



American Association for Strengthening Families: Colorado

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Ph.D., D. Min.

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THIS DENVER BASED INITIATIVE:

A very clear indicator of whether communities have the potential to substantially change the dynamics of family challenges in a given area is a determination of how well the organizations that are involved with providing social services are able to coalesce capacities to optimize collective impacts.

In this connection, Global Peace Festival Foundation (GPFF) and the African American Healthy Marriages Initiative propose to co-convene with the Center for Community Excellence and Social Justice (CCESJ) The American Association for Strengthening Families, Colorado (AASF) for the Greater Metropolitan Denver Community (GMDC) as well as the Rocky Mountain Multi-State Region.

Through the convening power of key partners, an initial exploratory meeting to determine the feasibility of a coalition is being planned. It brings together a group of strategic individuals and organizations involved with providing community based, family systemic and child centered services. The concept has received favorable consideration, convener, and/or partnership commitment from the:

- *African American Healthy Marriage Initiative*
- *African American Leadership Institute*
- *American Pathways University*
- *Black Chamber of Commerce (Colorado)*
- *Bo Matthews Center for Excellence*
- *City and County of Denver's Department of Human Services (Family Services Division)*
- *Colorado Black Women United*
- *Denver Weekly News*
- *Global Peace Festival Foundation*
- *North East Denver Strengthening Families Coalition*
- *Urban Tikkun Center*

From this initial exploratory meeting, the coalition will be formed comprised of partners committed to strengthening families through strengthening communities. We anticipate such an event can occur in February, 2012. Below is a summary of such initiatives in various regions in the country.

Editors:

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AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THIS DENVER BASED INITIATIVE (continued from page 1):

Region II (New York) Established: July '09

- **Conveners:** ACF Region II; New York Urban League; York College; Exodus Transitional Community (Prison Re-Entry Initiative)
- **Vision:** Stronger families through collaboration.
- **Mission:** To strengthen children and families through sharing information, encouraging effective policies, and maximizing resources by working in collaboration.
- **Taskforces:**
 - Parenting and Relationships
 - Incarceration and Reentry
 - Mental Health
 - Economic Stability
- **Coalition Orientation:** Mainly oriented toward NY State and City Public agencies – Human Services, etc.
- **Current # of active partners:** 35
- **Catchment area:** Mainly New York City

Region II (New Jersey) Established: January '10

- **Conveners:** ACF Reg. II; New Jersey Urban Mayors Association
- **Vision:** Northern New Jersey Families & Communities are self sufficient, empowered and healthy.
- **Mission:** To provide services and information via collaboration that fosters family development and parenting skills that enhances Northern New Jersey families.
- **Taskforces:**
 - Mental Health
 - Prison Re-integration
 - Economic Development/Employment
 - Healthy Marriage Relationships & Parenting
 - Education
- **Coalition Orientation:** Mainly oriented toward significant non-profit & quasi-governmental organizations, i.e., Head Start.
- **Current # of active partners:** 20
- **Catchment area:** Northern New Jersey

Region III (District of Columbia) Established: July '08

- **Conveners:** ACF Region III; Greater Washington Urban League
- **Vision:** Empowered Healthy Families and Strong Community Partnerships.
- **Mission:** Operate as a Coalition of People & Organizations to mobilize resources, facilitate partnerships, build capacity & organize stakeholders to strengthen families & communities.
- **Taskforces:**
 - Child Development
 - Fatherhood
 - Mental Health
 - Public Safety
- **Coalition Orientation:** Mainly toward significant non-profit organizations.
- **Current # active partners:** 25
- **Catchment area:** Greater Washington, DC & Southern MD

Region IV (Atlanta), Established: August '10

- **Conveners:** ACF Region IV, Global Peace Festival Foundation, Georgia Legislative Black Caucus
- **Vision:** Strong Families in Atlanta
- **Mission:** Strengthening Families and Communities Coalition of Atlanta will strengthen families through sharing information, encouraging effective policies, and maximizing resources by working in collaboration.
- **Taskforces:**
 - Teen Pregnancy Prevention
 - Youth Violence Prevention
 - School Dropout Prevention
 - Economic Development/Financial Literacy
 - Family Health
- **Coalition Orientation:** Non-profit Organizations, Academic Institution(s).
- **Current # active partners:** 40

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American Leadership
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Ronald Wooding,
Northeast Denver
Strengthening Families
Coalition

- Catchment area: Greater Atlanta, GA

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THIS DENVER BASED INITIATIVE (continued from page 2):

These Coalitions focus on three generic outcomes: Information sharing, Policy formation and Collaboration. An example of information sharing and perhaps policy formation was evidenced when the Atlanta Strengthening Families Coalition submitted policy recommendations to the upcoming convening of the National Black State Legislative Caucus. It is clear that such outcomes are based on a sense of ownership among conveners and partners to make a real difference in the community. Partners from this Atlanta coalition included:

- US Dept of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families
- Georgia Department of Human Services
- Atlanta Workforce Development Agency
- Urban League of Atlanta
- Morehouse School of Medicine
- Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials
- New Beginning Full Gospel Baptist Church (mega church)
- Organization of DeKalb Educators.

All of the various urban areas around the country face both universal and unique challenges that adversely impact families and communities. Each coalition therefore establishes its own set of priorities, based on the consensus of the conveners and partners. This establishes an atmosphere where there is identification, and so, buy-in from a consensus group that would be willing to work toward strategic solutions.

We propose that a plan be developed whereby, strategic and/or potential partners convene to explore significant concerns confronting the Denver metropolitan community. The outcome of such will be a set of individuals and organizations willing to participate in a coalition that would develop and implement strategies to address key issues in Strengthening Families & Communities.

Please join us November 18, 2011, at CCESJ, 1600 Downing Street, 10:30 am-12:00 pm, to hear more about the initiative, and/or become a partner, as we plan toward our exploratory forum in December.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rev. Marjorie Lewis, Ph.D., D. Min.

end



**A NATIONAL MISSION FOR AMERICAN RENEWAL
Resolution:**

(The following information is part of a resolution signed by faith-leaders nationwide during the National Faith Leader's Summit. There were approximately 100 people from various locations throughout the nation. Denver was represented by five leaders of organizations in faith and/or community based organizations. It frames the vision, mission, goals and objectives of an emerging faith leader's coalition. For our initiative, it provides the vision/mission, as well as goals and objectives.)

Future Topics:

1. What is Community Based Empowerment?
2. The Church, Community, and Public Policy
3. The Issue of Domestic Violence
4. Reentry: Family Systemic Issues
5. Proceedings from the Colorado Strengthening Families Conference

OUR COMMON MISSION FOR AMERICAN RENEWAL (continued)

Whereas, we recognize the present challenges facing our nation on many fronts, we likewise **recognize our nation's founding principles and their timeless capacity to bring about the revitalization of the nation. Chief among these that claim that we are created equal and that the Creator has endowed us with unalienable rights and freedoms.**

Whereas, we also acknowledge that to **claim the gift of liberty**, citizens must first **practice self-governance**. That practice entails people with virtue, shaped through **applying shared values to their own behavior**. The Universal values essential for an ethical society are therefore, rooted in unchanging principles that we are espoused and then exemplified by people of faith and good conscience.

Whereas, we recognize the enduring hope embodied within **the American Dream**; it is the dream that all have **equal access to the pursuit of happiness** and, although we are from many, we stand as **one America, one family, one nation** under God.

Whereas, we also recognize that **America is a work in progress** and that the light of the Dream also reveals the shadows of our present and our past, the founding of America **goes on until the Dream, for all, is realized.**

Whereas we recognize that **to be an American does not speak to any particular racial, religious, ethnic, or political persuasion**; America is about a shared idea, self-evident truths and common values. Thus, **America is to be a model that provides an example to the world that peace and prosperity are possible under the principles of God.**

Whereas, studies show that **Americans today often lack understanding of the essential principles that define our national identity**, and have lost clarity about a moral definition of right and wrong; thus, we are **confronted with a values vacuum in America.**

Whereas, we recognize that **every faith leader has a unique, divine obligation that is exclusive to their own tradition**; we also recognize a **common mission of civil focus**. That mission of civil focus requires leaders of faith, with **one voice, to call attention to those timeless virtues that stand as the foundation of a moral and ethical society.**

Therefore, on this 13th day of October, 2011, we affirm our commitment as leaders motivated by our respective faith traditions, to bring new focus and energy to promoting the founding ideals of America as expressed in its first principles, to work collaboratively toward a strong national consensus on the common values necessary to an ethical society, and to encourage our colleagues and faith leaders throughout the nation to do the same.

Further, we carry forth this commitment through the following:

- 1) *Build a coalition of faith leaders united by affirmation of this resolution to reawaken America to its founding principles and values as outlined herein.*
- 2) *Inform, educate and encourage elected officials and other opinion leaders regarding the central importance of the American ideal and the principles and values that are its foundation.*
- 3) *Organize symposia, forums, roundtables, and other educational initiatives to inform and then inspire recommitment to those founding principles and to the goal of realizing the American Dream.*
- 4) *Organize, in partnership with other community stakeholders, service projects and initiatives that bond diverse communities together for the common cause of addressing critical challenges facing families and communities, and thereby advance the vision of America as one nation under God.*
- 5) *Bring timely response to controversies that have preeminence in the consciousness of the nation. Stand in the breach to provide a perspective that transcends political interests and is neither right, left nor centrist, but instead reflects our common interest as one American family under God.*

As faith leaders responding to the urgent challenges facing our nation today, **we hereby express our shared commitment to espouse and embody the noble virtues bequeathed to us by God and to renew the nation's embrace of the sacred gift of Liberty.**

Details of this conference are summarized in the next article. If you would like to know more about Denver's initiative or any other component of this national coalition, we would love for you to attend our next meeting scheduled for November 18, 2011. It will be held at the host agency location at:

The Center for Community Excellence and Social Justice
1600 Downing Street, Suite 200
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**Initiative
Conveners:**

CCESJ: Center for
Community Excellence
and Social Justice

AAHMI: African
American Healthy
Marriage Initiative

BMCE: Bo Matthews
Center for Excellence

GPFF: Global Peace
Festival Foundation

Urban Tikkun Center

Northeast Denver
Strengthening
Families Coalition

African American
Leadership Institute



NATIONAL FAITH LEADERS SUMMIT (Part One) **October 11-13, 2011**

Community Partners and Friends:

CBCC: Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce

DAAC: Denver Mayor's African American Advisory Commission

DDHS: Denver Department of Human Services

DWRB: Denver Welfare Reform Board

Mayor's Office City and County of Denver

ULMD: Urban League of Metropolitan Denver

October 11, 2011: The Summit opened with two keynote presentations from **Dr. Robert Schuller, Jr.**, Chairman of the National Faith Leaders Summit, and **Dr. Harold Dean Trulear**, Associate Professor of Applied Theology and Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Howard University.

Dr. Schuller opened with an overview of the National Faith Leaders Initiative. He alluded to the fact that the conference featured second generation leaders as he is the son of **Dr. Robert Schuller, Sr.** As well, **Ms. Ruth Graham**, founder and president of Ruth Graham and Friends, is the daughter of **Reverend Billy Graham**, and **Dr. Hyun Jin Moon**, Chairman of the Global Peace Festival Foundation, is the son of **Rev. Sun Myong Moon**. Each of these individuals has established himself or herself in organizations and roles independent of their parents'.

October 12, 2011: The next day we heard topics entitled:

- **Toward One Nation Under God: Vision and Reality:** This session featured presentations from Rev. Darrell LaRue Armstrong, Pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church in Trenton, New Jersey who shared his insights from his perspective as a civic leader and a grassroots community organizer. He was followed by Pastor Shantae Y. Younger, the Vice-Presiding Bishop of One Way Churches International in Lynchburg, Virginia. Pastor Keith Anderson, Dean of Students, at Liberty University. Finally we heard from Rev. Paul Murray an ordained minister of more than 24 years, credentialed with the Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the Senior Pastor of the Lighthouse Christian Fellowship in Maryland.
- **Our Common Mission: Building Consensus on Values:** This session featured Dr. Hyun Jin Moon, Founder and Chairman of the Global Peace Festival Foundation, Mr. Paul Montero, Associate Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement, Rev. E. W. Lew, Pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church, McDonough, GA, and Rear Admiral Barry C. Black, elected as the 62nd Chaplain of the United States Senate. Together they gave a convincing charge for us to look beyond religious parochialism to search our souls for core values that frame our civic morality and sense of justice.
- **Models of Social and Interfaith Action: Best Practices:** This presentation was moderated by Mr. Alan Inman, who served as National Director for the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood. It featured presentations from Ms. Ruth Graham, founder and president of Ruth Graham and Friends, Senator Emanuel Jones, Georgia State Senator from the 10th District, Reverend Marjorie Lewis, President of the Center for Community Excellence and Social Justice and Professor of Psychotherapeutic Studies at American Pathways University. They all featured community based family systemic services offered through their respective organizations and/or jurisdictions.
- **Town Hall Meeting:** This panel fielded questions from the audience around a variety of topics relative to the previous presentation categories.



October 13, 2011: PROGRAM ON CAPITAL HILL: RAYBURN BUILDING

During this session faith leaders met and listened to a variety of individuals representing the political community. It was moderated by Rev. Mark Farr from The Faith and Politics Institute. Reverend Patrick Conroy, US House of Representatives Chaplain prayed the invocation. He was followed by Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver, Dr. Robert A. Schuller, Chairman, National Faith Leaders Summit, Mr. Joseph Griesboski, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, Dr. Robert L. Woodson, Sr., Founder and President, National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, Dr. Hyun Jin Moon, Chairman, Global Peace Festival Foundation, and Rev. Paul Murray, International Director of Multi-Faith Initiatives. The resolution was read by Mrs. Schuller.

Together they provided additional insight into the essentiality of the partnering between religious, civic, and political partnership.

More details regarding the conference are forthcoming in additional issues of the newsletter.



Sponsors of the Faith Leaders Conference Included:

Strengthening Families and Communities Coalition of Washington and Atlanta

The Global Peace Festival Foundation

The Greater Washington Urban League

The Urban League of Greater Atlanta

Vision Ministries International

Host Agency:

**Center for
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Calendar of Relevant Events:

November 18, 2011: Partner and Convener Planning Meeting

December 16, 2011: Partner and Convener Planning Meeting

January 20, 2012: Partner and Convener Planning Meeting

February, 2012: Strengthening Families Conference

March, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

April, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

May, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

June, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

July, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

August, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

September, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

October, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

November, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

December, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

January, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

February, 2012 (TBD): Strengthening Families Coalition Meeting

If you have events that you would like to share with this initiative,
E-mail us at CCESJ@attglobal.net.

CCESJ

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