



2014 Volunteer of the Year- Invest in Others (September 2014)

Starkville
Bridges

Newsletter
December 2014

End of the Year Update

From SB President of Board



As another year comes to an end, Starkville Bridges eagerly anticipates the ways we can expand this coming year! We have been busy since our last newsletter! We held another Building Bridges for Kids program at the Starkville Boys and Girls Club, a successful One Day Community Training event, and our Founder and board member; Lynn Phillips-Gaines earned the Invest in Others 2014 Volunteer of the Year Award!

Welcome

Starkville Bridges warmly welcomes the new members of our Steering Committee!

- Shayla Jefferson**-VISTA Service Coordinator
- Carole Hawkins**-Dept. of Public Safety
- Debbie Nettles**-ERA Town & Campus Realtor

We also would like to welcome Lauren Black to our Starkville Bridges Board of Directors!

Charity Tracker



When Hurricane Katrina displaced hundreds of families, charitable agencies rallied to meet the overwhelming need by providing vital support to these families. Other disasters such as the Louisville tornadoes left many families seeking assistance from many resources, both locally and nationally. These families found some restoration. However, for agencies providing support, something was missing.

Charity Tracker is an internet-based service, designed to be easy-to-use, and it has been proven to unite community agencies, measuring impact, and creating accurate reports.

We hope that the implementation of this system in the Starkville community will link all of our charitable organizations together for a greater purpose; to help those in need.

Upcoming Meetings

Steering Meeting: January 8, 2015
10:00 a.m. at City Hall in Starkville. The meeting is open to **all** who are interested in learning more about Starkville Bridges, and plans in 2015.



Pictured above: Founder Lynn Phillips-Gaines (right), and her husband Russell Gaines (left) in Times Square with the Starkville Bridges logo displayed on the NASDAQ digital display board.

2014 Building Bridges for Kids

Building Bridges for Kids (BB4K) began this year on June 2nd at the Starkville Boys and Girls Club. Forty anxious participants entered the program. Ages ranged from third through fifth graders. Through the course of seven weeks, Coordinator Rod Holmes, and Bulldog Mentors from MSU worked with the Starkville Boys and Girls Club children using age relevant curriculum to educate them about poverty and other related topics. The “R” Rules, Entrepreneurship, and safety were among the areas taught. In addition to many “aha moments” from the kids, several of the mentors have pledged to return the Boys and Girls Club to volunteer. Though BB4K has ended for 2014, it is our hope that the lessons instilled and bonds formed will have a lasting impact on the participants.

Special Volunteer Mentors



Bulldog Mentors Making an Impact with BB4K!

This year, all of our volunteer mentors were provided by Bulldog Mentors, an MSU initiative to allow interested students of all college levels and community status to assist with the mentoring of students at the Starkville Boys and Girls Club! A special thanks to all of those who gave their time and their hearts to this rewarding summer program. Thanks for your service to the community!



Achievements!

Phillips-Gaines named 2014 Volunteer of the Year

The Invest in Others Charitable Foundation named Lynn Phillips-Gaines the 2014 Volunteer of the Year for her work with Starkville Bridges out of Poverty. Phillips-Gaines is the founder of SBOP, served as President until the beginning of 2014, and is serving as Vice President on the Board of Directors. Along with the award, a sizable donation has been made to Bridges, our logo was displayed in Times Square, and Lynn and other winners were given the honor to open the NASDAQ Market Site.

Pictured below: Lynn Phillips-Gaines at NASDAQ



Rod Holmes named Interim Executive Director and Bridges board member

Our newest board member Rod Holmes, shares a little of his story...

“My name is Rod Holmes and I am originally from Louisville, MS.

When I went into the Air Force right after high school, I thought I could conquer the world in every aspect, but I didn’t know what personal decisions after the military would have in store.

For some reason, people assume that once you’ve made a mistake, you have to live and die by those mistakes, and carry that around as your new identity. However, with God as my true advisor, I took the initiative to constantly grow from all of the wrongdoings I made within my years, and to continually become a better man than I once was every day. I continually live by the “quality before quantity” measure, and strive to enhance myself through education and mentoring. As a result, I am a Mississippi State graduate, and continue to raise awareness of community and its sustainability through grassroots efforts within my master’s studies.

My family has been my support system and my motivation to never settle for average, but to always strive for advancement. “With God as your key ingredient, the recipe to happiness will always lead to sweet rewards” my mother says.

Through Bridges, I have come to realize that community has a bigger task than just coming together; it has an obligation to learn in every aspect. I am now serving on the board of directors and as the *Interim Executive Director*, where my ideas and coordinated efforts will hopefully help others.”

Pictured below: Rod Holmes, *Interim Executive Director*, Starkville Bridges



Starkville Bridges Hosts One Day Community Training Event:

Starkville Bridges hosted its fourth One-Day Community Training on Tuesday, September 16th, at the Starkville Sportsplex. The Reverend Bobby Weatherly facilitated the training. Weatherly is a Reverend with Chapel of the Cross, a Vicksburg, MS resident, and works with the Central Mississippi Bridges out of Poverty initiative. The event lasted from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. To co-facilitate at a Getting Ahead Class, it is a requirement to go through the community training, and so the success of this event was imperative. Our sincerest thanks go to The Reverend Bobby Weatherly and all those who were in attendance for helping us in the fight to eradicate poverty in Oktibbeha County!

Pictured below: Bobby Weatherly speaking at our One Day Community Training.



Pictured above: John Breazeale (left), President of Starkville Bridges, and Dorothy Issac (right), Vice President of the Oktibbeha County Chapter of the NAACP at our One Day Community Training

“Getting Ahead While Getting Out” Plans are Underway for 2016

Starkville Bridges is in the research and planning stages for a “Getting Ahead while Getting Out” program in 2016. This program is a long-term goal for our initiative, as it is a relatively new class within the Getting Ahead community.

Starkville Bridges Founder Lynn Phillip-Gaines and Board of Directors member Rod Holmes met with the regional supervisors, parole officers, and program developers for this population and they are very excited and feel this program could become the foundation to all the other educational programs for ex-offenders returning to society.

Starkville Bridges intends on providing Bridges out of Poverty mental concepts training for the judges, parole officers, any volunteers for this project, and agencies who interact with those getting out of prison, using the Bridges out of Poverty mental models and the 5 principals. Also, there will be specialized training for the facilitators, due to this programs unique challenges. Screening of the potential participants for the program will be done by MDOC.

It turns out that Phil DeVol, the author of the Getting Ahead program has a new educational curriculum that has been developed specifically for this population, and the materials will be available for the first time in mid-2015. Getting Ahead while Getting Out is designed to bring the Getting Ahead principals to the ex-offenders, with training as unique as the challenges they will face.

Bridging the Gap toward Change around America



30 Years of Building a Community to End Hunger

In 2013, FoodShare partnered with the Urban League of Hartford and the Chrysalis Center to start a pilot of Bridges out of Poverty/Getting Ahead in Hartford to end hunger. That same year, FoodShare distributed enough food for 12 million meals—that’s 40,000 meals a day—but even that huge amount of food covered only one-third of the need in the Hartford area. In the future, they strive to exceed that need.

FoodShare consists of a three part solution:

1. Increasing the amount of food availability by reaching out to food banks, retail donations, disaster relief efforts, SNAP outreach, school breakfast and lunch programs, summer food programs, and their hunger action teams that consist of Getting Ahead graduates.
2. Providing programs such as Bridges out of Poverty, model programs that provide case management, job training, housing and heating assistance, and other practical tools to pull themselves out of poverty and out of hunger.
3. Involving the community through advocacy, community partnerships through faith groups, and local charitable programs that relate to their regional food network.

FoodShare’s goals are very ambitious, but much needed. The only way this balance can happen and keep happening is with support and effort from the entire community.

For more information on how the Bridges out of Poverty initiative has influenced and made an impact on this wonderful organization, you can visit their website at: www.foodshare.org

Getting Familiar with those donating time and talent

Shayla Jefferson

Shayla Jefferson is the new Volunteer Service Coordinator for the Maroon Volunteer Center, adopting the former position of Rod Holmes. Since acquiring this new position, Shayla has demonstrated her deep concern for those in poverty, and desire to assist in carrying out our initiative. For those not familiar with this Starkville native, we asked her to provide us with a bio, as we look forward to working closely with her in the future!

Shayla Jefferson, a native of Starkville, is the newest AmeriCorps VISTA for the Maroon Volunteer Center. She is a graduate of The University of Southern Mississippi (Nutrition and Dietetics) and Mississippi State University (Environmental Economics and Management). It was through these college experiences that she truly found her purpose and passion for helping, educating, motivating, and investing in people. Her ultimate goal as a VISTA this year is to leave a legacy of profound service, a mark on the Starkville community, and inspiration in the hearts of everyone she meets.



“AmeriCorps is my chance to make someone else’s day unlike any other.”

Our Supporting Patrons!



First Presbyterian Church



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Ways you can contribute

Many have asked how they can participate in this initiative, so here are some of the ways that you can help in the New Year:

Become a certified Bridges trainer so we have someone here in our area that can go into businesses, health care, education, and law enforcement communities to help educate our middle class first responders about the mental models of poverty. Funds are available to pay for training.

Speaker’s Bureau: We would love to have multiple volunteers who can address civic clubs and help organizations install Bridges within their organizations.

Event planning: For those who love to entertain, we need an event coordinator for fund raising and training events.

Praying for our work, that it be pleasing in the sight of God.

Mentoring an under-resourced individual from our community.

Facilitating a *Getting Ahead* class.

If interested contact us at:

bridgesoutofpoverty@gmail.com

Or by phone at: 662-705-2011. You can

also check out our website at:

www.starkvillebridges.com