

A Willingness For Fierce Conversations

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If you are a follower of pop music culture, allow me to state that the title above did not come from a gathering of folks exchanging Beyonce quotes of wisdom!¹ Even more impressive, the quote came from a leader that participated in a recent gathering of *Social Entrepreneurs of Faith*, which was a leadership track that the NBA hosted as part of the 2014 HOPE Leadership Academy in September.



A Word of Hope Spoken

After spending five days together of learning, brainstorming, engaging in small group and plenary sessions, these leaders took time to speak a word of hope to one another – for their ministries, for the new friends and conversation partners that they had made in each other, and for the faithful work ahead. This cohort and group of leaders that we gathered together for these days of learning is part of the NBA *Incubator initiative*. Integral to NBA’s mission to inspire and connect

people and health and social service ministries across the life of the Disciples church, one of the ways that we are living into that mission is by incubating new and emerging projects, leaders, and non-profits for doing health and social service outreach and care in their local communities. I was humbled and inspired by the individuals that came together and by their commitments that I heard spoken aloud.

From Sharyn with the Oklahoma Family Empowerment Center, she shares, “I experienced a turnaround in my spirit...I sensed fresh breath and my commitment strengthened.” Hers is a ministry that provides social and health services for youth and young people within the juvenile justice system in Oklahoma’s Tulsa County.

From Denise in the Lubbock, Texas, area, she reflects how “I would love to create a grief center that would serve the whole Lubbock community with faith-based grief care programming and support. I would like for it to be seen as a sacred space of healing and wholeness.”
(more on backside)

¹ For those who want to know what I’m referencing, feel free to research <http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Beyonces-Alter-Ego>.

From Milele with Gomer's House based in Portland, Oregon, who is inspired by her staff and leaders that provide "amazing healings to...battered, bruised, and broken souls trapped in a world of adultery, addictions, codependency, and criminal activities." Milele serves as the co-pastor of Trees of Righteousness Christian Church and directs Gomer's House, which provides transitional housing and social services for those recovering from addictions.

Incubate Initiative

Do you work with or know of a Disciples leader that is interested in being part of the "Incubator initiative?" Is there a project or idea related to health or social service outreach that someone would benefit from having conversations around program development or discussions about incorporating as a 501(c)(3)? When I think about the work of "incubating," I am reminded of a constellation of support. As people of faith, we are called to listen to one another, to hear the needs and hopes of each other, and to find ways of empowering our collaborative work together serving the "least of these."

For more information about NBA's Incubate initiative please contact Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, at awatkins@nbacares.org or (314) 993-9000 ext. 2214. Visit www.nbacares.org/incubate!