Faith-Based Initiatives: Partners in Home & Community Based Long Term Care

Alaska Geriatric Education Center's – Promoting Best Practices in Elder Health

June 9, 2005

BP Energy Center- Anchorage, Alaska

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Learning Objectives

- Gain an understanding of the role of faith-based programs and services
- Identify one or more faith-based organizations and how they can address gaps in services and supports
- Learn how to develop partnerships with faith-based organizations to address gaps and services
In 2001 President Bush established the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.
The mission of the White House Office and Centers is to empower faith-based and other community organizations to apply for Federal social service grants.

- The White House does not administer any grant programs or participate in funding decisions.

- The Centers supply information and training to faith-based and community organizations, but they do not make the decisions about which groups will be funded.

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✓ The agencies make those decisions through procedures established by each grant program, generally involving a competitive process.

✓ No grant funding is set aside for faith-based organizations.

✓ The Faith-Based and Community Initiative creates a level-playing field for faith-based as well as other community organizations so that they can work with the government to meet the needs of America's communities.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/
Alaska’s Faith-Based & Community Initiative Task Force

The mission

To Enhance Alaska’s health and social service capabilities by expanding the contribution of faith-based and community initiatives
Tasks of the FBCI

To accomplish its mission the Task Force undertakes the following activities

- Develop and help launch innovative ideas for increasing the contribution of faith-based and community initiatives
- Foster partnerships between and among government agencies and faith-based and community organizations
Results of the Survey of Alaska’s Gaps

Social service needs and gaps

- Housing
- Relational Support
- Direct Service
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http://ltgov.state.ak.us/fbcI/
Faith Based & Community Partnering

Brenda Moore
Christian Health Associates
Community Liaison
What Is Faith Based?

- **Church**
  A congregation with a shared statement of faith and distinct form of worship, vision and mission

- **Para Church**
  Organizationally autonomous, with a faith mission
  Typically function interdependently with churches
  Staff and volunteers are church affiliated

- **Traditional Social Ministry**
  Organizationally autonomous with a faith mission, provides services as an expression of faith
  Typically function independently of churches
  Staff and volunteers are not necessarily church affiliated
Faith Based Organizations Are Helping

Abbott Loop Community Church
Abbott Loop Transitional Living Program
Give & Take Cache (food & clothing distribution)
Anchorage Youth for Christ (Para Church)

Parachutes Teen Club & Resource Center, provides a drug-and alcohol-free environment for teens, helping them and their families meet physical, social and spiritual needs.

Currently providing ASSETS clients a safe environment for social activities.

Catholic Social Services (Social Ministry)
Serve and advocate for the poor and people in need.

Provides care for children who experience developmental disabilities and offers a support system for their families.
Developing Links & Partnerships

Some Things to Consider

Church

- Meeting special needs in churches is more about relationships than programs

- Church programs often grow from felt needs within the congregation and then are extended to the community
Para Church

- The mission of a para-church organization may lend itself to serving special needs.
- Para-church organization are often willing to partner if it doesn’t require diminishing their faith mission.

Social Ministry

- Social justice for people with special needs is often the overarching mission goal of social ministries.
- Social ministries are usually well positioned to partner.
Some Suggested Strategies

It’s All About Relationships!

Church

- To engage church volunteers consider contracting or hiring a volunteer coordinator through a church
- Connecting may more easily be accomplished through the small group ministry of larger churches
Para Church

✓ Determine if the mission and service goals of the organization align with unmet needs and if partnering may expand capacity
✓ Determine if the organization’s faith identity will be a hindrance to partnering, i.e., hiring and service approach

Social Ministry

✓ Determine if mission and service goals align with unmet needs and if partnering may expand capacity
✓ Explore intermediary capacities for administering, training and facilitating
An outreach of their Mission and Health Ministry. Through a network of trained volunteers, this program provides the “little things” that make a “big difference” in the lives of those we serve.

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http://www.providence.org/alaska/community/faithinaction.htm
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The Realities

- Increase in aging population
- Increase in chronic diseases
- The “unseen caregiver”
- Decrease in support systems
- A disease cure system
A national program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation with direction and technical assistance provided by Wake Forest University School of Medicine.
One Common Goal

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

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Health Care Ministry

A Vital Link in Health Care

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Disabilities and Faith Organizations

Partnering with Faith Organizations
Darcy Mollet
Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education
Meaningful Relationships: Common Threads for Welcoming Congregations (Video)

- Didn’t integrate with a one size fits all, but got to know people as individuals.
- Built relationships,
- Limited Assumptions
- Created circles of support
- Allowed time to build relationship
- Believed that everyone has something to offer
Alaska Family Experiences:
Common Threads (Interviews)

- Pastor and other members were comfortable with not understanding
- Knew people in the congregation, had a circle of friends
- Size, smaller congregation easier to integrate
- Got to know family and individual as people, their likes, talents, and dislikes.
- Family joined activities, took forward steps
- Congregation matched person with the activity they liked.
- Congregation was accepting
Tips for Creating Inclusive Spiritual Communities

Family and Individuals
- Introduce family or individuals to faith leader
- Discuss needs, strengths, likes. Enjoyable activities etc.
- Join activities (coffee hour)
- Ask to be connected to the “bridge builder”
- Provide direct education to staff
- Discuss congregation protocol with person with disabilities

Faith Organizations
- Recruit members to serve as companions
- Assemble an inclusion team: Faith Leader, Educator, Parents
- Seek training for the staff using local resources (disability etiquette)
- Form a circle of Care
- Recruit children to become classroom buddies
- Create an accessibility team
- Acceptance

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Slight changes seem small, but removing the barrier to one disability often begins the steps needed to welcome people with any disability.