stay focused, and overcome obstacles. **Professionals in the community** need to understand and address the special needs of low-income households, and find ways to facilitate proper access and use of opportunities that services and businesses provide. **Mentors and role models** for the poor must play an important role in supporting the journey out of poverty by using their life experiences and knowledge of the community to improve a family's chances of success.

As we all work toward a community that provides adequate opportunities for motivated persons to earn sufficient wages to support their families and move away from public assistance, many adjustments will have to be made at a community level. Only through a **community-wide sustainability effort** that educates and encourages the poor, removes barriers and provides opportunities for success, and engages professional and advocates in business, government, and service sectors can this vision be achieved.

Bridges Out of Poverty is an opportunity for all of us to create true bridges to a better community future with sufficient energy, commitment, support and vision to bring us together and benefit us all.

To learn more about where you can fit into the Bridges Out of Poverty effort in Summit County contact the Summit County Steering Committee _____; AMHA _____; OPEN-M _____; or Info-Line _____.