

IMPACT Advocate

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IMPACT Advocate

In Quietness and Trust Is My Strength: A Spotlight on Mr. William Graves

“Matthew 19:26 reads ‘but with God, all things are possible ...’ I am very grateful to God for covering me during my 11 years of incarceration and for directing a friend to tell me about IMPACT and its Re-Entry Program, which started me down this new path.” – William Graves



My story begins in Columbus, Ohio, where I was born and raised. I lost both of my parents when I was 5; and for the next 12 formative years, I lived with two (maternal) aunts, who raised me as their own child. Considering my circumstances, my life was somewhat good. We moved around a

lot, so I wound up attending four different high schools (South, Marion Franklin, Hamilton Township and Independence), and ultimately obtained a G.E.D. Shortly after high school however, my life seemed to have taken a change for the worse. By hanging around with the wrong crowd, picking up bad habits and trying to fight off the demons, my life quickly went out of control and sent me on a downward spiraling path.

I knew I had to stop, step back and make some changes. By the power of God, I was able to reach deep down inside of myself and pull myself together; and I decided to join the Navy. I passed all of the necessary tests, but something wasn't right. I talked with some friends from my church and I was encouraged to continue my education. I enrolled in Columbus State Community College and decided to pursue a degree in business. I made the Dean's List and I was

an Honor Roll student. Inspired by my friends and mentors from church, I transferred to Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and earned a B.A. in Financial Management. After graduation, I landed a job with Naval Sea Systems Command in Arlington, Virginia and was in pursuit of a successful career. Employed and pursuing a Master's degree part time, I had a promising career and was on track to achieving my goals.

Over the years, I became seriously depressed and the demons returned. Once again, my life spiraled downward and out of control but much faster and fiercer than the first time. After a series of bad decisions, losing my job, exhausting my finances and burning all of my bridges, I caught a case that landed me in the Arizona Department of Corrections for 11 years.

Despite the chaos, the setbacks and the mayhem, prison did not break me. Instead, I found peace and purpose. I was able to break free from the depression, conquer the demons and to clear my head. God kept me motivated to reclaim my pursuit of a successful career and a successful life.

I was paroled on Valentine's Day in 2014. All I had were the clothes on my back and just over \$1,200 I earned from the jobs I had in prison. I was committed to making the most of any opportunity that came my way; but no one would give me that opportunity. So I turned to Craig's List to advertise my services as a general laborer (yard work, moving jobs, odd jobs, etc.). I did this for roughly four months before deciding to move back to Columbus.

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In Quietness and Trust Continued from Page 1

When I moved back to Columbus, a friend told me about IMPACT's Re-Entry Program and I decided to give it a try. I was enrolled in Re-Entry Class #39 and it was one of the best decisions I've made. The program instructors were very knowledgeable and passionate about their work. I was in a class with others, who, like me, were looking to make the most of a second chance opportunity. Through this program, we learned to draw from our individual life experiences to help us embrace our potential, reconnect with our families and friends, and to prepare for a successful future.

After the Re-Entry Program, I was enrolled in IMPACT's Employment Plus Class #71. This program taught me job skills and interviewing techniques, instilled a new level of confidence within me, inspired and motivated me, and pushed me to expand and grow. While in the Employment Plus Program I applied to Restoration Academy, a program started by then-Mayor Michael B. Coleman to assist restored citizens with job training and internships. Little did I know that two of the instructors from IMPACT had already recommended me for this program. Restoration Academy was such a great learning experience and such a great opportunity, which led me back to IMPACT as an intern in its Human Resources Department.

I wanted to make the most of this six-month internship with IMPACT. I wanted to build my skills, prove myself and eventually find permanent work. HR is fast-

paced, challenging and interesting. Committed and focused, I pursued a Certification in Human Resources, which I earned from the Business Training Institute in August 2015. But God wasn't through with me yet. Later that year, IMPACT hired me full time as a Human Resources Assistant.

I am so grateful to God for covering me during my 11 years of incarceration and for directing my friend to tell me about IMPACT and its Re-Entry Program, which started me down this new path. I am still expanding and pushing forward, still setting goals and dreaming; and I am committed to making it all a reality.

Along the way, I like to share my story and gratitude with the hopes of motivating and helping as many people as possible. I have spoken to graduates of IMPACT's Re-Entry and Employment Plus classes. I encourage them to not let their past or anyone prevent them from setting goals and having dreams (big dreams) and making them a reality. I believe in hard work and the benefits of hard work. I remind them that there will be obstacles and times of doubt; but to push through and overcome. I remind them "but with God, all things are possible ..."



IMPACT Recognizes Local Servant Leaders

IMPACT salutes the works of three stalwart servant leaders in our community as the 2016 recipients of the Ripple of Hope Award: Ohio State Senator Charleta B. Tavares; Ms. Lela Boykin, Community Relations Director for The Neighborhood House, Inc.; and Mr. Philip E. Cole, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies.

The awards will be presented at the **5th Annual Ripple of Hope Awards Luncheon** on Tuesday, May 31 at the Columbus Hilton Hotel at Easton. Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry, the former host of "Melissa Harris-

Perry" on MSNBC is the keynote speaker.

Through this event, IMPACT brings to the forefront the current state of poverty in our nation, in our state and in our local communities. IMPACT engages elected officials, business leaders, community leaders, civic groups and other stakeholders to inform them on the affects and effects of poverty.

Proceeds from this event support ongoing poverty-fighting initiatives, programs and services offerings at IMPACT.

For information on tickets and/or advertising, please call 614.453.1624 or visit our website: (www.impactca.org)



Succession Planning Provides Continuity on IMPACT's Board

IMPACT's Board of Directors has new leadership that was built from within.



Mr. Cecil Jones, president of Acceleration Services, takes the reigns as Board Chair, following

his two-year tenure as Vice Board Chair. Mr. Jones succeeds Kelvin Hilvert, a partner with Bricker and Eckler LLP, who has served on IMPACT's board since May 2009, and as board chair for three years.

Under Attorney Hilvert's leadership, IMPACT expanded its programming to serve youth and young adults; was one of 10 organizations selected by Bank of America Charitable Foundation and Corporation for Enterprise Development to participate in an Intensive Learning Cluster on Integrating Financial Capability into Social Service Delivery Programs; and was one of five local organizations selected to participate in the Center for Social Enterprise Development's Social Enterprise Catalyst Program, which enables local nonprofits to create revenue-producing social enterprises.

"We thank Attorney Hilvert for his leadership and counsel over the past eight years", said Jones, "as we move forward, we want to provide entrepreneur-focused opportunities to the many customers we serve, in addition to the workforce development training that we provide currently for career positions."

"We will do this by building our partnerships with local corporations and other organizations to accomplish these goals and others. By using the data that we receive from our community needs assessments, we will expand our programs and services offerings to better meet people in need where they are, and we will walk with them on their paths to self-sufficiency," the new Board Chair concluded.

Rounding out the new board officers, Bishop Robert O.E. Keyes, pastor of Refuge Temple Church who served as the Board Secretary for two years, was elected as the new Board Vice Chair. Bishop Keyes has served on IMPACT's Board since April 2013.



Ms. Peggy I. Simmons from AEP Ohio, succeeds Bishop Keyes as Board Secretary. Ms. Simmons has been an IMPACT Board member since October 2013.



Mr. Henry Davis, who has served on IMPACT's Board since June 2014, was reelected as the Board's Treasurer.



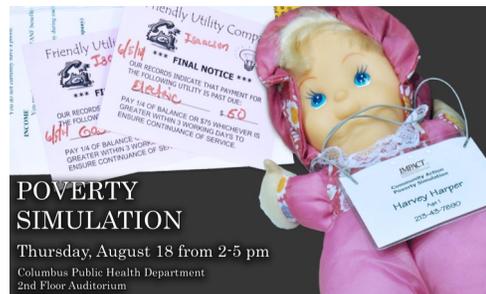
IMPACT has a tripartite board made up of three equal numbers of private sector, public sector and democratically-elected low-income representatives.

Save The Dates: Special Events

IMPACT will host its **4th Annual Beat the Heat Summer Crisis Program (SCP) Kick Off** on Friday, July 1, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the rear parking lot at its Headquarters at 700 Bryden Road.

In the spirit of "collective impact," IMPACT links with partner agencies, health and safety educators, youth focused and other human service program providers to inform, assist and serve our community as we kick off the SCP. The family-friendly event is free and open to the public.

IMPACT will host a **Poverty Simulation** on Thursday, August 18 from 2-5 p.m. at the Columbus Public Health Department. Our goal is to present unscripted, real-life scenarios that will reveal aspects of poverty that may have never been considered. The purpose of this poverty simulation is to generate awareness of and to increase sensitivities to the multiple barriers faced by families and individuals who live in poverty.



IMPACT will also host a **Poverty Summit** on Thursday, September 15 from 2-5 p.m. at the Columbus Public Health Department. This event will focus on the state of poverty in our local communities, spark critical conversations and drive action items to move the anti-poverty agenda forward.



For more information, call 614 453-1708 or visit www.impactca.org

Creating the Ripple Effect



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Key Events

Mobile Medical Unit at IMPACT	5/3/16
5th Annual Ripple of Hope Awards Luncheon	5/31/16
Mobile Medical Unit at IMPACT	6/7/16
Beat The Heat/SCP Kickoff	7/1/16
Mobile Medical Unit at IMPACT	7/5/16
Poverty Simulation	8/18/16
Poverty Summit	9/15/16

“Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

~Senator Robert F. Kennedy, 1966

Community Action was founded in 1964 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Vision for A Great Society that ushered in Civil Rights reform, Economic Opportunities for all citizens and began the War on Poverty.

IMPACT Community Action is one of 50 Community Action Agencies in Ohio that is on the front line in the War on Poverty. Our mission is “to reduce poverty by providing hope-inspiring help and real opportunities for self-sufficiency.”

Despite tough economic times and increasing demands for our programs and services, Community Action will never back down or shy away from its commitment to the community.

Message from the Chief Executive



May is National Community Action Month and each year during this time, IMPACT Community Action, along with a network of more than 1,100 Community Action Agencies nationwide, intensifies our efforts to call attention to the issues of poverty and to galvanize efforts to address those issues.

I’ve shared with my staff that as we continue to fight the war on poverty, we need to be reminded of our mission as the guiding principle for what we do and the promise that must not be broken to those who need us most. Our mission is to reduce poverty by providing hope-inspiring help and real opportunities for self-sufficiency. In 2008, IMPACT shared its Pledge to the Community, our solemn promise to serve at the highest level.

As we enter Community Action Month, I want to share IMPACT’s pledge and promise to carry out the following principles every day in all that we do:

Customer service: we promise to ensure that our customers are treated with respect at all times and we will provide them with the best service possible.

Financial accountability: we promise to be good stewards of the resources that of been entrusted to us and we will make sure they are used for the purpose they are intended.

Communication: we promise to be transparent and to maintain open lines of communication with our customers, partners, funders, and the greater community as a whole.

Advocacy: we promise to champion the effort to uplift this community so that all people have a real opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency.

Program/service delivery: we promise to use the best practices and to provide innovative programs and services that are effective in meeting the needs of our customers in the community.

Partnerships/collaborations: we promise to collaborate with partners who have demonstrated a commitment to creating expanding opportunities for self-sufficiency for Franklin County residents.

Robert C Chilton

Robert “Bo” Chilton, CEO
IMPACT Community Action