

IMPACT Learning Center initially had its beginning as the Jackson County 21st Council. It originally began in spring 1993. The Scottsboro Rotary Club, whose president Norman Johnson, was challenged to begin a literacy program as part of a district Rotary effort to address illiteracy in north Alabama. The Scottsboro Rotary Club formed a committee to develop our local literacy efforts. Bill Strain, Clyde Butler, Jim Prewitt and John Gay formed a committee which looked at several potential literacy projects. The possibilities of an adult education center to house adult education, computer purchase for schools and adult reading programs were evaluated. This Rotary committee eventually decided on developing an alternative sentencing program for our Judicial system. In the process of developing this program our club worked closely with Randal White, The Adult Education Coordinator for Northeast Alabama. He gave several programs at our club and worked with us on alternate sentencing. He was the first person to challenge our club with the sad news about adult literacy. He emphasized and continually reminded us about these facts:

1. 42% of adults were non-high school graduates
2. 1/7 of adults were functionally illiterate (could not read phone book)
3. High school drop - out rate was 10%

It was obvious when we finished our alternative sentencing program that we had only addressed a minor part of our literacy problems. John Gay and Jim Prewitt continued to meet to work on the idea of developing an adult education center to house adult education which at that time had no home.

Steve Livingston, president of Jackson County Chamber of Commerce in 1994, fostered the idea that the Chamber through its interest in work-force development, should begin to look at the status of illiteracy. The Chamber leadership recognized that Jackson County growth in the 1960's and 1970's was based on cheap land, low taxes, an abundant and eager workforce. The Chamber, under Steve's leadership, decided that future growth in the 21st Century would not be based on these issues, but the availability of a "well educated and well trained" work force. With this in mind the Chamber embraced this idea and established an Education Committee whose chairman was Jo Smith.

Since the Chamber and the Rotary Club had mutual interest the two organizations began meeting together to examine adult education goals. Search for a model of an adult education center found such a program in Lawrenceburg, TN. Cromer Smitherman, a retired business executive from Lawrenceburg, came to Scottsboro to speak about their adult education effort and their focus on workforce development. In the fall of 1994, a group of 22 people made two trips to Lawrenceburg. Members of this group were:

Elle Smith - D.H. R.

Jim Prewitt - Rotary Club

Glenda Moody - Three Arts Club

John Gay - First National Bank

Ron Blanton - Fieldcrest

David Thornell - EDA

Jo Smith - Educator & former council woman

Clarence Potter - Computer consultant
John Paul Campbell - NACC
Susan Barron - NACC
Cheryl Holder - Scottsboro City Schools
Sandy Walker Kean - City Council
Louis Price - Mayor of Scottsboro
Randal White - Adult Education
Mary Jane Caylor - State Board of Education
Pat Cobb - Counselor at Scottsboro High School
Sandra Sheppard - Stevenson representative
Jo Ann Smith - Workplace Education
Betty Ann Vaughn - Workplace Education
Patti Cobb - Scottsboro Attorney
Dr. Charles Carrick - Superintendent Scottsboro City Schools

In Lawrenceburg we saw a community that had been through extremely difficult times in community growth and development. Under leadership of Cromer Smitherman the focus had been to abandon industry recruitment on the basis of cheap labor and low taxes and start to develop their workforce and community by improving their education system from pre-K to adult education. Their community had built an adult education center with video teleconferencing programs which taught English class and Nursing from Vanderbilt 60 miles away; a computer aided learning system and an education foundation to help county and city children have "extras" in education.

From these two trips this group of people returned to Scottsboro and began work on our own project with monthly meetings at the Chamber of Commerce. After Gerald Paulk, a local attorney, wrote our bylaws, a group of twelve read the book Seven Habits of Highly Effective People and began working on our mission statement. Eventually we decided on a statement written by Jim Prewitt - "Recognizing that a well trained workforce is a key element in community growth development, our mission is to provide basic education, job skill training, and higher educational opportunities for all people of Jackson County."

With our mission statement in mind, the board of directors set to work to establish our goals. The board decided to have an adult education center with a computer aided learning system and video teleconferencing and to establish an education foundation for the county and city. Plans were made to address the high school drop-out rate at some time in the future.

Mary Jane Caylor, a board member, chaired a committee that interviewed and hired our first director, Ann Kenamer. Ann was a great asset to our program. Without her efforts none of the literacy projects that we attempted would have been possible. Our first adult education center was located in what is now Scottsboro City Solid Waste Office, Ann Kenamer and a volunteer staff moved in and immediately converted this one time reality office into Jackson County's first Adult Education. Within a few months the city, who had given us the building rent free, decided

that the city needed the building, The City Board of Education allowed us to move to the band room at the old Scottsboro High School (now Collins Intermediate School). Ann and her staff had to move again, this time to the cafeteria in the basement of the old Jackson County High School (now the Central Office for Scottsboro Board of Education). Our third move took us to the cafeteria at Page Elementary (now the Central Office for BOE). IMPACT moved again and is currently located at 23123 John T. Reid Parkway.

We began to look for funding to develop our computer and video conferencing needs. These needs have been met through the award of several matching grants for the Appalachian Regional Commission listed below.

1. ARC-Phase I-1997 \$200,000 used to purchase and install 3 VeTel video conferencing units which were placed at Scottsboro High School and Ernest Pruitt Center of Technology
2. ARC-Phase II-2000 \$150,000 used to purchase 5 VeTel video conferencing and multi control units which were placed in Scottsboro
3. ARC-Phase III-2003 \$150,000 used to purchase 10 Tandberg video conferencing units which were placed in all Jackson County schools that didn't house a 9-12 high school
4. ARC Network additions-2007-08 \$150,000 used to purchase 10 Tandberg video conferencing units placed in Jackson County
5. ETA-2006-07 \$75,000 used to develop and implement Global Competitive Communication (Customer Service, Workplace Spanish and English for Employment)
6. HUD-2006 \$75,000 used to update and install handicap restroom facilities
7. Bynum Foundation-2008 \$25,000 used to establish and pilot a Pre-K program for six months (8 students) and later received \$825,000 over 11 years for Pre-K

When we visited Lawrenceburg we saw a very active county based education foundation. In an effort to duplicate that program, we began plans to develop two educational foundations since we, unlike Lawrenceburg, had both a county and city school system. The Scottsboro City Schools had established, but not funded a foundation. Glenda Moody, a founding board member and member of the Scottsboro Three Arts Club, obtained matching grants from Alabama Power Company and a \$1,000,000 donation from the Three Arts Club. In a similar fashion John Graham established the J.C.E.F. and obtained initial funding from a grant from Alabama Power. Both of these foundations continue to provide "extras" in education for both county and city school systems.

In an effort to address problems of high school dropout rates our board began working on Pre-K education in the summer of 2007. The IMPACT board saw pre-K education as an opportunity to address learning deficiency at an early age of 4. Since the 4th grade reading level is used to determine the number of jail cells for the next generation, it became obvious to the IMPACT Board that a pre-K program could have an impact on dropout rates and improving workforce development. In the summer of 2007, Amy Cameron, Glenda Moody and Matt Doss traveled to Birmingham to evaluate the Pre-K Partner Program at St. Luke's in Mountain Brook, AL. They were so impressed with the program and returned home to work on establishing such a

program. Pre-K pilot program opened for eight 3-4 year olds at Scottsboro High School. It had been funded by a grant from the Bynum Foundation. This program was miraculously put together in three months by board chairman, Betsy Parks with board members, Susan Barnes, Becky Bridges, Matt Doss, Gordon Gossett Amy Lackey and new board member, Marionna Harbin. The program was later funded through the Office of School Readiness. IMPACT administered this valuable program as it grew into three classrooms housed at each of the three elementary schools in Scottsboro. The city school system took over the program for the 2017-18 school year. Currently the three classrooms are located at Nelson Elementary School.

As you can see much has been accomplished, but much work and commitment is still needed. We on the board of directors have been blessed by the opportunity to help the education process in Jackson County. It is obvious that during our years of service divine providence has handed us many gifts that have made our programs possible. We, The present board of directors, hope that you will see your service as an opportunity to make Jackson County a better place to live for our children, grand and even great grandchildren!

Brad Bradford
Chairman IMPACT Board of Directors