



# COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

## Connection

### Competition or Collaboration?

by Jeremy Kiner, Co-Director

#### Mark 9:

**38** John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he wasn't in our group." **39** "Don't stop him!" Jesus said. "No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me. **40** Anyone who is not against us is for us. (NLT)

As a business communications major at Ohio University and a senior manager for a thriving home health care company, I understand the importance of "competition." Niche marketing, product differentiation, an aggressive sales strategy - all vital components of staying competitive in the marketplace. In the world of business, competition is king. But in the Kingdom of God, does competition make sense?

I would submit that, in the business arena, competition usually always results in better products and services and better prices. In the Church, however, competition results in division, strife, and lost productivity - not the way God designed the Body to function. In business, competition makes sense. In the Church, only collaboration makes sense.

Yet herein lies the irony. In our community, where competition is to be expected, we find collaboration. Where collaboration is to be expected, we find competition (or at least the lack of collaboration). In the Parma area, we are seeing remarkable efforts of unity and collaboration among those where competition is the rule. Groups such as C/B/S Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Parma Jaycees, and Parma Area Family Collaborative garner tremendous support and cooperation from local businesses' seeking to collaborate together on various issues that better the community. And this is a wonderful thing! But where is the Church?

There are nearly 100 churches in the Parma and surrounding area. Is competition (denominational lines, pride, bigotry) keeping them apart? The Church is where we should be seeing the greatest level of collaboration, yet among our churches we are seeing the least amount of communication and partnering. Can we do something to remove this segregation? I don't say this judgmentally or as a blanket statement. There are, in fact, a number of area pastors that are reaching beyond their walls to cross-resource and cross-network in an effort to bless the community and grow the Kingdom.



As the Body of Christ, I believe that we should exemplify the type of unity and collaboration that makes people's heads turn. We should be at the front lines addressing the needs and meeting the greatest challenges of our community, in ways that are not just noticeable, but effective, impactful, and inspiring. All be told, the Church should be the greatest resource that City Hall, the school district, and local businesses ever know.

My prayer for the Parma area churches is that the Body of Christ would be one. I truly believe that God is calling His Church to a new level of unity that will spur remarkable things in the community and even greater things in the Kingdom. I ask that you join me in this fervent prayer. I encourage you to stay the course and keep your hands to the plow. Remember, when one plants, another waters.... and surely God will bring the increase and be glorified!

#### 1 Corinthians 12:

**12** The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. **13** For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.....**21**The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"..... **25**..... there should be no division in the body..... (NIV)

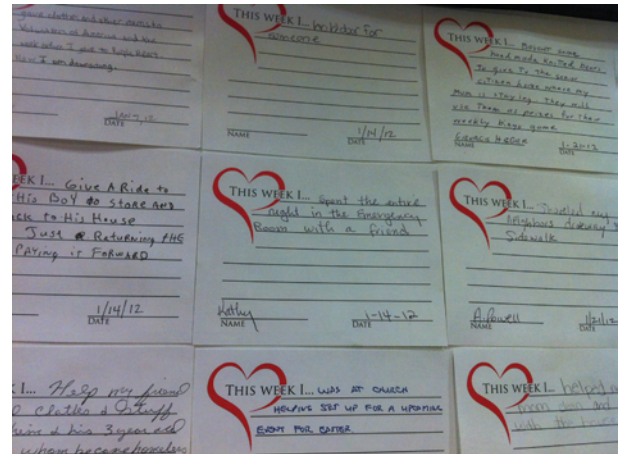
# PAY IT FORWARD CAFÉ

Each and every Saturday from 12:00 - 2:00 PM, Pay It Forward Café is bringing love and support to individuals and families facing challenging times. Located at Parmatown Mall (near Chase Bank), the Café collaborates with local businesses, churches, and other various organizations to provide a healthy meal, fellowship, and ongoing support.

One of the features of the Cafe is our Pay It Forward wall. This wall is covered with numerous cards that patrons have written on telling of how they have "paid it forward" for someone else in the community. We often tell people that walk through our doors, "The food is free, but the price of admission is to pay it forward." Some examples of acts of kindness showcased on our wall have been anywhere from a simple smile and "hello" to someone needing encouragement to dropping off pizzas at the senior center or buying an air conditioner for someone in need.

At Community Ambassadors, we ultimately want to see people and families move from a posture of receiving to giving; to help transform them from being consumers to producers. We want to see people find hope, but we also want to see them pay it forward and inspire a spirit of citizenship and productivity throughout our community.

If you or a ministry within your church would like to learn more about Pay It Forward Café, or come to observe or volunteer one Saturday, please email us at [contact@comamb.org](mailto:contact@comamb.org) or call Dona Kiner at 216-200-7030 for more details.



## I want to get involved... Where do I start?

- **Get connected!** Join civic groups, such as C/B/S Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Parma Jaycees, Parma Area Kiwanis, or Parma Area Rotary Club. Attend a Parma Area Family Collaborative meeting, a city hall meeting, or school district meetings. The networking and information-gaining opportunities within these groups and events will help you to get your finger on the pulse of your community.
- **Collaborate!** If you aren't presently able to conduct a community project or implement an initiative on your own, join forces with others within the faith-based community. Contact the Community Ambassadors to discuss more about how you and your ministries can get involved.
- **Just do it!** Don't delay. Don't just talk about it. What good is our faith if it has no relevance or impact on those around us? Take action today!

## UPCOMING EVENTS *Get Connected*

- May 18 - **C/B/S Partnership Meeting** @ Broadview Multi-Care Center, 5520 Broadview Road  
7:30 AM networking/refreshments, 8:00 AM -9:30 AM meeting
- May 24 - **Parma Area Family Collaborative Meeting** @ Bethel Temple, 12901 W. Pleasant Valley  
8:15 AM - 9:30 AM
- May 24 - **Parma Area Chamber Scholarship Luncheon** @ Cuyahoga Community College - 8:00 AM