



KEEPING IN **THE LOOP** WITH CIRCLES

January 2019

Circles Laurel Highlands Region

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RECRUITMENT TEAM

The Recruitment Team is currently recruiting for the new class of Circles participants. We are looking for people who are ready, willing and able to make a better life for themselves through training and better employment. For information on the application process or dates and locations of new classes, please contact Al Ambrosini, Recruitment Team Chair 724-366-4243 or Sue Ann Priemer, Circles Coordinator 724-437-6050 x3216.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM A LEADER

Initially, I found myself asking, “What is this Circles© program about?” After reading up a bit, I thought Circles© was centered primarily on achieving adequate financial independence. This is, of course, part of the bigger picture. Soon I learned this weekly group entails so much more than just merely honing budgeting skills. The foundation of Circles© was formed with the concept of growing one’s personal social capital. That statement might, admittedly, appear a bit cold. Yet, the reception you receive at Circles© is a far cry from unfriendly.

From the moment I walked in the door of my first meeting, I was greeted by numerous smiling faces and all around welcoming “Hellos.” As one who is typically socially awkward, I felt an unfamiliar accommodating sense of comfort. Here we were all strangers randomly planning to gather together for a hearty meal. I remember thinking to myself, “This should be rather interesting.” In reality, I was genuinely surprised by the experiences people from all different walks of life shared! Through our “Listening Pairs” activity, I discovered a good bit about fellow group members. More importantly, I am cognizant of how well I actually listen to others. These once strangers have welcomed, helped, and talk to me daily outside of our group attendance. With

general kindness and care, we now assist each other through every means possible. Slowly, I am starting to see that this *is* my new “inner circle.” Maybe I could continue to struggle in solitude. Fortunately, I am not so alone anymore. Circles© Laurel Highlands has provided me, an outsider, with the truest gift of friendship.

By April Yeager

CIRCLES GRADUATION



We are proud to announce the graduation of five Leaders on December 12th. They are Breanna McKnight, Nicole Nicholson, Terrance Harris, Marie Lewis and April Yeager. Congratulations!



Terrance being congratulated by Sue Ann Priemer Circles Coordinator, Jim Stark CEO of Fayette County Community Action Agency, Kim Hawk Director of Operations FCCAA, Rita Masi Director of Customer Service FCCAA and Kellie McCoy veteran Circles Leader.

COMMUNITY TEAM

The Community Team has been hard at work providing venues and food for our meetings.

Email Team Chair, Tina Shaffer, at tk34@zoominternet.net to find out how you can help.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION



On Wednesday December 19th, we celebrated Christmas. Through the Giving To Grow program, the Nurse Family Partners, WIC and Circles came together to sponsor a wonderful evening. 37 adults and 37 children, (representing 21 families) enjoyed a wonderful ham dinner, heard healthy eating tips from Susan Mahokey and participated in a cooking demonstration by Kelly McKnight and Sue Ann Priemer. There were fabulous gifts, a fun game and a complete Christmas ham dinner presented to each family.

SERVICES TEAM

The Services Team would like to highlight one of their resources:

The Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) is where people may come to get financial counseling and a complete credit report at no charge.

Contact Rita Masi for more information 724-437-6050 x3213 or rmasi@fccaa.org

JOBS AND EDUCATION TEAM

The Jobs and Education Team would like to announce their new team chairperson, Maria Lovat. Maria is the Adult Education Coordinator for Fayette County Career and Technical Institute. She has an extensive background in post-secondary education. Maria says

she is pleased to be working with Circles and connecting Leaders to educational resources in our area.

On January 16th the Jobs and Education Team will present the evening's topic "The FAFSA". This weekly meeting is open to the public. Please come to receive valuable information on how to complete the FAFSA as the primary resource for tuition assistance.

As you can guess, the Jobs and Education team is dedicated to helping our Leaders with job and education options. Please call Maria if you would like to serve on this team. Her contact information is 724-437-2721 x255 or mlovat@fayettecti.org.



Pictured are April Yeager, Marie Lewis, Heather Wasler, Maria Lovat and April Michels during a volunteer training session. Thank you to all who attended.

BIG VIEW AND CLIFF EFFECTS TEAM

Led by Chairperson Becky Ambrosini, our Big View Team focuses on systemic barriers that prevent individuals from moving out of poverty. Our Big View Team is currently recruiting volunteers. You are welcome to contact Becky at bambrosini@zoominternet.net if you have an interest in addressing issues such as affordable housing, transportation, or the Cliff Effect.

CIRCLES 108 N. BEESON AVE. UNIONTOWN, PA 15401
OR CONTACT BY PHONE AT 724-437-6050 X3216