

FRIENDS IN DEED

... for those in need.



Circles[®]

Washtenaw County

Building Community to End Poverty

Suzanne Van Dam – Circles Coordinator

Bonita Bingham - Circles Coach

FID's Expanded Role

- Continue to provide emergency assistance and fill gaps in service
- Promote and support long-term financial independence
- Build Community by fostering relationships across socio-economic & racial lines




The Circles Goal

To help struggling families earn at least twice the federal poverty level, moving them **permanently** out of poverty and into economic self-sufficiency.



The Circles Approach

- Change from *management* of poverty 
Collaborative *solutions*
- **Relationship-based:** Matches people in poverty (**Leaders**) with 2-3 middle income partners (**Allies**)
- Engages entire community



What makes Circles different?

Empowers
participants
(Circle
Leaders)

Involves
the **WHOLE**
community

Requires
time and
Commitment
(2 years)

Revolves
around a
central
relationship

CIRCLES ASKS PEOPLE TO DO A GREAT THING



Circles USA

- Began in Iowa City in 1998
- More than 70 chapters in 19 states & Canada
- **Michigan**
Holland, Grand Rapids,
Fremont &
Washtenaw County
- Evidence-based



Selection Process

- Receive referrals or direct inquiries
- Candidates apply, pass background check & interview
- Staff review & select
- Candidates begin training



Training (Currently Virtual)

Leaders: 14 weeks

- **Job skills**
- **Money skills**
- **Education**
- **Parenting, health & goal setting**



Allies

- **Overview of Leader Curriculum**
- **Poverty Simulation & Awareness**
- **How to help without hurting**
- **Coaching**

Weekly Meetings + Relationships = Long Term Changes

- **Match Leaders & Allies**
- **Meal & children's program (on pause-COVID)**
- **Time for Leaders and Allies to talk/plan**
- **Workshops & Training**
- **Help from Jobs & Ed Resource Team**
- **Advocacy work: The Big View**



Our “Cohorts”



Group #1 started in July of 2017; Launched in April 2019 (8 Leaders)
Group #2 started in July 2018. Launched June 2020 (12 Leaders)
Group #3 started September 2019. Currently Active!
Group #4 starts in January 2021 (Delayed due to COVID)

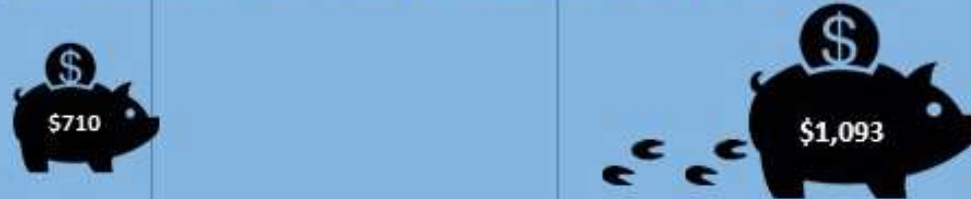
Does It Work?



↑ 19% increase from intake to 12 weeks/class completion



↑ 39% increase from intake to six months after class completion



↑ 54% increase from intake to 12 months after class completion



↑ 75% increase from intake to 18 months after class completion



Employment Gains



↓ 40% decrease in
unemployment



↑ 13% increase in
part-time employment



↑ 49% increase in
full-time employment

**What we need
from you:**



Basic Requirements

- Live at or below 185% of the FPG
- A Washtenaw County Resident
- At least 18 years old
- Relatively stable



Beyond Basics: Circle Leaders Are..

- Open to new people and experiences
- Motivated to work toward financial independence
- Able to commit to a long-term program

If receiving Disability, they have the ability and desire to move off.



Help Us Help Your Clients!

- Tell candidates about the Circles Program
- Assess interest. Be realistic about this!
- Complete and return the Circle Leader Referral Form to Bonita
- Encourage Clients to attend Sept 25 Block Party to meet Circles Staff!

Contact Us!

Bonita Bingham

Circles Coach/FID

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www.friendsindeedmi.org/Circles

Circles USA Video

<https://www.circlesusa.org/>

www.friendsindeedmi.org/Circles