

BREAKOUT SESSION – POVERTY

A) FIRST SPEAKERS: MARY CROME AND ANGIE KENNEDY FROM GUELPH/WELLINGTON CIRCLES

**Circles: “An new way of thinking: A new way out of poverty”
Matches low-income “leaders” with middle or upper-income “allies”**

Five causes of poverty starting with “D”

- 1. Death**
- 2. Divorce**
- 3. Disease**
- 4. Debt**
- 5. De-employment**

Can also continue to include depression, disaster, etc.

These are the fault of circumstances beyond one’s control but society has a tendency to blame the individual (expressed through policies, body language, attitudes, etc.)

What is Poverty? The extent to which a person loses connection with these resources: physical, spiritual, financial (least important), emotional and relational.

Quote: “The opposite of poverty is not wealth but rather community.”

Goal is not to reduce but rather eradicate poverty. Best way to eradicate is through community.

Reading from John McKnight – abundant community

12% poverty in Dufferin at moment

BRIDGES group (Allies – economically stable) + GETTING AHEAD group (Leaders – experiencing poverty) = CIRCLES group (a way out of poverty)

Leaders are individuals or a family interested in becoming self-sufficient

Allies are individuals interested in helping someone find a way out of poverty

This is an intentional, reciprocal relationship.

Allies are often surprised that rather than lending a hand, they end up becoming a recipient.

PERSONAL PROFILE – speaker Angie Kennedy

- difficult birth with subsequent challenges which were misdiagnosed
- at age 34 began to receive appropriate treatment for cerebral palsy
- medication and surgery helped
- single mom
- wants to become a tax paying citizen
- began to take courses 2.5 years ago
- BEFORE CIRCLES: no social circle and felt hopeless
- AFTER CIRCLES: found out about resources in community, found friends, developed a love for computers, developed confidence in her abilities, obtained a micro loan through Meridian Bank

How Allies help: coaching for interviews, providing encouragement, providing advice

Qualities of helpful Ally: confident, listens well, communicates well, organized, provides good support, strong problem solving skills

How Leaders help: develop understanding about what it is like to live in poverty and teach how to shop economically and make do with less

BIG VIEW MEETINGS: focus has been on transportation, access to dental care , \$20,000 home campaign, micro credit loans from Meridian instead of Pay Day loans typically accessed and meaningful work experiences

CFUW helps: financial support, childcare, food handler for meals, bursary/scholarships

Example of someone assisted – single mom, huge OSAP debt, wanted to be a nurse, changed to PSW program and received a bursary

New and Good activity: Angie and Mary demonstrated how they try to end with an emphasis on positive; sought participation from audience

B) NEXT SPEAKER – ISABEL BOYLE from CFUW GUELPH

Local group wanted to help eliminate poverty and wanted a community connection

Circles was just beginning in Guelph so this became their community connection

Had a meal program (\$20) before their meetings

Used this money for childcare, coach training, food, scholarships for a member of Circles, membership on “Guiding Coalition”, helping to institute the microloan and to provide members with training in order to become Allies

Amount averages approximately \$2000 per year

