



East Cooper Faith Network

In one sentence: ECFN was the phoenix that rose from the ashes of our Mount Pleasant Boys & Girls Club (B&GC). Five years ago it became evident our community Boys & Girls Club was struggling for existence. Several churches rallied around, offering mentoring, gardening projects for the kids, nutrition and “business” services. That core group of churches were Friendship AME, Hibben UMC, St. Paul's Lutheran, St. Andrews and Mt Pleasant Presbyterian. This support partnership worked well for over a year, involving dozens of volunteers from the various churches. Sadly, the national B&GC hierarchy became too burdensome for the Mt. Pleasant ‘unit’ and it closed its doors.



Here comes the Phoenix. Takeaways by all those involved with the B&GC work were: 1). Look what can we do when we work together, 2). We now know each other across ecumenical boundaries, and 3). Let's not let the spark die.

From that beginning, ECFN was formed. Initial gatherings were sharing sessions with churches getting to know one another. From that came a joint worship service and then the offering of public forums where community needs could be bubbled up. The Network's first initiative from such a bubbling was I-Beam. This places a reading mentor into the life of a high potential elementary public school student. Simple: One Student, One Adult, One Hour a Week, One Book. Two other initiatives have been added through similar public forums: Summer Enrichment and Fix It!. Summer enrichment offers just that, an opportunity for high potential elementary students to lessen the learning backslide that normally occurs during summer recess. The Fix It! initiative focuses on simple repairs for homeowners who are unable to address simple health, safety and security issues in their homes.

Today this open and growing network encompasses over 20 churches, 5 health and human services agencies and 2 local government entities. We are limitless when we all are focused on impacting our community.

By Al Jenkins

