

AL BAILEY

THE RIGHT SPEAKER * AT THE RIGHT TIME



Al Bailey Remembering the Hard Times

The journey of life is, for some, a trip down some rocky roads, but Al Bailey decided that the road he had traveled would not define him.

Although a troubled young child, who was placed in the Foster Care system by a loving mother trying to do the best she could for her son, Al Bailey has turned lemons into lemonade.

“In my ten years in the system (and 23 foster and group homes) I made some bad choices along the way, but now look at me.... Well, that’s what I want to show others. Show them that you too can make positive changes, change your life and even be a positive part of any community,” Bailey said. Al Bailey uses his life experiences to illustrate that he is not just another do-gooder.

“I can’t become a statistic like all of my other counterparts,” as Bailey said in an Oct. 2000 interview with reporter Jacqueline Marino for the Cleveland Scene. He is a man with the experience, the life lessons and a passion that enables him to help others realize they have goals and the power to achieve them.

“I had a desire to be politically active from a young age,” Bailey admits, which was confirmed by Isaiah Porter, a former fellow group home resident. Bailey started talking about running for office at the age of 11, according to Porter. At age 14 Bailey began by working for Cleveland City Councilwoman Patricia Britt. Bailey was the only student who consistently showed up to work on the Cleveland Teachers Union limited tax abatement initiative, according to then Second Vice President Meryl Johnson, CTU.

Although the initiative was voted down Bailey was not dissuaded. Shortly thereafter he ran for the State of Ohio’s School Board, making history. Bailey was the youngest candidate to ever run for a state level position. Bailey garnered 10,000 votes, placing 6th out of 10, in which several other candidates were seasoned politicians. Not bad for his first run.

“After running for State School Board I decided to head back into the game and I ran for City Council against a 16-year incumbent,” Bailey remembers. Although Bailey did not win, he has the distinction of rising more money than even the incumbent did, thus showing his growing appeal to a vast group of people. Bailey was further spurred into action after searching an Ohio State website where he located many of the foster kids he had grown up with.

“I was astonished to find most of them in jail or dead.” That is when Al Bailey started his first non-profit – Social and Educational Betterment Coalition, Inc. -- a supportive service for youth who were aging out of the Foster Care System.

In a four year period Bailey took this SEB Coalition from a mere idea to a \$750,000 a year budget, during which time he received many proclamations from the Mayor, County Commissioners and other community leaders, including the Catholic Churches Social Services

Arm, Catholic Charities and the Knights of St. Peter Claver African American Male Image Award.

Over the years Bailey has gone from a consumer of the Social Service system to working within the system as a Social Services Manager and a Social Services Board Member. His goal is helping others achieve their very best. Al Bailey and his team at Eye for Change Consulting, Inc. see the future as a bright one, one that, with the right guidance, can be shown to and realized by others.

“I want to use my life, my experiences, and my mistakes to make organizations work more efficiently. You know... so they can better assist the folks they are trying to help,” Bailey said.

Bailey is aware that effective organizations start with effective and efficient management teams that are able to reach donors who understand what is needed out there. “But I know that some groups are not currently effective,” Bailey said. He wants to help change that. Furthermore, Bailey knows how to reach the donors.

“A donor who understands what is needed and knows that an organization’s goals are realistic, designed to be effective and designed to meet the specific needs of those slipping through the cracks... well they become committed to an organization’s cause. Consequently, becoming supporters of the cause and the organization,” Bailey said.

Al Bailey and his team at Eye for Change Consulting, Inc. are the right team at the right time to help groups like yours and agencies focus, raise the funds needed and thus reach their target audience.

His story reminds us all that WE too can keep moving after adversity.