



# The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia

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## Oak Street Episcopal Mission- Setting Goals, Looking to the Future

Oak Street Mission has recently begun to restructure the management of its organization by returning to a totally volunteer-run organization while the board begins a search for a new After School Coordinator and eventually, a new Executive Director.

Alston Watt, Chair of the Board of Oak Street Mission, shared her thoughts on this transition: "When we realized that we were going to return to a volunteer-run program, it made us step back and reflect on our core values, goals, and aspirations."

The team at Oak Street, which consists of parishioners from three Thomasville churches, met together in December with the Very Rev. Denise Ronn, co-coordinator of the Church Leadership Development Programs. They used this meeting to reassess the core values of the program, set some goals, clearly define the roles of the board, and revitalize the volunteers in the wake of this new transition. "Denise's work with our group- she just pulled us all together beautifully. The goals we set are feeding and watering [not only the Oak Street Mission but also] our own three churches and teaching us to be a part of the hope of this neighborhood," says Alston.

Ronn used methods taught in CDI to assist the board in examining the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, define its mission and purpose, establish some priorities, and revitalize and unify the board members.

### Core Values of Afternoons at Oak Street

- Afternoons at Oak Street will always reflect in every way respect for the dignity and worth of all involved, children from the neighborhood, volunteers of all ages, employees
- Afternoons at Oak Street will always encourage children in the neighborhood to exercise their talents to the maximum and to keep all opportunities for their future open

- Afternoons at Oak Street will always be a program that inspires confidence and resiliency
- Afternoons at Oak Street will always strive to foster in the children of the neighborhood a lifelong faith in the love, mercy and faithfulness of God
- Afternoons at Oak Street will strive to help the children in the neighborhood to grow socially, emotionally, spiritually and academically.

### Goals for Afternoons at Oak Street

- Provide a safe, welcoming, loving environment within which the core values can be fostered
- Empower youth and adults from the Episcopal Church and other churches to be effective volunteers who understand and further the core values of the program
- Secure regular volunteer support from each of the Episcopal Churches
- Develop productive relationships with the children's parents and caregivers so that they can reinforce the life lessons that the program is trying to teach
- Communicate frequently and effectively the goals, successes and challenges with the neighbors, the three Episcopal Churches and potential future supporters
- Oak Street also plans to develop more stable funding by applying for 501c3 status in the first quarter of the year. This would be a major step for the organization that would provide future opportunities to apply for grants and other types of outside funding.

By the third quarter of the year, Oak Street will hire a full or part time Executive Director. This person will be the face of the organization in the Oak Street Community and help communicate the needs of its people to the leadership of the mission. Watt said, "We have a better understanding of our needs in an executive director than we did two years ago."

She added, "This neighborhood needs a lot of love and care. We always understood that in our heads but now we understand it in our hearts. All three churches are really committed to this work and mission."

### *About the Oak Street Mission*

*The Oak Street Mission is a ministry of the three Episcopal churches in Thomasville-All Saints, Good Shepherd, and St. Thomas. A result of the Campaign from Congregational Development's emphasis on creating Signature Ministries, the mission was founded as the Episcopal Development Agency of Thomasville (EDAT). The Oak Street Mission continues to foster the development of the Oak Street Community surrounding Good Shepherd Church.*