



INDIANA FAITH-BASED ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes

October 3, 2006
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Indiana Government Center
302 W. Washington Street
Conference Room C
Indianapolis, Indiana**

The meeting of the Indiana Faith-Based Advisory Council was called to order at 1:08 PM by Executive Director Paula Parker-Sawyers. Those in attendance were asked to introduce themselves, giving the name of their organization and the city in which it is located. Mrs. Parker-Sawyers stated it was very important to acknowledge the fact that not everyone was from Indianapolis.

Joan Andrews
Hosea Baxter
Domingo Castillo
Rick George
Jeff Glover
Dan Haifley
Jerry Pattengale

Curt Smith
Eugene Spicer
Glenn Tebbe
Maria Thompson
Mark Tieke
Thomas Walker

Staff members from the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives who were in attendance were: Paula Parker-Sawyers, Dave Liebel and Janet Simpson.

Following the introductions, Executive Director Parker-Sawyers extended her personal thanks to those on the council who sent her an email or a sympathy card due to the passing of her husband, Jim, in August. She shared with the council she feels the prayers of many during this difficult time in her life and with their continued thoughts and prayers; she will heal the way God intends her to.

Mrs. Parker-Sawyers asked the council if there were any corrections to the minutes from the July 25th, 2006 meeting. Rick George made a motion to accept the meeting minutes and Dan Haifley seconded. The motion passed.

Mrs. Parker-Sawyers then directed the council's attention to the blue folders that were passed out before the start of the meeting. She indicated the materials in the folder were

distributed to those in attendance for the Challenge to Excellence conference hosted by the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives on September 27th. She thanked Curt Smith for his participation as well as those council members who attended the conference. Mrs. Parker-Sawyers indicated the conference was successful, basing that success on the evaluations received from some of the attendees. She further stated based on a scale of 1 to 5, the OFBCI scored an overall score of 4.29, and the comments indicated the event was well received. There were also a number of people who stated they received valuable information that would assist them in administering faith-based programs and write better grants. Mrs. Parker-Sawyers advised the council that with the exception of three presenters, all the other presenters were state government employees. Based on their participation, it is a strong statement about the quality and knowledge of our state employees. This conference demonstrated that if state agencies communicate and cooperate with each other, many good things can be accomplished. From Professor Gronberg's presentation Mrs. Parker-Sawyers learned there are over 280,000 Hoosiers who are involved with or employed by a non-profit organization which also includes churches and synagogues. OFBCI will be working on helping all state agencies understand the power, influence and value of non-profit and faith-based organizations.

Mrs. Parker-Sawyers asked the council to review the "*Operating a Non-Profit Organization in Indiana*" booklet located in their blue folder. She indicated rather than trying to publish a single book with multiple topics, it was decided to do a series of booklets on topics of interest to faith-based and community based organizations. "*Operating a Non-Profit Organization in Indiana*" is the first in a series and is available to anyone who contacts OFBCI. Currently, there are 300 copies available and will be mentioned in an upcoming issue of Friday Night Facts.

Executive Director Parker-Sawyers shared with the council that she had an occasion last Monday to speak with four international visitors from four non-governmental agencies in Venezuela. She explained that the International Center of Indianapolis often has international visitors in the city and whenever possible they visit the OFBCI, as well as Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy, and other non-profit organizations. The OFBCI gives the visitors a comprehensive look at both government and volunteerism. She mentioned the International Center had previously hosted visitors from Afghanistan and Iraq. One of Monday's visitors was an independent consultant, one ran an organization similar to the United Way and another gentleman worked in Caracas as part of an organization that worked with the council and their mayors to develop appropriate government policies.

Joan Andrews took the opportunity to publicly thank the OFBCI staff for their work in hosting the Challenge to Excellence Conference. She advised it was one of the best meetings she had ever attended. Mrs. Andrews further stated the breakout session speakers were very knowledgeable, were able to respond to questions asked by the conference attendees and that the entire presentation was wonderfully done especially on a small budget.

Mrs. Parker-Sawyers indicated that a number of advisory council members indicated they wanted to know more about the Indiana Department of Correction's Purposeful Living Units Serve (PLUS) program. She introduced Dr. Stephen Hall who is currently the director of religious services and community involvement and a chaplain in the Indiana Army National Guard. He has also served as chaplain for the Indiana Women's Prison as well as the Putnamville Correctional Facility. Prior to becoming a chaplain, he was a senior pastor at First Baptist Church in Bloomfield, the associate pastor at First Baptist Church in Greencastle and the pastor at Tampico Baptist Church in Brownstown.

Dr. Stephen Hall thanked the Faith-Based Advisory Council for the opportunity to come and speak with them about the PLUS Program. He indicated he would be sharing with the council where the program was at this point in time as well as the future program plans. The PLUS Program is an opportunity for people who are serious about changing criminal behavior to explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through an emphasis on spiritual, moral, and character development, life-skills training, and intentional preparation for living as law abiding citizens who contribute to the well-being of their community. Dr. Hall stated there were both faith and character based tract opportunities and that the offenders had the option to choose one or the other. Currently, there are slightly more people participating in the faith tract than the character tract and they are permitted to change from one tract to the other. He further stated the faith tract is not so much the content of the program as it is the context in which people are working on their issues. It also allows people to use whatever faith they have as a resource to address those specific factors that contribute to issues such as recidivism and behavior on the outside and is helpful to address all variables that contribute to their circumstances. Curt Smith asked approximately how many people are currently in the system. Dr. Hall said there are approximately 24,000 adult offenders currently incarcerated with an expected release of over 16,000 this year. He further stated the recidivism rate is about 37 percent. If an inmate gets 'back in the system' anytime within 3 years, they are included in the recidivism count.

Dr. Hall stated there are currently 16 facilities participating in the PLUS Program, with one additional facility anticipated by the end of the year. There are 27 total facilities in the Department of Correction system. One criteria for participating in PLUS is the offender must have at least 16 months left on their sentence. Participants include males and females, adults and juveniles. The PLUS Program only has jurisdiction in state facilities.

Pastor Dan Haifley asked Dr. Hall if there was the same type of program available on the county level. Dr. Hall stated not yet, but the Department of Correction would like to implement this program at the county facilities. At this time, several factors are preventing this from happening such as personnel, budget and the fact that inmates may not have a total of 16 months sentence time. He further stated the therapeutic community is just as important as the PLUS curriculum as it is a complete package—learn it and learn it together. It is Commissioner Donahue's goal to possibly designate a whole prison for the PLUS Program.

Mark Tieke shared with the group they are looking to assist women who are released from their local jails in Columbus, Indiana. They want to provide four women an opportunity to obtain employment and temporary housing for two years. Pastor Tieke asked if this type of program would work in that kind of a setting. Dr. Hall responded in the affirmative and further indicated this is where the Department of Correction wants to collaborate in the future because 16,000 offenders returning to our communities across the state is not just a Department of Correction issue. Commissioner Donahue has been aggressive in challenging state agencies to help offenders land on their feet once released from prison. This program excludes sex offenders and some other hard criminals. The ICHDA is working closely with the DOC reference housing rental assistance for up to a year. Mrs. Parker-Sawyers took this opportunity to tell the council about the recently developed SHARE Network. The SHARE Network is part of the Department of Labor and the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in Washington, DC. The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) has partnered with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to work on offender reentry issues such as housing, jobs and training. Indianapolis was one of the twelve cities throughout the country selected to work on this initiative. Dave Liebel, OFBCI's marketing and outreach manager has been working with the DWD and a group of AmeriCorps VISTAs assigned to the Department of Correction on this initiative. The SHARE Network will post information on the web, which will be available across the state, and will include a description of the program, services and any job opportunities available. The OFBCI, DWD and DOC are in the process of gathering information. Dr. Hall was asked if volunteers were needed for the PLUS Program and he said mentors were specifically needed. He further stated that the first few hours or days is a crucial period and can make or break someone who has just been released.

Pastor Dan Haifley suggested that perhaps there could be a cluster of mentoring groups available in every county and on stand by to assist when an offender is released. Suggesting if anyone was interested, they could come to a training session to get certified in the PLUS curriculum, even having larger organizations purchase the curriculum. Dr. Hall indicated he would present Pastor Haifley's suggestion to the DOC for research. Mrs. Parker-Sawyers agreed that a faith-care team made sense and suggested the possibility that the OFBCI could partner with CHOICES for faith-care training. She said she would make contact with Mary Longstreth from CHOICES and would email the council the results as well as ask for their feedback.

Mrs. Parker-Sawyers thanked Dr. Hall for taking the time to come and speak to those in attendance. She said he had given them all a lot to think about as well as another project to work on.

Following Dr. Hall's departure, Mrs. Parker-Sawyers introduced Habitat for Humanity of Greater Indianapolis' Executive Director Deal Illingworth. She told the council that back in April approximately 250 state employees took vacation time off to build a Habitat for Humanity House. It was called the 'Solution House' because it was tied to the Governor's Conference on Service and Volunteerism. April's build was in partnership with the Department of Correction. Mrs. Parker-Sawyers indicated there has been

discussion about state employees building a second house, but nothing has been finalized, as well as building a House of Abraham.

Mr. Illingworth said Habitat for Humanity has been around for 20 years and he has been on the board for 12 years. He further stated 24 homes will be built this year and they are hopeful to build 26 to 31 homes in 2007. Volunteers from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths came together and built the House of Abraham. Money was raised for the building of that house, 12 partners came forward with funding. So far, there are 15 Houses of Abraham in the country. Mr. Illingworth said the City of Indianapolis is going to build a Habitat for Humanity home in 2007. The cost to build a home is \$60,000. Mrs. Parker-Sawyers asked how the Faith-Based Advisory Council (FBAC) could become involved, indicating there are 17 denominations represented on the council. She proposed the Faith-Based Advisory Council in conjunction with the OFBCI consider building two Houses of Abraham in Indiana next year, making sure it is a multi-denominational build where ever they are built. Discussion ensued about possible locations, such as South Bend. Mr. Curt Smith asked if it would be possible to combine initiatives by building a House of Abraham for someone who had completed the PLUS Program. Mrs. Parker-Sawyers indicated that was a good idea and briefly discussed the Assets for Independence program, a grant opportunity from Health and Human Service. The offender would be responsible for saving 1/3 of the money, a participating organization would supply 1/3, and the final 1/3 would be supplied from HHS. These funds would be used to move the offender along the path to full self-sufficiency through education, the purchase of a home, or starting a small business.

Mr. Glenn Tebbe stated building a House of Abraham was a wonderful idea but indicated there may be very few places in Indiana where all three faiths were present and there probably weren't any members of the Jewish faith in rural areas. He suggested perhaps Muncie as well as previously mentioned South Bend. Pastor Mark Tieke suggested checking into communities that have colleges and perhaps using college students who would represent all three faiths. Pastor Dan Haifley suggested perhaps it might be possible to focus on whatever religious diversity there was in a community and have them participate in the building of the House of Abraham.

Reverend Rick George shared with the council that his church had recently completed building their third "Church in a Day" in Indiana. It took 350 workers a total of 19 hours to build an 80 x 40 building, including landscape, and have discussed the possibility of building a house in Peru, Indiana. Reverend George asked Mr. Illingworth if it would be possible to obtain the floor plans for one of their Habitat for Humanity homes.

Executive Director Parker-Sawyers thanked the council for their participation and suggestions. Based on the council's comments, Mrs. Parker-Sawyers and Mr. Illingworth will discuss further the House of Abraham. She also indicated there was additional follow up and research that needed to be done by members of the OFBCI staff and that she would send the findings to the FBAC via email.

In closing, Mrs. Parker-Sawyers indicated she didn't see a need for the council to meet again before the end of the year. She also stated if anyone had any opportunities, events or activities they would like to have her participate in, to please let her know.

The meeting of the Faith-Based Advisory Council adjourned at 3:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Simpson
Administrative Assistant