

# Leadership Montgomery Torchbearer Class VIII – Community Projects

## Project Team #1

**Report Author:** Lisa Ranieri

**Project Name:** Renaissance House—Ping Pong Tournament

**Team Members:** JaTaune Bosby, Elton Brooks, Julie Knight, Lisa Ranieri, Phelps Reid, Kadedra Smith, Laurel Teel, Antonio Williams

**Chairperson:** Nancy Bradford (Event Chair), Mary Lil Owens (Board Chair)

**Dates of Implementation:** First board meeting—May 12 | Event—August 12-13

**Duration of project:** Two months

**Project location:** Crump Senior Center

**Media Outlets:** Alabama News Network, Bell Media

**Name of those responsible for securing photos:** Elton Brooks

**Name of those responsible for writing/producing news stories:** Laurel Teel (press release), Lisa Ranieri (produced news story)

**Whom did the project benefit?** The residents housed by Renaissance during the 6-month reentry process and the staff that maintain the house and program.

**Groups involved (sponsors):** Over 30 community sponsors including Alabama Power, Bell Media, Bumper Nets, and The Confucius Institute of AUM.

**Total number of volunteer hours:** Three one and a half hour board meetings (4.5) + Friday night event (4) + Saturday (5) + outreach (4) x (8) members = 140 hrs.

**Vision for future project:** With the launch of their inaugural fundraiser, Renaissance hopes to continue garnering more support and local interest in the coming years. By collaborating with an outside organization—Ping Pong for Charity—it provides the board with a sustainable fundraising framework.

**Will this be an ongoing project? Who will carry the project forward?:** The ping-pong tournament will be an annual event. Currently the board is confirming details for the 2017 fundraiser.

**How was the project implemented?** The Renaissance House board of directors raised over \$25,000 in direct and in-kind sponsorship for the event. The initial challenge was generating visibility for the reentry program and the fundraiser. Our group created a Facebook page, producing a high-level of engagement for board members and organizations that give to the program. This provided a social media presence for Renaissance that enabled them to share and advertise information through one platform.

With the help of various community partners, media sponsors, and the commitment of our group volunteers, Renaissance raised over \$20,000 during their first ping-pong tournament fundraiser.

**Describe your presentation:** Our presentation will be a brief overview of our initial objective, challenges, delegating tasks, group strategy, and the outcome of the event.

**Feedback provided to board:** *Below is the feedback our group compiled. Note, these were simply considerations and suggestions for next year's event. The mission of Renascence is important to the community and we were honored to support the initiative.*

### Volunteerism

- Utilizing the Google doc with each task was more functional than [www.SignUpGenius.com](http://www.SignUpGenius.com), allowing people to access the doc and sign-up for tasks via email versus logging into another app. or program.
- Steering committee members should be required to recruit at least 2-5 volunteers each. For example, in addition to assisting with getting participants, each TB member could have focused on securing volunteers for the day-of event.

### Administrative Tasks & Communication

- Designate one or two board members that consistently communicate with volunteers. This provides clarity for volunteers and minimizes additional tasks/redundancy.
- Designate one person to handle all of your social media promotion. This person could delegate tasks for your Facebook page, event invites, silent auction items, etc.

### Event Day

- Separate youth and advanced divisions in the morning and afternoon.
- Two sets of print outs for registration and sign-in.

### Core Message

- The importance of the fundraiser and whom it benefits should be the focal point of the content surrounding the ping-pong tournament. The event is a great opportunity to educate the public on the resources Renascence provides and the opportunity for second chances. Therefore, we should utilize every outlet/platform to do so (e.g. highlight success stories every week on FB, invite family members of residents to participate, allow residents to showcase talents and skills at the preview party—art, cooking, etc.)

### Next Steps

- Consider a video vignette as a good marketing tool. Investing in the video allows Renascence to repurpose it in any capacity. For example, it can be used to raise general awareness for your cause by posting on Facebook, good engagement/soliciting tool for a future Capital Campaign, during annual meetings with donors and staff. Clay McInnis is the contact for this; he is president of the Downtown Business Association.
- Consider taking advantage of the renovation and rehabilitation that is happening in Cottage Hill. Partnerships in the community will be very beneficial going forward. Reach out to whomever is orchestrating the Five-Points renovations, or Johnny Veres with the Sanctuary. Maybe when they have an event Renascence could be the beneficiary.

## Project Team #2

**Report Author:** Kiesha Favor

**Project Name:** The Montgomery Area Food Bank

**Team Members:** Kiesha Favor, Will Frazier, Caty Turnipseed, Nikki Darley, Nick Revels, Nic Cofield, Thomas Bell, III and Zachary Beasley, III

**Chairperson:** Kiesha Favor

**Dates of Implementation:** April 2016 to present (October 2016)

**Duration of project:** six (6) months

**Project location:** The Montgomery Area Food Bank, 471 Trade Center Street

**Media Outlets:** Social Media (Facebook) and Radio

**Whom did the project benefit?** The Montgomery Area Food Bank; the MAFB services 37 of Alabama's 67 counties

**Groups involved (sponsors):** None

**Total number of volunteer hours:** 30 hours

**Vision for future project:** Our vision is to continue to help the MAFB through donated time and continuing to market the food bank for future donations.

**Will this be an ongoing project? Who will carry the project forward?** One-time project

**How was the project implemented?**

The team first received our project at the Class VIII retreat. We met with the Executive Director and drilled won on what she and the food bank exactly needed. We came to the conclusion manpower, funds and food and supplies were the primary need for the MAFB. We successfully coordinated fund drives in our respective places of employment, and also partnered with some of our local grocery stores to conduct food drives.

## Project Team #3

**Report Author:** Anna Ganey

**TITLE OF THE PROJECT:** Catholic Social Services-The Home Safety Program

**TEAM MEMBERS:** \_Rahmel Cowen, James Foley, Anna Ganey, Shermeka Hawthorne, Ian Maloy, Aquan Robinson, Kris Stallworth, Brad Talley and Morrisa Tuck\_

**NAME OF CHAIR PERSON:** Anna Ganey

**DATE(S) OF IMPLEMENTATION:** June 23, 2016-June 29, 2016 and August 6, 2016

**DURATION OF PROJECT:** 1:00-3:00 PM each day of service (June 23-June 29) & 9:00 AM-11:00 AM (August 6)

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Homes of CSS clients throughout Montgomery and CSS Campus (4455 Narrow Lane Rd)

**NAMES OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURING PHOTOS:** Ian Maloy, Aquan Robinson and Rahmel Cowen

**NAMES OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR WRITING NEWS STORIES/OTHER ACCOUNTS:** Shermeka Hawthorne and Morrisa Tuck

**FINAL DESCRIPTION OF YOUR PROJECT:** The St. Margaret's program of Catholic Social Services provides smoke detectors and weekly deliveries of non-perishable foods as well as paper goods/personal hygiene products. Our project team completed the installation of smoke detectors in 18 homes and delivered bags of food and paper goods to these Senior Services clients. In addition to the items delivered to the families, our project team packed bags for future deliveries and completed the transfer and organization of the resource room (a multi-purpose food pantry/storage and staging area for food, household and personal hygiene products given to CSS clients) from a smaller space to a larger, more useful and accessible space.

**Exactly who will be served by the project?** Underserved seniors 60 and above who receive food deliveries from Catholic Social Services. **How many people will benefit?** 18 direct clients (more individuals if you add in their family/household members) have benefited from this project being completed. This included 36 smoke detectors being placed in 18 homes. An additional 1,760 pounds of food and paper goods were delivered to these homes, and over 2,300 pounds of food was sorted and packed for future delivery. An innumerable group of clients will be positively impacted due to the transfer of the resource room, which will allow CSS to receive and store more products as well as offer ease of accessibility for volunteers and CSS staff members.

**OTHER AGENCIES AND GROUPS THAT WERE INVOLVED:**

No additional individuals or groups were involved in the completion of this project. Our project team was able to complete the project, as outlined by CSS, without the need for additional personnel.

**HOW MANY VOLUNTEER HOURS WERE DEVOTED TO THIS PROJECT?** A total of 84 volunteer hours were devoted to the project by our project team.

**VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PROJECT:** We envision that CSS will identify additional clients who will benefit from this service. As those needs are identified, they will complete the installation of the smoke detectors on an individual basis. Monthly food deliveries will also continue to be provided to CSS clients through the service of CSS team members and community volunteers.

**Will this be an on-going project or a one-time project?** This project has the potential to become an on-going project as additional clients in need of this service are identified.

**If it will be on-going, who will carry it forward?** CSS will continue to be able to rely on the service of their staff as well as community volunteers to aid in future home installations.

**Describe exactly how your project will be implemented.** Our team initially met with CSS to determine the project guidelines. Carol Herron, Director of Elderly Outreach Care, identified clients who would benefit from this service. In coordination with Anna Ganey, a schedule was developed for project implementation. Our project team was divided into smaller teams of two individuals. Between June 23<sup>rd</sup> and June 29<sup>th</sup>, our team visited the homes and installed smoke detectors, delivered food & paper goods, or provided both to the clients.

After each smaller team completed their route for the day, the team members would journey back to the CSS campus to prepare packages for future deliveries. Each package consisted of a bag from Group A: (non-perishable food items) as well as Group B: (household cleaning products, paper goods, personal hygiene products). Clients were also gifted with fresh flowers donated by area businesses and a cross handcrafted by children who attend local schools.

Upon completion of the original project, our project team recognized the ability and desire to provide additional service to CSS. Our team met with CSS staff to discuss additional priorities for the program. The Executive Director, Patty DeBartoli, as well as the St. Margaret's/Senior Services Program Manager, Carol Herron, determined that the greatest need was for the relocation of their resource room. This room served as a multi-purpose food pantry/storage and staging area. Because the room had outgrown its capacity, the CSS staff wanted to relocate it to a larger and more easily accessible space on their campus. Members of the project team met at the campus on the morning of August 6 to complete this additional project. All food items, paper goods, personal hygiene and household cleaning products, along with the shelving units and delivery containers were relocated from pallets in the original resource room to a larger multi-purpose space on the campus of CSS. The relocation of this space will enable CSS to increase their overall storage capacity as well as provide easier accessibility for staff members and volunteers who assist with stocking and deliveries.

Our project team's presentation will be segmented as follows:

<b>Outline of Presentation-Team 3-Catholic Social Services</b>	
Introduction of Team Members: Name, Title, Place of Employment	James Foley
Meet Miss Cherry and Mr. Bell-Introductions of CSS Clients	Morrisa Tuck and Aquan Robinson
Intro to MCSS (Overview of Organization)	James Foley
Fire Statistics-Project Need in Our Region	Kris Stallworth
Our Project-Description of Project Implementation	Ian Maloy
Our Experiences-Personal Perspectives from Project Participation	Brad Talley, Shermeka Hawthorne, Rahmel Cowen
Call to Action/ Closing	Anna Ganey-Project Team Chairperson

### **Our Experience - Brad Talley**

Starting this project I was unsure what to expect. I did not know where we would visit, nor the people we would come across. I was unsure if this service would be beneficial for the people we would encounter. There

were many unknowns, but after spending time in the community I've learned a little goes a long way. Spending a little time listening to those in our community can help heal loneliness. Spending a little time trying to understand someone's actual needs versus your perception of their needs. Spending a little time listening you will find out the value placed on family. My most memorable moment of installing the smoke detectors was the very first installation. There was an elderly lady in her room, but left the door open for us expecting our arrival. As we entered with our green bags and smoke detectors we were genuinely welcomed. She did not realize there was a guy coming and quickly made sure she was presentable. As we were installing the smoke detectors she began to talk about a car accident she had the previous week and how she needed things that were in her car. She sat there with a brace on leg attempting to figure out how to place the brace on correctly. We could see she was having a difficult time with this brace and then someone remembered the guy was a nurse. We then spent time adjusting her brace and talking about her recent events. Spending that little time listening to her, we were able to not only make sure she was safe, but also help ease her mind about her personal belongings.

### **Rahmel Cowen**

When we had the opportunity to select our preferred project choices, the Montgomery Catholic Social Services project seemed like the best choice for what I wanted to accomplish. I was looking for a chance to work with those that were less fortunate and help to make a difference in their daily lives by doing a small deed or just putting a smile on their face by satisfying a need. During this project we not only got a chance to do a lot of things to help assist MCSS in their monthly mission work but we also got a chance to meet some really nice people along the way. We learned a lot about all of the services that MCSS offers and that they also have a great thrift store. This project also gave me an opportunity to go into some areas of Montgomery that I normally would not have a reason to visit or otherwise see.

I thoroughly enjoyed putting in the smoke detectors and delivering food to those in need of the service. One of the biggest things that I took away from this experience is to never take the things that I have for granted. All of the people that we assisted during this project not only appreciated the simple small tasks that we were doing but were also elated to see that we were volunteering our time to help them. A smoke detector is probably something that we all overlook in our houses until the battery is dead and you have to change it in order to get rid of the annoying sound. However, this part of the project was very humbling and allowed me to put things in perspective in reference to what is really important in life.

I believe that as a group we were successful in completing the goals of the Montgomery Catholic Social Services through effective communication, teamwork, and having a great attitude. I personally plan to continue to support MCSS in any way that I can and will be soon making another donation to the thrift store. I hope that others will choose to support them as well after learning a little more about their services.

### **Shermeka Hawthorne**

Working on this project made me feel like I actually made a difference; as if I could actually see the difference. I currently work with children and youth so it is not often that I get the chance to make an impact in the lives of the older population. It made my heart smile knowing that I was part of a great team who did something that was of great worth to the care and safety of the clients at St. Mary's Catholic Social Services. As a social worker, I know how the elderly population is often forgotten about. Going out with the workers to visit with the clients and installing the smoke alarms made me feel honored to just be in the presence of wise individuals. On one of my days volunteering, one of the clients shared with us about her life and how she used to do hair. I knew that we were probably the only company that she had probably all week. Even though our visit only lasted 5 minutes, I walked away from that client's home knowing her week was made because she had a moment to socialize and interact with someone else.

We also delivered food as we installed the smoke detectors. Seeing how excited the clients were to receive their monthly food was something special. Some of the clients needed assistance unpacking the food bags while other just encouraged us to find a spot in the kitchen and sit them down. One thing that was a commonality among each of them was that they took pride in what “little” they had. They were always grateful to greet the staff and were even more grateful when the staff brought out us...the volunteers.

This project reminded me of how hard the elderly have it. Many of them are on a fixed income and it was explained to us that they consider things such as paper towels as luxury items. That is definitely something to think about; I never imagined something seemingly so basic as paper towels as a luxury item.

### Call to Action

What can you do to make a difference?

As we've mentioned before there are many ministries that operate out of Catholic Social Services. However, from our time working with St. Margaret's some needs began to stand out.

- **Consistent volunteers:** while any and all volunteers are appreciated. Catholic Social Services is in need of volunteers that are willing to make a long term commitment. That are willing to show up on a weekly basis for a few hours and help make food deliveries or transport someone to a doctor appointment.
- **Christmas Goodie Bags:** Volunteers and items are needed for the Christmas Goodie bags. These bags typically include small toiletries such as toothpaste, razor, lotion, etc. Volunteers are needed to stuff these bags as it draws closer to Christmas.
- **Box Fans:** Many of the people they serve do not have air conditioning and simple box fans can be lifesaving.
- **Thrift Store:** They need donations, customers, and volunteers. All donated items are not sold; people in need are given vouchers for the store and are allowed to pick out clothing and household items for themselves.

## Project Team #4

**Report Author:** Brian Matney

**TITLE OF THE PROJECT:** E.A.T. South Project

**NAME OF CHAIR PERSON:** Brian Matney

**TEAM MEMBERS:** Carlton Avery; Chandalyn Chrzanowski; Lindsey Baker; Aaron Ganey; Tamara Hartley; James Jackson; Cindy Sawyer; Kenny Ward, Jr.; Brian Matney

**DATE(S) OF IMPLEMENTATION:** From: 5/1/16 to 10/1/16

**DURATION OF THE PROJECT:** 5 months

**PROJECT LOCATION:** E.A.T. South Office; E.A.T. South Downtown Farm

**FINAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project saw several changes since its beginning. The Executive Director who submitted the initial proposal for the project, Liz Laroche, left E.A.T. South in May of 2016. Our team met with Mrs. Laroche at the end of her tenure and were introduced the new Executive Director, Sara Byard soon after we returned from the Retreat after being assigned our project. In mid-June, we were informed that Mrs. Byard was resigning, and met with Interim Executive Director, Beth Anne Dunagan, to once again outline our project.

In our initial meetings with Mrs. Laroche and Mrs. Byard, it was clear that E.A.T. South wanted to become known as a venue space to help generate more income to help them become self-sustaining (to have the ability to pay all expenses with revenues generated by being a venue space). Mrs. Laroche and Mrs. Byard also asked that we present them with any and all ideas our team had to help them improve their standing in the community and to become a self-sustaining organization. Additionally, they both emphasized the need to address a problem with water drainage around the raised garden beds at the Downtown Farm location.

After the departure of Mrs. Byard, our team met with the Interim Executive Director, Beth Anne Dunagan and brought many different ideas to the table. E.A.T. South lost 3 AmeriCorps VISTA workers shortly after Ms. Dunagan became the Interim Executive Director. Additionally, the Farmer who had been with the Organization for several years left and was replaced with a new Farmer during the summer. With the high degree of turnover in the Organization, leaving 2 remaining employees the emphasis on becoming a venue space was less important to the new Ms. Dunagan. After our meeting with Ms. Dunagan, it was clear that time consuming aspects of our project were not a high priority for the remaining E.A.T. South staff members. Our project turned into somewhat of an advisory role, which included the following five items:

- 1) Venue rental agreement – Our team assessed the Organization’s current venue rental agreement and provided recommendations around their fee structure (both in dollar amount and duration of rental) to be more in line with that of other, comparable local facilities. The Organization’s existing rental agreement included wording which only asked for “suggested donations” for rental of the facility. As the lessee would be receiving services with a value, these donations would not be tax deductible for the lessee, and therefore we recommended setting a fixed rental rate schedule. The rental rate would depend on the day of the week and the length of the rental. Our recommendations ranged from \$375 for a weeknight rental to \$1,000 for a full day Saturday or Sunday rental (for an event like a wedding).



- 2) Drainage solution – Our team assisted E.A.T. South to determine potential solutions for the drainage issue at the Downtown Farm location. Our team organized meetings between an engineer with Goodwyn | Mills | Caywood and the E.A.T. South Director. The engineer provided a drainage plan to E.A.T. South, which our team began to work on at our E.A.T. South work day on October 1, 2016. At this time, it was determined that the initial drainage plan would not work due to hard compacted soil below a geo-mat. The geo-mat was placed below all of E.A.T. South’s raised garden beds as the soil beneath the geo-mat is contaminated with arsenic. Therefore, no moisture seeps from above the geo-mat to the dirt below, resulting in the soil being extremely hard. E.A.T. South is currently exploring more options with the City of Montgomery.
- 3) Marketing intern – Our team coordinated an internship position (for credit) for a student studying marketing at Auburn University at Montgomery. This intern will assist E.A.T. South with various office related items including managing social media accounts. These duties were previously performed by the AmeriCorps VISTA workers who E.A.T. South lost earlier this year. With the assistance of Dr. Kimberly Johnson in the AUM College of Business, this position was advertised and students who have expressed interest are being evaluated to ensure they meet internal criteria. As soon as a student is approved, Dr. Johnson will send their information to Ms. Dunagan. This goal is to fill this this internship position for the upcoming spring semester.
- 4) Marketing Assessment – Develop a series of questions to assess current marketing efforts. The end goal of this assessment is to increase brand awareness by creating and maintaining a consistent message. Through the answers; provided by board members, staff, vendors, and friends; E.A.T South can evaluate the gaps and create a more robust marketing strategy. This exercise allows E.A.T South to celebrate the strengths and focus on the weaknesses.
- 5) “Fundraisers @ the Farm” – This is an idea brought to E.A.T. South by our team to incentivize local non-profits to hold fundraisers at the Farm (and thus increase E.A.T. South’s recognition in the community). Our team created an outline for the program and drafted a contract addendum to their rental agreement in which E.A.T. South could lower the cost of the venue rental (to \$0 if necessary) as long as the renter follows co-branding requirements for the event (using E.A.T. South’s logo).

**MEDIA OUTLETS CONTACTED:** None

**WHO WAS SERVED AND HOW MANY PEOPLE BENEFITTED?** E.A.T. South and those benefitted by their mission, including school age children in their school garden programs and those benefitted by their community gardens.

**OTHER AGENCIES AND GROUPS WHO WERE INVOLVED:** Goodwyn | Mills | Cawood

**VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PROJECT:**

**WILL THIS BE AN ONGOING PROJECT OR WILL IT BE A ONE-TIME PROJECT?** Some aspects are one-time (drainage project, work done on rental agreement, etc.), while others could be on-going if E.A.T. South chooses to implement any of our recommendations.

**IF IT WILL BE ON-GOING, WHO WILL CARRY THE PROJECT FORWARD?** E.A.T. South employees

**HOW MANY VOLUNTEER HOURS WERE DEVOTED TO THIS PROJECT:** Approximately 175 hours