

Case study: Ieshia & Kianna

- Sibling group abandoned by mom's death and dad's alcoholism. Were living in abandoned house with no utilities, caring for siblings
- Sisters assisted by PCHAS agency while in high school
- Sisters greatest fear was for siblings to be separated
- Managing to work and care for younger siblings but barely surviving in extreme poverty

Outcomes from PCHAS case

Ieshia

- Graduated from Corsicana High School
- Obtained a Habitat for Humanity home
- Went from part-time job at Dairy Queen to working at a local nursing facility
- Enrolled in LVN school

Kianna

- Graduated from Corsicana High School
- Obtained a full scholarship to University of Texas at Arlington
- Moved out of family home to attend college
- Returned home for holidays and summer vacation

After Case Closing – Life in Poverty “happens”

Ieshia

- Continued taking care of her brothers
- Working full time at nursing home
- Attended LVN Program but failed last semester
- Became pregnant and had daughter

Kianna

- Attended college but became very ill/had no insurance
- Forced to drop her classes and return home to work part-time at a daycare
- Began a relationship and became pregnant with a daughter

Relationship Matters

- Ieshia continued to stay in touch i.e. phone, walk-in visits
- Both girls would occasionally come by the office to “catch up”
- The girls identified that because of our relationship their lives had changed for the better while in high school
- Both Kianna & Ieshia voiced they wanted to “do something more” with their lives
- PCHAS referred the sisters to Open Table opportunity



Open Table Model

Family Model



Carol Burnett & Whoopi Goldberg

Disclaimer

We have no connection to the organization, Open Table, other than what we have described in this presentation. We were not compensated in any way to present about them.

Open Table Members



Group Process

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing



Two Steps Back...

- We all have issues...or do we? – Table Member Conflicts
 - “I keep thinking what would I say and do if Ieshia and Kianna were my grown daughters. What I think Ieshia and Kianna have lacked is good life skill training and decision-making.” -Table Member “D”



Differences in Culture

- Church – Table Member Quotes
 - “Like you “B”, I was a little discouraged that they spent most of their time this past week focused on the Revival at their Church. I am not saying that is a bad thing but maybe we need to work more on prioritizing and time management.” -Table Member “S”
 - “When they were at VBS all week instead of applying for jobs, none of us said a word but many of us were thinking it and went home frustrated. Where is the balance?” – Table Member “B”
- Family Structure – Table Member Role Dilemmas
 - Mother Figure vs. Sister vs. Aunt vs. Mom

Differing Values

The Values of Table Members

- Good decisions/choices bring future change or success
- *Any* job is okay temporarily to provide money for family
- Education is crucial for future success

The Values of our "Sisters"

- Believed in "fate"; bad things happen out of their control
- Unwilling to apply for fast food/waitress jobs to provide income
- Past failures indicated education was not a reality

Different Experiences

- Survival Mode vs. Planning – Table Member Quotes
 - "One thing I mentioned to D is that the girls seem to be in a pattern of living very reactionary lives, not having the luxury to think about what they really Want or are able to do. Maybe that's a part of living forever in poverty?" – Table Member "B"
 - "I also think when we compare them to our children who have grown up with nurture, stability, positive parenting as well as continuing support in their adulthood, we are judging them. They have been afforded none of these and although they are grown they have little foundation or support." – Table Member "P"

Relationship Building

- "We're all in this together."
 - "I am looking at this from my own struggles with low self esteem not from a poverty standpoint. I have failed a class before, I managed to get through College and receive my degree but because I didn't have a high GPA I was afraid to even interview for a job. I haven't always been treated well in my working environments and I know what it feels like to be fired, I have been fired and laid off more than once. I have had supervisors tell me I was stupid, I have had mistakes that I made put before my entire work group as examples of what not to do. I may not have lived in poverty but I know what it is like to be beaten down and I know what it is like to feel like a failure and I don't want that for Ieshia or Kianna." Table Member "S"



Celebrations



Building Relationships

Working Together



Laughing & Crying Together

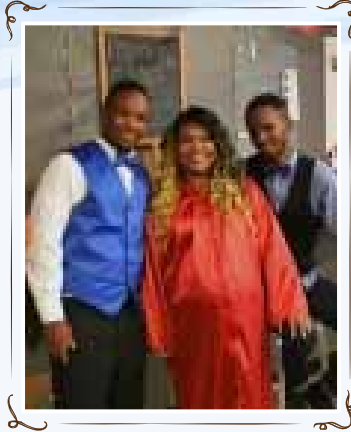
Outcomes

- Kianna – Bachelor in Finance; Ieshia – LVN; both are gainfully employed
- Both girls graduated college debt free
- Kianna & Ieshia both have reliable transportation
- Robert received full scholarship to college and will graduate in May 2016 with Bachelor of Criminal Justice
- Chris will graduate from high school in May 2016 and plans to enroll in college
- All have reconciled with their father



Kianna Graduation

Bachelor of Finance
December 2013



Ieshia Graduation

LVN July 2014



Adkinson Family

2014

Termination Summary Notes – Ieshia & Kianna's Own Words

Challenges in Family of Origin:

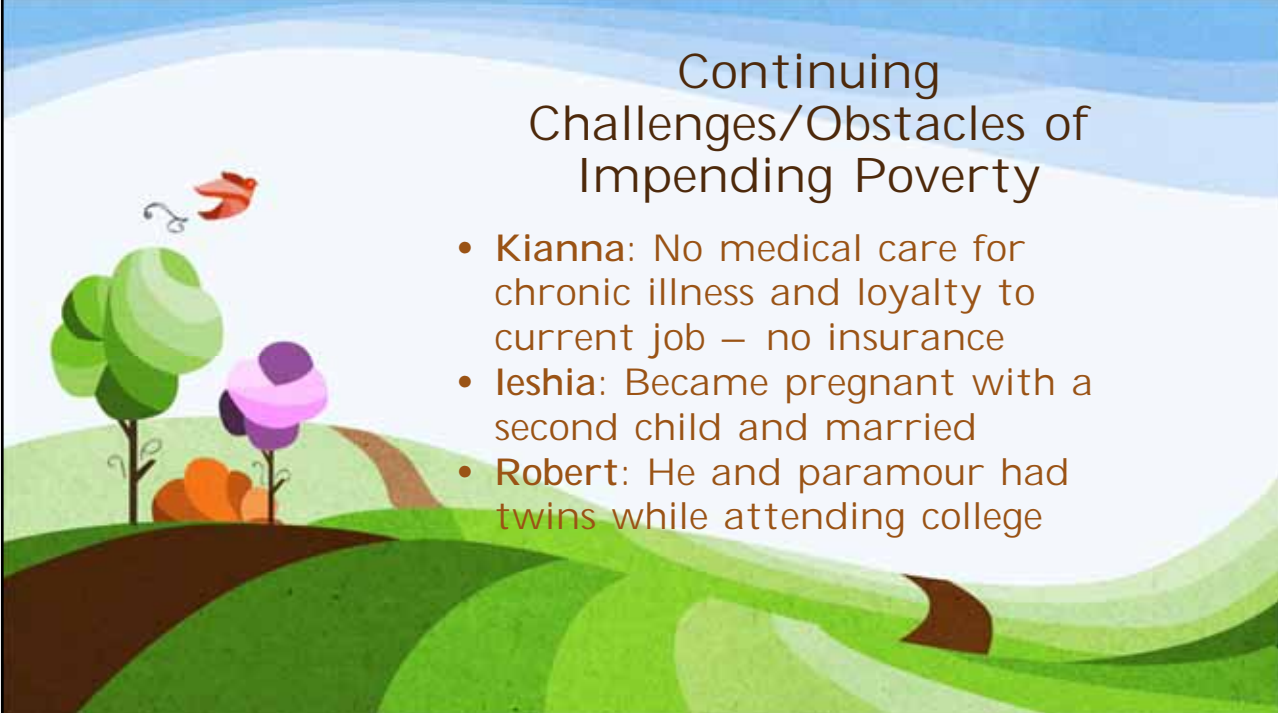
- Content with place in life (any job)
- Do not require much of you/therefore do not require much of self
- Give opinions/not support
- Know how to panic/not how to support
- Learning to block out negative comments – “you think you are better than me”

Strengths of Open Table:

- Helped to “push through/see the light”
- Gave hope to change – afraid to try and fail with family
- Learned it was okay to make mistakes that “were not smart” and do things better
- Learned to budget money and prioritize (bobby pins)
- The tears, the laughter, the memories, the conversations, the people

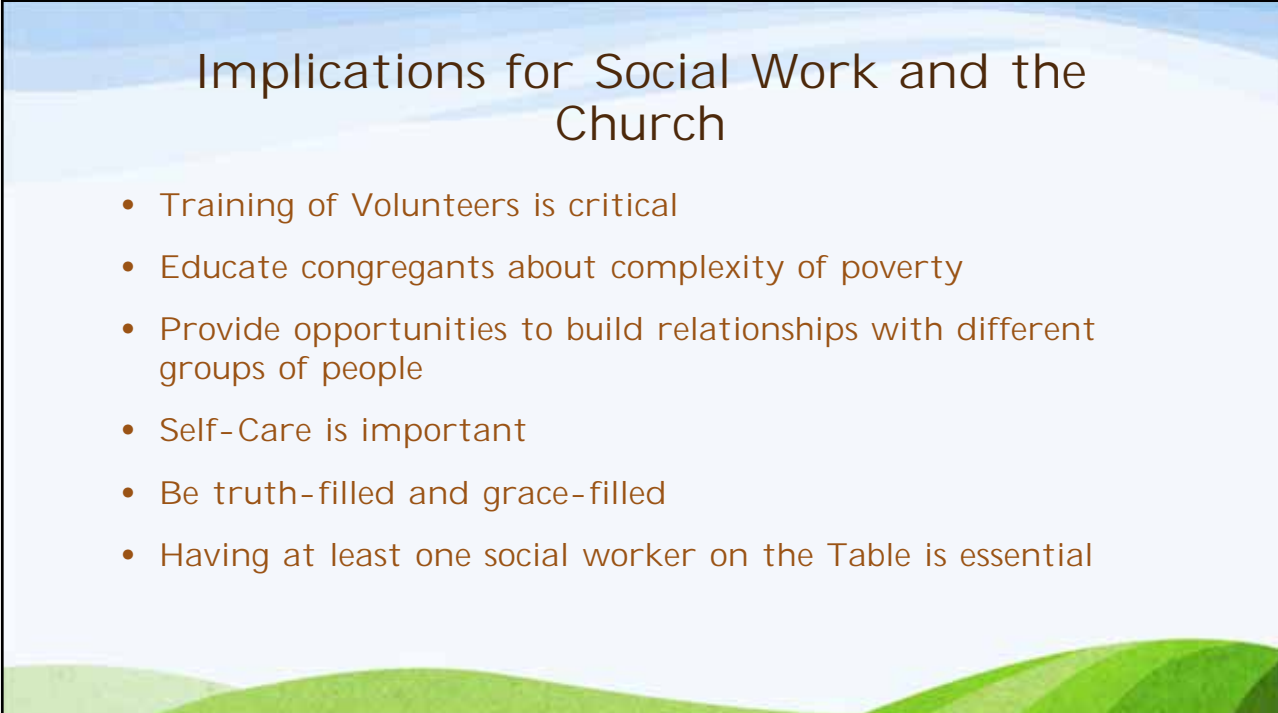
Relationships create change “Fingerprints left on each other”





Continuing Challenges/Obstacles of Impending Poverty

- **Kianna:** No medical care for chronic illness and loyalty to current job – no insurance
- **Ieshia:** Became pregnant with a second child and married
- **Robert:** He and paramour had twins while attending college



Implications for Social Work and the Church

- Training of Volunteers is critical
- Educate congregants about complexity of poverty
- Provide opportunities to build relationships with different groups of people
- Self-Care is important
- Be truth-filled and grace-filled
- Having at least one social worker on the Table is essential

