

We're In This Together

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In September 2017, the NBA Incubate Initiative hosted the 2017 SENT Seminar: Equipping Social ENTrepreneurs for Leadership and Change, in Leavenworth, Kansas. Designed for Disciples and their leadership teams who are starting new health and social services ministries, the SENT Seminar covers the basics of nonprofit ministry startups, as well as skills for leadership and change in our global and faith communities. Eliud Peralez, Lilies of the Valley, attended as a 2017 SENT Seminar Participant with his mother, Guillermina Peralez, and shares this reflection.



One of the beautiful takeaways from our participation in the National Benevolent Association SENT seminar, was the fact that our struggle was heard by loving people who are in ministries that love to help the marginalized, just like us. It was great to see how everyone shared their passionate stories that helped us relate to our stories.

Working with a nonprofit organization can sometimes feel like a daunting task, especially when you have limited resources and staff, but when everyone comes together to share their ideas of how you can become better, running a nonprofit organization doesn't seem impossible after all. Even today, our nonprofit "Lilies of the Valley," has SENT Participants asking how they can lend a helping hand. Networking!! We are grateful to God for this opportunity to network with friends that aren't competing to see whose organization can be better, but instead come seeking how can we be of better service to our community.

It's wonderful to see how the love of our neighbor can create organizations that vary from helping abused and neglected women, to helping the incarcerated, to helping the elderly who have been forgotten in their homes. All these leaders bring an awareness to situations that you might never have thought existed. Sometimes you know what or who you want to help in your community, but you don't know how to begin or how to organize, and it still warms our heart to see that NBA takes the time to equip us with resources that can help us get the jumpstart we need.

The entire time my mother and I were attending, we kept talking about how our future plans seem to get brighter now that we have all this information to take back home, and how we could not wait to get started. We've sat down and reviewed our notes on everything that was shared by our workshop leaders, and we couldn't help but get excited about how we could see our organization come this far with the help of God.

Ultimately, we are grateful for all the people who took that step of faith and attended this seminar. We are grateful for their stories, lives, passion, and hearts. We are forever grateful for their offers of help with prayer and encouragement. It's a blessing to know that we are not alone. We are a team of achievers and servants. We are a team of compassionate and loving individuals that seek to value others. We are a team that shoots for the stars and dreams big. We are a team that takes chances and works to become better. We are a team that lifts each other and prays for one another. We are grateful for all the opportunities that have come from being a part of this seminar. We are grateful for everyone who put this event together and shared their talents to show us that we are not alone, but that we're in this together...

The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at nbacares.org/incubate or by contacting Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, at awatkins@nbacares.org.