

FINDING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENTS THAT WORK FOR YOU

When churches think in terms of getting involved in Community Based Ministry (CBM) they often believe they have to create something themselves. The reality is, there are wonderful organizations (Christian or not) that are already serving the community in wonderful ways, but what they need are volunteers. Churches have a volunteer resource. A church that desires to engage their community can do so quickly and simply by finding an existing organization to partner with. And, if the organization is populated primarily by non-yet believers, the church has two ministry streams at the same time: 1) Ministry to the organizations workers; 2) Ministry to those in the community the organization serves. Connecting with an existing Volunteer based organization is a tangible way of *fulfilling the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment*.

How might you go about doing this? A Director of Volunteer enlistment for Excelsior House (a home for young women) in Denver, CO provided these guidelines.

NARROW YOUR INTEREST

- What population does the church want to work with?
- Does the church want to do “hands-on” work or “behind the scenes”?

RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS THAT MEET YOUR CHURCH’S INTEREST

- Web sites that may be helpful: City offices, Volunteers of America, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Youth Mentoring Collaborative, Chambers of Commerce
- Attend community volunteer fairs
- Ask people in the church of organizations they are aware
- Connect with service clubs (e.g. Kiwanis, Rotary, etc...)
- Meet with school officials
- Gather as much information as you can

DETERMINE THE STRENGTHS OF YOUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

- What potential leaders do you have to coordinate this?
- How much time is available for service?
- What gifts, skills, interests do you have existing in you congregation?

BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN OFFER

- Choose one contact person from your church to connect with the community organization
- Learn the basics of the volunteer organization you choose
- Make sure what you can offer they can use
- Tell them upfront the types of volunteers you can provide
- Let them know who the contact person will be
- Ask what holiday needs, if any, they may have
- Plan ahead