



Guiding Coalition Board Membership

CEO: Ron Errett

Chairman: Rev. Dominic Verdell

Teresa Buff, Robert Lark, Gary McElfresh

Rev. Geri Williams, Karen Winner,

Olivia Lazor, Ray Benedict

Congratulations to the 3rd Class of Circle Leaders July 13, 2010



Rear: Peter Bucciarelli Linda Anderson, Carl DiFeo, Front :Linda Parillo, Betty Simmons, Michelle Kelly

The broad smiles tell a story of the success that our graduates are feeling at this point in their journey toward self sufficiency. Their individual persistence in attending classes and maintaining the work book requirements brought them to this point in their efforts. They now enter the next stage of their journey as they continue to apply the lessons they learned. They are on the threshold of a new beginning.



Bridges Out of Poverty Training Workshop

When: Friday September 10, 2010,

A day long training on Ruby Payne's 'Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities'.

The session will focus on the framework for understanding poverty, including mental models, research, key points, hidden rules, and language and family structures.

Where: Grace Chapel Community Church 4075Lamor Road, Hermitage, PA 16148

Time: 9:30 am — 3:30 pm -½ hour lunch (provided).

Cost: The workshop fee \$10.00 (includes lunch)

No fee to be charged for Circle Allies, Circle Leaders, or members of the Mercer County Circles™ Guiding Coalition.

RSVP - please contact Olivia Lazor, 724 342 6222 ext 121 or 724 418 1039.

Circles of Mercer County Calendar

Guiding Coalition Meeting

August 10, 2010

Grace Chapel Community Church

Time: 6:00 P.M.

NOTICE:

CURRENTLY TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR THE FOURTH CLASS OF GETTING AHEAD IN A JUST GETTING BY WORLD

Send Letter of Interest

to

Ray Benedict

75 South Dock Street, Sharon, PA 16146

A CIRCLE THANK YOU!

A special thanks to Pastor Larry Haynes, Associate Pastor Dominic Verdell and the community of Grace Chapel Church for the use of their beautiful facility for the dinner and graduation ceremony.

Thank you to Matt Tarbay, Manager of Eat N Park Restaurants for the pies and cookies that were a tasty addition to the celebration.

Thank you to everyone for the abundant, delicious pot luck dishes...Yummy! . And, for pitching-in to help make this special day for the graduates a success.



Circles Anniversary

THIRD ANNIVERSARY



Circles of Mercer County has a great deal to celebrate in addition to the graduation of the third Getting Ahead class. Circles of Mercer County has reached a milestone—it's third year anniversary. The Initiative began with a group of committed community members in the Summer of 2007.

It is fitting that this issue includes comments and thoughts from the Chairman, Coach and the Chief Executive Officer of the agency and Circles sponsor—Community Action Partnership of Mercer County



CIRCLE LEADERS



MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE FAMILY AT A TIME

SHARING LESSONS LEARNED



Dominic Verdell Circles Chairman
Associate Pastor Grace Chapel Community Church

Whenever we learn something, nothing drives it home like explaining it to someone else. No matter what new idea we pick up or what new skill we learn, we really learn it best when we begin to teach it to others; and this is no truer than in Circles.

Over the past month we have seen our third class of graduates complete the Getting Ahead coursework and as we look toward the coming fall, these grads will be forming circles to support them as they work toward reaching new goals and learning new skills. Further, as they better understand our community and grow, our Guiding Coalition is working to facilitate a series of meetings that we call Big View Meetings. Together with Gary McElfresh, Tracy Schliep, and our graduated and Circle Leaders, we have been working to design a monthly opportunity for the Circles community to take the lessons being learned by our families and pass them along to others. Through the Big View, we will gather together each month to look at a topic that we can educate our community about. Whether it is transportation that is available, job opportunities or other community resources, our Circles have a deep desire to tell others what they are learning through Circles and how they have taken steps to get themselves and their families out of poverty.

We really learn it best when we begin to teach it to others, and through the Big View we are excited to be able to share with other what the Circles Community is learning.

Helping people help themselves

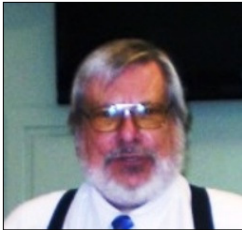


“It just wasn’t worth my time” by Ron Errett, CAPMC CEO

I asked a Circles graduate why they stopped attending the weekly meetings once they had completed their “Getting Ahead” curriculum. The answer they gave, “It just wasn’t worth my time”, made an impact on me. She was correct. If you set aside time to do something, you want it to be worthwhile. Maybe you learn something new; maybe you expand your networks; at the very least you should have some fun.

The Weekly Meetings Team consists of Rhonda Jordon, Sarah Paske and me. We are committed to ensuring that these weekly meetings will be worth your time. We are currently planning eleven months of speakers and programs. Each month will be devoted to one of the eleven resource topics in the Getting Ahead curriculum. Each month there will be three programs devoted to that topic. We are trying to think about what would make a difference in your life. Do you know how to use coupons effectively and buy groceries at a deep discount? We will have a speaker on that. Do you know how to exercise using a Pilates ball? Can you be a single parent with children surviving on welfare and go on to get a law degree? Someone did.

We hope to provide you with worthwhile programs presented by inspiring people that can assist you in moving forward with your goals and plans. So watch for upcoming announcements; we hope to get started in early fall.



RAY BENEDICT: CIRCLES COACH

For the last three years I have had the pleasure of being a volunteer Circles Coach. This has afforded me the opportunity to facilitate "Getting Ahead In a Just Getting By World" and "Bridges Out of Poverty" trainings for a variety of folks. I have also been able to work with a variety of persons on the Guiding Coalition. I say the above to lead to the following. I have seen several things that have excited me and a few that have frustrated me.

THE COACH'S CORNER

I have been excited by the people in poverty who have attended sessions, shared their stories, examined their lives, their community and the barriers to achieving self-sufficiency and the hidden rules of economic classes. They have once again demonstrated the tenacity and resiliency of the poor.

I have been excited by the people in the middle class and in wealth who have become involved to befriend others, to better our community and to “just” do the right thing”.

I have been excited by seeing how when we get to know each other that we are all the same despite our differences. We all want a better community, a more just community, to move ahead in life, the best for our families and to treat others well.

I have been excited by the generosity people have shown to each other and to Circles.

I have been frustrated by the folks who have become involved and then dropped by the wayside. For some it was too hard, for some it was fear of the unknown, for some it was wanting others to do for them rather than doing what only they could do. As a result, we have all lost!

I have been frustrated by those who have resorted to stereotypes (nobody cares about the poor, they don't want to change, I don't have time, it makes me uncomfortable, etc.) rather than drawing on inner strength and making it happen. As a result we have all lost!

I have been frustrated by the failure to obtain adequate funding for Circles. If we don't achieve this WE ALL WILL LOSE!

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. ___Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. ...Margaret Mead