

Activist, Advocate, Collaborative Leader



Robert L. Caldwell, Jr

Primary Professional Focus:

Urban community transformation through advocacy for research based and culturally informed public policy and the development of asset oriented social and human service programs and services

- More than 25 years of social service and community development experience
- Award winning developer of social service programs
- Advocacy efforts resulting in over \$200 million dollars in community development investment
- Oversight of operating budgets in excess of 10 million dollars
- Developed programs and services that have served over 5000 families

AnswerPoverty.org

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Professional Achievements

A Columbus, Ohio native, Robert L. Caldwell, Jr. has been a practitioner and thought leader on the issue of urban poverty for more than twenty-five years. He is the founder or co-founder of several different social and human service initiatives including; The Faith Based Partnership Initiative, an innovative community development effort focused on seeking holistic solutions to the problems faced by underserved urban communities and the P.A.S. Program (Positive Alternative to Suspension), in cooperation with the Columbus Public Schools, to provide academic remediation and social service intervention for students serving out of school suspension. This program won a merit award from the Columbus Chamber of Commerce in 1995. In 1991 he helped develop the R.O.W.T.E.A.M.S. Program (Residents off Welfare Teaching Educating Achieving Motivating Success), which in 1997 won the Governor's Award (Voinovich) for Excellence in Public Service in the State of Ohio. Robert also served as the Managing Director of the YWCA Family Center, Franklin County's (Ohio) only emergency homeless family shelter offering an array of support to homeless families. During his tenure, the shelter served over 1500 families and received national recognition from the National Alliance to End Homelessness. In 2016 Robert received a Distinguished Service Award from The Ohio State University for his work in the Weinland Park Community.

Community Service Achievements

Robert served the center city community where he and his family lived as the founder and past President of the Weinland Park Community Civic Association, a coalition of residents, social service and community organizations and city officials working to improve the quality of life for the residents of the Weinland Park Community; as an Area Commissioner representing Weinland Park on the University Area Commission (a community extension of the Columbus City Council) and as a member of the Board of Directors of Columbus Compact Corporation, the federally designated administrator of Columbus Ohio's Empowerment Zones, charged with the revitalization of Columbus' center city neighborhoods, where he currently serves as Board Chair. He served as an advisor to former Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell, providing grassroots community-based policy input for his gubernatorial campaign; and as a Senior Co-Advocate for The American Center for Civic Character, a character-based civic leadership development initiative. In 2007, Robert was appointed to the Mayor's (Coleman) 2012 Bicentennial Commission and served as Safety Committee Co-Chair. He is currently a Senior Fellow for the Mission Columbus Institute for Community Initiatives, a faith-based, nondenominational community organization working to facilitate collaborative efforts between faith and community-based organizations.

Collaborative Leadership Achievements

The Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan – worked with the City of Columbus Department of Development, community residents and stakeholders as the Committee Chair to develop a comprehensive economic development plan impacting over 100,000 residents, students and employees in living and working in the Weinland Park and South Campus Area.

The Schoenbaum Family Center Development – worked with Columbus Public Schools and The Ohio State College of Education & Human Ecology to facilitate resident and stakeholder involvement in the design and development of a State of the Art community-based child & family development center.

The Holistic Community Assessment Project – worked with Mission Columbus and Central Ohio Youth for Christ to design a holistic community assessment tool to help strategically direct faith community resource investment toward key community issues.

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Professional Highlights

- Received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Community Service
- Received the Merit Award from the Columbus Chamber of Commerce
- Elected representative for Weinland Park (District # 3) of the University Area Commission
- Board of Directors Columbus Compact Corporation
- President, Board of Trustees University Area Enrichment Association
- Member /Safety Committee Co-Chair, Mayor's City of Columbus 2012 Bicentennial Commission
- Fellow, Ray Miller Institute for Change & Leadership
- Senior Co- Advocate, American Center for Civic Character
- Co-Chair, The OSU Youth Violence Prevention Advisory Board
- Chair, Safe Neighborhoods Results Committee for the United Way of Central Ohio
- Chairperson of the Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan Working Committee
- Founder & Past President for the Weinland Park Community Civic Association

Professional Experience

Executive Director – AnswerPoverty.org (Formerly the Center for Urban Poverty Solutions) Columbus, Ohio – Training & Education organization working to advance public policy education and social service practice towards solutions to poverty in urban communities. www.answerpoverty.org (2008 – Current)

Regional Director for Training & Development – Think Tank, Inc. Springfield, Ohio – Training and education organization working to build the capacity of social service organizations. We provide customized training and training resources that equip community leaders and stakeholders to address poverty and lead community renewal. www.thinktank-inc.org (2014 – Current)

Managing Partner - Community Revitalization Associates, LLC, Columbus, Ohio An urban community development consulting firm focused on the revitalization of blighted urban communities through strategic planning and whole community collaboration. (2003 – Current)

Managing Director - YWCA Family Center Columbus, Ohio – Homeless Family Shelter providing family support, housing, employment advocacy, childcare for homeless families in Franklin County. Responsibilities included the development and oversight of a \$2 million annual budget, the leadership of over 60 operations and program services staff, and the management of partnerships with over 15 community based agencies to coordinate resources to serve homeless families. (2007 – 2009)

Executive Director, The Faith Based Partnership Initiative Columbus, Ohio - An innovative faith based community development organization that focused primarily on employment and employment support for people transitioning from welfare to work. Responsibilities included community resource networking, volunteer recruiting/training, strategic planning, workshop facilitation, and donor development. (2002 – 2007)

Executive Director/Program Coordinator, TEACH- The Enrichment Association of Community Healing (formally Greenbrier Enrichment Center), Columbus, Ohio – A faith based social service organization focused on supporting people transitioning from welfare to work. Responsibilities included program development, the hiring, training, and supervision of staff, the supervision of three TEACH Service Centers in two Ohio cities, and five different faith-based programming efforts, grant writing, resource networking, and reporting to various funding sources. (1989-94 / 1997-2002)

Education

B. A. from Denison University in Granville, Ohio in Corporate and Organizational Communication with emphasis in English and Organizational Psychology. This degree also included coursework at The Ohio State University in Politics and American Culture. (1982)

Graduate studies at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio in Religious Education, Family Counseling and Pastoral Counseling (1989/90)

Graduate studies at The University of Dayton (at Capital University) in Counseling, Group Therapy and Ethnics in Professional Helping (1991/92)

Graduate and Fellow of the Ray Miller Institute for Change & Leadership at The Ohio State University African & African American Studies Extension Center in Columbus, Ohio (2006)

Family

Robert, his wife Michelle and their four children lived out their authentic commitment to urban community building by living and working for over a decade in Weinland Park, a blighted, low-income urban community located just south of the main campus of The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.