

4th Annual NCACDSS Best Practices Awards Nomination Form

Category: PCC#10 Tier 2
Profiles in Community Collaboration

Project Title: World Changers

1. **Project/Program Summary:** Briefly summarize the project's history, purpose, timeline and budget. Harnett County DSS became involved in a wonderful partnership with World Changers in 2002. Since that first year, it has been an annual event that Harnett County appreciates because of its positive influence and cooperative spirit that affects the individual homeowner, participants, city and county officials, and the entire community. World Changers is a youth mission project sponsored by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and other evangelical churches that provide "free labor". These individual homeowners may be elderly, disabled, or single-parents who can not afford to make much needed home repairs. By providing no costs for labor, agencies are able to double the number of projects they can do with a particular sum of money. There is no charge to the homeowner for the costs of building materials, instead, expenses incurred are financed through private donations, local businesses, or grant money. In Harnett County, DSS assists World Changers by providing a list of low income homeowners that have requested assistance with home repairs. World Changers has completed the following number of homes since coming to Harnett County: 2002 – 3 homes, 2003 - 5 homes, 2004 – 18 homes, 2005 – 33 homes, and in 2006, there have been 14 homes completed thus far, with more to be completed by the fall. Some of the repair work performed on the homes include: ramp construction, new shingled roofs, scraping and painting homes, cool seals on tin roofs, repairing porches, weatherization of doors and windows, some floor repairs, and installing rain gutters. Harnett County was so impressed with the results of World Changers, that in 2004, \$5000. was budgeted for the project. The past 2 years Harnett County Commissioners have financially supported World Changers by allotting \$20,000 each year, to be used towards purchasing materials for the World Changers projects. This has been a tremendous blessing to Harnett County residents needing home repairs and to the World Changers organization. World Changers this year in Harnett County had approximately 300 youth from all over the country that came to participate in a mission project to help someone in need. This large group is divided into smaller groups of 8 to 10 youth and they go to each home to provide some type of repair requested. Every group has a construction coordinator that oversees the work being done at a particular location. It is an excellent opportunity for the youth involved to get hands-on work experience, to share the gospel, and to reach out in love to those in need. The World Changers projects usually last one week, and by the end of the week the homeowner, their neighbors, the youth volunteer, and the community have learned so much from each other that it is exuberant. The key to keeping costs down is to have a good construction coordinator who gives good estimates on building material costs - Harnett County DSS has not had any problems with being able to cover the costs of the building material. All counties should consider having World Changers come into their area to provide home repairs to those in need. This summer, 2006, World Changers will be in 86 cities doing 93 projects across the USA. Their goal is that students, adults, and communities will be changed after the week they spend in each project city/community as they improve the quality of life in neighborhoods by helping others. For more information on World Changers contact 1-888-421-4408 or go to www.world-changers.net or www.servemg.com Chuck Morris is the Associate Director for World Changers Serve Management Group for our district (in North Carolina) and will be happy to

help any county get the necessary information to have World Changers come to their area for a missions project.

2. **Innovation:** Why is the program unique? How does your project differ from similar projects? World Changers is unique because the church works along side the county to meet some very basic needs of people. Both working together to assist the elderly, disabled, or poor to have adequate housing and to improve the quality of care for the homeowner as well as to improve the community. The county or city is able to have more houses repaired than normal because the labor is volunteer (free) and the only costs involved is for the materials. This saves the agency or county money and doubles the number of houses/individuals being able to have their home repaired.

3. **Project Success and Impact:** What were the objectives? How well were they met? How widespread is the impact of the project/program? What is the anticipated long-term impact? Did the project involve collaboration with other agencies, non-profits, businesses, etc.? Describe the outcome of the collaboration. The objective would be to repair as many homes as possible with the amount of money allocated. Harnett County this year was able to repair 14 homes and are planning to repair more in the fall. Last year, Harnett County through World Changers were able to repair a total of 33 homes. The residents of these houses became involved with the youth who were working on their houses – many of the residents participated in the youth/volunteer's devotions that were held at their houses before the days work began. At some residents' homes a few of the neighbors even came over for devotion. As other neighbors within the community saw the homes being repaired by World Changers, they too wanted to repair their houses and the neighborhood started improving in its appearance. The result of the World Changers impact is awesome! The homes are repaired and changed, and so are the lives of the residents and community.

4. **Project Effort and Difficulty:** How well did the program use limited resources? What obstacles or challenges did you overcome? How was this done? World Changers is funded by private donations, local businesses, and grant funds. The only costs is for the material because the labor is free. Therefore, the County is able to repair more homes for the allotted money since there is no labor costs involved. Harnett County commissioners agree that this is such a worthy cause that they have graciously reserved \$20,000 in the County's budget for World Changers the past 2 years, and in 2004 allotted \$5,000 that year. It is amazing what needs can be meet when people work together for a common goal. One difficulty is trying to choose which homes to be selected for World Changers. In Harnett County one way we have tried to select homes is to ensure that the caller calling in the request for World Changers meets the financial criteria by using the NC DMA Financial Eligibility Fact Sheet (Families and Children Medicaid Programs) as a guide. This helps to ensure that the person requesting the help is truly in financial need. Also, houses are chosen for World Changers based on which houses have the greatest need. Sometimes this can be difficult when there are 50 to 60 homes on a referral list for home repairs.

5. **Ability to Replicate Project:** Can this project be duplicated in other counties? What could counties do to minimize obstacles and problems? World Changers is an excellent solution to a city/county's problem towards improving housing in an area with little resources. Harnett County is a very rural county, but with the support of the county commissioners DSS is able to verify the needs of people with low income and the home repairs needed. Contact World Changers to assist you with more information, and to help build a bridge for a better tomorrow between your residents, community, and your local Department of Social Services. World Changers: 1-888-421-4408 or go to www.world-changers.net, or www.servemg.com