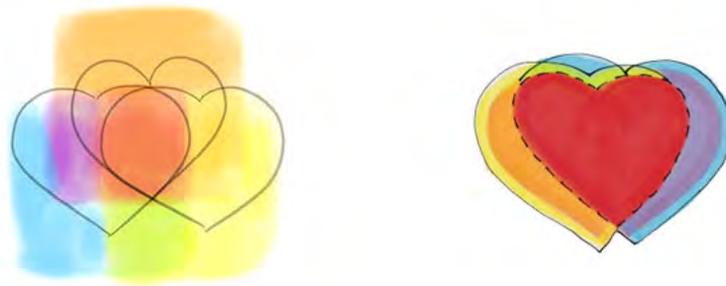




**NBA Business Report to the 2015 General Assembly**  
**Mr. Mark D. Anderson, NBA President and CEO**  
**July 22, 2015**

We understand from Christian theologians that “the only...final norm of human life” is love; love of the Divine, love of one another, the ability to love oneself. For the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the origins of compassionate care and loving of others began with six women in a prayer circle.

It seems only fitting then that, three years ago, when the staff and board of trustees for the NBA were considering a new organizational logo, we thought of love. We thought of how love often begins with one and becomes amplified by many.



Early in life, Jacob struggled with an inadequately treated mental illness. In his attempts to cope, he developed an alcohol addiction and was estranged from his family by the time he was a young adult. Last year, Jacob was welcomed into the caring community of Gomer’s House in Portland, Oregon, led by Pastors Milele and James Hobbs. Jacob received safe housing, counseling, and – this year – is training to become one of the house managers at Gomer’s House. A heart impacted, a heart nurtured to care.

Rev. Dean Bucalos, of Mission Behind Bars and Beyond and the coordinator for the NBA’s Prison and Jail Affinity Group ministries, has been educating and raising the awareness of the U.S.’s overcrowded and broken prison systems. One trained volunteer leader, LaVece, at Crestwood Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky, has been so moved to make a difference that she has helped to support four returning citizens who were formerly incarcerated re-enter their community. LaVece has driven folks to job interviews, answered numerous late night calls, maintained regular contact, and simply been a friend to those who seek to build a life of peace and wholeness. A heart impacted, a heart nurtured to care.

Rebecca Wells came to us from Dallas, Texas! She knew that 10-months in NBA XPLOR would be life-changing. This year, she worked thirty hours each week with families experiencing homelessness, with the San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission. Rebecca learned to ask every day, “Am I being helpful to the people I serve, or am I just making myself feel good?” Rebecca met Anna at the Mission’s Dignity Store, and helped empower the single mom to select some gifts for her son. This experience made a deep impact on Rebecca, and on Anna and her child. How profound to share that gift of joy with each other. A heart impacted, a heart nurtured to care.

The National Benevolent Association has been led and inspired by countless Disciples leaders and congregations to make a difference in the lives of others.

Today, the NBA incubates new and emerging Disciples-related health and social service ministries. What often begins as an idea or meeting an immediate need, Disciples leaders are building into comprehensive mission outreach programs and organizations. Through our NBA Incubate Initiative, we are accompanying 13 Disciples projects at various stages with entrepreneurial leadership development, mentoring, and administrative support.

The NBA initiates ministry programs designed to establish and grow partnerships around health and social service ministries. Last year, we launched NBA XPLORE, a congregationally hosted, 10-month residency program where young adults live in simple community, explore community engagement, and develop their hearts for care. In June, 10 XPLORE Residents completed their XPLORE Residency, and we are now preparing to welcome 24 new XPLORE Residents to be living and serving in seven cities nationwide with more than 50 congregations, nonprofits, and regions involved.

The NBA connects direct care providers, emerging social service ministries, local congregations and mission partners so that all may learn, collaborate and grow stronger together. In partnership with Disciples Home Missions, we coordinate the network that is the Disciples Care Exchange, with more than 32 participating agencies. We also support affinity groups or ministries collaborating to address justice issues within America's prison and jail systems and mental health and wellness for people in our communities.

Jacob, LaVece, Anna; Milele, James, Dean, and Rebecca; these names are part of many living lives of love, compassion, and abundant care.



We are the National Benevolent Association, your health and social services general ministry. We are called together, and called to care, as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). And, most importantly, we are called as God's people.

We invite you to know more. Thank you, and God's blessings.

*Presented by Mark D. Anderson, NBA President and CEO, to the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Columbus, OH - July 22, 2015.*