



Cohort 1

Fellowship for the Common Good: *Investing in Local Leaders*



Common
Good
Initiative

TOGETHER. CONNECTED. EMPOWERED.

August, 2021



**Allegany
Franciscan
Ministries**

A Member of Trinity Health



Fellowship for the Common Good: *Investing in Local Leaders*

In 2014, **Allegany** launched The Common Good Initiative, a place-based program where the community determines needs, strategies to address those needs, and investments to implement strategies. The initiative works in three diverse Florida communities: **Wimauma in Hillsborough County, Lincoln Park in Fort Pierce, and Overtown in Miami.**

Through the work, Allegany heard from residents the need to build local leadership and in 2017, began to offer the **Fellowship for the Common Good**. The Fellowship is a 12-month leadership development program for community-based leaders to improve their knowledge and develop their leadership skills with the hope that fellows would both be better positioned to help their communities and that the increased leadership capacity would allow for continuation of progress made through the initiative.

After drafting a general design for the Fellowship, in April 2017, Allegany released an RFP to select a consultant firm to co-design and deliver the Fellowship; AIM Philanthropy was chosen. AIM is a partnership between Nexus Research Group and trepwise, which combined leadership development experience, coaching expertise, and a background in social change. Collaboratively over a period of three months, AIM and Allegany worked through the details, from participant criteria and recruitment strategies to curriculum and coach matching protocols. In October 2017, the inaugural class began.

“Allegany has done something for me that no one has ever done, and that’s give me an opportunity to show up, be heard, and understand that I must listen to others as well. It’s phenomenal. And in this community, nobody tells you that. They tell you to sit down and shut up.”



Cohort 1

The Fellows' Journey

August 4, 2018: Fifteen fellows are in a church community room in Lincoln Park. It's graduation day and the fellows are standing before their peers and describing their leadership journey. One by one they rise, and to clapping and encouragement from the room, they talk about what they've learned and how it's changed them.



"It's just like a real eye opener that there's a way to voice your opinion without being controversial and angry. I guess that's why they're looking to me now, but I've really been stepping up and like saying what I have to say especially with the leaders. If I feel like they're wrong I'll tell them where normally I would sit back and not say anything."

"I used to go to the council meeting, the county and city commissioner meetings on the defense. Since I'm on one of the fellows now I have more private conversations with the commissioners versus I'm going to see you at the committee commission meeting and that's where we are going back and forth."

"I think I'm more comfortable putting my foot down and actually speaking up about certain things. Because I know what certain things should look like now."

"It showed me exactly how to be a leader with longevity, and not just be a fly-by-night. Okay, I tried something, it didn't work and I'm giving up. No. They showed me different ways to be successful."

So how do these changes occur?

Each year, approximately 15 fellows are chosen from a pool of applicants. The Fellowship includes four two-day in-person sessions (including an out-of-state site visit) and eight two-hour virtual sessions in civic leadership, individualized coaching two to four hours per month, and post-fellowship professional development specifically tailored to fellows' interests.

Fellows receive:

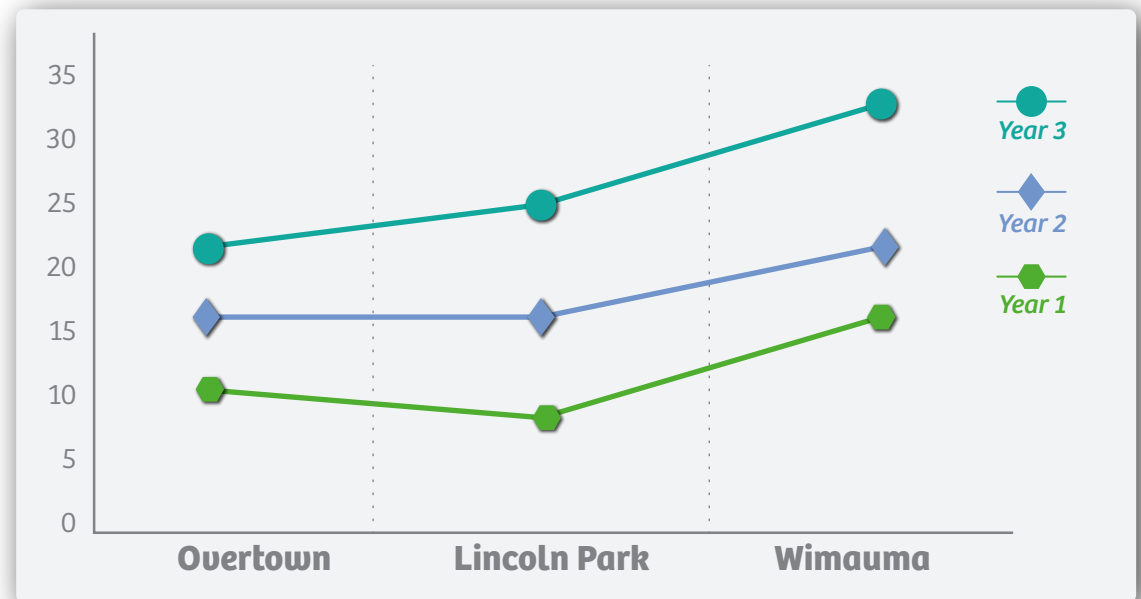
- ✓ a \$5,000 stipend
- ✓ a tablet to allow them to interact virtually and access leadership resources
- ✓ financial assistance to support travel and other expenses

Applying for the Fellowship

114

*In the first three years,
114 residents from the
three communities
applied to be a fellow.*

In the first three years, 114 residents from the three communities applied to be a fellow. Participants could have an existing recognized leadership role in the community or have the passion and potential to serve the community as a leader. Either way, they needed to commit to improving community well-being. Fellows completed a paper or a video application, responding to a short series of questions. Applications were reviewed by staff from both Allegany and AIM and a short list were interviewed by two different members of the team to determine the candidates.



Recruitment Strategies:

- ✓ Targeted Paid Advertisement on social media
- ✓ Former fellows
- ✓ Allegany Franciscan Ministries Newsletter
- ✓ Councils for the Common Good and Community Partners

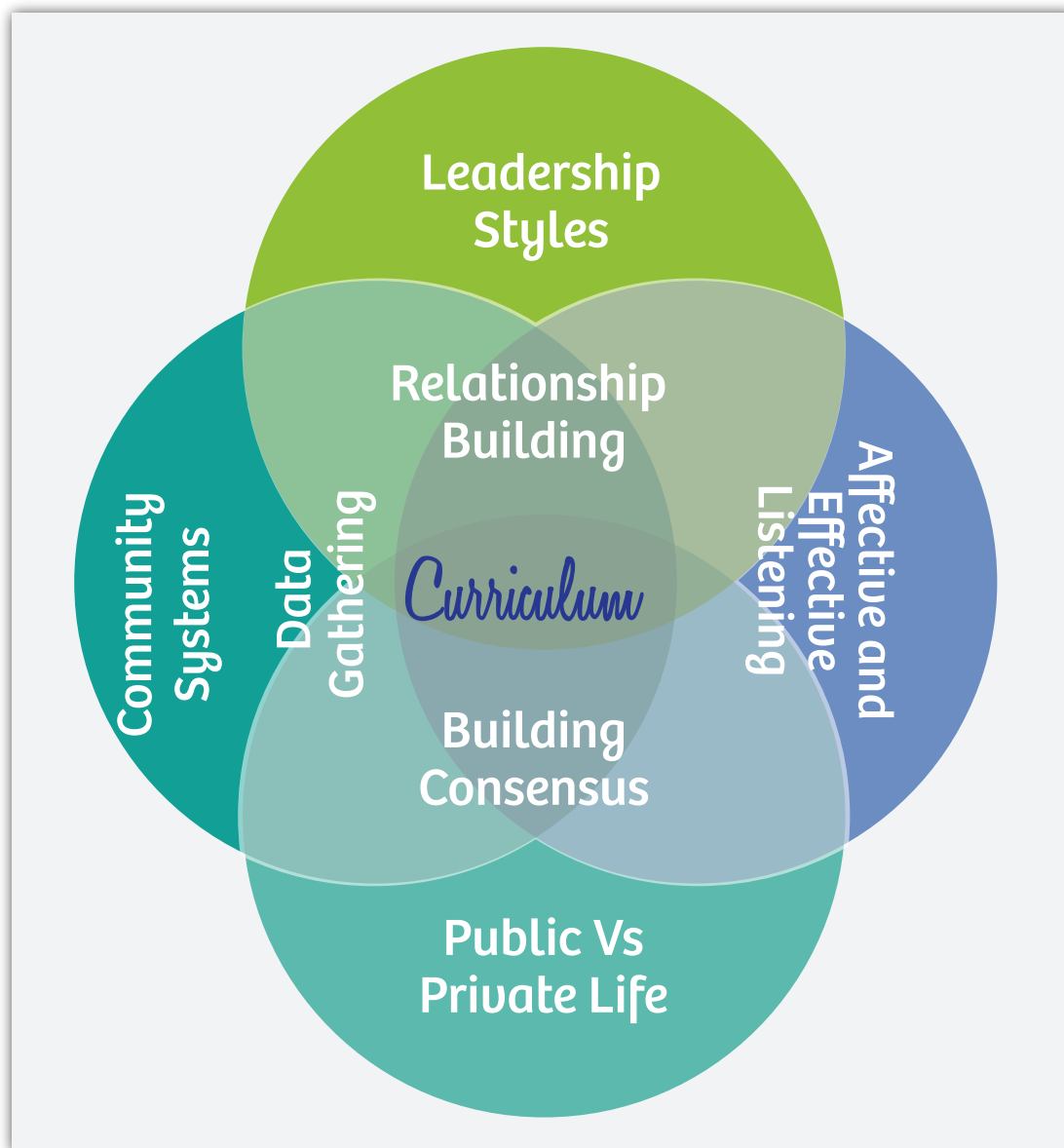


Cohort 2

Increasing Knowledge

The Fellowship includes four two-to-three-day in-person sessions¹ and eight shorter virtual sessions where the AIM team delivers the curriculum. Topics include leadership styles, public vs. private life, the importance of data, how community systems work, active and effective listening, relationship building, and building consensus. The approach emphasizes *self-awareness, civic action, compassion, and commitment to the community*. Fellows also apply what they have learned to a project of interest to them. There is not an expectation that the project will come to fruition - although that happens. Rather, the goal is to provide a framework for practicing new skills in a meaningful way: gathering data, narrowing the focus, identifying allies and partners, and creating an implementation plan.

1. For the third cohort, COVID-19 required a change in delivery. The third cohort participated in one two-day in-person session with the remaining educational sessions delivered virtually.



Developing personally and professionally

Fellows also participated in coaching and for some, this was the highlight of the program. Through trepwise, AIM recruited coaches who were then matched with fellows based on the preference of the fellow and coach availability. Fellows and their coach identified goals at the beginning of the engagement and then assessed progress throughout the Fellowship. Goals ranged from managing work life balance and working on interpersonal skills to starting new careers or community-based organizations.

Learning from other activists

A highlight of the Fellowship in the first two years was the trip to New Orleans to learn from other community activists². The visit begins with a tour of New Orleans to learn from other advocates and then dinner with those advocates. The next day includes in-person educational sessions and dinner as a group. On the final day, fellows incorporate the trip's lessons into their personal projects and present them to their peers.

Continuing the journey

As the year 3 class neared the end of the program, the Allegany and AIM team began to plan for engaging alumni. At that time, alumni could apply to a fund to cover ongoing development but there was not a formal way to harness their collective capacity. In September 2020, the alumni experience launched with three elements: a group project, a training and capacity building portal, and an advisory council. For the project, fellows will define a common challenge to address that will create real-world change in the three communities.

2. The New Orleans trip was not possible for the third year due to COVID-19.



*"I thought I had an idea, but **the fellowship puts you on the right track**, puts you on the right direction of that journey that you're trying to accomplish."*



*"Passion is great, but **you have to put the work in** and you have to know what work to put in"*



*"Developing that project and seeing it through allowed me to actually put it into **action in real life** and I'm actually working in the field, doing exactly what my project was outlining for me to do. It just catapulted me into this job."*

By the Numbers

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Applications
vs. Acceptance



Applied

40

33

41

Accepted

15

15

18

Graduates



Lincoln Town

5

4

6

Overtown

5

3

5

Wimauma

5

3

6

Total

15

13

14



Cohort 2

The Fellowship increased local leaders' skills and leadership activities

Allegany Franciscan Ministries commissioned an evaluation of the program to determine whether it is meeting its goals. The evaluation questions were

- 1) Did the fellows develop as civic leaders?
- 2) Do the fellows take action to advance their communities? And
- 3) What worked, what didn't, and what did we learn?

Evaluation memos and reports were provided throughout the project to help fine-tune the Fellowship; data from the evaluation is included throughout this document.



What percentage of fellows reported an impact on their civic leadership skills?



What percentage of fellows reported taking action to advance their communities?



What was the average baseline goal achievement on a scale of 1 to 5?

What was the average ending goal achievement on a scale of 1 to 5?

Year 1

100%

91%

2.6

3.9

Year 2

100%

92%

1.7

*

Year 3

100%

**

1.8

3.5

Notes:

*Few coaches provided ending assessments for year 2 fellows and reported that year 2 fellows were harder to engage than year 1 fellows.

**Although all fellows interviewed reported a concrete impact (e.g., I know how to advocate for my program, I'm more comfortable speaking in front of groups), the pandemic limited their ability to apply their new skills to advance their community.

Fellows reported they had a better understanding of what it means to be a leader. For example, one fellow noted it was valuable to learn the *"continuum of leadership qualities that you have to exhibit, because once you assume the mantle you have to exemplify it"* while another said the program *"showed me how much of an impact I could have in how I show up and what I do in my community."* Another said that *"through the process of picking a project that we worked on throughout the fellowship, it honed down to what you are best suited at accomplishing for the community."*



Fellows Increased Confidence and Their Ability to Work with Others

The idea that people experienced *increased confidence* was an unanticipated outcome.



Cohort 2

That's one of the biggest things from this fellowship, is it gives you a morale boost, and it helps you identify what being a leader is, and it gives you a checklist. It gave me 50 times more confidence that I'm doing the right thing. And it was all through Allegany caring enough to invest in me as a person. I will forever be grateful."



"It definitely boosted my confidence. I feel as though now I know which direction I'm going. I know what pros I have with being a leader and what weaknesses I have. Before, I didn't really know that and I would try different things and fail and wonder why."



It "helped me to know what I have to offer, that I have more to give. In the past, I would have been ashamed to speak up if I didn't know enough about a topic. The fellowship is a safe space to have conversations and learn. I gained confidence."



Fellows from all three years also reported an increased ability to work with others.

"I used to be the kind of person that was very pure in the expectations that I had of people and what I really wanted. And I basically said it's going to be that or not that. And I was very militant about it. I realized that that wasn't really going to be the attitude that brought success. And when I reprioritized that in my mind, I found that I was able to be more consistent in the success that I was getting."

The "understanding that sometimes you have to agree to disagree in order to accomplish a task, even with someone who you may just totally feel they're off base, but they have a same focus or same goal to accomplish for the common good of the community."

"There were some people in the room that it was quite obvious to me that they didn't like me. And I didn't let that stop me. Before, I would have been mad. I would have been sitting around looking pouty face and like, 'Why they here? You didn't like me, so why you here?' And I'm not like that anymore. I'm more like, 'It's our community no matter what. You have to live here. Obviously, you're here. And I have to live here. Obviously, I'm here. So, we can all get along in this space. Are we all gonna move on while here in this space?'"



Fellows are Making a Difference

The list of ways the fellows are making a difference in their community is long and varied: starting nonprofits, starting community-oriented businesses, sitting on boards, sitting on public-private committees, starting a pastor coalition, advocating for services in the community, building relationships with local government officials, building the community's economy, and providing vehicles for citizen engagement.

A few are highlighted here:

- One fellow wanted to start her **own business** and the fellowship provided her the knowledge, skills, and confidence to do it. Now established, she has partnered with the local **Job Resource Center** on a **new program teaching sewing skills** that students can use in design careers, work as a seamstress, or just to save money on clothing and repairs. The Job Resource Center recruits the students, and she trains them for free. She has also been **mentoring** other business owners and those that want to start a business. In her shop, she also alters and repairs donated clothing and provides it to residents those that are job hunting or in need of clothes.
- One fellow attended an event held to **raise awareness around a political issue**. Here is how she described what happened next: "You're sitting in the middle of my community, doing a forum, and there's no people that are my neighbors. And they were like, 'Everybody was invited.' And I was like, 'But they're not here. So, obviously, you don't have the reach to the community, so I think you should tie in with someone that can reach the community to do something like this.' The sponsor said 'Well, what are you gonna do about it? You're standing here complaining, but what are you gonna do about it?' And you know what I said? Wholeheartedly, I said, 'You know, you're right.' And about maybe less than a month, **I put on a forum. I invited people from my community**. There was over 100 people in attendance. And I'm telling you, **it was phenomenal. That's something I would have never attacked if I would not have been a fellow.**"



Fellowship for the Common Good - Learning Session in New Orleans (with Spanish subtitles), 2018.

- Another **fellow also increased his community advocacy**. As he described it, “there are people who are opposing the free clinic. They invited us to come up and speak, so I used some of the things I’ve learned from the training. I answered with facts and things that I knew that would get people thinking that this is bigger than this political stuff. This is about people’s health.” **This fellow also took a COVID-19 test on TV to encourage others to do so and went door to door encouraging businesses to require masks and providing supplies to keep customers safe** (signs, masks, and hand sanitizer). He’s also Treasurer of a local nonprofit and **has considered running for local office**.
- One fellow left academia to **work for a community-based organization with the mission of increasing community engagement**: “The Fellowship inspired me to become involved in the community full time.” She also started Girl Trek Overtown and was **recently awarded the Voice of Change award from the national Girl Trek office**. Not content to stop there, she’s collaborating with a number of groups to preserve Overtown’s legacy including having longtime residents share their memories to create the Historic Legacy Trek. Finally, she’s met with a County Commissioner to **advocate for getting an oversight board re-instated**, he voted to do so, and recruitment is underway.
- Another **fellow is producing a daily morning show**, broadcast on local channel which reaches 250,000 residents. The morning show **focuses on local issues although national news that impacts the community** is also covered. Through his production company (a Community Internet Broadcasting Network) he offers free advertising to Overtown businesses if they have a commercial available and produces affordable commercials for businesses that don’t have them. **He’s working hard to build the community economy** including partnering with another business to promote networking among Overtown businesses, and a pop up that hosts up to 12 businesses. He promotes the event including offering a \$1,000 raffle.
- Finally, although the *Lincoln Park Young Professionals* existed before the Fellowship began, **two of the members were year 1 fellows and applied what they learned**. Because of that, the organization applied for and received 501c3 status, developed a strategic plan, strengthened its board, and obtained a \$500,000 grant **to start The Root, which will take a vacant lot and turn it into a community hub**. The Root will consist of four shipping containers: two will be classrooms, with the others a library and a bar with a small kitchen for new businesses to get exposure. The organization successfully applied for a \$1 year land lease from the city and the groundbreaking occurred on February 28, 2021.



Cohort 3

What Lessons did We Learn?

Due to [COVID-19](#), the [Allegany](#) and [AIM team](#) paused the [Fellowship](#) and focused on supporting the alumni. As part of that process, the team met to identify *lessons learned* in the first three years and the implications for the *program's future*.



- The program and the fellows had to **balance their investment in personal leadership development with everything else** occurring in their lives, which sometimes included wrestling with basic subsistence.
- The **stipend was a motivator and financial support** was critical for participation and attendance.
- Fellows who had **limited experience** engaging program elements (ideating, coaching, problem solving, etc.) **struggled with the necessary self-confidence and personal agency** to derive maximum value out of the opportunity.



- While our desire to cast a wide net created a microcosm of the community, having a **group that is differentiated** across areas of readiness makes it **difficult to speak equitably** to each person's stage/level/needs.
- The **current program design does not provide a lot of space for participants to learn from one another**. This seems a missed opportunity, especially given the range of expertise among the fellows.



Cohort 3

Appendix

Investment Made

June 2017 through June 2021



Project Timeline



New Orleans Field Trip Agenda

Thursday In-Person Session

Travel (early for this session)
✈ check-in to hotel

1:35-2:00PM

Board tour bus at hotel

2:00-5:00PM

New Orleans group tour

6:30-8:30

Dinner with NOLA advocates

Friday In-Person Session

7:30-8:30AM Breakfast

8:30-8:55AM Travel to meeting space

9:00-9:25AM Welcome-Allegany
reflection- agenda review

9:25-9:35AM Reflective exercise

9:35-10:00AM

Lesson: World-As-It-Is us.
World-As-It-Should-Be fixed positions,
locked ideology, and unwillingness to
compromise the first killers in movement
building

10:00-10:35 Exercise: Role play—failure to
agree on results brings negative
consequences for a troubled neighborhood

10:35-10:45 Debrief: share learnings,
observations of what wasn't working, why?

10:45-11:00 Break

11:00-11:20 Lesson: Common vs. Selfish
Self-Interest—what's the difference?

11:20-11:40 Lesson: Relational Public
Relationships—what are they? What do they
look like?

11:40-12PM Exercise: Identify one reciprocal
and/or public relationships in your life that
you have used to get something done, or to
do something for someone else

12:00-1:00 Lunch & discussion

1:00-1:20 Lesson: the One-on-One (building
public relationships in common
self-interest-what it looks like and how to do it)

1:20-2:20 Exercise: Conduct a one-on-one in
groups of two

2:20-2:45 Report: What did you learn about
yourself, the other person?

2:45-3:00 Break

3:00-3:30 Lesson: Identifying and building
allies (different levels of allies for different
purposes)

3:30-4:00 Lesson: Building Consensus—what
it looks like and how to do it

4:00-4:35 Exercise: role play building
consensus among the entire cohort on a
given topic

4:35-4:45 Debrief: what happened? How did
it work? How did it not work?

4:45-5:00 Review/recap and wrap up

5:00-5:30 Travel to hotel

7:00-9:00 Dinner

Saturday In-Person Session

7:30-8:30AM Breakfast

8:30-8:55 Travel to meeting space

9:00-11
5-minute project presentations

11-11:15 Recap/next steps
Closing Allegany reflection/Adjourn

11:15-11:25 Evaluations

11:25-12:30 Lunch

12:30-6:00 Travel

Contact Us



Allegany
Franciscan
Ministries

A Member of Trinity Health



Common
Good
Initiative

TOGETHER. CONNECTED. EMPOWERED.

For more information, contact
Allegany Franciscan Ministries
727-507-9668

afmfl.org



Brittney Frazier,
bfrazier@afmfl.org

Special thanks to:

AIM Philanthropy, c/o
Nexus Research Group

Lucas Diaz
ldiaz@cipl.us

nexusresearchonline.com

Robertson
Consulting Group, Inc.

Shelley Robertson, EdD,
info@snrobertson.com