



Community Connection: September 2020

"When we learn how to become resilient, we learn how to embrace the beautifully broad spectrum of the human experience." - Jaeda Dewalt

Visit our Website



New & Good: Leader Gift Program

There was much "good" to celebrate in August as our 4th cohort of leaders finished training and our 1st cohort graduated. In observing this period of achievement, we also stepped back to consider the commitment Leaders make to the Circles process.

Leaders, while faced with demanding present challenges, join Circles knowing it is a two-year undertaking. The long-term commitment can feel daunting, especially for someone who may be consumed with immediate needs and a lack of resources to meet those needs. We recognize that enrolling in Circles can feel like an added burden to an already taxing situation. That's why we provide basic benefits such as a weekly meal and free children's program. We limit the costs associated with accessing Circles' support.

There is also an opportunity cost associated with joining Circles. Leaders are possibly giving up an extra shift at work, an added class, or time with their family... in the hopes of something better. They are taking a chance on themselves, believing that with added support the future they dream of is within reach.

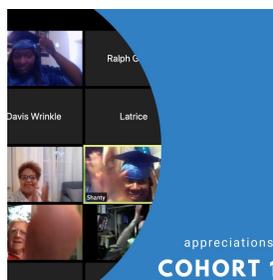
In recognition of the sacrifices made by Leaders, we have created a new Leader Gift Program. Circles RVA now acknowledges key milestones met by Leaders by gifting funds into a savings account. In essence, a Circle Leader's graduation gift is an emergency savings. The path forward out of poverty is complex. Often the goals set by Leaders are large-scale future objectives that require time to accomplish. We are happy to assist Leaders as they transition out of the Circles community with this monetary security net.

Appreciations: Taking a Chance

Yes, making a long term commitment to a process like Circles can feel daunting... especially when no one has gone before you! Our first Cohort of Leaders and Allies joined Circles, taking a leap into the unknown. Many viewed it as a social experiment. Could an intentional relationship really change someone's life? Is it possible to find common ground? Would they become genuine friends? Was real, tangible progress for Circle Leaders a realistic hope?

We appreciate their courage, authenticity and tenacity. And now, upon their graduation, we can say it did work! Authentic friendships formed. Specific and measurable goals were accomplished. Most importantly, a vision for a better tomorrow, as individuals and on a macro level, emerged.

Thank you, Cohort 1, for walking with us and proving that building bridges is transformational.



With the help of VCU volunteers, we are launching an **E-Mentoring Program**. This program allows for individuality and flexibility in how we bolster the emotional, social and academic health of Circles youth.

We are accepting applications for our **5th class of Circle Leaders** who will start training September 15. Know someone who could benefit from a positive and uplifting community of support? Share this online Leader application [link](#).

It's not too late to [donate](#) to our **annual giving campaign**. Circles RVA is a fiscally efficient model that operates through the financial support of individuals, organizations and foundations. Thank you for giving generously!

Expand Your Circle: Upcoming Events

SEPT 1	SEPT 8	SEPT 15	SEPT 22	SEPT 29
Cohort 4 Leader & Ally Mixer	Cohort 4 Match Reveal Night	Cohort 5 Leader Training	Big View GET OUT THE VOTE! led by the Commissioner of Elections for the Commonwealth of Virginia	VA Community Voice
Cohorts 2&3 Q&A Session with Cohort 1	Cohorts 2&3 Match Night: Goal Check-in	Cohorts 2, 3 & 4 Introduction to Resource Teams		

** ALL PROGRAMMING IS BEING CONDUCTED VIRTUALLY.**

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

