



## Community Connection: February 2020

"Your goals are the road maps that guide you and show you what is possible for your life." - Les Brown

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### New & Good: Bridging Ceremony

Last month our third cohort of Circle Leaders completed their 12-week orientation to the Circles process. They spent time self-assessing, gained financial tools and explored a wide range of factors that lead to a healthy and prosperous life.

These sessions culminated in the creation of vision boards. Leaders were gifted the time and space to formulate a vision of what they want for their future. These vision boards were presented during our recent Bridging Ceremony.

As they move forward and are matched with volunteer Allies, their vision will be translated into attainable goals - steps to walk on the path to security. Leaders provide the vision, goals and resolution. Allies bring added encouragement and motivation. Together, there is much to accomplish!

### Appreciations: Affordable Housing

A common goal for many Circle Leaders is to secure stable housing for their family. What appears to be a simple, standard process for middle and high income families is a significant challenge for lower income families. Factors contributing to the housing complexities in Richmond are:

**Shortage of affordable housing options.** For every 10 families living at an extremely low income level, there are only 3 affordable rentals.

**Safety and health concerns.** A disproportionate percentage of code violations are related to rental properties.

**Eviction processes.** Richmond's annual eviction rate is over 11% (2nd highest in the country). Approximately 30% of all renters receive a notice of eviction in any given year. Eviction proceedings can be initiated if payment just 5 days past due.

At times, the compounding effect of these challenges feels too overwhelming to overcome. That's why we greatly appreciate community partners that bring hope to families working towards stable housing. Habitat for Humanity, HOME of VA, Urban Hope and the Virginia Poverty Law Center have all presented to the Circles Community over the past 12 months. Their individual missions make housing opportunities more equal and home ownership a possibility for low income families that are working to break the cycle of poverty.

And when housing is stabilized, a shift occurs. The focus can move from worries of immediate security to plans for the future. Economic security is within reach.



Capital One's **Credit Workshop** provided a wealth of knowledge last month. We each have a list of actionable to-dos as we move forward in better managing this measure of our financial health.



An ongoing **thank you** to our weekly meal donors like Chick Fil A. Their generosity allows us to focus outside the kitchen on relationships and engaging in meaningful dinner conversations.



By definition **a facilitator** is one who makes something easier. Our facilitators, like Tanyqua, do just this as they walk Leaders and Allies through the process of turning vision into measurable and attainable goals.

## Expand Your Circle: Upcoming Events

FEB 4	FEB 11	FEB 18	FEB 25
<b>COHORT 1 &amp; 2</b> <b>MATCH NIGHT</b> Leaders and Allies meet together  <b>COHORT 3</b> <b>ALLY TRAINING</b> <b>LEADER GOALS</b>	<b>UNITED WAY</b> Volunteer income tax assistance  <b>COHORT 3</b> <b>MATCH MIXER</b>	<b>COHORT 1 &amp; 2</b> <b>MATCH NIGHT</b> Leaders and Allies meet together  <b>COHORT 3</b> <b>MATCH MIXER</b>	<b>BIG VIEW</b>

Do you have a suggestion for future programming that would be meaningful to our Circle Leaders? [Share](#) your ideas with us!

