

“A Culture of Care...Walking in Another’s Shoes”

By Joan Foster

I am beginning my presentation tonight with two quotes that I would like for you to remember during this presentation:

“I would encourage you to keep in mind all those people around us who are trapped in a cycle of poverty. They too need to be given hope. The fight against poverty and hunger must be fought constantly and, on many fronts, especially in its causes. Now is the time for courageous actions and strategies, aimed at implementing a “culture of care” and an integrated approach to combating poverty”. (A quote from Pope Francis urging Americans on his visit here to help the less fortunate)

“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view,” Atticus tells Scout in Chapter 3 of *To Kill A Mockingbird*”, “until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” (*To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, Chapter 3)

Tonight, my presentation is on poverty, specifically how our community has stepped up to create a culture of care to address intergenerational poverty in Lynchburg over the last ten years and how our community members have developed strategies to assist our citizens who are poor. Intergenerational poverty is defined as poverty that persists from one generation to the next; in other words, households in which daily needs are not consistently met, and the individuals in these households remain in poverty over a lifetime. (Weldon Cooper Center’s report to Lynchburg Council, 2015). Much has been written about poverty and about those living in poverty. Although, my presentation is about what has happened in our community over the last few years, I would be remised not to mention that our history in Lynchburg has not always been a culture of care for everyone. When we look at the percentages of those living in poverty in our community there is a racial dimension to these numbers, and a glance back at our history reveals that racial injustices have played a role. Red-lined African American neighborhoods, New Deal programs that excluded African Americans, and funding that helped with education and business start-ups for whites only again excluded our African American neighbors. (Dr. John Abell, *Redlining in Lynchburg*, August 25, 2020).

This is unacceptable and should not define who we are in Lynchburg, Virginia in 2021!

My goal is to present information on the intergenerational poverty rate in our City and share with you some of the efforts that City government and our citizens have initiated to reduce the poverty level and increase the median income. At the end of this presentation, some of the early outcomes will be shared with you. I will have to point out that COVID 19 may have changed all that I report to you tonight.

In the above quote from Atticus (In *To Kill A Mockingbird*) he is trying to give fatherly advice to his daughter Scout. He gives her an analogy of climbing into a person's skin and walking around in it to view situations from that person’s point of view. His analogy is essentially taken

from the well-known adage, "walk in someone's shoes for a day." Tonight, I am asking you to do this for the next 30 minutes, to listen to some of reasons why some of our citizens continue to struggle in our community because they lack the financial capital, education or connections that will help lift them out of poverty. Most importantly, I want to relate some of the action steps that our community has put in place over the last ten years to initiate the culture of care that Pope Francis talked about.

In the United States the threshold for poverty in 2020 for an individual under 65 is \$12,760 and the threshold for a family of four is \$26,200 (United States Census Bureau).

To begin your walk tonight I am going to begin with three individual journeys of three residents in our City. I have intentionally left the ending of these three individual stories out of my opening tonight however, the stories have conclusions.

The first is RJ:

R.J. would be considered an intergenerational poverty individual. Neither of his parents completed high school, and both lacked employable skills. However, they were determined to make a better life for R.J. and his sister. His parents worked tirelessly to provide shelter and food, and they encouraged the children to do well in school and stay involved in a local church. The family qualified and acquired a home through Habitat for Humanity and inched closer to financial independence and security.

Following high school R.J. attended community college, earned an associate degree in general studies. He found full time work, moved into his own apartment and to use his words, "Life was great!"

Tragically, R.J.'s father suddenly died of an apparent heart attack. R.J. and his mother were devastated, and this event triggered a downward spiral for R.J.

Within months R.J. lost his job and his apartment. After moving back home R.J. fell into the 'wrong crowd,' running the streets and drifting into a dark place. His mother managed to hang onto the home, but food, utilities and transportation were daily challenges.

The second is LA:

LA was also born into a dysfunctional family that was living from paycheck to paycheck, his parents struggled to provide just the basic needs for their two children. Both of his parents were recovering addicts who had met in recovery programs. LA excelled in school and was a stand-out student who was accepted by his classmates because of his academic accomplishments. LA did, at times, make poor social decisions but avoided getting into real trouble during his high school years. At the end of his Senior year in high school LA received a total scholarship to attend a very prestigious university in the Commonwealth, this scholarship amounted to \$74,000 a year for 4 years. The summer that he graduated LA continued to make poor social decisions and was told that he could no longer live at home, this happens as he was

heading off to school. He arrived at the University with all his belonging in a large plastic trash bag and with little else. During his first year LA did not excel academically because so much was going on in his life, but he managed to have acceptable grades and therefore was not placed on academic warning. However, he struggled socially at this University, mainly because he was poor at a school that most students were affluent, he did not fit in socially. At the end of his Freshmen year LA was caught stealing an article of clothing and was told he could not return the following year to the University. That summer LA arrived back in Lynchburg homeless.

The third is CS:

CS was also born into intergenerational poverty and into a dysfunctional family. Her mother left the family and the dad struggled to raise the 3 children that she left behind in his care. The dad did work, but it was long hours and he struggled to keep the family together. The children were left alone while dad worked, and consequently, CS became a teen mom, not once but twice. During this time CS had poor on-going medical care; however, during one of her pregnancies it was discovered that she had a significant medical problem that required surgery; however, her troubles worsen after surgery. After surgery she was given pain killers that she quickly became addicted to. This addiction to oxycontin led to criminal activity on her part and she was caught and tried and ended up with a criminal record. She lost her 2 children to the foster care system, and CS became homeless.

As I present tonight, I want you to think about what you would do for RJ, LA and CS, perhaps using some of the resources that I mention tonight or that you know are available in our City.

First some highlights and background information about Lynchburg City Council's efforts for obtaining an accurate measurement of poverty in Lynchburg:

- In 2014 during City Council elections, the subject of poverty came forth as something that was a growing problem in our city.
- In May of 2015, at a City Council work session, a presentation on poverty was presented and a discussion by City Council members followed. After this discussion, Council decided that they needed to have accurate data to understand the nature and extent of poverty in the City. Concerns were expressed by Council members that the poverty numbers could be inflated because of the number of postsecondary students who were in the local colleges. A resolution was adopted appropriating \$50,000 in funds in the 2016 budget for poverty.
- September of 2015: Council Approved the use of \$28,088 of the designated \$50,000 for the poverty initiative with \$18,088 allocated to the Demographics Research Group of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia to conduct an actual analysis of poverty in the City of Lynchburg.
- December of 2015: Council receives the study by the Weldon Cooper Center that reported the poverty rate of Lynchburg at 22.6%, which was approximately double that of the state

average of 11.2%. The official poverty rate for the United States at this time was 13.5% (The United States Census Bureau, www.census.gov)

- The Weldon Cooper Center study concluded the following after their study:
 - Although, Lynchburg is distinct from other college towns in Virginia, poverty remains high even after accounting for postsecondary students
 - The poverty rate among African Americans and Asians living in Lynchburg is higher than the overall 22.6%. Caucasians make up 63.1% of the Lynchburg population, however their rate of poverty is 19.0% whereas African Americans comprise about 30% of the population and have a poverty rate of 34.7%. In addition, Asians comprised 2.8% of the population and have a poverty rate of 45.3%. The study stated with a high degree of certainty that the poverty rate among whites is significantly lower than rates among African Americans and Asians. Approximately 30% of the City's children (who account for 21.7% of the population. 3 out of 10 children in the city are poor).

The recommendation from the Weldon Cooper Center to the City was:

- Consider *targeted* efforts to encourage employment and educate residents about social safety net programs, also there should be city-wide efforts to create job opportunities (Weldon Copper Center's study Poverty in Lynchburg, Virginia -An analysis presented to Lynchburg City Council on December 8, 2015)

City Council's response to this information and recommendation:

- February 2017-The State of the City Address for 2017- Mayor Foster and Vice Mayor Tweedy kicked off a City initiative, **Poverty to Progress**, and issued a call to action for the 23% poverty rate. This call asked the community to come out to a meeting on May the 4th 2017 to help design a plan to tackle poverty. It was stressed in the call to action that poverty is a community issue, and it will take the community to make a difference. They urged the community to work together; government, faith leaders, non- profit organizations, schools, private citizens, and design the plan and work through tasks forces together. (Lynchburg State of the City Address, February 2017)
- May 2017-Over 800 individuals attended the "Call to Action" meeting and brainstormed solutions to lower the generational poverty rate. Nine community task forces of citizens were formed to tackle the identified problems. These tasks forces met throughout the summer and fall of 2017 to create action plans with goals and measurements (these task forces were: Community Education, Childcare, Education, Food Disparity, Legal System, Transportation, Health and Mental Health, Workforce Development and Housing).
- February 2018-State of the City Address-Mayor Foster and Vice Mayor Tweedy gave an update to the Poverty to Progress initiative relating that GLTC is conducting a survey to shorten routes to enable riders to get to employment sites in a more timely manner, the Housing Authority had hired a Housing Navigator to assist citizens in finding safe and

affordable housing, Centra Health had opened a community health center on Fifth Street for health care for our citizens living in poverty, as well as local faith communities (No Walls Ministry, and Community Connected/Open Table) had begun to set aside difference in ideologies and denominations in order to work together to make a difference in the lives of our citizens. (State of the City Address, February 2018)

- Fall of 2018-Poverty to Progress merges with Bridges of Central Virginia and forms Bridges to Progress, with 10 task forces. The task forces deal with the barriers that are faced by those living in poverty: Early Childhood Care, Education, Community, Education, Housing, Legal System, Mental Health, Faith Community, Food Disparity, Transportation, Workforce.
- 2019-2021- The task forces continue to meet and a Bridges to Progress Steering Committee member attends these meetings. 5 Steering committee members were appointed by Mayor Tweedy and City Council and 5 were appointed by Bridges of Central Virginia to help facilitate the merger as follows:
 - Provide linkage between all the task forces
 - Guide future direction of the initiative
 - Make recommendations for City grant funding
 - Provide continuous evaluation and measurement of progress for task forces and Bridges to Progress to ensure they are making a difference

This merger represented a collective effort by the citizens of Lynchburg to reduce poverty in the City of Lynchburg. The merger resulted in the development of action items focused on eliminating barriers for our low-income citizens. It was also a catalyst for the civic engagement of faith-based organizations, non-profits, individuals, businesses, schools, and others to rally around the cause of creating a community of care with empathy and understanding the citizens in our community that are living in poverty. (Bridges to Progress website).

Community efforts occurring that paralleled the governmental efforts, it seemed throughout discussions on poverty that three main components continually came up in community conversations:

- **education (i.e., family dysfunction that prevents their involvement in a child's life that encourage the culture of cradle to graduation/college/career)**
- **jobs/workforce (lack of employable skills, education, history that prevents being employable, etc.)**
- **knowledge of and access to resources (to decrease homelessness, overuse of medical emergency services, mental health issues, substance abuse, etc.).**

Community Response to these conversations (I like to preface this by saying that there were many community efforts already in place like Daily Bread, Johnson's Health Center, Horizons, Salvation Army, Miriam's House, The Gateway, etc. that have worked with citizens in need for

many years. The list I am about to give have grassroots origins and have come about in the last ten years to assist with the rising poverty rate in our City):

- 2010-2011-Lynchburg Beacon of Hope- Students, families, and community members expressed the need for equal opportunity in education for all students, regardless of race or level of income or zip code in the City. Members of the Education Subcommittee of the Dialogue on Race and Racism created a Board of Directors and Lynchburg Beacon of Hope is born. Just one year later, the Beacon of Hope opened two Future Centers on site in partnership with E.C. Glass and Heritage High Schools. Lynchburg Beacon of Hope's Future Centers become physical spaces that served as hubs for all college and career readiness programming for students attending public school. These Future Centers worked to help students remove the barriers that prevent them from pursuing college—from mentoring and study skills in 9th grade, to visiting college campuses in 10th grade, to SAT and ACT prep courses, to resume building, to college application assistance, to financial aid application assistance to last-dollar scholarships.... the Future Centers help students remove the social, the academic, and the attitude barriers that prevent them from pursuing education after high school. (Lynchburg Beacon of Hope website www.Beaconofhopelynchburg.org) The graduation rate at this time was 83% ,today the graduation rate is 88.7%
- In 2013, Lynchburg and surrounding social services departments held a training for area communities, businesses, schools, and local government agencies that focused on poverty and its causes. This training was taken from the concepts presented in the book, *Bridges Out of Poverty*, by Ruby Payne. Over 1,000 attended and heard about changes that can be made to tear down barriers that are sustaining poverty. Not having money is only one dilemma of poverty, lacking a reliable resource system (defined as a person's **Social Capital** or having networks of relationships that enables a person to function effectively)) is also a huge fact. During this training participants learn empathy and a better understanding of individuals living in poverty, for example their support system are other individuals living in poverty. The attendees of this training also learned that a persistent poverty state contributes to a learned helplessness (Morris, Santos, & Neumeyer, 2018). Here, Morris, Santos, and Neumeyer state, "such a sense of helplessness can give rise to living only in the moment, irresponsible spending, not saving even if one could, and not responding to incentives when they are offered. The bottom line is that the person loses hope" (2018, p. 8).
- In 2015 Lynchburg Human Services received \$10,000 from Lynchburg City Council for continued training on the "*Bridges Out of Poverty*" model and in January 2016-Jodi Pfarr, nationally known trainer for Bridges Out of Poverty AHA! Training institute held a workshop for Central Virginia service providers based on the Bridges Out of Poverty model. These trainings helped providers understand better how to work with

individuals living in poverty and how to build and sustain relationships with those from generational poverty backgrounds. During the Spring and Summer of 2016 nine subcommittees formed. Participants in these committees developed 20 goals to tackle and to hold regular meetings and report out on progress. Some of these goals targeted some of the information that had been gleaned over the years as solutions that would help individuals to move out of poverty. For example:

- Accessible and affordable transportation for all
 - On-the-job training opportunities available to all members no matter their background history
 - Increase in affordable and safe housing
- September 2016- Groundbreaking for the Holcomb Hughes Community Health Center. A coalition of health care providers in the area realized that there was a huge need to break down barriers that prevented the uninsured and underinsured community members from getting the healthcare that they deserve. Thus, the Community Health Center on Fifth Street became a reality. This center was built in the central part of the City of Lynchburg on Fifth Street located on the bus line. This was a partnership between Centra Health, the Free Clinic of Central Virginia, and the Community Access Network. The purpose of this clinic is to work with the uninsured and the underinsured individuals, as well as those who income is less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level- about \$24,000 for a family of four. Plans included not only a place to meet health needs of citizens, but also mental health, there is also a pharmacy on site. **The Community Health Center opened to patients in January of 2018.**

On the Community Health Center's website, they state the following:

- "Our community is hurting, and the pain is showing itself in ways that are sometimes uplifting and sometimes difficult to watch. But we are the healers. It is our mission and life's work to help those who are hurting... Our new mission, vision and values statement says this about empathy:
Empathy: We strive to understand the perspectives of our patients and co-workers. When our patients or co-workers hurt, we hurt. When they need help, we help. Not just because it is our job, but because it is the right thing to do."
(Community Access Network website info@communityaccessnetwork.org "About Us")
- 2017-Parkview Community Mission receives its non-profit status. Just to note that in 1996, Park View Methodist Church began a food ministry on Wednesday nights for anyone in the community who wanted to come and eat dinner they also offered food boxes to those in need. The church officially disbanded in 2007, but the food ministry continued and became known as **Park View Community Mission**. Their primary targeted area in the beginning was answering the needs of the citizens who lived in and around the Memorial Avenue location, which had been identified as one of the most impoverished areas of Lynchburg (Weldon Cooper study). However, this mission and

outreach has grown tremendously to reach the needs of all of Lynchburg and the surrounding area with their Backpack for Kids program (Food for Thought) and their food pantry known as **Food for Families**. To date the mission has opened a **Community Resource Center** to teach basic nutrition and homemaking skills, life skills training program, (Life Skills Institute). The problem of hunger among students was recognized, and the **Food for Thought** backpack program was launched in 2018 and 900 students are reached weekly with this program. The food program continues with well over 200 families being served weekly. (Parkview Mission website, All About Us) Also, the mission hosts the **Getting Ahead** classes in partnership with Lynchburg Social Services. This curriculum is based on the Bridges Out of Poverty philosophy and works with local citizens who are living in poverty to build their social resources and assist with financial stability.

- 2015-2018- No Walls Ministry and Community Connected (the Open Table Model) were formed as separate non-profits to assist citizens living in poverty to move to self-sufficiency.
 - Community Connected/Open Table's goal is to tear down barriers that are social, economic, racial, and generational for the individual or family that they work with over a period of time. In the Open Table model, 6-8 community volunteers come together once a week for a year to support the individual or family by drawing up and implementing a "life plan" to help them create transformational change. With this particular approach, all of the table members work together to build trust and to problem solve with the individual living in poverty so as to have a positive outcome and impact. The goals center around financial, educational, occupational, health and family goals. The Open Table model has a 97-98 percent graduation rate for participants. (Katov, 2018).
 - No Walls Ministry-obtained non-profit status in 2015 and set about bringing together local churches, stressing that denominational differences in Lynchburg should not prevent a collective effort to help our community members who are struggling financially. The members joined efforts to assist community members in need of furniture, appliances, cars, etc. Work teams were formed from the church members to work together to assist as needed with needs, for example, painting homes, carpentry work, building a playground for children in the White Rock neighborhood. NO Walls also strives to break down walls between the races, and those who have many resources and those who do not.
- Fall of 2018-Lynchburg Beacon of Hope announces ***Stay Close Go Far*** Scholarships- Beginning in the spring of 2019 and continuing until Spring of 2024, all graduates of the two public high schools in Lynchburg, E. C. Glass and Heritage High Schools (which is approximately 550 students)—will be eligible for up to \$8,000 in scholarships to attend local colleges, universities or accredited technical certification programs. ***The Stay Close,***

Go Far Promise Scholarship Program is funded entirely by local citizens and businesses in the Lynchburg area. All graduates can go to Central Virginia Community College for free and any graduate attending Centra College of Nursing, Liberty University, University of Lynchburg, Randolph College, and Sweet Briar College and can receive up to \$8,000. In addition, this non-profit offer 10-15 \$5,000 scholarships to go anywhere in the Commonwealth. To date, this non-profit has raised almost 7 million dollars to fund the scholarships. In 2019 over 40% of the graduating class received the SCGF scholarships and in 2020 over 46% of the graduating class accepted the scholarships to attend CVCC and local colleges and universities as well as certified technical programs. As students with scholarships head off to college or to technical school, they are mentored by **Beacon Buddies**, who are community members who keep in touch with them during their post-secondary experience. They will send encouraging emails, take them out for coffee, send them care packages, etc. The organization also established an Office of College Success, the director of this program keeps in touch with each student who accepts a scholarship, many times problem solving with the student solutions to challenges that they are facing.

Note that one recommendation of the Weldon Cooper study was to invest in creating job opportunities. Lynchburg Beacon of Hope exists to give Lynchburg's young people fair and equitable access to higher education and technical certification training programs after high school. This kind of proactive investment in Lynchburg's youth ensures a secure economic future—not just for our young workers and their families—but for this region as a whole.

- Tuesday, January 28, 2020, all nine Bridges to Progress grant applications were approved! Over \$112,000 was approved by Lynchburg City Council for the taskforce. A few of the action plans that were funded of the task forces were:
 - Services will be provided through Getting Ahead classes, training through Virginia Career Works, and ongoing social support through Community Connected's Open Table model.
 - Smart Beginnings Central Virginia, a partner in the Early Childhood Care and Education Workgroup, will provide intensive classroom-based coaching at the White Rock Head Start Center.
 - The Faith Taskforce will partner with approximately 25 families of the Fairview Community Center to offer three sessions of a four-week program to enhance family money management skills as well as family soft skills necessary to secure and maintain gainful careers.
 - The Food taskforce will purchase 100 transit folding shopping carts for citizens regularly utilizing food agencies that are challenged with transporting groceries via walking or public transportation.

As you can see our community has stepped up and worked together to find real, sustainable solutions to our poverty numbers however this has been and will continue to be a difficult journey. There are no easy fixes to systemic poverty however it is good to see progress. It is important to remember that when we talk about poverty we are also talking about economic development and the financial well-being of all of our citizens. When people are able to move out of poverty, work in jobs that pay living wages, and are able to enjoy what most of us take for granted, the entire community becomes stronger.

Here is a graph of some of the numbers that reflect our poverty rate and our median income, is this a direct correlation from what has been done over the last 10 years? Hopefully, it is. However, In the next few years we will see the impact of COVID on our poverty rate and our median income.

How did our stories of RJ, LA and CS end?

- All 3 individuals used the services of Park View Mission, they received food from the food pantry and attended the dinners. They all used the Health Center on 5th Street for various reasons.
- RJ and CS signed up for the Getting Ahead Classes at Parkview Mission and graduated, both of them became members of their own Open Table
- Both became employed, RJ received a car from No Walls Ministry. CS was able to obtain a car from a resource on her table, and she was working as a waitress.
- RJ stayed with his Open Table for one year, he graduated, made lifetime friends and mentors from the group, was able to get his own apartment and became a teacher's aide in a local school system, and he now mentors' young men
- CS was attending her Open Table, working on becoming more stable so she could her children back. Then COVID hit, and her table meetings became virtual, and she lost her job when the restaurants closed. She stopped attending her virtual meetings, returned to drugs and overdosed and pass away.
- What about LA our college student? He returned to Lynchburg stayed at the Salvation Army, reconnected with LBOH and his Beacon Buddies. This network of individuals helped LA obtain a job at Centra Health through the Tech Hire program that the City of Lynchburg had established for those who are younger and harder to employ. He received an old bike and a new helmet from his Beacon Buddies, as well as a loan from them to get a room in a rooming house. He went to work each day, paid back all of the loan, enrolled in Community College with the assistance of LBOH and Pell grants and graduated with straight A's from CVCC while working a full-time job. He wanted to return to his University and after encouragement from all of his mentors, he set up a meeting with the dean and presented his case. His Beacon Buddies also wrote character references to the dean. Meanwhile, he did community service for stealing and began to attend NA/AA meetings. He was reinstated at the University and is on track to graduate

with honors, he lives in drug free housing on the campus and has been drug/alcohol free the entire time. He plans to go on to graduate school and is applying to very prestige institutions of higher learning.

My last question to you is did you walk in their shoes tonight? Do you want to become a member of our culture of caring in Lynchburg? If so see me or email me and I can give you some suggestions.

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A Culture of Care... Walking in Another's Shoes

BY JOAN FOSTER

Pope Francis urges Americans to help the less fortunate:

"I would encourage you to keep in mind all those people around us who are trapped in a cycle of poverty. They too need to be given hope. The fight against poverty and hunger must be fought constantly and, on many fronts, especially in its causes. Now is the time for courageous actions and strategies, aimed at implementing a 'culture of care' and an integrated approach to combating poverty"

-POPE FRANCIS

Atticus' words of advice to his daughter, Scout:





“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

-CHAPTER 3, TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

"Red-Lining" in Lynchburg

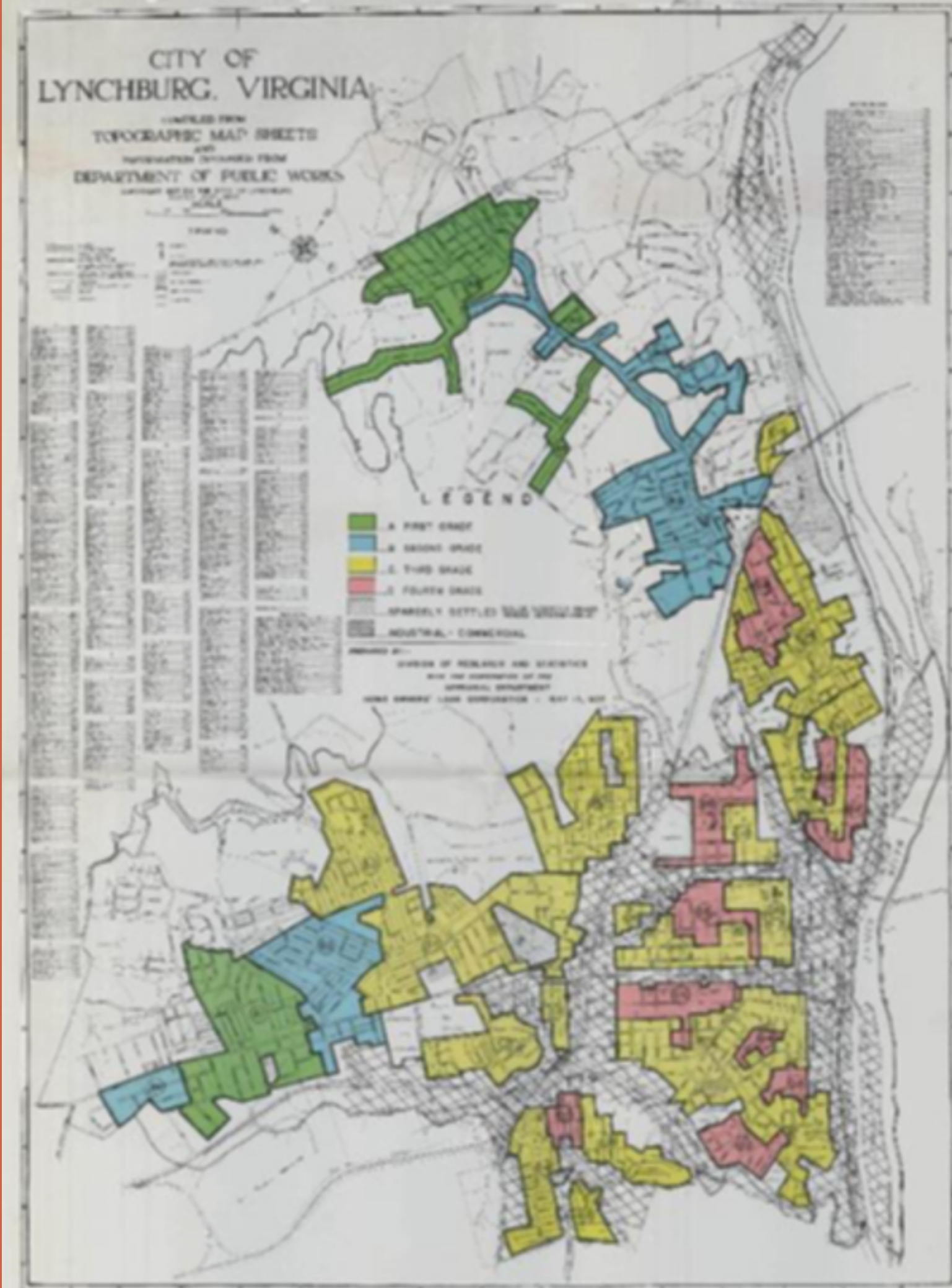
MAP OF LYNCHBURG, JULY 1936

KEY:

-  A- Best
-  B- Still Desirable
-  C- In decline or transition
-  D- Hazardous

Note that the mortgage opportunities in "C" and "D" neighborhoods were limited or none

MAP PRESENTED TO BRIDGES TO PROGRESS BY
DR. JOHN ABELL, JULY 2019



Story #1: RJ

FAMILY LIFE

- Intergenerational poverty
- Neither of his parents completed high school and lacked employable skills
- Parents worked tirelessly to provide food and shelter
- Family acquired a home through Habitat for Humanity

EDUCATION & WORK

- RJ attended community college and earned his associate's degree
- Found a full-time job, moved into his own apartment, with the mindset "Life was great!"

TRAGEDY HITS

- RJ's father suddenly died of an apparent heart attack, leaving RJ and his mother devastated
- This event triggered a downward spiral for RJ
- RJ lost his job and apartment
- He moved home and fell into the "wrong crowd," drifting into a dark place
- His mother kept her home, but could barely manage food, utilities, and transportation

Story #2: LA

FAMILY LIFE

- Dysfunctional family living from paycheck to paycheck
- Parents struggled to provide basic needs for children
- Both parents were recovering addicts who met in a recovery program

EDUCATION & WORK

- LA excelled in school and stood out because of his accomplishments
- Received a total scholarship to attend a prestigious university in the Commonwealth--this scholarship amounted to \$74,000 per year for 4 years!

TRAGEDY HITS

- Upon graduating high school, LA continued to make poor social decisions and was told to move out of his home, causing him to enter University with all of his belongings in one large trash bag.
- During his first year at school, LA did not excel academically due to the added stress in his life. LA also struggled socially since he didn't fit in with the affluent culture at the school.
- At the end of his freshman year, LA was caught stealing an article of clothing and was told he could not return to the University the following year, causing him to arrive back in Lynchburg homeless.

Story #3: CS

FAMILY LIFE

- Intergenerational poverty and dysfunctional family
- Her mother left, and the father had to raise 3 children on his own, working long hours struggling to keep the family together
- The kids were often left home alone while dad worked, and CS became a teen mom

TRAGEDY HITS

- As a teen mom, CS had poor on-going medical care, and during one of her pregnancies it was discovered that she had a significant medical problem that required surgery
- After surgery, she quickly became addicted to pain killers
- Her addiction to pain killers led to criminal activity, where she ended up caught and tried with a criminal record
- CS lost her 2 children to the foster care system and became homeless

Median Household Income and Poverty Rate in Lynchburg

YEAR	MHI*	POVERTY RATE
2015	\$39,589	24.8%
2016	\$40,728	24.3%
2017	\$41,971	22.3%
2018	\$43,374	21.8%
2019	\$46,409	19.5%

**MHI = Median Household Income*

To get involved...get
in touch!

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