



Compassion in Action

AREA 4 FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

Cobb County Board of Education has established priorities that include community stakeholder involvement. The Cobb Keys Principal's performance evaluation system is adapted from the Georgia Department of Education Leader Keys. The Cobb Keys Principal's Performance Standard Rubric establishes the 8 Standards which are the framework for the evaluation instrument used to assess a Principal's annual performance. The 8th standard is Relationships Development.

To work towards meeting this standard, Area 4 School Social Workers have begun a Community Collaborative with numerous faith-based leaders and community resource representatives. The stated purpose of the committee is *To begin a conversation that would build relationships between the Area 4 Schools and local faith-based organizations to discover how we can partner together to bring healthy change to our community.* This area has some families who are constantly in "survival" mode. Children in that kind of environment are unable to learn effectively. What our community (the noun) needs is community (the verb)! Currently, Area 4 consists of approximately 64,000 household with children that attend 3 high schools, 5 middle schools and 12 elementary schools. There is 36% single households in our area and free and reduced lunch rates of 45% in our area 4 schools. Some of the common needs of our families with economic needs include:

- **Clothes closets for emergency need**
- **Food**
- **Gift cards for crisis situations**
- **After-school programs**

- **Classes on family health and dynamics**
- **School event support**

The goals and vision of this initiative use the power of collaboration. Through combining the School Social Workers "in the trenches" perspective and experience with the "serving" attitude of faith-based organizations brings healthy change to the community. Currently, there are other faith based initiatives already prospering in other areas of Cobb County. While some pockets of successful collaboration and sharing of resources are evident in our community, the needs remain great and require even more intentional and broader collaborative efforts. The committee discussed the several barriers to effective collaboration:

- **Trust:** Churches trusting schools to identify "real" needs in families and Schools trusting churches to provide resources without strings attached
- **Communication:** Knowing who to call in churches and schools to build relationships and share resources
- **Perspective:** The "in the trenches" perspective and insight of social workers is invaluable to meeting the immediate needs in the community. The long-term ramifications of not meeting these immediate needs in our community are serious; therefore, we need a long-term perspective to our short-term actions.



Meaning, we must be willing to start small and concentrate on quality and sustainability.

- **Capacity:** Training our people to have a heart of service will increase churches' capacity to serve their community
- **Hopelessness:** There is an epidemic of hopelessness among our community's young people. Churches are in the "hope" business. Through mentoring, we build the bridges and make the connections to deliver hope to our community. Mentoring may be the relational tool to deliver that hope to our hopeless generation. One key player in this initiative is Mentoring Coordinator for Cobb County, **Maryellen Gomes**, who gave some ideas about establishing a county wide mentoring program that is being developed through the Success for All Students Grant. Another key player is **Jose Maldonado**, chief operating officer for Teach One to Lead, who discussed a mentoring program in place to assist schools in area 4.

The collaborative will continue to broaden its outreach to include more area 4 faith based organization, choose one project that we can all do together to create a culture of collaboration in Area 4, and begin to invite other stakeholders to our conversation. If you are a part of Area 4 and would like to be a part of the committee, please contact your School Social Worker for more information.

LOCAL CHURCHES and COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS HELP FAMILIES

By Providing Book Bags and School Supplies!



School Social Workers are creative in finding resources for students in need of assistance. Due to the economy, the needs are greater and the resources are fewer. Thanks to our community at large for ensuring that the children of Cobb County started the school year with book bags and basic school supplies. The following churches donated book bags and/or school supplies to hundreds of students to assist them with a good start to the 2011-2012 school year.

- Piedmont Church
- Orange Hill Baptist
- Mount Paran Church



- Piedmont Church
- McEachern Memorial UMC
- A Fresh Hope at Westridge Church
- Realm Ministries
- Townview Baptist
- Austell First Baptist Church
- Christ Episcopal Church
- Piedmont Baptist

- First Baptist of Kennesaw
- Kennesaw United Methodist
- With Purpose Church

Also, special recognition to the following organizations for their book bag donations to students in our community. We appreciate your support of our families and children.

- H&R Block in Kennesaw
- Kennesaw Optimists Club
- Cobb-Marietta Educators Association
- Beta Epsilon Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa
- Variety of GA

Thanks again, for your support! It really does take a village!!!!

New Attendance Rule

The Cobb County Board of Education adopted a newly formatted Administrative Rule JE- Student Attendance on 8/10/11. Some parts of the newly adopted Rule are similar to the former Rule whereas other portions are new. The Rule begins with a "Rationale/Objective" which defines "Truant" as "any child.....who, during a school calendar year, has more than five days of unexcused absences." Next, there is verbiage to address how the District expects local schools to maintain attendance records. Section A lists eight reasons an absences may be excused as defined by the State of Georgia. Section B provides guidance on what documentation the school can require for absences. This section contains some new options including, "The

principal may ask for additional medical or other documentation to verify that absences are excused, particularly when more than three (3) absences have been accumulated during the semester." Section C says that students must be in school for at least half a day in order to be considered present. Schools may ask that parents provide appropriate documentation for early checkouts and late arrivals. Section D mandates that the district must participate in a "Student Attendance Protocol Committee" to define the identification, investigation, and reporting requirements of truancy cases. According to the new Rule, school administration can make a refer-

ral to the School Social Worker to address attendance at "any time it is deemed appropriate." This new option allows schools greater flexibility implementing truancy interventions. Next, there is a section addressing suspensions and expulsions and then a final section which mentions penalties for parents of truant children.

As of this writing, a new Attendance Protocol has been drafted and is awaiting final approval. This new protocol will give local schools direction on how and when schools will notify parents/guardians of their absent students. It is hoped early interventions will lead to much greater student achievement.



The Thanks For Giving and Cobb Christmas Program is right around the corner!

**Registration for families in need is
on October 4 & 5th,**

9am-4pm @ Cobb Civic Center.

Food Distribution: November 19 & 20
(by appointment only)

If you know of someone in need this
holiday season, please call
770-428-2601 x 414 for more info.

- dried or canned milk
- dried beans
- canned meat, tuna or ham
- peanut butter
- rice, pasta or cereal
- bread or rolls
- canned fruit

PLEASE DO NOT PLACE GIFT CARDS IN BASKET
WE CANNOT ACCEPT REFRIGERATED ITEMS

For more information on sponsorships, volunteering or con-
ducting a food drive, contact
Jennifer Cain at (770) 428-2601

or JenniferCain@TheCFR.org

**If you are interested in sponsoring a food
drive, here is a list of items we will need to
fill the baskets for families:**

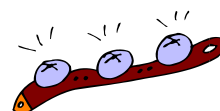
- \$15 gift cards to a local grocer for a
turkey
- roasting pan
- Dressing mix
- cranberry sauce
- canned or instant potatoes
- canned green or yellow vegetables
- non refrigerated pie shell and pumpkin
pie mix



Last year the “Golden Barrel Award” was
earned by **Rocky Mount Elementary,
Dodgen Middle, and Harrison High
School!** Let’s see which school col-
lects the most for our neighbors the
most this year!

Sleighbells on the Square-5K December 10, 2011

*Get your running shoes and help the Cobb Bar Children's
Emergency Fund!*



The Cobb Bar Association fund helps families in Cobb and Marietta School Systems who are experiencing a financial crisis. Families are referred to the Cobb Bar Association by the School Social Worker. The fund has helped 100’s of people avoid hunger, homelessness and cold

nights. School Social Workers will be sending a flyer to all of the schools in November. Registration is at a low cost! The race is fun, festive and a great time for all! Sleighbells is the big fundraiser for the fund, which helps needy families and we need participation from staff, students and the community.

Contact your School Social Worker for more registration information!

