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Serving Muncie and East Central Indiana

Better is at the root of his leadership development concepts



Kyle Evens / The Star Press

HIGH HOPES: Charles Betterton says he can deliver unique leadership advice to Muncie. A colleague calls it "really remarkable" that Betterton is selling his program in the Midwest.

By **DAVID PENTICUFF**
The Star Press

Charles Betterton aims high, talks in rapid-fire syllables like a machine gun and has set his sights on making Muncie and Delaware County a more positive place to live.

Betterton, 47, a native of Mississippi Delta town of Greenville, is founder of the Center For Successful Living, an organization that takes up several rooms at the High Street Square office building, 309 N. High St.

Betterton wants to make the center a resource for community leadership and development by making it a veritable library of motivational philosophies and programs that espouse ways to be successful.

"It's my business because it's my mission," Betterton said, surrounded by

mostly bare walls on the bottom floor of the building.

The center, which Betterton said would be a non-profit enterprise, will provide membership for a fee and access to materials, also at a price that depends on the particular program. Betterton said his main aim was to get the information out, not to make a lot of money.

The man with an Southern evangelical style and a belief in mixing the spiritual and the business world attended college until after he started his career helping disaster victims through federal programs.

When he started, the disasters were tornados. By the time he ended his

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career with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the disasters were impoverished public-housing projects in Detroit and Chicago.

He now holds a master's degree in community development from New Hampshire College.

But, he said, the turning point in his life was reading Norman Vincent Peale's *Power of Positive Thinking* at age 16.

Betterton has lived at the Oakwood Farm Retreat Center near Selma for the past 3 years while building a community development consulting business with clients in New York and Illinois.

The Center for Successful Living is related to another organization Betterton has founded called Center Space.

"It's based in my head and my heart," he said.

It is similar in ethic to his plans for the Center for Successful Living, he said, which is to get people working together — if they want.

"What it is will be determined by the extent of interest in the county," Betterton said of his fledgling effort.

He has been meeting the political and business leaders in the community to encourage their participation.

In September, Betterton brought Chin Ning Chu, an author and motivational speaker to Muncie. He has hopes of bringing another, Mark Victor Hansen, to the city in December.

"That's what I can deliver," Betterton said, "if we find enough people interested."

He plans on offering a "smorgasbord" of various success strategies and

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