

## Training for Leaders and Allies

*Getting Ahead in a Just- Gettin'- By World* training is offered to potential Leaders. Training participants study the causes of poverty and learn the hidden rules of economic class. They identify resources and set goals, to build financial, professional, and social resources in their own lives. Getting Ahead is one night a week for about 17 weeks. Children's programming and meals are provided free of charge.

*Bridges Out of Poverty* training is offered to potential Allies. Allies learn the hidden rules of economic class, which helps them to develop a better understanding of poverty as it exists in their own community. Allies also learn valuable skills that will help them form a solid, supportive relationship with their Circle Leader.

## About the Circles™ Initiative

Circles™ is an innovative campaign to eliminate poverty that is active in dozens of locations throughout the country. A local Guiding Coalition provides the framework to increase the emotional and financial stability of participating families and reduce their use of welfare benefits. Just as importantly, Circles brings the experience of poverty into the hearts and minds of community members and leaders, taking us one step closer to a national commitment to end poverty.

*"What's different about the Circles™ Initiative is that it empowers the person moving out of poverty and builds community at all levels of participation."*

- Linda Slevers,  
Bloomington Township Trustee  
and Guiding Coalition Member

Learn more about the Circles™  
Initiative at SCCAP by calling

**(812) 339-3447**

extension  
218 or 206



South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP)  
is the lead agency for the Monroe County Circles™ Initiative.

SCCAP provides staffing, training, funding, and community education for this innovative program to end poverty in our community.



*"We believe that all people need sufficient relationships, money, and meaning in their lives to thrive."*

- Monroe County Circles™ Guiding Coalition.



## Supporting Individuals and Building Community

A **Circle** is a supportive friendship across class lines, made up of one **Circle Leader** who is living on a low-income and three or four **Circle Allies** who are living on a middle-class income. A Circle typically meets once or twice a month to work toward achieving the Circle Leader's plans for moving out of poverty.

### Circle Leaders

**Circle Leaders** are individuals or families who are motivated to get out of poverty. The Leader is in charge of creating his or her own plan to increase their financial, professional, and social resources to move out of poverty. The Leader will teach his or her Ally about the experience of poverty. Leaders are comfortable participating in groups and have a willingness to accept support from others, especially Circle Allies.

### Circle Allies

Circle Allies are community members who form a supportive friendship with a Circle Leader. Allies work with the Leader to figure out how to accomplish his or her plan, offering help in areas in which they are somewhat knowledgeable, whether it's financial, educational, or social/community connections. Allies can be anyone with stable resources who genuinely wants to help and to learn.

**Circles provides support by making the sort of personal and community connections that are important for successful life change.**

*"The positive impact that Circles is making in my life is tremendous – I feel empowered."*

- Tracey, Circle Leader



**Circle™  
Leaders**

Families direct  
their Circle



## How It Works

Circle Leaders and Allies are matched by their talents and interests and are each asked to make an 18 month commitment. Everyone is expected to meet with his or her Circle at least once a month. In addition, Leaders are asked to attend the weekly Community Meeting. Children's programming and dinner are provided during this time. It is the connection formed during these meetings with Allies and other Leaders that builds respect and understanding, linking people together to end poverty one family at a time.

## Community Education and Big View

Through outreach events, Circles™ provides the community with a framework for understanding poverty. It is our goal to raise awareness of issues of poverty so that everyone can come together to work on removing the barriers that make it difficult for people to get out of poverty.

*"My Circle gave me a sense of family that I needed. They were reliable and held me accountable to my dreams."*

- Circle Leader

