

## Live It! Hope Builders

*There are times that I feel as though I am standing in front of a great ice wall with a small pick in my hand “slowly” picking away. Some weeks a big chunk falls off and at other times only very small pieces fall away. But I do feel that the wall is coming down and it is exciting to witness because as the wall comes down then relationships can grow. And the greatest relationship is with God. My job is to be patient and wait on God’s guidance because I know I would not be in this relationship except that He wants me here. To anyone that feels called to witness as a mentor I highly recommend it –but, come with an open mind and a willingness to be lead by the Holy Spirit.*

Testimony from a Mentor

### **Life of Israel:** Ruth 1:22

“So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.” (NRSV)

### **Life of Christ:** Matthew 25:37, 38, 40

“The righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” (NRSV)

## Culture Study

There are 37 million people living in poverty in the United States according to the 2004 Report of the U.S. Census Bureau; of that number, 13 million are children under 18 years old. Over 749 thousand people in the State of Virginia have annual incomes below the poverty level.

The World Bank states, “Poverty has more dimensions than simply an absence of assets. Poor people are vulnerable to economic shocks, natural disasters, violence and crime. They are often denied access to education, adequate health services and clean water and sanitation” ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)).



The Bible teaches that we should meet the needs of others, especially those who are hurting. The Old Testament emphasizes communal responsibility in the care of the priests, debtors, the poor and the widows. The Old Testament story of Ruth and Naomi is a perfect example of the importance of faith community and mentoring relationships during times of great need. Ruth did not desert Naomi in their time of grief and sorrow; likewise, Naomi supported Ruth when they moved to a land that was foreign to her. Their mutual support, their faith in God, and the kindness of their kinsman, Boaz, worked together to bring about a better life for both women.

The New Testament also encourages us to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). Jesus said, "Just as you did it to the least of these...you did it to me." As followers of Christ we are called upon to reach out to others in their times of need.

Answers do not come readily when addressing the reality of poverty and the crippling effects of long-term dependency. However, one-on-one ministry through a mentoring relationship is one solution to this complex problem. In 1997 the **Hope Builders/Christian Women's Job Corps** was started by WMUV for the purpose of assisting women in breaking out of the poverty cycle. There are eight key elements of the program:

1. A mentor for each participant
2. Bible study for spiritual growth
3. A covenant between every participant & mentor
4. Networking
5. Assessment of community & participant needs
6. An advisory council
7. Ministry evaluation
8. Certification of Project Coordinators & training of leaders

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty  
([www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org))

- 16% of American children—more than 11 million—lived in poor families in 2002, meaning their parents' income was at or below the federal poverty level. These parents are typically unable to provide their families with basic necessities like stable housing and reliable child care.
- 37% of American children—more than 26 million—lived in low-income families in 2002. Their parents made less than 200% of the federal poverty line (FPL). These families often face material hardships and financial pressures similar to those families who are officially counted as poor.

## Case Study



Sheila Smith and Victoria Yates

Victoria Yates entered the Shiloh Hope Builders Program in search of a better way of life. Like each of the members of the program, Victoria met with a mentor on a weekly basis and took part in on-going Bible study. Since starting the program, Victoria has completed training and has become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) in the State of Virginia. But her determination has not ended there. After completing the CNA program Victoria enrolled in a GED program and plans to have her diploma by the end of the summer. Sheila Smith, Christian Women's Job Corp Consultant, states, "Not only has Victoria been a motivator and encourager for the ministry, but she has come full circle and is now a mentor for others in the program."

Smith continues, "Shiloh Hope Builders is dedicated to serving Jesus Christ by becoming an integral part of the lives of others. We are approaching our second year anniversary on Oct 1<sup>st</sup> and are very excited about the blessings and miracles we have witnessed through this ministry. The first year we had three women graduate from the program and they all returned to the ministry for a second year. We are so proud of each and every one of our ladies."

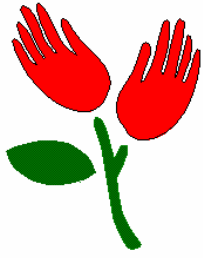
### Involvement

1. List a minimum of five poverty concerns of which you are aware.
2. List the ways in which your church or group is already addressing the poverty needs in your church; in your community; at the national & international levels.
3. What needs are not being addressed in your church; community; nation; world?
4. Identify organizations or programs in your community that offer assistance to people with these needs. What are some ways that you and your church community might partner with these organizations to help address the needs?
5. Pray that God will reveal ways in which you can become actively involved in addressing the needs you have listed. Make plans to participate in at least one project within the next 30 days.
6. Is there a Christian Women's Job Corp/Hope Builders Program in your community? If not, call WMUV to explore ways to get one started.

### Commitment:

Make a monthly commitment to help those affected by issues of poverty.

1. Make a covenant with members of your church or Sunday School group to explore ways that you can become an ongoing participant in addressing the poverty needs in your community.
2. Teach life skills to participants in programs such as Hope Builders.
3. Volunteer to work with Habitat for Humanity on a regular basis.
4. Volunteer at a local food pantry or soup kitchen each month.
5. Become a friend and mentor to someone in need.
6. Volunteer to present poverty awareness programs to other church or community groups



# **HOPE BUILDERS/CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S JOB CORPS SITES In the State of Virginia**



**Hope Builders Norfolk Baptist Association: (757) 463-6525**



**Richmond Area Hope Builders: (804) 232-0174**



**Hope Builders Fredericksburg Baptist Association: (540) 894-8440**



**CWJC Central Virginia Association: (434) 842-2231**



**Shiloh Association: (540) 825-6282**



**Roanoke Association: (540) 992-5450**



**Henry County Association: (276) 957-1849**



**Shiloh Baptist Church, Reedville**

# RESOURCES

## WMU Books

[www.wmystore.com](http://www.wmystore.com)

or

1-800-968-7301

### ADULT

***Breaking the Cycle: Issues Affecting Poverty***, by Cathy Butler

What can Christians do to alleviate poverty? Can the cycle of poverty be broken? This book explores issues related to hunger, child advocacy, AIDS, cultural diversity, and restorative justice, and how poverty touches them all.

***A Garden Path to Mentoring: Planting Your Life in Another & Releasing the Fragrance of Christ***, by Esther Burroughs

This book guides you through the process of mentoring, using gardening metaphors: planning the garden, working the soil, choosing the seeds, and knowing the season. You'll learn what it means to be a mentor, how to choose a mentee, and how to draw out the best in your mentee. Also included are plans for a Garden Retreat for women.

***Growing Godly Women: A Christian Woman's Guide to Mentoring Teenage Girls*** is a blueprint for making a vital difference in a girl's life through a mentoring relationship, providing her with crucial support and wisdom during her complex teen years.

### CHILDREN

***What Does it Mean to be Poor?***

Follow the story of a young child who discovers what it means to be poor and how God loves us all no matter what our circumstances.

### For More Information About Poverty:

- Kaiser Family Foundation [www.StateHealthFacts.org](http://www.StateHealthFacts.org)
- National Center for Children in Poverty [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org)
- Institute for Women's Policy Research [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org)
- U. S. Census Bureau [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
- Institute for Research on Poverty [www.irp.wisc.edu](http://www.irp.wisc.edu)

**Virginia Poverty Law Center**: a not-for-profit organization concentrating in the areas of law that affect low-income families. Established in 1978 to advocate on behalf of low-income Virginians on poverty issues of statewide importance, VPLC is the only state-wide organization providing training to local legal aid program staff, private bar attorneys, and low-income clients, relating exclusively to the legal rights of Virginia's poor.

700 East Franklin Street, Suite 14T1

Richmond, Virginia 23219

Tel: 804.782.9430

[www.vplc.org](http://www.vplc.org)

**FAMIS:** On this site, you will find information about three of Virginia's health insurance programs: FAMIS - the Children's Health Insurance Program; FAMIS MOMS - for pregnant women; and Smiles For Children - a dental program. For more information about the FAMIS programs, call toll-free: 1-866-87FAMIS (1-866-873-2647). [www.famis.org](http://www.famis.org)

**The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)** provides assistance to citizens of Virginia to help them live their best lives. One child, one senior citizen, one person at a time, VDSS programs and services help people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect, achieve self-sufficiency and shape strong futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

For General information:

(804) 726-7000 (Richmond)

(800) 552-3431 (toll-free)

(804) 726-7958 (FAX)

[citizen.services@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:citizen.services@dss.virginia.gov)

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