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You can play a role in the Blueprint plan

We have a lot to be proud of in our city and we recognize there is much room for growth and improvement. The only way to ensure that Jacksonville becomes one of the nation's top-tiered cities and continues to be a great place to live is to be proactive. Blueprint for Prosperity, a comprehensive approach to improving our community, is a positive way for Jacksonville's citizens to get involved in moving our city forward through work focused in six areas: economic development, education, racial opportunity and harmony, infrastructure, leadership and quality of life.

The Blueprint process is focused on collaboration among organizations to pool our resources, carry out the strategies of the plan and to make sure our important efforts are not duplicated.

There are many ways for you to become a Blueprint partner. The YMCA is one organization that has been heavily involved in the Blueprint process. "We certainly see the importance of a community-wide focus on breaking down some of our city's barriers to success," said Ray Purvis, senior vice president for community development at the YMCA. "The Blueprint plan cuts across all different sectors and all different approaches."

The YMCA has engaged with churches to bring their wellness programs into church congregations. "We can help people improve their lives - whether or not they are willing to come to our front door - by partnering with other organizations," Purvis said.

Currently the YMCA has a facility within a church in San Marco. "We're always looking for ways to collaborate strategically and be a resource in the community," Purvis said.

Bank of America also stepped up to become a Blueprint partner through its Neighborhood Excellence initiative, a program designed to recognize, nurture and reward organizations, local heroes and student leaders helping their neighborhoods to achieve excellence.

"Blueprint's goal is to enhance the quality of life for all of our citizens here in Jacksonville and that is certainly one of our organization's major goals as well," said Martha Barrett, vice president of community relations at Bank of America. "This initiative shows our commitment to strong neighborhoods in Jacksonville."

There is certainly something each of us can do that will benefit the community. We all must take ownership over our city's future. Become a Blueprint partner and help create a better life for all of Jacksonville's citizens.

"The hallmark of a great society is how it rears its young" - Aristotle

Guest Column by Warren Grymes Jr.

CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters • Co-Chair of Blueprint for Prosperity, Education Foundation- Mentoring



Warren Grymes Jr.

I heard this quote only days after becoming CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Florida in January of 2004, and it has stayed with me since as a daily reminder of what Jacksonville can be if we focus our efforts on our young people. With that in mind, earlier this year, I had an idea that is becoming a reality

with the help of the Blueprint for Prosperity. The idea was to create a community-wide coalition of mentoring organizations and groups that support the effort to mentor children.

A meeting with Jon Heyman of Communities in Schools and Cindy Harpman of Kessler Mentoring Connection convinced me that we had enough interest to move forward. Further discussions with the Mayor's Office, then incoming City Council President Michael Corrigan, the Jacksonville Children's Commission and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office led me to the conclusion that we were on to something special. I also met with Chamber leaders and Blueprint staff to outline my thoughts that if we took a holistic approach to raising our young people through mentoring we could make a difference in our schools, reduce crime and increase per capita income.

In June we formed our Mentoring Coalition and began creating the framework and infrastructure necessary to implement a community-wide initiative tied to Blueprint to recruit and train hundreds of new mentors. A call to action will occur in January to kick off our efforts led by civic, community and business leaders.

The Blueprint plan has given us the framework to put together a coalition of child-serving nonprofits (including the United Way, Jacksonville Children's Commission, the Women's Giving Alliance and the Community Foundation) and business and civic leaders including Mayor John Peyton and City Council President Michael Corrigan. The stars are aligned to bring together our community in a dynamic manner. Please join in and make a difference!

Founding Partners

- City of Jacksonville
- Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce
- WorkSource

New Partners

- First Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Healthy Jacksonville 2010
- Job Opportunities Consortium
- Real Sense Prosperity Campaign
- State Farm Insurance
- The UPS Store

Total of 176 Partners

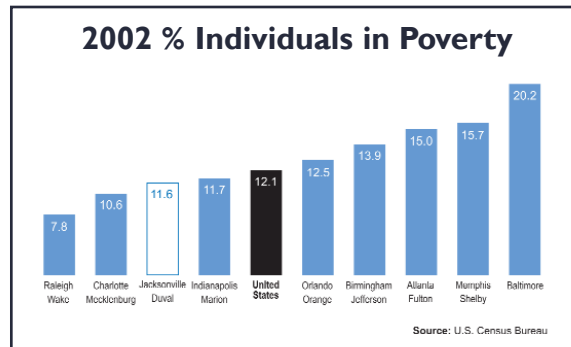
Key Benchmarks

There are nine Key Benchmarks outlined in the Blueprint for Prosperity document. These Key Benchmarks are the driving force in creating an overall better quality of life for residents in Duval County. Progress toward the Key Benchmarks will be presented to the general public every year. We have highlighted Key Benchmark 5 below:

Key Benchmark #5 - Poverty Rate

- For all Duval County Resident in Poverty
 - Reduce Duval poverty rate to 50 percent of the United States average poverty rate in 20 years.
- For High-Poverty Duval Residents
 - Reduce by 1 percent annually the areas where the poverty rate is between 10 percent and 20 percent and 20 percent.
 - Reduce by 2 percent annually the percentage of individuals in poverty in every zip code in Duval County where poverty exceeds 20 percent.

2002 % Individuals in Poverty



Case for Change

A. In 2002, 11.6 percent of Duval County residents lived in poverty, based on a cash income threshold of \$18,392 for a family of four. This was 3rd best among the eight peer counties and the United States. (Refer to Chart) This income does not include non-cash welfare income.

B. There are five zip codes in Duval County where the poverty rate exceeds 20 percent, according to the 2000 Census (32202, 32204, 32206, 32208 and 32254).

Blueprint Partner Spotlight: The First Coast MPO leads our region's transportation vision

New and improved roads, bridges, transit, airports, seaports, sidewalks, bike lanes and greenways are essential to meet the transportation needs of our growing region, not to mention the funding, land and technology to make it all work.

The First Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization (First Coast MPO) is our region's independent transportation planning agency whose mission is to "provide a regional forum for developing an effective transportation system that moves people and goods safely, economically, and efficiently while maintaining a high quality of life in Northeast Florida." This organization is a key Blueprint for Prosperity partner, as they are leading the way in creating a vision for our region's transportation system. The following are some of First Coast MPO's plans and programs:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - the 20+ year blueprint based on current needs and forecasted future growth which lists the multi-modal transportation projects that are needed and can be funded in that timeframe. While developing the LRTP, it became clear that our region's projected transportation needs will far outpace our financial resources. The First Coast MPO is exploring a variety of funding options, including non-traditional financing, public/private partnerships and user fees.

- Commuter Services - saves commuters time, money and hassles, while improving air quality. We offer a vanpool program, as well as help in forming carpools, finding the best bus route and learning more about telecommuting, bicycling and walking to work.

- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) - uses cutting edge technology to reduce traffic congestion and provide the public with real-time information on travel conditions.

- Congestion management - identifies and prioritizes congested roadway segments in areas where major road widening is not feasible.

We encourage you to participate, learn more about critical transportation issues and share your ideas on improving the way we live and travel on the First Coast. For more information, call the First Coast MPO at (904) 306-7500 or visit www.firstcoastmpo.com.

Blueprint Partner Orientations

- November 15 1:30 p.m.
- December 12 1:30 p.m.
- January 18 1:30 p.m.

To register for these orientations, contact Harlan Stallings at 904.366.6618 or harlan.stallings@myjaxchamber.com.

Jacksonville Public Library Needs Your Help

During the community involvement phase of Blueprint, many of you noted the important role the Jacksonville Public Library serves for the quality of life in our community. The library is in the process of developing a new strategic plan. Blueprint is cooperating with the library in its efforts to

involve a broad cross-section of the community. Please join us in helping the library gather valuable information by completing a five-minute online survey at <http://www.libraryconsultant.com/JacksonvilleLibrarySurveyBusiness.htm>