

# Collaborations

*The Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.*

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## The White House Conference on Faith Based Initiatives

*by Roberta Roper*

Collaborative Faith Project staff members, representing the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc. were privileged to attend the first National White House Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives on Tuesday, June 1, 2004. This event was preceded by twelve regional conferences across the country.

President George W. Bush presented the opening address, reminding participants that their faith initiatives are empowering the social fabric of American society changing one soul, heart and person at a time. He stressed that the Faith-Based & Community Initiative was created by Executive Order, and begins to end the discrimination that Government cannot allocate money to faith-based initiatives. Recognizing that faith-based programs often seem to work more effectively and compassionately than government programs in transforming people's lives, he said that when decisions are made on public funding, the focus should not be on the religion practiced, but on the results delivered. Unfortunately, the Federal government has often not been a willing partner to faith-based and community groups in the past.

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**Highlighted Program:** "The Good Samaritans" program of Mobile, Alabama was created to train volunteers to help victims secure their homes, replace stolen documents, refer them to community services, and settle their nerves after a crime. The Good Samaritans program unites law enforcement and community organizations in the service of crime's most vulnerable victims.

The Office for Victims of Crime has provided funding for this program as a demonstration project. For more information Contact: Martha Simmons e-mail: [martha\\_simmons@mobile-da.org](mailto:martha_simmons@mobile-da.org).

**"One person can make a difference—and every person should try." Stephanie Roper**

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Government rules and regulations often hindered these groups from competing for Federal funds. The reason for the Faith-Based and Community Initiative is to enable all groups, faith-based or secular, large or small, to compete on a level playing field, so long as they obey all legal requirements.

His remarks were followed by a powerful video, and the focus of his message was abundantly clear: RESULTS - RESULTS - RESULTS! This message is very relevant for the five Faith Collaborative sites across the country. Each of the sites should:

- Have passion melded to purpose;
- Track who is served & how they are served;
- Be well run organizations with clear missions;
- Show great yield on results with “testimonials” or “poster people” demonstrating positive effects;
- Show good accountability, but pay attention to results over process;
- Develop partnerships & show community relationships.

The Conference ended with a Research Panel discussing the strengths of faith-based and community organizations. Because there is so little research history to demonstrate the effectiveness of faith-based initiatives, all of us involved in the Collaborative Faith Project must truly take the President’s message to heart as our primary goal. All of the sites have “passion melded to purpose” ... now let us show results!

*(Views expressed by the authors of the following articles and websites do not necessarily reflect the opinions of OVC or MCVRC)*

Check out Jewish Women International’s current issue on Domestic Violence ([www.jewishwomen.org](http://www.jewishwomen.org)) Thursday, June 17, 2004; VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3; Below are just a few of the highlights:

- Jewish Women International (JWI) has just released a Needs Assessment, a yearlong study on domestic abuse in the Jewish community. The study reveals critical information about abuse in Jewish homes and families.
- Jewish Women International (JWI) is now accepting applications for presentations at the 2nd International Conference on Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community, March 20-23, 2005.
- The Jewish Domestic Violence Coalition of Greater Boston was established to unite concerned organizations and individuals in an effective response to domestic violence in the Jewish community.
- What started out as Mitzvah Day at B’Nai Israel in Albuquerque turned into a widespread project to help children who experience or witness domestic abuse.

[www.fastennetwork.org](http://www.fastennetwork.org): FASTEN's mission is to strengthen and support faith-based social services, especially in distressed urban communities throughout the United States.

FASTEN assists faith-based organizations (FBOs) in exploring whether to launch or expand efforts in providing social services in their urban communities. Given the immensity of need and the multiplicity of public and private organizations seeking to bring about positive outcomes in distressed communities, many grassroots FBOs are searching for practical help in better serving their neighborhoods.

[www.vawnet.org/NRCDVPublications/WOCN/Papers/](http://www.vawnet.org/NRCDVPublications/WOCN/Papers/) The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence addresses "Forging New Collaboration Between Domestic Violence, Child Welfare Services and Communities of Color."

[www.sikhmediawatch.org](http://www.sikhmediawatch.org): With over 20 million followers worldwide, Sikhism is the world's fifth largest religion. Its constituents can be found in most countries, and their widespread distribution includes a pioneering presence in North America dating back to the turn of the century. Although Sikhs are a highly visible minority, few people are aware of their customs, history, and religious beliefs. This sometimes leads to the dilemma of publicly disseminated information about them being inaccurate.

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