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Our University- Reach

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Our University- Reach

Reach is the ability of an institution; a family, a university, a seat of commerce, a government to generate impact beyond its home or geographic boundaries. Reach is powered by quality. Quality comes from knowledge and insight. Knowledge and insight are the nephews and nieces of mobilized study and research - action. The result of reach is interest and attention. Impact when real, is not impression, but change.

Reach is always the result of analysis and thoughtful action. It is never driven by casting to and fro for ideas and concepts, looking for a place to land, hoping for a positive impression, longing for good result.

Reach is the product of toil and organizations that aspire to excellence know that.

The job of any university is to create reach. The best universities create reach by solving important problems at home. The apparent contradiction - that you gain reach, a global phenomenon through local action - is not real. The problems of one geographic region are shadows cast by problems of another.

At our university we have excellent programs that attend to the needs of the people of Southern Illinois. Project 12-Ways addresses the complex and onerous problems that live at the intersection of poverty and family life leading to, among other things, neglect and child abuse.

Poverty is something we don't lack in Southern Illinois. We should be experts.

This is not a lament. Project 12-Ways won't allow that. It is a statement of fact, and a cause for action. The faculty and graduate students who work in this program do more than just work. They are driven. They toil. The toil produces results. Because it is thoughtful and intelligent the results have value, and for that reason Project 12-Ways has reach. It addresses real problems, of real people, in Southern Illinois.

Someone might argue this is too local, attention to the challenges of poverty and family life in Southern Illinois are unique, and would not be of interest or use to people outside our geographic region. The problems of family life and being poor are different in rural locations with high unemployment and low density living environments. Single-wide solutions won't work in a high rise world. However, regions all over the United States and world have parallel forces at work, creating parallel life circumstances, and the need for solutions that work in Southern Illinois.

And, people are people.

When Project 12-Ways creates ideas and insights that positively transform family life here, they can be used all over our nation and the world. The dilemma of poverty, and its' impact on family life, knows no geographic or cultural boundary. Instead, dealing with these problems in a profound way has value over and over again. Anywhere.

Progress locally creates reach and opportunity globally.

The mother of reach provided by Project 12- Ways is the Rehabilitation Institute. Our world renowned programs in Rehabilitation have been vibrant and emulated for years. Delyte Morris, who took deep satisfaction in applying knowledge to solve real problems, was the father of the Rehabilitation Institute. He understood what reach was, and how it could be attained. He did not create the program to create reach. Too shallow for a deep man. He created the program to solve a set of real problems. Passion at work.

And, we are reminded of this simple truth, by our mothers and fathers and, by the French poet Jean De La Fontaine when he quipped, *"By the work one knows the workmen."*

Excellence and vitality, almost interchangeable concepts, power reach. Nothing else will.