

## THROUGH THE DOOR

by Brenda Hughes

Mysterious and intriguing, delightfully inviting, or possibly disconcerting and frightful, or even dark and foreboding are some of the ways we may perceive a door that stands in our path.

The economic crisis that our nation and the world is in has cast before many of us some unexpected and uninvited doors. Which door do you take after a job loss, foreclosure, dwindling retirement and a myriad of other disruptions in a well planned life?

The difficult truth is that we

don't know what lies beyond the doors that are before us. We can anticipate, plan and strategize, but in the

end we must decide whether to remain where we are, or in faith walk through the doors, trusting God for the outcomes.

In Zechariah chapter 8 God says, "Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong." (NIV) This was in reference to the promise of restoration to the nation of Israel.

I believe this word is



relevant today as we continue to seek to do His will in these difficult times.

Why does God's word repeatedly admonish us to not be afraid? Fear will cause the heart and hands to become weak.

The ministry of BICC is actively providing doors of opportunity for people to improve their lives: college scholarships, match savings for homeownership, youth leadership, mentors for our young people, the Credit Union offers competitive

loans, and high school diplomas can be earned through REACH Adult High School.

These and other doors of opportunity are being provided because of the generous support from people like you-- individuals, businesses, churches, private foundations, and federal grants.

Your faithful support is greatly appreciated, especially now as nonprofits are all affected by the economic downturn.

May all our hands be strengthened as we work together to fulfill His will in our lives and in the ministry of BICC. ✨

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### COMING EVENTS

(See backs for more information)

**May 4**  
Mentoring Banquet  
**September 12**  
ITLT Youth Conference



## ONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Starfish is an in-home parent education program for families with children from prenatal to age three in Cleveland/Bradley County. It provides children with a strong foundation for success in school and life by providing parents with better tools and information to become their child's best, first teacher.

**Why are the first few years of a child's life so important?** Within the last decade, scientific findings have revealed the intensity of brain development that occurs in the earliest years of life. From birth to age five, the human brain develops most rapidly. What happens in a child's life in these early years can positively, or negatively, impact healthy development.

Early childhood is a unique time of life and presents a unique investment opportunity for our community. When investments are made in the years of peak brain development, both children and communities benefit.

Starfish is the most recent BICC project and is supported in part by the Bradley Memorial Hospital

Endowment administered by the United Way, and the United Thank Offering and the Opportunity Grant Fund of the Episcopal Church.



*Ben & Sara Hinkle working with mom (Susan) during a Starfish home visit.*

For more information contact Corinne Freeman, Starfish Director at 559-1112 or <corinnefreeman@bellsouth.net>.

# DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

## INSPIRING TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY (ITLT)

ITLT is a youth leadership program for middle and high school students in Cleveland and Bradley County. Students receive training and experience that helps them develop their leadership potential. ITLT recognized that youth-leading-youth is the most effective way of reaching our young people with positive messages like "be smart, don't start" and "school is cool".

With the assistance of Desmond Wellington (director) the ITLT students design, plan and carry out trainings and events like the upcoming Second Annual Youth Leadership Conference to be held at the Boys and Girls Club on September 12th. For more information contact Desmond at 559-1112 or <dwellington@bellsouth.net>.



ITLT Students conducting an after school training on the harmful effects of tobacco.

## BRIDGING THE GAP (BTG)

BTG mentoring program provides students between ages 8 to 14 with caring adult mentors to offer guidance and friendship to help them to make right choices to enhance their potential of becoming successful adults. Currently BTG has 40 mentor/mentee matches.

"The Magic of Mentoring" Fundraising Banquet will be held on May 4th at the Cleveland YMCA. Contact Sonia Calvin (director) for more information about enrolling your child as a mentee, if you are interested in becoming a mentor, or the fundraising banquet. Call 559-1112 or email <scalvin@bellsouth.net>.



BTG mentors and mentees enjoy bowling night as one of the many shared activities.

## BRADLEY SAVINGS INITIATIVE

Bradley Savings Initiative is an Individual Development Account saving program that offers a dollar-for-dollar match for participants' savings.

Your savings can earn 100% interest as you save toward:

- Homeownership
- Post-Secondary Education
- Small business start-up or expansion

Receive 12 weeks of money management classes on a variety of relevant topics at no cost.

Open exciting new doors to your future by joining the many others in the program now!

For more information about program guidelines and how you can join contact Margaret Gilbert (director) at 559-1112 or email <gilbert\_margaret@bellsouth.net>.



## REACH ADULT HIGH SCHOOL

REACH is a full-fledged high school in the Bradley County School System that offers opportunities for individuals whose education was interrupted to complete their traditional high school diploma.



In May '09 a total of 150 adults have graduated from REACH. For more information call 473-8473.

## Bradley Initiative Credit Union (BICU)

BICU is a community development credit union that offers a range of financial services including loans, savings accounts, money wires, financial counseling and others.



Visit the credit union at 1075 Blythe Avenue to learn more about how you can become a part of this valuable resource in our community. For more information contact Denis Collins (manager) at 559-1181.

## BICC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Need more information?**

**Want to get involved?**

**Contact:**

**Bradley Initiative for  
Church and Community, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 5404  
Cleveland, TN 37320-5404**

**Phone: 559-1112; Fax: 559-1244**

**E-mail: 4bicc@bellsouth.net**

**www.bicc-inc.org**

## BICC ON THE MOVE!

Thanks to Skyridge Medical Center BICC has relocated the offices in to a beautiful office complex at 2810 Westside Drive. The former offices of BICC for past 8 years were provided by Broad Street United Methodist Church.

You are cordially invited to visit the BICC offices at your convenience. Office hours are 8:00 to 5:00 Monday - Friday.

*Thanks Broad Street UM!*

*Thanks Skyridge Medical Center!*

## Special Thanks

*to all the churches, businesses, organizations, foundations, individuals and families who support BICC through your time, talent and treasure.*

*God Bless!*