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## Alliance of groups moving to reform Dallas bail system

By David Wilfong  
NDG Contributing Writer

Throughout the public forums held for judges' races in the Dallas County Democratic primary, the issue of bail reform was constantly raised by candidates seeking election. Outside the political arena, two separate efforts are underway to address the matter; one challenging the current system, and one seeking to provide relief to those incarcerated under the current rules.

The complaint about the current bail system is the fact that being able to post bail prior to trial creates an unfair hardship for poorer defendants.

The newest movement for change comes from a local organization calling itself the Community Bail Fund of North Texas. Headed by Chairperson Manuel Valles Tellez, the group seeks to provide grants for economically disadvantaged citizens who find themselves under arrest and unable to make bail on their own.

Tellez grew up in the small panhandle community of Borger, and dreamed of coming to Dallas as he saw it as the "Big City." Working in marketing, he says he loves Dallas life, but began to notice disparities between the different local populations. The difference is especially



*An arrest for even a misdemeanor or low-level felony can be a life-changing catastrophe for low income defendants who cannot afford to bail out of jail. (Photo: Elvert Barnes / Flickr)*

stark in the area of criminal justice.

"It's set up really to punish people who are poor and especially people who are minorities," Tellez said. "Whether you are talking about sentencing or the way cops conduct themselves, but especially when it comes to the bail system. The way the bail system is currently set up is that if you have money, or access to money, or know someone who has money, then you'll be hauled into Lew Sterritt and as long as the crime you commit isn't too, too serious; you are able to get out within a reasonable amount of time."

Normally those short on cash would turn to a bail bond company, but Tellez points out those compa-

nies are looking to make a profit, so they naturally gravitate towards cases with a higher bail amount than some minor offenses receive, leaving a window of need that is too often unmet. Too many times, Tellez said, defendants take a guilty plea just to get out of jail and get back to their jobs and lives.

"The down side to that is that they have a conviction on their record," Tellez said. "The flip side to that is they can wait to fight it out in court. The unfortunate thing is that if you're working to pay bills, chances are your employer isn't going to wait around a week, or two weeks,

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# New 'Firestarters' book reveals innovator, instigator, and initiator insights to help ignite your own life and career

What is the difference between those bold enough to pursue their dreams and others who never get comfortable enough to ignite their lives? The doers are "Firestarters" and, because of them, the world is a much different, and often, better place.

No matter if you are moving up the corporate ladder, starting your own company, or championing a profes-

sional cause, chances are that there are times you ask yourself: "Will I make a difference?" "Can I ignite myself and others?" "Can I fuel the passion and drive that will lead me to success?"

The answer to these questions is an emphatic "yes," as exemplified by those who are already lighting up the world. More than 40 of these individuals are profiled in a new book called "Firestarters:

How Innovators, Instigators, and Initiators Can Inspire You to Ignite Your Own Life" (Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY).

In it, notable Firestarters share advice on what it takes people to start, create, and even disrupt in order to achieve their dreams. Their stories, along with psychological, organizational, and business research from The Firestarters Framework, pro-

vides unique insights into what makes some people just fan the flames, while other spark the fire and realize success.

To wet your proverbial whistle, Palokoff, along with her co-authors Dr. Paul Eder, organizational effectiveness researcher; and Raoul Davis, Jr., CEO brand strategist, offer these three insights on how to become a Firestarter:

1. Ignite, fuel, and accel-

erate success. There are factors based on personality, situations, and environment that you need to recognize in yourself and optimize to be successful. For example, what igniters trigger an "aha moment?" Is it freedom, passion, talent or something else? What fuels such as prestige, opportunity, luck, or money can you use to propel an idea, business, or cause? How can factors including

collaboration, mission, and competition help accelerate you to the next level?

2. Replicate accomplishments to gain confidence. Look for connections between seemingly disparate events, learn what works across situations, and generalize this knowledge to other activities. By looking for patterns of achievement,

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or even a month or two to wait for you to get out and continue paying you in the meantime. So you end up losing your job."

For an innocent defendant without economic means, there is no good choice.

The Community Bail Fund began in November with a collection of individuals ranging from concerned citizens to justice system professionals. Through funds received from SMU and a GoFundMe campaign, the Community Bail Fund of North Texas has raised more than \$10,000 and is looking to give defendants

an opportunity to fight their case "from a place of freedom."

The organization has worked out an assessment system based on points to determine who will receive help with bail. This is based on practices from other parts of the country, and Tellez said the group is looking to start bailing out defendants in the May-June time frame.

The other effort underway seeks to shed light on the process of setting bail itself.

Currently bail proceedings in Dallas County are held behind closed doors, which many allege makes it

easier to apply higher bail requirements. To those ends, a lawsuit has been filed against Dallas County, alleging the current bail system is unconstitutional. Social justice organizations Faith in Texas, the Texas Organizing Project Education Fund, Civil Rights Corps, the Texas Fair Defense Project and the ACLU of Texas are plaintiffs in the suit.

"Matthew 25 teaches us that it is our duty as Christians to help the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the weary, and those in prison," said Rev. Edwin Robinson, executive director for Faith in Texas. "As people of faith we believe it's not just our responsibility or our legal

right, but more importantly it is our faithful calling to be with our sisters and brothers in every place of human need. Being denied access to bail proceedings is not just a hurdle, but a brick wall preventing us from living out our sacred calling of caring for our neighbors."

The local organizations now have legal heavy-hitters behind them with the addition of the ACLU.

"Faith in Texas and Texas

Organizing Project Education Fund are doing tremendous work pushing to end mass incarceration in Dallas County," said Kali Cohn, staff attorney for the ACLU of Texas. "As plaintiffs in this lawsuit, they are standing up once again to demand that the public has the tools to hold decision makers accountable."

Tellez said he has received support from both sides of the aisle on the

issue of bail reform, and it is a subject that has too often been "crowded out" locally by other issues. It is a subject which affects all Dallas County residents, from the poor who are incarcerated to the rich who pay taxes to keep defendants in jail.

"Our justice system is based on the presumption of innocence until proven guilty," Tellez said. "But that isn't always the case."

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thousands of young people join the registry over the years, and we're excited to engage even more to be life-saving advocates in 2018."

Since 2011, Give a Spit About Cancer has added 8,000 young people to the bone marrow registry through Be The Match. Of those, 50 have already gone on to give potentially life-saving donations to patients in need.

Brother duo Ayo & Teo, most known for their viral dance challenges and hit single "Rolex," have helped raise awareness to young people through recording a PSA and encouraging their fans to complete the #SwabChallenge and get on the registry!

"We love engaging with our fans on social media, and we've seen how much they love competing in our dance challenges," said Ayo & Teo. "We're excited to join forces with DoSomething.org and Johnson & Johnson for the #SwabChallenge, to get more young people aware of their power to defeat cancer."


Through April 30, young people can host their own bone marrow registration drives in their local communities, or on college campuses. People can register for the national bone marrow registry through Be The Match by filling out a 15 minute online form. From there it's simple, Be The Match sends a swab kit.

All you have to do is swab some spit from your cheek (following the detailed instructions) and then mail it in with the prepaid envelope provided. From there, Be The Match will notify people if they are a potential match.


Another way to support the "Give a Spit About Cancer" campaign is by downloading the Donate a Photo app available on the iTunes App Store and in Google Play. For every photo taken in the app before May 27, Johnson & Johnson will donate \$1 to DoSomething.org to offset the costs associated with joining the Be The Match registry.

To participate in Give a Spit About Cancer, text SPIT to 38383 or visit DoSomething.org/spit.


**COLLABORATE**




**LEARN & GROW**




**THRIVE**





*"I'm originally from Sacramento, California, so learning about the history and culture of Dallas is really cool to me."*

**Sasha**  
AGENT-MARRIER  
Special Education Teacher



apply online  
**CFBJOBS.COM**



**Happy Easter  
Everybody, visit a  
church this coming  
Sunday!**

**BETHEL BIBLE  
FELLOWSHIP,  
CARROLLTON  
(A PLACE TO BELONG)**

**NOTICE:** Pastor Woodson serves the community by providing "Professional Therapy and Counseling Services" on a "Sliding Fee" scale. To schedule an appointment call the Pastoral Counseling Center at 972-526-4525 or email the church at [www.bethelbiblefellowship.org](mailto:www.bethelbiblefellowship.org)

Discover Hope and Help for daily living; and, you don't have to be a member to come. The Connect-2-Reflect (C2R) meetings are held in comfortable and relaxed homes, one in Carrollton and one in Plano, refreshments are served. Call the church for details.

**April 1, 9:45 am**

This is no April Fool's Day. We will have Communion; and, Bethel's pastors and members invite you to join us as we celebrate the glorious Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on this Easter Sunday. Our Total Praise Team is doing a special production with Dance Choreographer Helena Webb; you don't want to miss this special praise dance.

**April 4, 7 p.m.**

Join us in Wednesday's Prayer and Bible Study Class with Senior Pastor

Woodson, Pastor Larry Gardner, Pastor Bernadette, and others conducting finishing a study on the book of Ephesians with supporting chapters and verses. Spiritual maturity is God's desire for you; it's Time to Grow in the Word of God.

**April 7, 10 am - 12 Noon**  
Ladies, join our Women's Ministry monthly meeting. W.O.R.T.H (Women of Reconciliation, Truth and Hope) we will continue our discussion on the War Room book.

Dr. Terrance Woodson, Senior Pastor  
1944 E. Hebron Parkway  
Carrollton, TX 75007  
972-492-4300  
[www.bethelbiblefellowship.org](http://www.bethelbiblefellowship.org)

**FELLOWSHIP  
CHRISTIAN  
CENTER CHURCH IN  
ALLEN  
"THE SHIP"**

**April**

You are invited to look at our Church Demo on our website to see progress on the new building sight as we prepare for the future.

**April 1, 8 a.m.**

Join us in our Sunday Morning Services as we praise and worship God in the Joycie Turner Fellowship Hall; followed by our Sunday Worship Services; and bring someone with you, you will be blessed.

**April 7**

Join us in our Wednesday's 12 Noon-Day Live, Prayer

and Bible Study and/or our Wednesday Night Live, Prayer and Bible Study at 7 p.m. to learn more about God's Word. Be encouraged by God's plan for your maturity and His glory; and most of all; be prepared to grow.

Dr. W. L. Stafford, Sr., Ed. D. Senior Pastor  
1609 14th Street  
Plano, TX 75074  
Future Building location is 2450 K Avenue #300  
Plano, TX 75074  
972-379-3287  
[www.theship3c.org](http://www.theship3c.org)

**INSPIRING BODY OF  
CHRIST CHURCH,  
Let's Go Fishing!  
MATTHEW 4:19**

**March 30, 7 p.m.**

All men are invited to Men's Ministry meeting each Friday night at 7 p.m., (IBOC promotes proactive male leadership.)

**April 1, 10 a.m.**

You are invited to join us for our Easter Service as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We will have Communion.

**April 2, 7 p.m.**

Join us in Monday School as we grow in God's Word and learn what God has to say to us.

Pastor Rickie Rush  
7701 S Westmoreland Road  
Dallas, TX 75237  
972-372-4262  
[www.Ibocchurch.org](http://www.Ibocchurch.org)

**MT. OLIVE CHURCH  
OF PLANO (MOCOP)  
(Uniting the Body of  
Christ Among Nations)**

**April 1, 10 a.m.**

Join us for Morning Worship Service as we praise and worship God for His Honor and His glory; and don't forget to comeback at 7 p.m. for our Brazilian Church.

**April 4, 7 p.m.**

You're invited to our Wednesday's Bible Study class; you will learn what God has to say to us. Come to be encouraged by God's plan for your spiritual growth and His glory.

Pastor Sam Fenceroy  
Senior Pastor and  
Pastor Gloria Fenceroy  
300 Chisholm Place  
Plano, TX 75075  
972-633-5511  
[www.mocop.org](http://www.mocop.org)

**NEW MOUNT ZION  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
(Abiding in Christ)**

**April 1, 7 a.m.**

Join us for our Early Service or our Morning Worship Service as we praise and worship God, you will be blessed.

**April 4, 7 pm**

Join us at our Wednesday's Intercessory as we pray to God for others. Call the church for details for details.

Dr. Tommy L. Brown, Ed. D. Senior Pastor  
9550 Shepherd Road  
Dallas, TX 75243

214-341-6459  
[nmzbcofdallas@aol.com](mailto:nmzbcofdallas@aol.com)

**SHILOH MBC  
IN PLANO  
(WHERE COMMUNITY  
BECOMES FAMILY)**

Come and connect to God through Shiloh; grow in Christ through the study of God's Word; and Serve God through service to each other and to the world. John 12:26.

**April 1, 8 am & 11 am**

You are invited to join us as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. We would love to have you at our services.

**April 4, 7 p.m.**  
You're invited to our Wednesday's Bible Study to learn more about God's Word. Come and be encouraged by God's plan for your maturity and growth; it's all for His glory and His honor. We are, "Growing in Christ through the study of His Word."

Our church ministries offer opportunities for motivation and growth; join us and see. Be blessed of the Lord.

Dr. Isaiah Joshua, Jr. Senior Pastor  
920 E. 14th Street  
Plano, TX 75074  
972-423-6695  
[www.smbcplano.org](http://www.smbcplano.org)



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**972-509-9049**



**IGNITE**, continued from Page 11

Firestarters replicate their success, which then creates an overall sense of positivism and confidence.

3. Plan for inevitable extinguishers. People are often unaware of how bumpy the road to success can be and

how inevitable extinguishers can crush them. You can avoid obstacles, however, by actively planning to reduce their impact. Successful people expect extinguishers and develop mechanisms to cope with discouragement and

mistakes. One important way is to have a life filled with supporters who can nurture, protect, and even challenge.

Use this pragmatic advice to ignite the qualities that will lead you toward pursuing and realizing our own dreams. Today is as good a day to start as ever.

*Branding, business and entrepreneurship success pundit, Merilee Kern, MBA, is an influential media voice and lauded communications strategist. Follow her on Twitter here: [twitter.com/LuxeListEditor](https://twitter.com/LuxeListEditor) and Facebook [Facebook.com/TheLuxeList](https://facebook.com/TheLuxeList).*

**Church Happenings is a weekly calendar of religious services produced by the North Dallas Gazette. To make additions or corrections to the calendar, contact: [religion@northdallasgazette.com](mailto:religion@northdallasgazette.com)**