

# IMPACT

University of Idaho  
Extension

Nez Perce County, 208.799.3096, Fax: 208.799.3054  
1239 Idaho Street, Lewiston, ID 83501

## Extension focuses on community building to end poverty

### The Situation

The difficulties and chaos of trying to survive day-to-day with minimal resources impacts individuals and families in many diverse ways.

Idaho's child poverty rate of 16 percent represents a child being born into poverty every two hours.

Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom rental in Idaho is \$684 per month. To afford that amount, a worker would have to make \$13.16 per hour at a single job or hold 1.3 full time jobs at minimum wage. Currently, an estimated 44 percent of Idaho renters cannot pay this amount.

Nearly 17 percent of Idahoans go without any type of health insurance. Uninsured adults are 50 percent less likely to have early detection screenings that save lives and dramatically lower treatment costs.

These issues reflect the growing need for educational programming on the impacts that limited resources and assets have on economic security at the individual, family, and community levels.

### Our Response

The Center for Community Building to End Poverty (CCBEP) is a virtual center created in 2008 through a unique collaboration among a private non-profit agency, a land-grant institution, and a monastery to address issues of poverty in a four-state region. This formalized partnership brings together the skills and expertise of work aimed at ending poverty from the Community Action Partnership, the strengths of academic research and evaluation from the University of Idaho Extension, and a model of an inclusive, self-sustaining community from the Monastery of St. Gertrude's.



The CCBEP is a grassroots movement to end poverty in our communities and offers several best practices to help people get the power and influence they need to get themselves out of poverty as well as to create a broader awareness of the realities of poverty in our communities.

### Program Outcomes

From November 2009 through October 2010, the CCBEP provided several best practice programs for Idaho and Washington audiences, including:

- Nine *Poverty Simulation* experiences for 449 participants and 248 volunteers
- Twelve *Bridges out of Poverty*® seminars for 405 participants
- Three *Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World*® courses for 40 participants

The Poverty Simulation is an interactive experience that helps people begin to understand what life is like with a shortage of money and an abundance of stress. Participants assume a role in up to 26 different families facing poverty. The experience is designed to sensitize those who frequently interact with low-income families, such as front line staff at social, legal and health agencies.

Bridges Out of Poverty® is a five-hour training seminar designed for middle-class and wealthy families to better understand the culture of generational poverty. The CCBEP has 10 certified Bridges trainers and is the only organization in the northwest licensed by **aha!** Process, Inc.®, to present the Bridges seminar. In survey evaluations participants reported that before participating in Bridges:

- 32% felt they had an above average or better understanding of what poverty is like in their community – after Bridges that percentage jumped to 80%
- 32% felt they had an above average or better understanding of the causes of poverty – after Bridges that percentage jumped to 93%

Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World® is an 18-week workbook-based investigation of economic class. It's designed to help those who are ready to move out of poverty create their own plan for stability for themselves and their families. Rather than being handed treatment plans by social and educational agencies, individuals go through a step-by-step life-planning process to create their own future story. Despite the economic downturn, 40 Getting Ahead graduates made significant positive changes:

- 43% reported getting a better paying job
- 67% paid off a credit card or pay day loan
- 60% opened or added money to a bank account
- 80% donated food or clothing to a charity

Audiences having received training in one or more of the Center's best practices include: University of Idaho, Lewis Clark State College, Walla Walla Community College, Idaho Catholic Charities, Idaho Department of Commerce & Labor, Orofino School District, Clarkston School District, IdahoSTARS statewide staff, Kamiah Human Needs Council, Idaho and Washington non-profit leaders, Horizons alumni communities, and the Idaho Association of Lifelong Learners.

Building capacity in communities for people to work together in defining and achieving overall well-being will increase opportunities for more families to live in thriving communities.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Kathee Tift**, Extension Educator  
University of Idaho Extension, Nez Perce County  
1239 Idaho Street  
Lewiston, ID 83501  
Phone: 208.799.3096  
Fax: 888-722.4674  
E-mail: ktift@uidaho.edu

**Mary Schmidt**, Spirit Center Administrator  
Monastery of St. Gertrude  
465 Keuterville Road  
Cottonwood, ID 83522  
Phone: 208.962.2001  
E-mail: mschmidt@stgertrudes.org

**Lisa Stoddard**, Executive Director  
Community Action Partnership  
124 New 6th Street  
Lewiston, ID 83501  
Phone: 208.746.3351  
E-mail: l.stoddard@cap4action.org

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