

*"Building strong relationships with program participants is the core... Good Sam believes that 'hen individuals connect with people who care, they are transformed. Today, they have some hard data to back up their belief in the power of relationships... The numbers tell the story [that] change is possible."*

*FASTEN Institute*

*Partners in Transformation Award - 2005*

## A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 2000, Good Samaritan Ministries (GSM) began working with the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research on a long-term study of the effects of mentoring relationships on the lives of people in need.

Good Samaritan Ministries has been collecting data on all of the families we've helped in our mentoring programs since 2001. We survey them on fourteen indicators when they begin and complete programs, as well as follow up with them a year after program completion.

We are pleased to share the results of the Frost Center survey. As we had hoped, the study shows that relationships can make a difference in the lives of people who are struggling.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

A total of 571 families exited GSM mentoring programs between 2001 and 2006. Of those nearly one-third (168) completed their programs.

Over half (53%) of those cases completing programs were single-mother households where the whole household benefited from the strides made during the program. This is well above the the percentage of single-mother households in Holland found in the most recent census. Over all, GSM's mentoring programs helped create positive change for family households that included 262 children.

The percentage of European American/White participants was much below the most recent census numbers, although it was the largest group in the study. The percentage of Latino/Hispanic cases closely matched the census numbers and the percentage of African American cases greatly exceeded the proportion shown in the census.

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

- More than half were living below poverty at the time they entered a program (HHS guidelines) and almost 75% had income lower than \$20,000 annually.
- Over 40% of the total sample were single mother households.
- The greatest number of participants were 25-44 years old
- Over half (51.7%) were European American/White. The remaining participants were African American (19.5%) and Latino/Hispanic (23.9%), with Multiracial, Asian, Native American and Other having fewer than 2% each.

Based on a statistical test of changes between European American/White and all other racial ethnic groups, the Frost Research Center concluded that race/ethnicity of participants was not a significant factor in success or goal attainment.

*"The entire series of Mentoring Program Evaluation Reports, including this report, has portrayed the positive benefits from intake to discharge for a fairly large group of GSM cases on many of the outcome variables. Most notably, there have been increases in adequate employment, reliable transportation, stable housing, and manageable debt ratios.*

*The results of this report (Year 5) continue to confirm the encouraging findings that were demonstrated in the previous reports regarding the efficacy of GSM mentoring programs."*

*- Frost Research Center*

# OUTCOME HIGHLIGHTS

## **Debt-repayment plans showed positive results.**

The number of participants who had no debt-repayment plan/no interest in a debt-repayment plan dropped from 71.6% at intake to 14.0% at discharge. The percentage with no plan remained below 14% at 3 months and 6 months, but increased to 27% at 12 months. However, this is still lower than the intake percentage.

## **Participants with manageable debt ratios increased.**

The percentage of participants with manageable debt ratios increased from 6.8% at intake to 30.5% at discharge. It remained above 40% at all follow-up interviews.

## **Budget skills and practices showed significant improvement.**

The percentage of participants without a written budget that met expenses dropped significantly from 76.7% at intake to 6% at discharge.

*"I think it's a great program - I recommend it when I have the opportunity. I greatly appreciate you being there."*

- Financial Counseling Participant

This percentage stays low at 3 months and increases slightly at 6 months and 12 months, always staying below 30%.

## **Employment showed positive changes.**

The most notable change in employment status for cases completing programs was an increase in the percentage of cases who were adequately employed for more than six months: 23.5% at intake and 53.3% at discharge. This percentage remains high at all follow-up interviews.

## **Housing acquisition reduced homelessness.**

The largest change in housing acquisition was in the percentage of those considered homeless or precariously housed, from 20.9% at intake to 5.5% at discharge. The percentage of those in emergency shelter dropped from 11.7% (19 cases) at intake to 1.2% (2 cases) at discharge. These decreases correspond with increases in cases that are renting, in transitional/subsidized housing and those who became home owners.

## **Reliable transportation was a program success.**

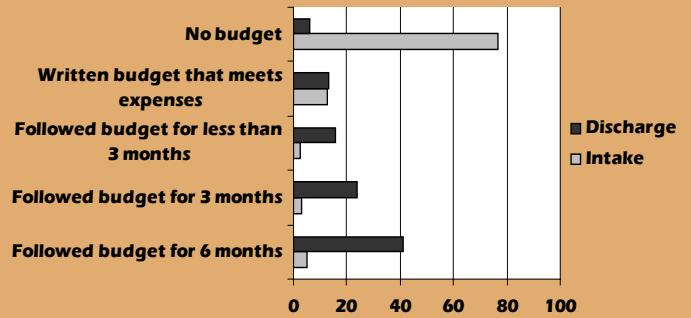
The percentage of cases that rated their transportation as "not reliable" dropped noticeably from 28.3% at intake to 2.4% at discharge. This percentage remained low at all follow-up interviews.

## **Relationship to church increased.**

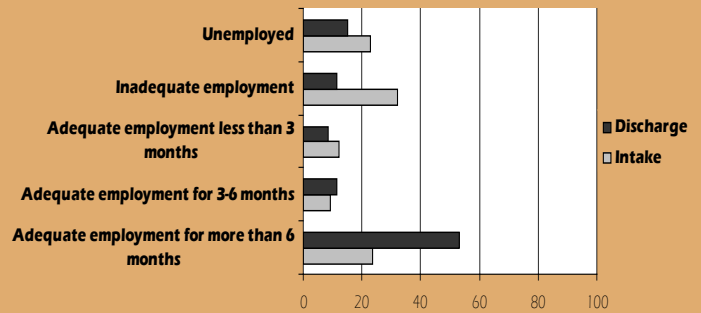
At intake, 24.2% of cases expressed no relationship with a church or no desire for a relationship. That percentage dropped to 1.2% at discharge. In the follow-up interviews, the percentage without a relationship to a church remains very low.

# PARTICIPANT ACHIEVEMENT

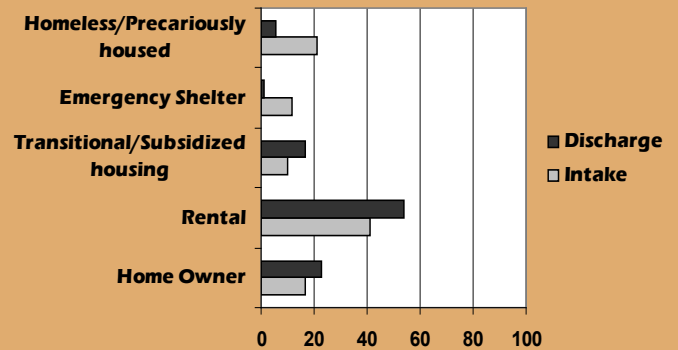
Budget



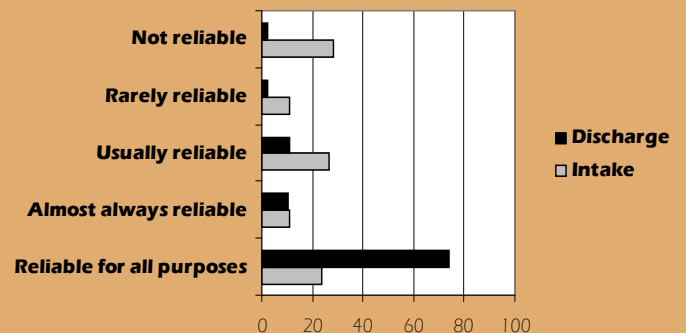
Employment



Housing Acquisition



Transportation Reliability



## CASE STUDIES

**ANITA MCCLOSKEY** - Anita and her children needed a new, safe start. Anita had graduated from an addictions recovery program and taken her children away from an abusive husband. She had no job, no transportation, no budget, no plan for the future and no home for her children. She entered the Community Housing Partnership in 2004 looking for a way to improve her situation.

Anita took advantage of every opportunity given to her during her two years in the program. When she graduated in 2006, she had attained full-time employment, learned to set and achieve goals and follow a budget. She completed the CarLink program and received a reliable used car to help her get back and forth to work and other community obligations. She had close friends from her church mentoring team. She had also been accepted into the Habitat for Humanity home ownership program.

Anita moved from homelessness, through transitional housing, into a rental while her new home was built, and into a new home she now owns. Anita and her family moved into the house they helped build in October 2007.



Through the generosity of supporters and the friendship of church team members, Anita and her children now have the privilege of living in their very own neighborhood. They began their journey with addictions, poverty and unemployment. Through the power of relationships, Anita now gives hope to her family and contributes to her community.

Photo provided by Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity.

**SCOTT GROENHOF** - After his release from prison, Scott was eager to start over. His parents offered him a place to live, but he didn't have a job and had to take over financial responsibility for his daughter's care. Within a week of his release, Scott had met with a case worker at the Department of Human Services for emergency assistance for his daughter and been referred to the Work First job program.

At Work First, Scott was encouraged to address his barriers to employment. A major barrier was his lack of transportation. He was borrowing his father's car when he could, but otherwise had to get rides to work. He was referred to Good Samaritan's CarLink program as a way to address this issue.

Scott was linked with a financial counseling mentor from Lakeshore Vineyard. They met weekly for eleven weeks and worked on budgeting and car-ownership issues. In February 2005, Scott received a 2001 Ford Focus, which he still drives.

Scott got his first job within a week of starting at Work First. He has been working steadily in construction since then and is now a permanent employee at Bosgraaf Builders as a job site facilitator for electrical installations. He is eligible for insurance and other benefits. He puts an average of 1,000 miles each week on his car going from site to site for work.

Scott still keeps in touch with his mentor and uses the skills he learned during the program. He says that he has a great support system and is confident that he can continue working to support himself and his daughter. He even recently got his own apartment again.

Relationships helped Scott move from prison to a productive new life.





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### DRAWING CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING AHEAD

Over the last five years, this study of the long-term effects of Good Samaritan Ministries' mentoring programs has consistently shown the power of relationships. More than just the meeting the material needs of those around us, building relationships is what allows for life-transforming change. This is shown in the difference seen between Intake (the entry date) and Discharge (the exit date), as well as over the year following graduation from a program. Offering material support while helpful, often only serves as a temporary fix. Long-term benefits are taken from relationships between people.

Good Samaritan Ministries will continue to evaluate the information gathered from this study to develop new avenues for building transformational relationships with those in need.

For a complete report including Executive Summary visit [www.goodsamministries.com](http://www.goodsamministries.com).

*"The Holy Supper is kept, indeed, by whatso we share with another's need;  
Not what we give, but what we share for the gift  
without the giver is bare."*

*- The Vision of Sir Launfal  
James Russell Lowell*