

FOCUS ON POVERTY 2001-02

now has a car. So, not only can she get back and forth to work, she can do her own grocery shopping, take the kids to school events... generally, have more personal freedom to come and go. Things most of us take for granted.

Through the HOMELINKS program, she is looking at the possibility of buying her first home in the near future.

On the job, this employee's positive attitude and desire to do well have enabled her to get opportunities in a variety of work areas and receive additional training. She's definitely on the right track. And Cascade Engineering has a dependable employee eager to perform and improve.

"I heard from her a lot in the beginning," says Joyce. "But, now, I don't hear from her so often. She's making good decisions on her own. She recognizes this as a good opportunity to move out of her situation and toward something better."

By building relationships around trust and respect, Cascade Engineering, FIA, and Joyce

Bosscher play instrumental roles with employees as they move out of poverty toward economic self-sufficiency. "The majority of my customers really want to make it. I see it in their faces. I love what I'm doing here."



CREATING PATHWAYS

When barriers are removed, success follows.

Creating partnerships yields results.

Most of Butterball Farms' employees come from within a 2-mile radius of the company, and poverty comes with them. Located on Buchanan, south of Hall Street, more than 50% of the employees are Hispanic. Lack of transportation, limited English-language skills, domestic abuse, and limited access to medical or dental care are some of the barriers employees face every day.

Butterball Farms believes in its employees and their desire to succeed. The company invests time, energy and money in creating partnerships with other organizations in the immediate geographic area.

Through partnerships with schools, social service agencies and other companies, Butterball Farms is providing resources in the immediate neighborhood to support their employees.

Solutions

The C.A.R.E. Group, consisting of Butterball Farms office and plant personnel, reviews the company's charitable giving, making recommendations on gifts or possible partnerships with programs and service agencies their employees use. The C.A.R.E. Group also raises money to meet employee needs if a service provider is unavailable.

Butterball Farms has formed some creative partnerships with:

- ▲ The Potter's House Elementary School - includes sponsoring and providing instructors for Junior Achievement classes. Students learn about money, economics, business and community leadership.
- ▲ Shawnee Park Elementary School - brings students on-site where they operate a 'snack shop' for employees. They learn about money, how to count and make change, customer service and more.
- ▲ In the Image - where employees access clothing and household goods.



"Many of our partnerships focus on children," says James VanderHulst, Vice-president of Human Resources. "If we can make a positive impact in the lives of our employees' children, we stand a good chance of gaining the employees' trust and participation in other programs and services we provide." Programs like on-site English as a Second Language classes and services like a caseworker from FIA to offer assistance and encouragement in removing barriers and encouraging employee success.

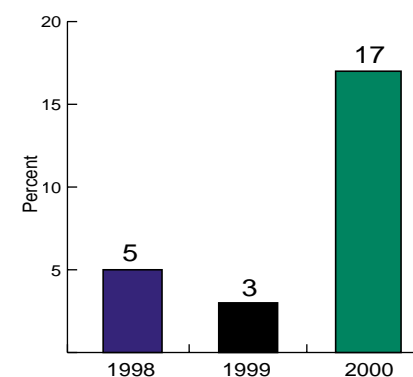
Measures

6. EDUCATION	7. TRANSPORTATION	8. HEALTHCARE	Focus Area
Assist members of the North American Indian Community in developing a mentoring program for their high school students at risk of dropping out of school.	Assess need and if appropriate, develop a plan and resource support for express or van service between Grand Rapids and northern Kent County.	Develop a plan for expanded low cost / no cost eye and vision care for low-income individuals in Kent County	Team Description
Dialogue/Action group to begin in 2002.	The number of municipalities contracting/participating with ITP Source: Interurban Transit Partnership	The number of low cost/ no cost eye examinations provided to low-income residents in Kent county.	Measure
	<p>In 1997, 9 of 35 participated In 2001, 11 of 35 participated</p>	<p>There is currently no data available on the number of examinations provided at low cost/no cost in Kent County</p>	

LEAD ABATEMENT - Get the Lead Out Program

A collaborative comprised of the City of Grand Rapids, neighborhood associations, the Kent County Health Department, the faith community, and environmental representatives have come together to develop a multi-pronged effort to reduce the exposure of children to lead poisoning. Elevated lead levels in children can permanently impair brain function. The Community Leadership Institute of Aquinas College is spearheading this team, which is focusing on testing children, reducing lead exposure in the home, and awareness/education.

Number of homes that have had lead removed.
Source: City of Grand Rapids



An estimated 35,700 housing units in Grand Rapids are at potential risk for lead-based paint hazards.