

THE REPUBLICAN STUDY COMMITTEE

ANTI-POVERTY INITIATIVE



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Congressman Steve Southerland (R-FL), Anti-Poverty Initiative Co-Chairman
Congressman Tim Scott (R-SC), Anti-Poverty Initiative Co-Chairman

Monthly Newsletter

December 21, 2012

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."
–The Declaration of Independence*



There may be no greater obstacle to the pursuit of happiness than poverty, but the traditional welfare state has failed to do justice to the poor. Nearly 50 years and \$16 trillion after President Johnson launched a federal War on Poverty, [46.2 million Americans](#) continue to live in poverty. The question policymakers must confront is how to best combat poverty and help Americans lift themselves up the economic ladder without further increasing the size of the administrative state. Many conservatives believe that effective welfare reforms should include efforts to empower institutions that have had a great track record of alleviating poverty.

This month's RSC Anti-Poverty Initiative newsletter features the work of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions (AGRM). AGRM is private group that is dedicated to engaging with the tragic conditions of the desperate and disenfranchised in America. AGRM will host a briefing on February 5, 2013 on effective communication on poverty in public policy. AGRM holds indispensable insights and perspective of those who have worked with our nation's most destitute citizen for the last 100 years.

AGRM will also host an RSC Anti-Poverty Outing for Members and staff at a local AGRM-member mission in DC on February 6, 2013.

Association of Gospel Rescue Missions



American painter Reginald Marsh depicted the sordid side of society during the Great Depression. One particular canvas he did captures the intemperate department of homeless men on a murky Manhattan sidewalk. Yet there is a hint of help and hope in that scene of destitution. It comes from an illuminated cross and a sign below it that calls out, “All Night Mission No. 8 Bowery.”

Many decades later, the lights are still on at The Bowery Mission—just as they are at hundreds of other gospel rescue missions across the United States.

Gospel rescue missions have a long history in our country of providing lifelines for those drowning in the waves of adversity and the undertow of addiction. For more than a century, they have been keeping watch on the waterfront of despair, and countless men, women, and

children have been saved in every sense of the word.

The concept of radical hospitality is at the core of rescue mission ministry. Mission staffs gladly welcome people who are on the bottom and at their worst: the “poster children” of abject poverty—the hungry, homeless, abused, and addicted with nowhere else to turn. Without discrimination, these individuals and families receive nutritious meals, products for personal hygiene, medical attention, suitable clothing, short-term accommodations, and an opportunity to hit the reset button on life.

A faith component is seen as the catalyst for lasting change in gospel rescue missions. In an environment of safety and bounty, guests are able to stabilize their lives and come to terms with the fact that they may be prisoners of poverty, possibly brought on by their own poor choices. They can decide whether to continue along their current course or embrace God’s acceptance and forgiveness, and commit to following a different path.



As guests go deeper into the services provided by missions, they can enter addiction-recovery programs, complete their education, benefit from life-skills classes, receive job training, and learn how to find employment and affordable housing. The goal is to help those struggling to survive to experience lives of healing and wholeness, and ultimately to be productive members of society.



[Since 1913, the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions \(AGRM\)](#) has been the gathering place for those who serve at these places of promise. AGRM is where they find resources, guidance, and advocacy in challenging times and inimical environments. AGRM also serves in a public relations role, telling their stories to the church and public at large, endeavoring to turn sentiment into strategy. In this regard, AGRM is a partner with the government in poverty awareness.

The demand for gospel rescue missions' services is at an all-time high. Whether the individual in need is a chronically homeless war veteran or a mother with her child experiencing homeless for the first time, these independent ministry organizations try not to turn anyone away. Amazingly, there is no fee-for-service at gospel rescue missions. The vast majority of what they provide is made possible because of the donations of individuals who have a deep conviction that caring for the poor and powerless is more than a civic responsibility—it's a divine calling.

Every year, AGRM member missions utilize 300,000 volunteers and 10,000 full-time staff to serve approximately 50 million meals, provide more than 20 million nights of lodging, distribute some 30 million pieces of clothing, graduate upwards of 20,000 people from addiction-recovery programs, and provide many more valuable services.

Please contact Ja'Ron Smith, at ja'ron.smith@mail.house.gov, if you have any questions or if you know of more private sector organizations that are showing results to solving poverty.

For more information about AGRM or to locate a gospel rescue mission in your district, please visits www.agrm.org, or call (719) 266-8300, ext. 103, for AGRM Director of Public Relations Nicole Daniels.

The AGRM: Anti-Poverty Site Visit



The RSC will be Partnering with AGRM to host a Member and staff briefing and site visit. If any Member or staffer is interested in attending please see details below and RSVP.

Briefing

- **When:** February 5, 2013
- **Time:** 3pm
- **Location:** House Office Building TBD

Site Visit

- **When:** February 6, 2013
- **Time:** 8:30am
- **Location:** 1350 R St NW, Washington, DC 20009

RSVP: ja'ron.smith@mail.house.gov

More details will be provided for both events soon, but please reserve these times on your calendars.