“Going the Distance – from Urban Sidewalks to Isolated Islands: A Modern Model for Successful Christian Outreach Ministry”

Sponsoring Diocese – The Diocese of Southeast Florida

Episcopal Charities of Southeast Florida partners with and empowers the people within 76 congregations of our Diocese in answering God’s call to respond to basic human needs. Its service area spans Jensen Beach to Key West – a 210 mile stretch along the southeast Florida coast. In addition to the three urban areas of Palm Beach, Broward and Dade, it also serves significantly smaller, rural and remote population pockets in Martin County and Monroe County (the Keys). In these more isolated and remote areas, 12 congregations sponsor 13 distinct outreach programs; 535 volunteers serve 175,000 meals annually to over 10,000 distinct clients. Other outreach ministries range from food pantries, community gardens, and a weekend back-pack feeding programs for poor children to homeless shelters and programs that serve the working poor. Congregations and volunteers in these areas cannot easily access centrally-located training opportunities, and typically have less connection to Episcopal Charities and its existing support resources.

The grant from Roanridge Trust will enable Episcopal Charities to significantly add many additional components to already well-developed and multi-faceted training and support programming for outreach ministries. These resources will increase the spiritual vitality of ministries in remote and isolated places by offering: 1) additional on-site local programming, 2) service-related webinars and virtual training opportunities which can be accessed or archived by program partners and their volunteers wherever the site location might be, 3) web-based training resources for congregations that will include samples of effective ministry outreach programs, service planning documents, volunteer curriculum and training materials, best-practice guidelines, survey and effectiveness tools, granting-seeking guidelines, program budget templates, etc. This collection will also provide excellent resources in ministry start-up and program support.

In summary, the congregations and volunteers of remote and isolated ministries will be better equipped to serve and grow in scope. Episcopal Charities of Southeast Florida will be able to grow in service and expand its current level of program support with web-based components that will be more fully accessed by 53 congregationally-sponsored service programs in southeast Florida and by others nationally with similar geographic challenges.
Camp Marshall
Sponsoring Diocese – The Diocese of Montana

The 2012 Roanridge Trust Grant will allow Camp Marshall to develop a specialized training program whose purpose is to empower rural church leaders to engage with youth around new media. More specifically, how can we be conscientious consumers and producers of new media? And how, in our increasingly wired and connected lives, can we leverage new digital and physical spaces in order to live into our mission as Christians?

The grant will also enable the camp to furnish a small state-of-the-art production studio, designed for use by camp staff, youth campers, and adult camp participants to make original media content.

In addition to being put to use for artistic/expressive endeavors, the Media Center Studio will be utilized by the media staff to create training/tutorial videos, with topics ranging from media production techniques to activities for promoting positive group synergy among youth groups. These publicly available videos can be a vital resource for our rural church workers who seek to engage in new media with youth and adults alike.

Furthermore, the media staff will contribute to the development and upkeep of the camp’s website, which will serve as a central community space for all the camp’s ongoing work. The evolving website will also serve as a central collection of online resources for families, church leaders, and young people who want to further explore and educate themselves about media and technology.

We will measure the efficacy of our training program through media staff evaluations, camper/parent surveys, levels of engagement in our online community, and information about how our online materials have been utilized by our rural congregations. You can check in on our media and the progress of our program at any time by visiting www.episcopalcampmt.org
Small Church Vestry Training Program

Sponsoring Diocese – The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

Building strong leadership is vital for any church. Ideally, church vestries and leadership would receive regular training in areas such as: spirituality for leadership, church growth, family systems, mission, evangelism, financial management, visioning, strategic planning, conflict management, the nurture and care of clergy, and more. Vestry members often have no experience with church leadership, and the only model they know is a business model.

The Roanridge Trust has awarded a grant for a diocesan-wide Vestry Retreat in the Central Gulf Coast. The retreat is offered to leadership teams from small churches, with preference given to churches sending their entire vestry and at least one clergy person. This approach will enable the vestries to meet together following plenary sessions to discuss and adapt the teachings to their own unique situation. This team-building focus will also jump-start the team formation process by building stronger working relationships.

The move from business model to mission orientation will be explored by means of a 2 night, 3 day retreat. The conference facilitator is the Rev. Dr. Margaret Shepherd, whose D. Min from Wesley Theological Seminary was obtained in Congregational Development. She is also a graduate of Shalem Institute’s Clergy Life and Leadership, Going Deeper program, and the Clergy Leadership Project of Trinity Wall Street. Plenary sessions will be followed by breakout sessions for individual churches to process the information presented, in order to lead the church in ways best suited to the mission of the church. Cooperation and networking between nearby small churches will be fostered for the sake of Christ’s mission. The ultimate desired outcome is the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, maximizing the use of the powerful and beautiful tools that are part of our Episcopal heritage. An outline of the topics to be covered follows.

I. Listening to God-or Listening to ourselves?
II. What Does Place Have to Do with It? The Ethnography of Place.
III. What About Your Family System? How Do We Listen to God and To One Another?
IV. What is God Really Calling Us to Do?
V. What is Radical Hospitality?
VI. Church Growth and Development
Plenary sessions will be videotaped, and uploaded to the web along with surveys, schedule, and accompanying notes, and made available to other churches through the Office of Congregational Vitality.
Contact The Rev. Martha Kreamer for more information, martha.kreamer@gmail.com.
We at Spirit of the Wilderness are very excited to have been given a Roanridge Trust grant for our work on a Christian formation course. Spirit of the Wilderness began four years ago in Grand Maris, MN and became a mission in the diocese a year ago. Prodded by the Spirit, the core group wondered how to be a different kind of church—one that is spiritually rooted in the Episcopal tradition, but also welcoming some who move to this area for the wild beauty of the North Shore of Lake Superior—especially artists, wilderness types, and those who have been hurt by church. Rev. Mary Ellen Ashcroft, with background as an English professor, priest and college chaplain, as well as a passion for lay involvement and growing disciples, has mentored this group and is now employed 30% time by the church.

Lay people are very involved in all the church’s ministries, including leading services and giving homilies about half the time. Vicar, Mary Ellen Ashcroft sees her role as facilitating lay ministry, and bringing theological, biblical background to the growing group.

Last spring, some members of Spirit of the Wilderness expressed a desire for greater understanding of their faith, something deeper than Sunday sermons and adult forums could provide. Other programs seemed to demand their participants be retired, or withdraw from their community and just do church—which undercuts one of the most important aspects of the ministry of all the baptized. Mary Ellen began developing a course called Deepening Roots: A Course in Christian Formation.

This course asks participants to commit to two years of monthly meetings in the non-tourist months, with a three day retreat in May. The first year provides background in the Old and New Testaments, as well as challenging participants to think theologically and consider how they interpret texts. Having begun to think as theologians, the second year will shift focus to particular issues—the environment, sanctity of life, sexuality—using scripture, theology, and church history to deepen our understandings. During the second year of the course there will also be a focus on listening to the needs of the local community. Fourteen people, including a few from the larger community, are taking the course.
The Episcopal Church as a whole faces a huge challenge—to move from priest centered churches, to ministry centered churches—a paradigm shift that must be made both by priests and people. This shift is being forced on us by tough times, but it is one that can move the church to greater health: not all can or should be ordained, but all the baptized can minister. The Roanridge Trust grant provides an opportunity for training such lay leadership.

Although the Deepening Roots: A Course in Christian Formation was planned during summer and began in September 2011, the Roanridge Trust grant will enable the course to become an ongoing program in northern Minnesota, and to be made available to the wider church. The online materials from Deepening Roots: A Course in Christian Formation will include course input, homework assignments, questions, and also a section for training leaders.

Rev. Carolyn Schmidt, recently arrived in will use her background in ministry, particularly with seasonal workers, will be working with Deepening Roots participants in the area of community listening. The Roanridge Trust will also provide scholarships for some people who would like to do the course but can’t afford it.
Adult Catechumenate for Rural and Small Town Settings
Sponsoring Diocese – The Diocese of Spokane

The North American Association for the Catechumenate, (NAAC) is eager to introduce congregations to the rich worship and faith formation practices of the Adult Catechumenate, an ancient and modern model for making Christian disciples. The Catechumenate is a relational process by which congregations can introduce seeking hearts to Jesus with integrity and joy in rural and small town settings. The Catechumenate is an effective means for connecting worship, faith formation and relationships so that congregations can reclaim their missional future.

We will offer congregational leaders a three day intensive experience of the Catechumenate. Though the participants will already have a relationship with Jesus, the conference will model the Catechumenate, using worship, prayer, scripture, holy conversation and public rites to deepen participant’s faith in Jesus, the Joy of the Church. We will take participants through the processes of inquiry, welcome, formation and mystogogy, all of which serve to deepen faith and which are perfectly accessible to any congregation, regardless of its size. In addition, we will be reflecting on how the experience at the workshop can be taken home to our congregations and put into practice. Uniquely, we will follow up on participating congregational teams with support from practitioners, mutual cooperation between congregations and a field guide to the Catechumenate. In summary, this project will lead to spirit-filled congregations where worshippers are transformed from members to disciples; deeply rooted in their faith, experiencing the grace of God in Jesus Christ, and living out their faith in daily life.

The conference is set for August 3-5, 2012 at Immaculate Heart Retreat Center in Spokane, Washington.
For over thirty years Rural & Migrant Ministry (A ministry of the Diocese of Rochester) has sought to nurture leaders for rural social transformation in New York. Our efforts have served both disenfranchised people at the grass-roots level, as well as franchised people within congregations. Frequently we hear the lament of leaders within congregations that they desire to reach out and build relationships with recent immigrants in their community, but have no knowledge of how to reach out and connect. Our desired outcome is to help congregational leaders develop understandings and skills to reach out to immigrant neighbors through programs that are creative and empowering (for both parties). Through the Ally Transformational Project we will help congregations develop effective outreach programs. Participants will be asked to engage in several steps including:

- Analysis of who the immigrants are in their area. This will lead to a listing of outreach needs as identified by immigrant neighbors.

- Based on this list of identified needs, participants will agree to take on an outreach project through their congregation (program/liturgy/action/ etc.)
  
  1. The project must meet the following goals: a) builds a relationship with immigrant neighbors, b) helps immigrant neighbors address a need.
  
  2. Participants will choose their own project based on their resources. (facilities/people/funding etc)

- Participants will meet regularly for analysis/evaluation/action plan. During these gatherings, participants will have the opportunity to learn from one another

At the completion of the Program, participants will have developed: 1) a sustainable outreach program, 2) a network of support, 3) theological and theoretical foundations for their outreach. They will also have taken a critical step toward the development of a relationship with immigrant brothers and sisters within their community.
The Roanridge Trust grant in the Diocese of Lexington will continue, expand and enhance the Network for Pastoral Leadership and Congregational Development (The Network) pilot project which was started in 2009. The Network services rural and Appalachian communities in Eastern Kentucky. The purpose of the Network is to strengthen and equip congregations to be healthy and vital mission centers, train and equip newly ordained clergy to be missional leaders of healthy and vital congregations, and create a sustainable model for this pioneering effort. The funds from the grant will provide the necessary resources to enhance the scope and depth the curriculum offered.

The project recruits, trains, places and supports recent seminary graduates in small and rural Episcopal churches throughout the Diocese. In partnership with each local congregation, the Network provides a place for seminary graduates to ground their ministry in a missionary spirit by providing a supportive environment, practical training and financial incentives. The program offers congregations stable pastoral leadership, and helps develop lay leaders and strengthen congregations to better meet the needs of their communities. The Network provides the place of practical application of the knowledge and tradition learned at seminary.

The Network provides the following broad categories to its participants throughout the course of their three-year term:

• Group Supervision
• Support for Congregational Ministry Team
• Mentoring
• Pastoral Leadership Seminars—online
• Sustaining Healthy Congregations Seminars—online
• Christian Education Practicum

During their participation, congregations agree to pay Network clergy a wage at the minimum standard for the Diocese. Clergy also receive continuing education support and access to a student loan repayment program.

A secondary final goal of the project is to create a sustainable curriculum that can be shared and adopted by other Dioceses interested in building a similar program.
The Episcopal Service Corps program at The Belfry – the Lutheran Episcopal Volunteer Network (LEVN) – will consist of eight recent college graduates who will live in community at The Belfry and participate in full-time social service internships from September 2012 through July 2013. Volunteers will use the year for discernment, to explore career options, and gain job skills. Community life will include communal meals, worship, and quarterly retreats. One of these volunteers will work specifically with YIIN and the migrant worker community in Yolo County, CA, and with the Children in the Fields campaign.

YIIN networks with other nonprofits and agencies to enhance, encourage, and build their services, social justice programs, and responsiveness to the target population. Since its inception in 2008, YIIN has created an education and recreation program for middle-school-aged children; offered an 8-week summer ESL class for adults; and sponsored youth soccer leagues and service learning activities for youth to develop their leadership skills. YIIN also works closely with staff from the Children in the Fields Campaign (CIF), which is an effort by the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs to reduce child labor in American agriculture. CIF staff document the level of child labor in agriculture in California, educate the public about the conditions under which these children labor, and build grassroots support for policies and programs that help keep underage farmworker children out of the fields and in school.

The LEVN volunteer for YIIN and CIF will work full time with migrant workers during spring through fall, and during the winter will plan outreach programs, engage volunteers, increase awareness among people of faith of the issues faced by farmworkers, and develop informational materials to support YIIN and CIF. As a result, the volunteer will develop expertise in networking and collaboration across a broad range of agencies and nonprofits, thus preparing them for future work in this area. This is likely to be a critical career skill for prospective staff of non-profit organizations that serve rural populations: large agencies capable of providing a full range of services generally are located in population centers rather than more sparsely populated rural regions.
SUMMARY OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The training programs will equip diocesan teams with the motivation and resources they will need to develop, on the local level, their own strategic plans for life-long faith formation, to reinvigorate existing programs, and to design new collaborative programs. These “Training of Faith Formation Leaders” programs will be two-day events offered at Episcopal conference centers and Episcopal schools in as many dioceses as possible in 2012 and 2013.

There will be master events in the spring and fall at one of the sites with diocesan teams participating simultaneously from a number of other sites via webinar technology. Video feeds from the master site will bring the plenary speakers to help participants understand the various scenarios and how they emerged from the Summit. Most of the time at the event will be spent working together as diocesan teams to build their own unique continuum of faith formation that will anticipate various possible futures of faith formation in the Episcopal Church.

The programs will train ministry teams from each participating diocese. Participants will be from rural, urban and suburban congregations, and will include persons involved Christian formation, camping, schools, youth, young-adult, older adult and ethnic ministries. Each team of ten to twenty persons will absorb the scenarios envisioned at the November 2011 Episcopal Church Summit on Camps, Retreats and Faith Formation, learn about one another’s ministries, and come to understand that each has a unique niche in the life-long continuum. This group will then begin to adapt existing programs to the various scenarios, create new programs, and develop linkages between programs that are appropriate to their own diocesan context.
From mission to Mission
Sponsoring Diocese – The Diocese of Idaho

Grace Episcopal Church of Nampa, Idaho, has developed a mission church, La Gracia, in a housing authority development approximately 20 miles away. The development is called Farmway Village, serves 1400 people and is 5 miles from the nearest town. The people who live there are primarily Latino with very limited income, struggling with immigration issues and a difficult economy.

After providing Sunday worship and children’s programming for four years, and a bilingual, multi-cultural, intergenerational summer camp for three, the mission there has begun to grow. We recently secured an office and nursery space on site, with priority use of the large common area for Sundays. With everything in place to really grow, the ministry possibilities in this isolated and underserved community are limitless.

Clergy leadership at La Gracia is part time. If this mission is to grow and prosper, it is essential that the members learn to take up the leadership skills necessary to build the church and serve the community. We cannot rely on liturgy and sacraments alone, especially when they are administered by a part-time or visiting priest. We are working to empower those in need of ministry to be leaders and ministers themselves. We must find a way to help people build a church that makes a difference in their lives and the life of their community.

Our program is designed to help members of La Gracia learn skills and develop the necessary confidence to take leadership in the areas of worship, stewardship, education, outreach, youth ministry and mission. As a result of this program, members will know how to be the church and have a clearer understanding of the gifts they bring to the world. They will experience the power of a people working in community. This will be demonstrated by the development of ministries and ministry partnerships that impact the lives of the people of Farmway.

To achieve these ends, we will provide training in the various areas by outside experts and local volunteers from Grace Church, Nampa and the surrounding community. In order to support and organize these efforts, two ministry leadership coordinators have been hired to provide oversight and administration. These ministry coordinators are essential as we are asking the
members to step into a new culture of leadership. The women employed are both members of La Gracia, so model the leadership we are calling everyone to embrace.

Update:

Since we moved into the new space in October of 2011 we have had volunteers assist with painting and decorating as well as cleaning and furnishing the nursery. The ministry coordinators were hired in November and have provided coordination for a community Thanksgiving meal, a two day health fair and a four day health screening event held in partnership with the nursing department of Northwest Nazarene University. They have collected resources necessary to refer those in need and are planning a Posada event for December. Acolyte training is underway every first Sunday. Lay worship training will begin in February and work is in progress to schedule a trainer for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.
Procter Center in the Diocese of Southern Ohio will partner with Episcopal Relief and Development to host a four-day training entitled “Growing Food and Faith.” The Growing Food and Faith program is a unique, long-term initiative that prepares rural community leaders to address poverty, hunger and economic development within youth and young adult populations. The Growing Food and Faith training will teach participants how to develop very flexible, low-cost programs that can be implemented by any Episcopal congregation, regardless of its budget or resources.

Participants will be chosen based on their passion for sharing resources with others, sharing a heritage of giving with the next generations and sharing the Gospel with youth and young adults. The training will follow the Abundant Life Garden Project (ALGP) program and the Act Out curriculums developed by Episcopal Relief and Development. The training is free for the 20 participants, who also will receive a $200 stipend for transportation costs.

The Rev. Shannon Ferguson-Kelly, freelance writer and consultant, will administer the Growing Food and Faith training. Other facilitators include Bishop Nedi Rivera of the Diocese of Eastern Oregon, Ms. Rebekah Zimmerer, Procter Center Farm Manager, and Paul Clever, and Episcopal friar and creator of Good Earth Farm in Athens, Ohio.

To learn more, contact Christine Tokarz at ctokarz@diosohio.org.
La Iglesia Episcopal de la Resurrección (Resurrección) is a Hispanic Episcopal church, located in Mt Vernon WA, located in the strongly agricultural area of the Skagit Valley. Many of the persons Resurrección serves are indigenous persons from the state of Oaxaca in Mexico whose first language may be Mixteco, Triqui or Zapoteco. The majority of our parishioners and social service clients are from farm worker families. The average family income for these farm laborers is about $16,000 for a family of six.

The average Sunday church attendance in 2002 was 6-8; by 2010 it had grown to 43. In 2011 it averaged 50. Easter attendance was 124 in 2011 compared to 75 in 2010. Easter, however, is not our highest attendance. Those Sundays are when we have special services such as baptisms, the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Day of the Dead, and Christmas.

The mission of Resurrección is twofold—pastoral care and social ministry, with a special emphasis on young couples starting families and school-age young people who are bi-cultural and bi-lingual. The pastoral care includes home visits, hospital visits, prison visits and family counseling. The social ministry entails advocacy, education, and social service to the greater community. In 2011, 2550 people received used clothing from Resurrección. An increasing number of students have come to our office to prepare to take their drivers’ licenses exams. Services are referred via word of mouth from congregation members as well as referrals from other community agencies and from the drivers licensing office chief. We have a bank of computers which are available for driver’s license classes, citizenship preparation classes and homework for high-schoolers and college students. Individuals, families or couples come to our office seeking assistance with filling out forms and applications, referrals for immigration and legal problems, accompaniment and advocacy for medical, insurance and legal problems, and for counseling and prayer. We collaborate with community and ecumenical partners to work for justice and integration into the community for immigrants. It is impossible to measure the number of people that have benefited indirectly from our community involvement. La Iglesia Episcopal de la Resurrección is a trusted source of information and resources for the community at large as well as a spiritual home for congregants and their extended families.
Ministry Developers Collaborative Cohort II
Sponsoring Diocese – The Diocese of Idaho

At a meeting of the Ministry Developer’s Collaborative during the Living Stones Partnership Conference in 2008, a great need for support of isolated Ministry Developers was identified across the U.S. and Canada. While the annual Living Stones meeting is a lifeline for many who are charged with leading development of diocesan programs for Baptismal Ministry/Total Ministry, ongoing support is non-existent for some when they return home. In the Spring of 2009, the Collaborative approved the design of a 12 month program to address this need. Fifteen people from fourteen dioceses, representing the U.S. (12) and Canada (3), participated in the first year long program, designed by Dr. Fredrica Thompsett, Mary Wolfe Professor Emerita of Historical Theology, Episcopal Divinity School, with the assistance of the Rev. Sandi Holmberg, Total Ministry coordinator for the Diocese of Minnesota, and the Rev. Manuel Padilla, Ministry Developer for the Western Region of the Diocese of Northern Michigan.

Evaluation of the first program identified that this need continues to exist. In addition, recent conversation among the Transition Ministers in the US has identified that more and more smaller churches are unable to afford full-time stipended clergy. Dioceses which have not, in the past, considered a Total Ministry Model with Ministry Support Teams, are beginning to ask questions about how to begin a Total Ministry program. Cohort II will repeat this program with the added goal of testing its portability, using facilitators who experienced Ministry Cohort I. The hope is to be able to eventually implement such conferences on a regional level.

The three main goals of the program are:

- Extending Ministry Development Skills
- Building Relationships among Ministry Developers
- Addressing Isolation Issues

The design includes two four-day retreats and monthly webcam conferences. The facilitators for the Ministry Cohort II will be the Rev. Dan Hines, Ministry Developer for The Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior of British Columbia (APCI), Canada, the Rev. Margaret Babcock, co-founder of Companion Way, a consulting service specializing in supporting collaborative ministry models, and the Rev. Fran Gardner-Smith, rector of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in

THE Episcopal Church
Berlin, New Hampshire, and mentor to The Border Parish, a shared ministry partnership made up of three congregations located in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Quebec, Canada. All three facilitators have served as adjunct faculty for Episcopal Divinity School’s EDS Connect program. Participants for Cohort II represent dioceses from various geographic areas of the U.S. and Canada.
Mann Canterbury Community House  
Sponsoring Diocese – The Diocese of Spokane

The formation provided by the proposed Mann Canterbury Community House—a residence for approximately six university students—is an authentic, contextual, relevant and imaginative response to the “graying” of The Episcopal Church (TEC), a significant phenomenon in more than half of rural and smaller churches that comprise most congregations in TEC.

While young adults (ages 20-34) comprise 20% of the total U.S. population, they make up only 10% of Episcopal Church congregations. Twenty percent of “Millennials” (ages 18-29) respond that they are not affiliated with institutional religion (compared to 13% of those born between 1946 and 1964, and 8% between 1928 and 1945). Young adults also attend religious services less often than older Americans. A challenge for TEC is how to engage young adults in its common life. If young adults are attending religious services less often than older Americans, in what other ways might we engage young adults in the life of the church?

A covenanted, intentional, living community—the Mann Canterbury House—which engenders and fosters missional Christian community in a sacramental understanding of life; nurtures and exercises prayer and discernment; and fosters a sense of stewardship and service is one way young adults can be reintegrated into TEC’s life and mission. Traditional methods of incorporation are waning, so unconventional methods are called for in unconventional times.

The Greek word ekklesia (church) is more verb than noun—“church” is an experiential community grounded in Christ, not a building stuck in the soil. St. Mark’s is initiating a covenanted community of young adults to do more than simply train lay people—through living Christian practices (e.g. prayer, evangelism, and service) lay members will be formed in Christ as participants in community, distilling holy transformation from daily living, toward formation as leaders in TEC.