



A Look at Evaluations

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Volume 7 / Issue 1 / June 2006

Faith-Based Evidence: Counting the Kingdom!

BY EDWIN I. HERNÁNDEZ

For many youth and community leaders the concept of EVALUATION conjures images of fear, number crunching statisticians, high-paid consultants—a big to-do about nothing. For many, spending the resources or time thinking about or carrying out an evaluation is time wasted from the urgent work of serving people's needs. But is evaluation something that should be feared or shunned by leaders of faith-based organizations? This article will highlight the importance of evaluation and why urban ministry leaders should make it part of their day-to-day thinking and doing.

The fact is that whether we want to or not, any leader of an organization seeking to make an impact in the lives of individuals or the community will have to embrace the task of evaluation. Why? Because any program or organization that claims to respond to God's calling needs to take seriously our responsibility as stewards of God's resources.

Good stewards are those who care about how their organizations or programs are doing, how they can do their work better and more effectively, whether you are indeed achieving the desired goals, and how closely aligned are the program goals and activities to the overall mission. In short, to be good stewards it is imperative that the task of evaluation be enthusiastically embraced. But how does one go about the task of evaluation when it seems so complicated and burdensome?

In a very accessible book, *Projects That Matter: Successful Planning & Evaluation for Religious Organizations*, the author, Kathleen Cahalan, states that evaluation is a "form of collaborative inquiry among organizational and project leaders that creates opportunities for learning and accountability." The key terms here are *leaders, learning and accountability*. Leaders

that are not in an ongoing learning mode will soon find themselves ineffective and lacking motivation. The desire to learn is the key motivating force behind evaluation. Organizations and leaders that embrace learning as a core value are more likely to seek and achieve accountability to a mission. When evaluation is seen as a learning process—defenses are lowered and problems or failed attempts are seen as learning opportunities rather than threats. Ideally, evaluation plans should be developed at the same time that program plans are designed to maximize learning and likelihood of achieving results. But it is never too late to begin to embrace evaluation as a daily task.



DeVos City Coordinators are a great source for feedback.

There are primarily two ways to enhance learning through evaluations—formative and summative. Formative evaluations provide an understanding of a program's status while it's being implemented. Summative evaluations focus what can be learned after a program has been delivered.

► *continued page 6*

HERE'S MY TAKE

Is There Power in Number Crunching?

BY GERALD BELL

Ever heard it said that doing youth ministry can't be measured because it's a matter of the heart? In a quantifiable sense, perhaps that statement holds true. After all, you'd raise a few eyebrows trying to report on a scale of 1-5, my mentee's relationship with God is a four!

Measuring ministry outcomes or assessing program impact can be a tall order at times. Some programs and organizations prefer to avoid the idea altogether. But more and more it's considered unwise to declare your organization a valuable part of the community with no deliverable backup supporting its effectiveness.

While there are arguments that insist the process of gathering and reporting data takes away from conducting ministry, we at DVULI are convinced there are significant benefits to "seeking and telling the truth!" This truth seeking principle led us to a few DVULI alumni who have their own views about number crunching and how it relates to their work with urban youth. Here's their take...

► **Patricia Scott (Memphis, 2004)**

Executive Director, Heart for Christ Youth Outreach Ministry

From the Samaritan Guide Evaluation Tool we used Outcome-based Evaluation (OBE), which is a systematic way to assess how well a program has achieved its intended results. It enables us to answer questions that donors might ask. Questions like: How has your program made a difference? How are the lives of the program participants better as a result of your program/ministry? Benchmarks are critically important. They have helped us to look closer at baseline measurements to develop logic models showing change in behavior, skill or attitude. They have also helped our ministry/program to celebrate successes. Sometimes we get so busy we forget to [honor] accomplishments and achievements.

► **Kelvin Jackson (Grand Rapids, 1998)**

Neighborhood Youth Program Coordinator, Wedgewood Christian Services

We conduct pre and post tests. This gathers important information that tells us what our youth and their family's needs are. Because there has to be some way to gauge where they are when we're dealing with people involved in drug use, alcohol abuse or choices about sex. One of my youth is a 21-year old virgin, and I wouldn't know how to create the right and safe environment if we didn't ask those personal questions in our evaluation process.



Marvin Daniels and family enjoy ministry to urban youth leaders

► **Marvin Daniels (Chicago, 2002)**

Senior Director of Leadership Training, Kids Across America

I utilize the communication style assessment for our Kaleo Clinics that I conduct with adults who attend the camp in select cities. In addition, at KAA we use an evaluation form from our adult leaders who bring the students to camp. We also conduct an evaluation from summer staff of their experiences. If there were no evaluations my assumptions would be based upon complementary or non-complementary feedback from students, youth leaders and staff. These evaluations really help me to understand if I am achieving my goals of transformational ministry. If there are no changes with the individual I train, and the habits by which that person carries out his or her ministry responsibilities, then I must retool and rethink my strategies.

► **Kristen Styf (Denver 2003)**

Executive Director of Sun Valley Youth Center

For a long time our center used the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) that covered writing, reading and arithmetic evaluation, but we're in the process of creating a better one. So we are partnering with the "Say Yes" Center to administer a new tool they have for private schools. We want to help kids strengthen their learning. The only way to do that is to know where to focus. And we can't do that if we don't track their success. I don't want them to just maintain, but get our kids where they are supposed to be. Plus you can't just tell a donor we have a great program if they can't see an increase! That's a big motivator too. ■



"Here's My Take" is a new section of the DeVos Urban Leadership newsletter that will regularly feature perspectives we hope will inspire, entertain and provoke thought. Contributors may vary as we value the views of those who work around us, both near and far.

BRIEF NEWS AND BREAKTHROUGHS



Patricia Scott (Memphis 2002) received a 2005 Acton Institute Samaritan Award.

As one of nine honorees, Patricia accepted the "Hearts of Christ" recognition for her achievements as program director of Project C.H.A.N.G.E. in Memphis. The event was held in Washington, D.C. on March 8, honoring premier examples of effective, privately funded national charities.

▶ Charlene Turner Johnson

(Detroit 2004), who received her Masters in Practical Theology from Ashland Theological Seminary a year ago, was licensed to preach the Gospel at Twelfth Street Baptist Church on March 29. Her trial sermon "Stretch Out!" was based on Psalms 31:7-8 and a word of encouragement from her late father.

- ▶ Chris and Amy Dreier (Albuquerque 2004) welcomed Christian Eric into the world last December 18th at 5:00 p.m. He weighed in at 7 lbs. 12oz. at birth and was almost 21 inches long. "He is very sweet-natured and has already stolen our hearts," said Chris. "We named him Christian Eric because we want him to be a bearer of Christ to the nations and ever powerful in God."

- ▶ Ryan & Rachel VerWys (Los Angeles 2003) gave birth to a baby boy January 9 at 6:49 a.m. Malichi David was 8 lbs. 11 oz. and 21 inches. According to dad VerWys, "He eats and sleeps well...Rachel and I are so thankful!"



- ▶ Virginia Ward (Boston 1998) is a 2006 recipient of the "Martin Luther King Community Service Award."

The Cambridge Black Pastors Conference recognized Virginia for her work with youth in the community.



Steve Faber (Grand Rapids 2000) is now the proud father of Levi J Faber who was born April 12, and was a healthy 8.15 lbs and 19.5 inches at birth.

According to Steve, The "J" (his middle name) stands for his Great-Grandfather Jack VanLaar,

Grand Father Jerry Faber and Uncle Jon Faber. "Nora and I are excited about entering this next chapter of our lives," he said.

- ▶ Jen Mori (Philadelphia 2002) got a new last name, Salhani,

after she said "I do" to Maher Salhani on March 4, 2006 at Wyoming Ave. Baptist Church, in North Philadelphia. "It was a very special day where family from California and Japan all came, and were exposed to the Gospel as we celebrated His love for us by blessing us with one another."



- ▶ Oahn Maronry (San Antonio 2001) was promoted to Director of Community Programs with Methodist Healthcare Ministries Jan 1, 2006. She now oversees two divisions with a staff of 25 to 40 reporting to her at a given time. Her former position has yet to be filled so her plate's pretty full of multi-tasking. However she boasts, "I still only have one gray hair!"

Save the Date

August 22 – 25, 2007
DVULI Reunion '07

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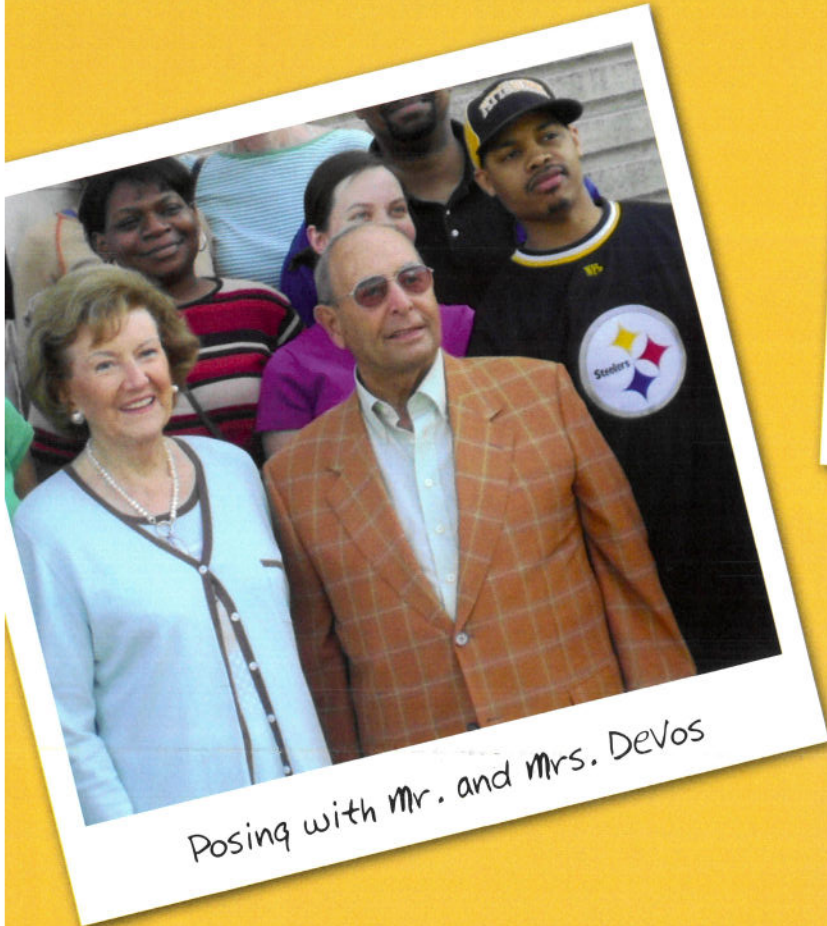
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CAUGHT ON CAMERA



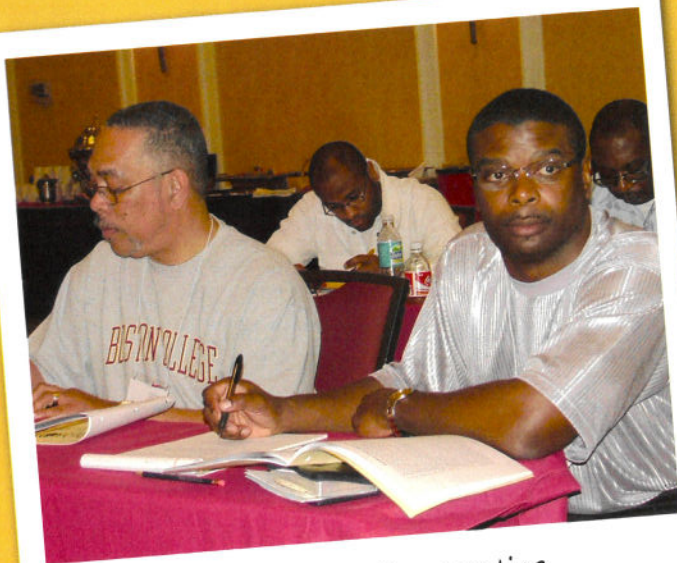
Posing with Mr. and Mrs. DeVos



Everyone wins at first National Conference



"Let your hair down" Friday



The thought of journaling

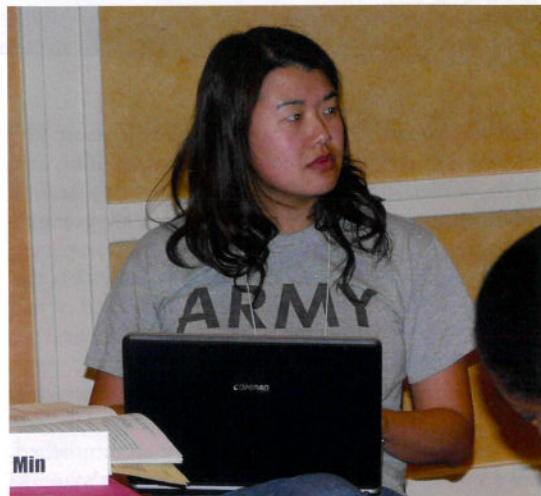


Small group - big results

Contributing Photographers:
Mike Hilf, Chris McCord, Elma McNairy, Chris Snoddy



Savoring Orlando's sunshine



Lots of memory required



Venturing the path of reflection



Making friends fast



Kenoly Concert inspires movement

First National Conference 2006 Orlando, FL

First time 3-Peat cities Boston and Grand Rapids, joined Atlanta, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh for the annual First National Conference in Orlando, FL. Like drinking from a fire hydrant, the five core values (Accountability, Balance, Empowerment, Interdependence and Leverage) were mind blowing for many in the class of 2006! But they survived!

Rich and Helen DeVos addressed the group over dinner on Wednesday evening of the 5-day conference and accompanied them to a nail-biting Orlando Magic's win over the Milwaukee Bucks. A new hotel, cook-out at a local ranch, and keynote by Dr. Bernard Franklin (Kansas City, 2002) were new features this year. Also, Orlando Rivera (Orlando, 1998) noted for his morning devotions, presented the core value Interdependence. First National Conference continues to be a defining moment for many participants.

COVER STORY - CONT.

The process of a formative evaluation asks the question: How well is our program doing right now? Are the activities, events, interventions, contact time with clients connected to desired goals, giving leaders an accurate picture of how things are going and whether anything needs to be changed? Are program participants learning the skills, knowledge, or behaviors intended? Is the program being executed according to plan? This kind of program evaluation should be ongoing and understood as integral to the oversight responsibilities of a program leader.

Summative evaluation comes at the end of the program and asks whether or not the program achieved its desired outcomes. It specifically assesses if long-term goals were accomplished. For instance, in a school retention program it asks, how many kids stayed in school and graduated? Were the final results achieved? If so, how were they achieved? A good summative evaluation should be able to answer which of the activities, events, and interventions contributed most to the results. Was mentoring the key factor in helping kids graduate from high school, or was it the tutoring, or a combination of both?

As discussed earlier, embracing evaluation as a collaborative learning process that builds leaders, enhances organizations, and expects results—is first and foremost a deeply theological act—in fact, a moral imperative. As stewards of God's gifts we have no other alternative but to learn what it takes to integrate good evaluation practices into our organizations and programs. This is our foundational motivation for pursuing and sustaining a learning organization. However, it also makes financial sense.

Good evaluation practices enhance the funding potential of organizations and programs. Private donors and foundations want to fund programs that show results. Thus, incorporating good evaluation learning practices that provide formative and summative information is foundational to any fund development efforts. Showing the results of your hard and faithful work on behalf of God's children gets others excited about your mission. Showing numerical evidence of goals met as well as documenting the stories of transformed lives is the narrative of God's actions. As C. Ellis Nelson put it, "The Bible is a handbook on evaluation from the story of Adam and Eve to the last judgment in the Book of Revelation."¹

However, the bottom line to creating effective learning organizations through evaluation is leadership. Evaluations won't get done unless the leader is at the forefront of the effort—trumpeting its benefits and garnering support from staff, volunteers, board members and participants. The best leaders are those that embrace with humility their talents and limitations, create a learning environment, and enthusiastically support mechanisms to identify how well the organization or program is doing. This all takes time, effort and resources. It should not be done haphazardly or on the cheap. The young people we serve and the God that has called us deserve nothing less. Go for it, document that the Kingdom is here! ■

For additional information on this topic visit:
www.mapfornonprofits.org; or www.fastennetwork.org.

Edwin I. Hernandez is Research Director for DeVos Family Foundations and Research Fellow at the Center for the Study of Latino Religion at the University of Notre Dame.

¹C. Ellis Nelson, *Using Evaluation in Theological Education* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1975), 14-15.

Methods in Evaluation

METHOD	Overall Purpose	Advantage	Challenges
Questionnaires, Surveys, Checklists	when need to quickly and/or easily get lots of information from people in a non threatening way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can complete anonymously • inexpensive to administer • easy to compare and analyze • administer to many people • can get lots of data • many sample questionnaires already exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • might not get careful feedback • wording can bias client's responses • are impersonal • in surveys, may need sampling expert • doesn't get full story
Interviews	when want to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get full range and depth of information • develops relationship with client • can be flexible with client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can take much time • can be hard to analyze and compare • can be costly • interviewer can bias client's responses
Documentation Review	when want impression of how program operates without interrupting the program; is from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get comprehensive and historical information • doesn't interrupt program or client's routine in program • information already exists • few biases about information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often takes much time • info may be incomplete • need to be quite clear about what looking for • not flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists
Observation	to gather accurate information about how a program actually operates, particularly about processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • view operations of a program as they are actually occurring • can adapt to events as they occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • often takes much time • info may be incomplete • need to be quite clear about what looking for • not flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists
Focus Group	explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g., about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints, etc.; useful in evaluation and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quickly and reliably get common impressions • can be efficient way to get much range and depth of information in short time – can convey key information about programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be hard to analyze responses • need good facilitator for safety and closure • difficult to schedule 6-8 people together
Case Studies	to fully understand or depict client's experiences in a program, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully depicts client's experience in program input, process and results • powerful means to portray program to outsiders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usually quite time consuming to collect, organize and describe • represents depth of information, rather than breadth

www.managementhelp.org/evaluation/fnl_eval.htm#anchor1575679



Evaluation Evolution

BY EILEEN KOOREMAN

Some might compare it to taking a final exam! But those questionnaires that get handed or mailed to you from DeVos Urban Leadership, when responded to honestly, add lots of value to the work of the Initiative. In fact many of the changes made to keep the program and its delivery relevant are a result of feedback provided by our participants and alumni.

Graduates from the first DeVos class (1998) may joke about being “guinea pigs” and laugh about how their training sessions were packed with way too much information and their days with way too much food! Later participants should be thankful that we collected evaluations from each workshop back then.

With the goal of developing leaders called to work with inner-city youth, and to bring about strategic, significant, sustainable change in the way they live and work (sound familiar?), – the time soon arrived when we asked, “are we really achieving that?” By year-three of the Initiative, when a commitment to continue this investment was affirmed by the DeVos family, we knew we needed more information to know if we were really reaching our goal. We needed to document where participants were before they took part in the training and what—if anything—changed afterward.

We began working with the Calvin College Center for Social Research in Grand Rapids, MI to develop and administer a questionnaire

that would measure personal development around the core values and breakthrough skills of the training. Collecting information was easy. Collecting useful information has been a bit more challenging — but each year our process improves. This information helps us continue making revisions to the curriculum and is useful in our selection process for new candidates. It also helps us to determine who will receive the most benefit from this training.

What are some lessons we’ve learned by trying to measure our impact?

- ▶ It’s not enough to create a training that makes people feel good—meaning we can’t totally gauge our impact on ‘customer satisfaction.’ That information comes from feedback on the workshop evaluations.
- ▶ If there is no real life change in how a graduate lives and does ministry, we haven’t done our job. That gets assessed by measuring changed behaviors through the before and after questionnaires.
- ▶ Has the training made a lasting difference? We are looking at new methodologies to help us measure that lasting impact.

No matter how we administer collecting the data—fill in the blanks or bubbles, or 1-10 ratings—what’s important is that we learn if the investment in you is passing the ultimate exam... a transformed leader and a sustained ministry. ■

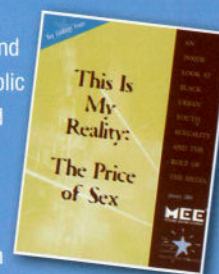
This Is My Reality— The Price of Sex: An Inside Look at Black Urban Youth Sexuality and the Role of Media

By Motivational Educational
Entertainment (MEE)

This Is My Reality—The Price of Having Sex is a factual report about the attitudes many Black urban youth have about sex and sexuality. MEE conducted the study in ten cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Oakland/Richmond, CA; New Orleans, New York, and Philadelphia. The report represents Black urban youth and young adults, ages 16-20, from households with less than \$25,000 in annual income. MEE studied emerging sexual and reproductive health trends of these low-income youth to understand how the biggest entertainment media consumers are being impacted by negative, conflicting and often destructive messages about sex and sexuality.

MEE views the report as a way to kick-start necessary dialogue to raise broader awareness and influence public policy related to youth sexual and reproductive health. Urban youth workers will find this study a representation of how research and evaluations can provide informative tools across any age, gender, ethnicity or culture.

Visit: www.meeproductions.com



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Message Board

These people have updated contact information:

Shanta Johnson (Denver 2003)
Alex Soto (Phoenix 1998)
Brian Gornik (Philadelphia 2004)
Job Lara (Los Angeles 2003)
Roland Robinson (Boston 1998)
Denzil Vaughn (Boston 2000)
Vince Trujillo (Denver 2005)
Hilda Guinn (Memphis 2004)
Keith Bell (Denver 2003)
Jermaine Scott (Paterson 1999)
Clive Craigen (Chicago 2000)
Terri Megli (Kansas City 2003)
Marva Watkins (Kansas City 2003)
Kwinn Tucker (Philadelphia 2004)
Bev Beard (Kansas City 2001)
Ryk Montoya (Denver 2003)
Eli Marez (Phoenix 2000)
Bill Brittain (Phoenix 2000)
Desiree Carter (Portland 2005)
Tina Marlin (San Antonio 2001)
Kirt Thompson (San Antonio 2001)

These people have new e-mails:

Cynthia Davis (Pittsburgh 2006)
Gail Spencer (Pittsburgh 2006)
Sahaan McKelvey (Portland 2003)
Ruby Smith (Kansas City 2003)
Larry Brown (Boston 1998)
Cynthia Burton (San Diego 1999)
Della Johnson (Indianapolis 2005)

If you are interested in contacting any of these people, please visit the DeVos Urban Leadership website for updated contact information.
www.devosurbanleadership.org



Class of 2006 Embraces the Journey

Representing Atlanta, Boston, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh, we welcome the newest team of participants, city coordinators and coaches to the DeVos Urban Leadership family of lifelong learners.

City Coordinators: Leroy and Donna Barber, Khary Bridgewater, Kelly Dorsey, Alika Galloway, and Joe and Donna Ortega.

Coaches: Phil Abeyta, Ron Carter, Mike Jones, Eileen Kooreman and Virginia Ward

Community Capacity Workshops

June 8-10: Atlanta, Boston

June 15-17: Pittsburgh

June 22-24: Grand Rapids, Minneapolis