

May 5, 2008

### **Closing the Final Gap—The Essential Ingredient is Relationship**

The *Human Investment Initiative* ([www.fresnobl.org](http://www.fresnobl.org)) is intended as a vertically integrated strategy to address the roots of poverty and other human issues. The goal is to insure that policies are aligned with what works on the ground and the systems in between are leveraged behind shared strategies. While we can change the context that gives rise to many issues, those who have already become addicted, lack basic skills or are involved in crime often require something more—an authentic relationship with someone who has been there. A group of pastors, the **Street Saints**, has united in **West Fresno** to build relationships. Their take on the *Community Values* take concepts to reality in deeply moving ways.

**Stewardship** – We will lead and follow as stewards of our region, caring responsibly for our community assets. We will work together to achieve the greatest, long-term benefit for the community as a whole.

*“These are our streets and we are committed to becoming the visible leadership inside of this community to the people we are serving and demonstrating to them that they are precious children of God with hope and a life full of promise and opportunity.”*

**Boundary Crossing and Collaboration** – We are willing to cross political, social ethnic, and economic boundaries and partner with others to achieve community outcomes. We will lead “beyond the walls” to create an inclusive, cohesive community through partnership and collaboration. *“We can’t get past God [we’ve got to get past color and the perception that the poor don’t matter”*

**Commitment to Outcomes** – We are willing to take responsibility for tasks and achieving specified outcomes. We are committed to staying involved until the tasks are completed.

*“We are going to take care of these children, their pride and their self esteem and teach them not to let what anyone thinks about them effect them because they matter.”*

**Art of the Possible Thinking** – We believe that anything is possible in the Fresno Region. We will envision “success without limitations” and then backward map a specific, attainable strategy for achieving that vision.

*“We are black men coming together to educate, promote and articulate that it takes a village to raise a child and this village needs to unite to take back their community.”*

**Truth Telling** – We value the empowerment of everyone involved, along with all community stakeholders, to honestly and forthrightly share all knowledge, experiences and insights relative to the work at hand. We take responsibility for ensuring our “truth” is current, not historical. We all share the responsibility for maintaining the truth telling standard.

*“This is about redemption for me. I was a part of the problem on these very streets. Poverty brings on so many problems. I used to be part of the problem and now I’m a part of the solution.”*

**Commitment to Resolving Conflict** – Conflict is inevitable and is sometimes required in order to achieve the best outcomes possible. Healthy conflict involves valuing every individual regardless of his or her stance on a specific issue and an unwavering commitment to working through the conflict in a positive manner despite its severity.

*“People are seeing something they haven’t seen before in west Fresno, Pastors coming together. At a time when churches are breaking up, these Pastors are coming together.”*

**Asset-Based Approach** – We are focused on using a strengths-based, asset-oriented approach to people and issues. We believe that positive change occurs when we appreciate, value and invest in what is best in our people and community.

*“We want to be examples of being faith filled and learning the power of giving back inside of a culture and a community that has only known blight and despair.”*