



School Social Work...Compassion In Action

Our Very Own...

We are very excited to report that our very own School Social Worker, Ms. Valerie Toliver, was named school Social Worker of the year for district 5 of the School social workers Association of Georgia (SSWAG). Ms. Toliver graduated from Atlanta University with a Masters in Social Work, and has been working with Cobb County Schools for the past 17 years. Ms. Toliver is a member of SSWAG at both the district and state level. She has been a member of SSWAG for approximately 16 years. At the state level

she has played a supportive role by moderating workshops. At the district level, she has held the offices of secretary and treasurer.

Ms. Toliver currently provides support to South Cobb High School and Sanders Elementary School. She works closely with the homeless students in the high school. "Homeless students on the high school level often feel intimidated and embarrassed by their situations, and I work diligently in fighting this stigma".

Ms. Toliver is also very committed to supporting the families that she works

with who are facing lack and limitation to no fault of their own. "If I can help them to believe that they are not their circumstance, that they are greater than it and thus can rise above it, then I've done my job well."



Cobb County
School District

Newsletter
March—April 2012

National Social Work Week

© March 4 to
March 10

Giving Props to Cumberland Community Church!!!

As highlighted in previous editions of Compassion in Action, faith-based collaborations with the local schools have been on the rise. Over the past two years, Cumberland Community Church located in Smyrna has played a pivotal role in developing and supporting the faith based initiative in area 2. What started as a small collaboration between Mike Thurman, CCC Youth Pastor, and SSW Ana Murphy has grown into an on-going dialogue with multiple schools and faith-based

organizations. Regular meetings are held throughout the school year to discuss the changing needs of our community and how we can work together to address these needs. The area 2 community has benefited from the many resources that have been created through this initiative including uniform items for students, parent education workshops, access to needed food resources, and matching students with mentors. The area 2 School Social Workers cannot express

enough gratitude to CCC for spearheading this collaboration! CCC's commitment to serving our schools has caught on...collaborations between the schools and faith-based entities can now be found throughout all of Cobb County!

We welcome all faith based organizations to participate in this awesome movement! Please contact Mike Thurman at CCC for more information about how to get involved.

School Social Work

If the only task of teachers was to teach the three R's, their jobs would be easy. But as we know, many factors conspire to make it difficult for some young people to make it through school—among them, poverty, substance abuse, community violence, early sexual activity and family conflicts.

School social workers pick up where teachers leave off. They are perhaps the professionals best equipped to address the social and psychological issues that can block academic progress. Through counseling, crisis intervention and prevention programs, they help young people overcome the difficulties in their lives, and as a result, give them a better chance at succeeding in school.

About 5% of the nation's approximately half a million social workers work in the schools, primarily in public school settings. Besides helping youth with traditional academic problems,

social workers aid others whose specific social, psychological, emotional or physical difficulties put them at risk for falling through the cracks. These include homeless youth, gay and lesbian youth and young people with physical or mental health disabilities.

Because social workers are trained to think of innovative solutions to complex problems, their interventions often make a strong difference for young people at risk for academic failure.

School social workers make an impact in many other arenas as well. For instance, they have designed successful violence-prevention programs. And they are experts at intervening in crises such as teen suicides/deaths and school violence. In these situations, social workers use a variety of organizational and



empathic tools to help both students and the community to address their grief, to heal and to move on.

Please read more articles about social workers at the site listed below:

<http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/school/default.asp>

References:
Gibelman, M. (1995). What Social Workers Do (4th ed.). Washington, DC. NASW Press.

NASW (2000) Social Work Speaks (5th ed.). Washington, DC NASW Press.

Belmont Hills Elementary Golf Tournament

Event sponsored by
Belmont Hills PTSA

Brookstone Country Club
March 26, 2012
1:00pm

Proceeds to benefit
Belmont Hills' student
academic field trips.

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Our school has the highest rate of poverty in the Cobb County School District and one of the highest rates of poverty in the State of Georgia. Thus, many of our students are not able to afford these trips.



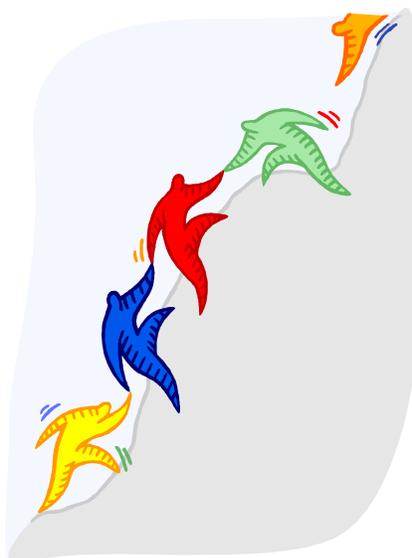
School / Church Collaboration

In the Spring of 2011, the School Social Workers in the Pebblebrook cluster began to meet with members of the Faith Community to determine what types family and student needs were not currently being met and to develop specific strategies to engage churches and schools in our community to help meet these needs. Our objective was to partner with these churches to serve the community.

We began the process by meeting with local churches in area 2 and discussed how to engage local churches in area 1.

Lin Harrison, pastor with Orange Hill Baptist Church then invited local churches in the community to meet with SSWs. We divided into subcommittees and discussed ways to implement targeted needs: **Mentoring, Food (i.e. food pantries) and School Uniforms/ Shoes.**

School principals were invited to attend a meeting with local churches, attendees were Principals from Riverside Intermediate, Lindley Sixth Grade, Lindley Middle and Pebblebrook High School and Assistant Principals from Riverside Intermediate and Pebblebrook. Specific needs were identified and



possible programs to implement were discussed. Our Principals embraced the collaborative effort and made the commitment to be a part of the implementation process and support the identified programs. Although unable to attend the meetings the Principal at Riverside Primary has also supported our efforts and helped to identify services that were needed in our area. We continue to meet bi-monthly and also have the option to request additional services and support, between meeting dates.

The above-mentioned collaboration resulted in the following, thus far, for the 2011/12 school year:

1. Food Pantries at Harmony Leland and Pebblebrook

2. Uniform distribution to Harmony Leland, Riverside Primary, Riverside Intermediate and Lindley
3. On Campus Mentoring at Pebblebrook
4. Payless Gift Cards
5. Coupon Workshop for staff
6. Belt Drive
7. 100 Day food Drive - Harmony Leland and Pebblebrook

To date, at least 150 students have been served through the uniform assistance program at Lindley Middle and the Sixth Grade Academy, and approximately 40-45 students have received items at Riverside Primary and Riverside Intermediate Schools. Around 50 students have received uniforms at Harmony Leland and Food Pantries are in place at Harmony Leland (partnership was established prior to the collaboration and serves 20 families) and Pebblebrook, and the selected families receive generous orders of food items once a month for the entire year.

We would like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to: First Christian Church of Mableton, Vinings Lake Church, Alive Ministries, and Mount Harmony Baptist Church. Your help and support is greatly appreciated.