



What is an ALLY?

Vision Statement

Our community's goal is a 50% reduction in the number of people living below the federal poverty level in Escambia County by the year 2020. This impacts 42,935 people currently living in poverty (15.8% of total population) including 16,918 children.

The Bridges to Circles ally has three primary goals:

1. Make an intentional friendship with a family living below the federal poverty line (Circle leader family) and join them in their quest to have enough money, meaning, and friends
2. Increase awareness of one's own stereotypes and class rules and be willing to face these
3. Use the experience of friendship with an under-resourced family to advocate within the community for changes in the systems barriers that keep poverty in place

The commitment of an ally:

1. Attendance at least twice a month on Tuesday evenings from 5:30-7:30 pm at Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, 1212 E Moreno Street.
2. 12-18 month commitment to the Circle Leader
3. After the Circles match is made, allies are asked to participate in the Tuesday weekly community meetings:
 1. Two weeks for the circle leader to meet with the allies,
 2. One week alternates between focus groups on barriers and a Big View meeting with other circles and the Poverty Solutions Team to discuss systemic change around the barriers.
 3. One week is used for ally support meeting
 4. If a month has a fifth Tuesday then all of the above mentioned activities will happen
4. Phone, email and in-person contact with your Circle Leader throughout the month
5. Allies are asked not to contribute financially to their Circle Leader

Support allies receive:

1. Orientation sessions
 - a. Bridges out of Poverty introduction to the rules of class
 - b. Hands-on ally training on how to build a circle for both allies and participants
2. Regularly scheduled ally support sessions
3. Collaboration with the other allies on the circle; no one is left in isolation
4. Staff to answer questions, assist with resource development, provide mentoring, and assist with conflict resolution
5. An ally's family is welcome to attend the Tuesday meetings and participate in the activities for children and youth.
6. The support of the entire *Bridges to Circles* community and Unite Escambia's Poverty Solutions Team

For more information, contact the Bridges to Circles office at 429-7296, or richardsh@cc.ptdiocese.org.