



Why Communities of Transformation?

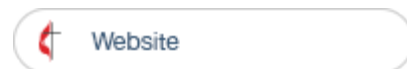
One critical aspect of COT is finding participants who are ready to be successful. Dothan's Wallace Community College has consistently referred such participants thanks to the guidance of Kelly Osmond, a career coach at Wallace. She recently shared what motivates her to share COT with others.

Dr. Laurel Blackwell called me several years ago to request a meeting with me to discuss COT. I think less than five minutes into our meeting, I was convinced how beneficial COT could be in the lives of our GED students. Laurel's passion for COT was contagious and I certainly caught her fever! She and I worked out some logistics of referring students and the next thing I knew, I was sitting in the audience of the first COT graduation. Wow; when people refer to "powerful stuff," this is what they mean! To see the students I had referred transform so drastically was more than incredible-- it was evidence of how wonderful and dedicated the staff and volunteers of COT are. Needless to say, every COT graduation that I attend, there are plenty of celebratory tears shed over how everyone has transformed into individuals who now know that anything is possible with a lot of hard work and a strong support system like COT!

I feel what separates COT from other ministries is the solid organizational plan that drives their process. COT has truly thought of everything, especially in regards to each participant's needs. When I approach students for the first time regarding COT, they always get so excited and relieved to know that at least on Tuesday nights they will have a hot meal, fellowship, and daycare for the evening. Yes, some are hesitant at first about going somewhere new, but after the first meeting, I can always count on all of my students visiting to tell me all about their AWESOME COT experience! A few weeks into their program, they will come back and ask, "is it Tuesday night yet?" For most, this is the highlight of their week and a restart button for their life. I get very excited for



Want more?



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every new class to begin, as I continually keep a running list of potential referrals in anticipation of the new class starting. By far the most exciting part of the new class beginning is the wonderful additions that enhance an already awesome group of individuals. Thank you COT for being the rock and inspiration to so many!

Kelly Osmond

Wallace Community College, AE Career Coach

Giving Back to Our Communities

Because we believe our communities are stronger when we work together, Communities of Transformation sites all over the conference participate in service projects. Here are a few of the ways we have served our communities this month.

[COT Demopolis at Pine Hill](#) joined with historic Antioch Baptist Church to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Members of the Pine Hill site stood with friends in front of the court house in Camden as the group prepared to walk to Antioch Baptist Church six blocks away in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Those present in the crowd who had been jailed during the civil rights era were recognized just before the walk began. The Pine Hill site was given the opportunity to pass out fliers and to share about COT while the crowd was gathering for the walk. Thanks to Pine Hill site trainer Lorenza Johnson for including COT in this day of fellowship.





[COT Mobile](#) led a mission project at the Vision Center. Volunteers and participants created thank you bags for first responders. In the bags were handmade thank you notes, candy, and information about the Vision Center. They also worked to clean the facility, outside and in.



[COT Montgomery](#) participated in a community clean up in the North Pass Neighborhood. This was one of many service projects organized by Hands On River Region. After our cleanup, we went to the Transformation Montgomery

Community Center for lunch.



[Phenix City COT](#) children made pine cone bird feeders using peanut butter, wild bird seed, and string. With permission, they hung the bird feeders along Idle Hour Park's Nature Trail to help beautify the park and create a feeding place for

more birds. All who participated enjoyed a beautiful day! Pictured are site pastor at [Summerville UMC](#), [Rev. Brady Baird](#), his daughter Evelyn, and our Childcare Coordinator Diane Cowart.





[COT Selma](#) partnered with the Selma Chapter of the Links to host their annual MLK Unity Breakfast. The Links, Incorporated is an international, not-for-profit corporation. They are business and civic leaders, role models, mentors, activists and volunteers who work towards a common vision by engaging like-minded organizations and individuals for partnership. Links members contribute more than 950,000 documented hours of community service annually – strengthening their communities and enhancing the nation. The Selma chapter also has an annual walk-a-thon and gives out numerous scholarships.

Celebrating in Mobile

[COT Mobile](#) started the new year by celebrating their most recently completed class. Two participants completed the Awaken curriculum. One participant shared that before coming to COT she really didn't feel like she would ever be a person other people wanted to be around. After hearing in an Awaken class that she was important and that she was worthy, she now believes in herself, she knows she is worthy, and she knows that God has a plan for her.



February Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please check the

website Events page for locations.

Brewton

Tuesday, February 6 Meeting
Tuesday, February 13 Celebration
Tuesday, February 20 Financial Workshop
Thursday, February 22 Financial Worksop
Tuesday, February 27 Financial Workshop

Dothan

Tuesday, February 6 Meeting
Tuesday, February 13 Meeting
Tuesday, February 20 Meeting
Tuesday, February 27 Meeting

Eufaula

Monday, February 5 Taste and See
Monday, February 12 Meeting
Monday, February 19 Meeting
Monday, February 26 Meeting

Evergreen

Thursday, February 1 Meeting
Thursday, February 8 Meeting
Thursday, February 15 Meeting
Thursday, February 22 Meeting

Mobile

Thursday, February 1 Meeting (Healthier Together program all month)
Thursday, February 8 Meeting
Thursday, February 15 Meeting
Thursday, February 22 Meeting

Montgomery

Tuesday, February 6 Meeting
Tuesday, February 13 Meeting
Tuesday, February 20 Meeting
Tuesday, February 27 Meeting

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Tuesday, February 6 Meeting
Tuesday, February 13 Meeting
Tuesday, February 20 Meeting
Tuesday, February 27 Meeting

Selma (Note new day and place!)

Wednesday, February 7 Meeting
Wednesday, February 14 Meeting
Wednesday, February 21 Meeting

Wednesday, February 28 Meeting

Selma's new meeting site is Church Street UMC.

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



Demopolis District Site Launches at Pine Hill

After being delayed a week because of winter weather, Communities of Transformation launched in the Demopolis District on Thursday, January 25, 2018. Twenty-four people were present, including guest speaker Latrice Mingo and Site Coordinator Margaret Bennett from COT Selma.

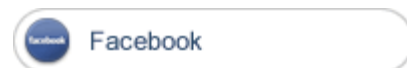
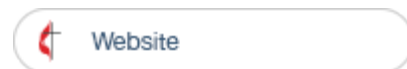
Volunteers who have been organizing, studying, and restoring their meeting place for COT for a year now gathered for a photo before their first Taste and See.



Visitors began paperwork to become volunteers at the Pine Hill site.



Want more?



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Refreshments were enjoyed by all!



We had a great turnout for our first meeting!



Guest speaker Latrice Mingo described her journey with COT Selma.



Sharing good news with our group.



COT Dothan Serves Community

Communities of Transformation believes that we all have value, and that helping other is important. COT Dothan provided volunteers for the Southeast Alabama Community Foundation's 5K & Half-Marathon on January 27. Volunteers gathered before the race to fill bags and organize race numbers, then, on the day of the race, they helped with the prerace registration for the over 200 runners participating.



COT Dothan also worked to help the Carver Museum on Tuesday, January 30. COT representatives cleaned baseboards, shampooed carpets, and painted interior doors. The projects were completed and fresh in time for the museum's Black History Month activities.





Montgomery Site Benefits from Local Grants

Recently our COT Montgomery site has received some important grants from local organizations. Site Coordinator Jennifer Lancaster was honored to receive a grant from Montgomery's Working Women's Home Association for childcare needs.



The Central Alabama Community Foundation announced their 2018 Arts and Community Building Grant Awards in February. Communities of Transformation was honored to receive a grant for equipment, training, and recruitment.



We Remember: Gene Ramsey

COT Montgomery mourns the loss of our dear friend and co-trainer, Dr. Gene Ramsey, who passed away on January 22, 2018. Gene was a committed COT volunteer who, along with Rev. Jackie Slaughter, led our participants through the Awaken curriculum. Gene's faith, compassion, wisdom, and humor, along with his experience as a psychologist and teacher were invaluable to our COT community. We are so grateful for the time we had to know and learn from Gene. We will miss him.



March 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please check the website Events page for locations.

Brewton

- Tuesday, March 6 Meeting
- Tuesday, March 13 Meeting
- Tuesday, March 20 Celebration
- Thursday, March 22 Social Artworking
- Tuesday, March 27 Meeting

Demopolis District at Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:30)

- Thursday, March 1 Meeting
- Thursday, March 8 Meeting
- Thursday, March 15 Meeting
- Thursday, March 22 Meeting

Dothan

- Tuesday, March 6 Meeting
- Tuesday, March 13 Meeting
- Tuesday, March 20 Meeting
- Tuesday, March 27 **No Meeting--Spring Break**

Eufaula

- Monday, March 5 Meeting
- Monday, March 12 Meeting
- Monday, March 19 Meeting
- Monday, March 26 **No Meeting--Spring Break**

Evergreen

- Thursday, March 1 Meeting
- Saturday, March 10 Community Garden Work Day
- Monday, March 12 Leadership Team Meeting
- Thursday, March 15 Meeting

Thursday, March 22 Meeting

Friday and Saturday, March 30-31 Community Garden Work Day

Mobile

Thursday, March 1 Meeting- Spiritual Health

Thursday, March 8 Meeting-Money Management and Intro to Budgeting starts

Thursday, March 15 Meeting

Thursday, March 22 Meeting

Montgomery NEW MEETING LOCATION!

Tuesday, March 6 Meeting

Tuesday, March 13 Meeting

Tuesday, March 20 Celebration

Tuesday, March 27 Meeting

Montgomery's new meeting location is [Holy Comforter Episcopal Church](#).

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Tuesday, March 6 Meeting- Tax Program

Tuesday, March 13 Meeting

Tuesday, March 20 No Meeting-- Spring Break

Tuesday, March 27 No Meeting-- Spring Break

Selma (Note new day and place!)

Wednesday, March 7 Meeting

Wednesday, March 14 Meeting

Wednesday, March 21 Meeting

Wednesday, March 28 Meeting

Selma's new meeting site is [Church Street UMC](#).

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



March 26, 2018

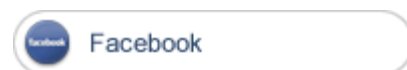
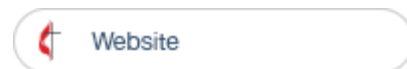


Children in our Communities

Communities of Transformation partners with adults who want to create a new future story for themselves and their families. Many of our participants have children who will be part of a better future because of COT. We believe caring for those children as we partner with their families is a vital part of our initiative.

Paula Bonner, the Children's Coordinator for the Pine Hill COT site in the Demopolis District, enjoys playing the piano, United Methodist Women's Mission work, and children. It is this latter love that has kept her busy the last six months as she and other volunteers prepared the Pine Hill UMC for ministry to children—none of which they had for several years until recently. Paula's husband John put the new crib and changing table together as she cleaned, sorted books and toys, and painted in the new nursery and old gathering rooms. These days she plans attractive and interactive walls and activities for the two children present ages 5 and 12 while working with Jennifer Goggans who assists her in accordance with the Safe Sanctuary policy. Truly, Paula's face lights up every time a child comes through the site doors, but the entire community gets to see and experience the warmth and light it sheds on the work of this site through the laughter and hugs of the children.

Want more?



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COT Phenix City recently received a grant from Walmart for their childcare program. The children's program helps parents who participate in the COT curriculum focus on their training. Children do homework, receive tutoring, play games, and do crafts in a safe and fun environment. Diane Cowart and Amber McCart coordinate the children's program at COT Phenix City. Between the two of them, they come up with fun, educational evenings for the children that many times mirror their parents' training. Diane uses scripture as she incorporates math and science problems in her lessons, but many of the children did not have a Bible. COT was able to provide children's Bibles for use at meetings. One parent has said that at the beginning of her training when she wasn't sure that she wanted to continue, her children were the ones who kept her coming because they enjoyed it so much.



COT Evergreen is the site of Garden of Hope, a place where families can spend time together and new friends can meet. Gardening is an activity for all ages!



COT Mobile partners with Help Me Grow Alabama to serve children in the community. Children from volunteer families, participant families, and community families had the opportunity to attend a screening event this fall. Part of COT's goal in participating was to show that COT is a holistic ministry, caring for all ages and all aspects of life. A parenting workshop was part of programming for the fall.



COT Eufaula has partnered with Eufaula City Schools to share the What, How, and Who of COT with all instructional leaders and teachers Pre-K through twelfth grade. They are a valuable resource!



Montgomery Celebration

COT Montgomery celebrated their second class on March 20, 2018. The celebration was held at their new meeting place, Holy Comforter Episcopal Church.



"Here it is not about numbers, it's about faces. It has the family factor that pushes us to WANT to do better. I could pay my bills ... But I was impoverished in other ways. I wanted a career, I didn't want to rely on anyone. I knew I needed change. My COT family were the ones that said DO IT. So I took a step of faith. I started a new career." LaQueta





"If you're ready for change, this is the place to be. It's a loving, caring, and safe environment to change." Erica



"All the people around me looked like me, they were the same race as me, most were the same age as me, and most were members of the same church. I became really convicted about this ... Laurel [Blackwell] gave a presentation in Montgomery on COT, and the Holy Spirit made it clear that's where I needed to be ... I came here expecting that I would be blessing people. Little did I know the blessings were also there for me. I was so ready for training to be over. I was so ready to get into matched groups. I thought we would be helping our Participant, but I learned we would be helping each other ... LaQueta used everything she learned in training to move herself and her family forward ... I thank God for broadening my circle of friends. You will never regret joining. God uses COT to richly bless ALL that are involved." Sarah



"I like being surrounded by people - positive people. I'm an independent person,

but I've learned how to surround myself with positive people." Melissa

"We all need time away from being stressed, from being tired, angry, bitter, overwhelmed. COT allows us to have that." Jackie



"You can't bless someone without being blessed." Richard

April 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please check the website Events page for locations.

Brewton

Tuesday, April 3 How to Write a Resume

Tuesday, April 10 COT Social Art-working

Tuesday, April 17 Coupon Class

Tuesday, April 24 **No Meeting**

Demopolis District at Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:30)

Thursday, April 5 Meeting

Thursday, April 12 Meeting

Thursday, April 19 Meeting

Thursday, April 26 **No Meeting**

Dothan

Tuesday, April 3 Meeting

Tuesday, April 10 Meeting

Tuesday, April 17 Meeting

Tuesday, April 24 Meeting

Eufaula

Monday, April 2 Meeting

Monday, April 9 Meeting

Monday, April 16 Meeting

Monday, April 23 **No Meeting**

Monday, April 30 Meeting

Evergreen

Thursday, April 5 Meeting

Thursday, April 12 How You Can Become a Homeowner

Thursday, April 19 Meeting

Thursday, April 26 Meeting at Community Garden

Mobile

Thursday, April 5 Meeting

Thursday, April 12 Celebration

Thursday, April 19 Meeting

Thursday, April 26 Meeting

Montgomery NEW MEETING LOCATION!

Tuesday, April 3 Meeting

Tuesday, April 10 Meeting

Tuesday, April 17 Meeting

Tuesday, April 24 Meeting

Montgomery's new meeting location is [Holy Comforter Episcopal Church](#).

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Tuesday, April 3 Meeting

Tuesday, April 10 Meeting

Tuesday, April 17 Meeting

Tuesday, April 24 Meeting

Selma (Note new day and place!)

Wednesday, April 4 Meeting

Wednesday, April 11 Meeting

Wednesday, April 18 Meeting

Wednesday, April 25 **No Meeting**

Selma's new meeting site is [Church Street UMC](#).

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



Volunteer Spotlight

April is National Volunteer Month, and we have some incredible volunteers! We are so thankful for all of our volunteers, and we would like to spotlight a few of them.

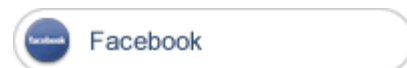
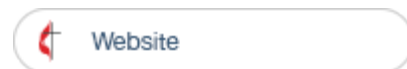
Nancy Tweedy finished her training at COT Phenix City in December 2017. She stepped up to take over the Meals Coordinator position and has done an amazing job. In addition to asking many restaurants and churches in town to provide meals for us, she helps serve the food and clean up in the kitchen when it's needed. Her church, The Fort, has supported Nancy by providing meals for our meetings. Nancy also is working in a small group of support to help one of our newly graduated participants move toward a better place in her life. Nancy personifies the term 'servant leader.'



Tracy Threatts was one of the four participants in COT Phenix City's very first training class, completing her curriculum in December of 2015. When Tracy started COT, she had no transportation, no job, no bank account, and was living in an apartment that had been flooded. She started working in a small group with



Want more?



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three volunteers and really turned her life around. She found a job, a new place to live for herself and her children, bought a car, opened a bank account, and started a savings account. Tracy had numerous setbacks along the way, but she never gave up. Now she has come full circle and is a volunteer working in a small group with a participant; she's giving back what she was given. Tracy's new job has her relocating to Atlanta. We are excited for Tracy and wish her well, but we will miss her smile that lights up a room and her personality that matches her smile. Tracy has truly been transformed, and so have the rest of us as we watched her realize her dream of a better life.



COT Eufaula appreciates long-term volunteer Joann Gamble's consistency. During the last reporting period, she attended all but one meeting. Joann is matched with a participant for weekly meetings. It is not unusual for her to help with set up, service, and clean up of meals. Joann has a gift for noticing what COT needs for operation and making the items appear! Joann serves on the Leadership Team and always demonstrates a positive attitude.



Brenda Parker is another long-term volunteer for COT Eufaula. Brenda secures volunteers for every meal, often donating meals herself. She follows up by writing a thank you note to each meal provider. Brenda demonstrates a genuine caring and understanding for participants, often offering a ride to or from a meeting. Her commitment to COT is evident in her willingness to serve.



Finance Class in Mobile

Mobile's focus for March was financial health. We are thankful for our friends at Regions Bank for sending staff members to instruct in different areas. The first class, money management, covered an introduction to spending and retirement. The second class focused on budgeting, and included information on understanding credit and how to protect yourself from identity theft. A financial adviser came for the last week. One participant noted, "The session on building credit was such a benefit for me. Learning the different ways that credit is impacted has helped me develop a plan to build my credit, which I thought was an impossible task before!"





May 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please check the website Events page for locations.

Brewton

Tuesday, May 1 Meeting

Tuesday, May 8 Meeting

Tuesday, May 15 Meeting

Tuesday, May 22 Meeting

Tuesday, May 29 No Meeting

Demopolis District at Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:00)

Thursday, May 3 Meeting (Special time--5:30!)

Thursday, May 10 Meeting

Thursday, May 17 Meeting

Thursday, May 24 Meeting

Thursday, May 31 Meeting

Dothan

Tuesday, May 1 Meeting

Tuesday, May 8 Meeting

Tuesday, May 15 Celebration

Tuesday, May 22 Meeting

Tuesday, May 29 Game Night!

Eufaula

Monday, May 7 Meeting

Monday, May 14 Meeting

Monday, May 21 Meeting

Monday, May 28 No Meeting

Evergreen

Thursday, May 3 Meeting

Saturday, May 5 Work Day at the Community Garden

Thursday, May 10 Meeting
Thursday, May 17 Meeting
Saturday, May 19 Work Day at the Community Garden
Thursday, May 24 Meeting
Thursday, May 31 Meeting

Mobile

Thursday, May 3 Meeting
Thursday, May 10 Meeting
Thursday, May 17 Meeting
Thursday, May 24 Meeting
Thursday, May 31 Meeting

Montgomery NEW MEETING LOCATION!

Tuesday, May 1 Meeting
Tuesday, May 8 Meeting
Tuesday, May 15 Meeting
Tuesday, May 22 Meeting
Tuesday, May 29 Meeting

Montgomery's new meeting location is [Holy Comforter Episcopal Church](#).

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Tuesday, May 1 Meeting
Tuesday, May 8 Meeting
Tuesday, May 15 Meeting
Tuesday, May 22 Meeting
Tuesday, May 29 No Meeting

Selma

Wednesday, May 2 Meeting
Wednesday, May 9 Meeting
Wednesday, May 16 Meeting
Wednesday, May 23 Meeting
Wednesday, May 30 Meeting

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



May 24, 2018



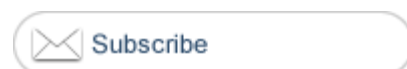
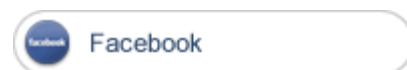
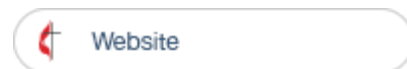
Dothan Graduation

Wallace Community College and COT Dothan have a close relationship, and when Wallace held their spring commencement ceremony in May, COT Dothan was very well-represented. Congratulations, graduates! We cannot wait to see what is in store for you!



COT Dothan site coordinator Tara Sanders says, "Wallace graduation was so special for COT Dothan. It was a long but rewarding journey for our participants. They all worked so hard. We are honored to have shared this two year long journey with them. They are part of our family, we love every one of them and were so excited to attend their graduation ceremony."

Want more?



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Christina Baxley shares that COT is her family and what church should be like. "No matter how hard the week has been, coming into COT is magic in that you can't be sad, angry, frustrated once you are there. Everyone is always excited to see you and they genuinely want the best for you."



SMART Goals

Setting goals is an integral part of the COT experience for both participants and volunteers. Our Awaken curriculum encourages the use of goals that are **SMART--Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relalistic and Timely.**

- A **specific** goal is clear and focused.
- When you set a **measurable** goal, you have a plan for how much or how often you will perform a specific action.
- An **attainable** goal is achieved one step at a time
- A **realistic** goal is challenging but achievable.
- A **timely** goal has a deadline with progress you can track.

Site coordinators, volunteers, participants, and even leadership teams have set SMART goals in meetings around the conference. COT Trainer Rosaland Harrison shares, "Goal setting is a tool participants can use to design a better life for themselves and their families. In the classroom, participants complete exercises to determine where they are right now and where they would like to be in the future. This is followed by discussions around the 'why' and the 'how.' Why is the goal important, and how can I reach my goal?" Rosaland emphasizes that a participant must have a strong sense of why a goal is important in order to achieve the goal, and she asks for up-front discussion about what a participant is willing to sacrifice to reach a goal.

Even the best plans have pitfalls, so Eufaula site coordinator Beverly Brown reached out to Melanie Little, a certified Life Coach with the Eufaula Housing Authority for help. Volunteers had shared that their matched groups felt "stuck" on achieving SMART goals so Ms. Little facilitated a discussion on "Why We Procrastinate." Providing common language for identifying our reasons for being "stuck" was extremely helpful. Members were encouraged to ask themselves: Am I stuck because I am feeling overwhelmed? Dealing with an unpleasant task? Fearing failure? Lacking motivation? Lacking focus? By being able to share the *why*, matched groups felt they might be better at providing support. The life coach also facilitated deep, meaningful discussions among volunteers and participants. Everyone felt better able to meet their individual goals and offer support for others in their group. Ms. Little will return to COT Eufaula in June to speak with volunteers.

Missional Giving Recipient

We are so pleased Communities of Transformation has been selected as this year's missional giving recipient by the AWFUMC annual conference planning team directed by Bishop David Graves.

Many churches will collect special offerings during your worship services leading up to conference. This offering will be collected at the opening worship service on

Sunday, June 3, 2018, at Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church.

Click [HERE](#) to see the bulletin insert that all churches in the conference are invited to print to find out more about COT. Click [HERE](#) to see a video about COT.

We are grateful to Bishop Graves and the annual conference planning team for this opportunity to share about Communities of Transformation!

June 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please check the website Events page for locations.

Brewton

Tuesday, June 5 NO Meeting

Tuesday, June 12 Financial Workshop

Tuesday, June 19 Financial Workshop

Tuesday, June 26 Fun Night--Crafting!

Demopolis District at Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:00)

Thursday, June 7 Meeting

Thursday, June 14 Meeting

Thursday, June 21 Meeting

Thursday, June 28 Meeting

Dothan

Tuesday, June 5 Meeting

Tuesday, June 12 No Meeting

Tuesday, June 19 No Meeting

Tuesday, June 26 No Meeting

Meetings will resume July 10.

Eufaula

Monday, June 4 Meeting

Monday, June 11 Meeting

Monday, June 18 Meeting

Monday, June 25 Meeting

Evergreen

Thursday, June 7 Meeting

Thursday, June 14 Meeting at the Community Garden

Thursday, June 21 Meeting

Saturday, June 23 Work Day at the Community Garden

Thursday, June 28 Meeting

Mobile

Thursday, June 7 Meeting

Thursday, June 14 Meeting

Thursday, June 21 Meeting

Thursday, June 28 Meeting

Montgomery

Tuesday, June 5 Picnic

Tuesday, June 12 Meeting

Tuesday, June 19 Meeting

Tuesday, June 26 Meeting

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Tuesday, June 5 Meeting

Tuesday, June 12 Meeting

Tuesday, June 19 Celebration!

Tuesday, June 26 Picnic

Selma

COT Selma will not meet in June.

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June 27, 2018

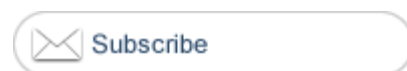
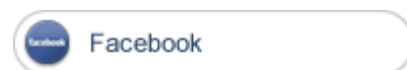
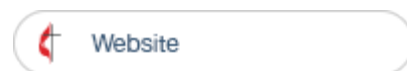


New COT Site Coordinator at Pine Hill



Our westernmost site is undergoing a few changes! The site formerly known as "Demopolis District" is now being called "Pine Hill." In addition to getting a new name, the site also welcomes new coordinator Brenda Autry. When Reba Wiley began her COT journey in the Demopolis District, she had experience working with COT in Selma. She knew a site in a more rural area would bring unique challenges. The mission-minded members of the United Methodist Women at Pine Hill UMC, led by pastor Dawn Bond, expressed a commitment to COT in their church. They worked together with Reba for a full year before scheduling their first Taste and See. Then it snowed. The Taste and See was rescheduled, and COT was finally and officially launched at Pine Hill in January of 2018.

Want more?



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COT Coordinator
[Email Fred](#)



Brenda Autry had been part of COT since she traveled with Reba and others to hear Robert Lupton, author of *Toxic Charity*, speak in Daphne, Alabama, in 2016. Brenda was working as a school principal then, and she understood the vision of COT from the beginning. She and her sister volunteered with COT in the Demopolis District. When Brenda felt it was time to retire from the school system to care for her family, she became more involved with COT.



Reba Wiley knew that for COT to be successful in Pine Hill, she needed to work with someone who was local. She also knew she could not continue the 45-minute commute from her home to the COT site. Brenda had grass-roots connections in Pine Hill, having grown up there. She was trusted in the community. Reba felt like Brenda would be the perfect site coordinator for COT Pine Hill.

Brenda's commitment to COT is based on her own story. She shared support from her family allowed her to attend college. Her experience has taught her that while success doesn't come easy, it is attainable with hard work and a good support system. Brenda is patient and full of faith, with a passion for helping people. We thank God for both Reba and Brenda and their work in Pine Hill!

COT at Annual Conference



Fred Blackwell spoke of COT's beginnings and its impact at the opening worship service.





COT staff members loved the opportunity to fellowship with one another!



Oh, the places we will go! Deaconesses Clara Ester, Celeste Eubanks, Laurel Akin, and Susan Hunt have all been part of COT.

We had such a good time visiting with all who stopped by to see us at Annual Conference! COT was honored and humbled to receive this year's Missional Offering. Thank you so much for allowing us to share the story of how lives are being changed across the Alabama West Florida Conference! So many of you expressed interest in how COT could work in your communities, and we look forward to seeing how our ministry will continue to grow!

Emergency Preparedness

Weather in Alabama can be unpredictable, especially in the spring. Two of our sites recently hosted speakers to help participants and volunteers learn how to

plan for an emergency.

COT Dothan hosted Wanda Carpenter from the Houston County Cooperative Extension Service. Wanda presented information on personal disaster preparedness. Her presentation focused on three main areas: evacuation, home loss, and recovery. We learned what we need to have with us if the need to evacuate arises. We also learned what to discard from refrigerators and freezers after a loss of power and how to discard items properly. In addition, we learned how to catalog personal belongings in the event of home loss.

COT Eufaula hosted Allie Corcoran, Barbour County Extension Office Coordinator, and David Logan, EMA Director for Eufaula. We took a "pretest" to see how much we already knew about emergency preparedness, and we checked our answers after the presentation. We learned so much! Perhaps the most important thing we learned was that we don't have to build an emergency kit in a day. We should start with the supplies we have and add to them as we can. Both facilitators stressed the importance of being ready to care for their families' needs for at least three days.

Our site coordinators are always working to provide meaningful programming for all our members. We are thankful for the members of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service who help keep us informed!

July 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please check the website Events page for locations.

Brewton

Tuesday, July 3 NO Meeting
Tuesday, July 10 Meeting
Tuesday, July 17 Meeting
Tuesday, July 24 NO Meeting
Tuesday, July 31 Meeting

Dothan

Tuesday, July 3 NO Meeting
Tuesday, July 10 Meeting
Tuesday, July 17 Meeting
Tuesday, July 24 Meeting
Tuesday, July 31 Meeting

Eufaula

COT Eufaula will not meet in July.

Evergreen

Thursday, July 5 NO Meeting
Thursday, July 12 Meeting
Tuesday, July 17 Financial Workshop
Thursday, July 24 Financial Workshop

Mobile

Thursday, July 5 Meeting
Thursday, July 12 NO Meeting
Thursday, July 19 NO Meeting
Thursday, July 26 NO Meeting

Montgomery

Tuesday, July 3 NO Meeting
Tuesday, July 10 Celebration
Tuesday, July 17 NO Meeting
Tuesday, July 24 Meeting
Tuesday, July 31 NO Meeting

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Tuesday, July 3 NO Meeting
Tuesday, July 10 Meeting
Tuesday, July 17 Meeting
Tuesday, July 24 Meeting
Tuesday, July 31 Meeting

Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:00)

Thursday, July 5 NO Meeting
Thursday, July 12 Meeting
Thursday, July 19 Meeting
Thursday, July 26 Meeting

Selma

COT Selma will not meet in July.

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



July 24, 2018



What Do Participants Learn?

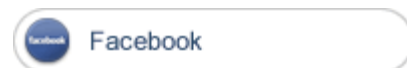
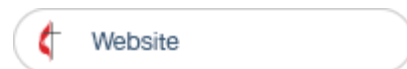
Have you wondered how Communities of Transformation helps families move away from instability, isolation, and dependence? You probably know that we do not provide direct services like a clothes closet or food bank does, but we want to share exactly how we are helping families create a better future.

One component of our meetings is the Awaken Curriculum. Awaken strives to identify and enhance leadership skills in each person. The classes are taught by trainers at each site, but Rosaland Harrison, COT's Conference Trainer, works with each site to support trainers all over the conference. Here is what Rosaland says about Awaken:

The Awaken curriculum is designed to enhance existing leadership skills and equip participants with life skills to help them pursue their goals and dreams. The curriculum focuses on the five human dimensions: Spiritual, Relational, Physical, Intellectual, and Financial. Within every dimension participants complete a self-assessment to determine strengths and weaknesses. I like to stress that the classroom serves as a safe place where participants can share their past struggles, mistakes, victories and hopes for a better life - without criticism or judgement. During each class, we have group discussions and set aside time for self-reflection. We cover a variety of topics in the classroom such as having a growth mindset vs. a self-limiting mindset, how to strengthen healthy relationships and recognize toxic relationships, managing financial resources, the importance of having a network of support, and more. Participants leave the classroom more self-aware, empowered, and equipped with practical skills to pursue their goals.

Participants meet for twelve weeks, growing and learning together. Perhaps the most important part of the curriculum is goal-setting. Each participant sets SMART goals as a plan for moving forward. SMART goals are Specific,

Want more?



Contact us

Courtney Albrecht
Communications Coordinator
[Email Courtney](#)

Fred Blackwell
COT Coordinator
[Email Fred](#)

Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. The culmination of the curriculum is a community Celebration, where each participant has the opportunity to share his or her story and receive recognition for hard work. Then there is cake!

Awaken is the first step for participants to begin living with a sense of purpose that leads to personal fulfillment. The relationships cultivated there are meant to last a lifetime, instilling a sense of caring that leads to a sense of community.

Montgomery Celebration

On Tuesday, July 10, 2018, Montgomery COT celebrated the completion of their third Awaken class. Four participants and three volunteers completed the 12-week personal leadership course led by Rev. Jackie Slaughter and Rev. Richard Williams. They will now move to the second phase of the program to start working in small groups on their goals. Montgomery's fourth class will start August 21!





Welcome Thomas Oakley Allen!

Congratulations to Heather and Jack Allen on the birth of their son, Thomas Oakley Allen! Heather works in performance measurement for COT.



August 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please contact

the site coordinator for more information.

Brewton

Tuesday, August 7 Meeting
Tuesday, August 14 Meeting
Tuesday, August 21 Meeting
Tuesday, August 28 Meeting

Dothan

Tuesday, August 7 Meeting
Tuesday, August 14 Meeting
Tuesday, August 21 Meeting
Tuesday, August 28 Meeting

Eufaula

Monday, August 6 **No Meeting**
Monday, August 13 **No Meeting**
Monday, August 20 Meeting
Monday, August 27 Meeting

Evergreen

Thursday, August 2 Meeting
Tuesday, August 7 Financial Workshop
Tuesday, August 14 Financial Workshop
Thursday, August 23 Meeting
Thursday, August 30 Meeting

Mobile

Thursday, August 2 **No Meeting**
Thursday, August 9 Taste and See
Thursday, August 16 Meeting
Thursday, August 23 Meeting
Thursday, August 30 Meeting

Montgomery

Tuesday, August 7 Meeting
Tuesday, August 14 **No Meeting**
Tuesday, August 21 Taste and See
Tuesday, August 28 **No Meeting**

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Tuesday, August 7 Meeting
Tuesday, August 14 Meeting
Tuesday, August 21 Taste and See
Thursday, August 23 Taste and See
Tuesday, August 28 Meeting

Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:00)

Thursday, August 2 Meeting
Thursday, August 9 Meeting
Thursday, August 16 Meeting

Thursday, August 23 Meeting

Thursday, August 30 Meeting

Selma

Wednesday, August 1 Meeting

Wednesday, August 8 Meeting

Wednesday, August 15 Meeting

Wednesday, August 22 Meeting

Wednesday, August 29 **No Meeting**

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



August 28, 2018



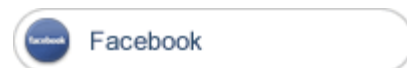
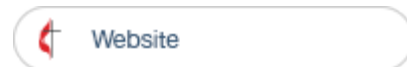
What do Volunteers Learn?

Have you thought about volunteering at Communities of Transformation? Have you wondered what your volunteer experience would be like? This month we are sharing more information about our volunteer experience. Maybe you will decide to join us!

One of our core beliefs is that poverty is more than just an economic problem. We believe poverty can be relational, intellectual, physical, financial, and spiritual. Those areas are the same areas our participants focus on in their course of study. Our volunteers work through what it means to be impoverished in any of those area and how we can work together to help each other in those areas. Some of the other areas our volunteers consider are culture, social expectations, relationship dynamics, and growth and development. Like participants, volunteers set goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. In this way, our volunteers are engaged in relationship **with** participants--not doing **for** participants.

We invite you to come see for yourself what is happening across our conference. Contact your local site coordinator for details on meetings near you.

Want more?



Contact us

Courtney Albrecht
Communications Coordinator
[Email Courtney](#)

Fred Blackwell
COT Coordinator

[Email Fred](#)





Healthy Eating Programming

COT Dothan hosted Anna Wells from the Houston County Cooperative Extension Service in August. She presented the first of six lessons in the **Eat Smart, Be Active** campaign. She demonstrated how to prepare chicken and vegetable stir fry with brown rice. It was delicious! After tasting, we participated in a 15-minute exercise routine. It was hilarious and fun! We can't wait to continue the series!





COT Phenix City had six nutrition classes given by the extension services of Alabama A&M and Auburn University. Some of the topics covered included budgeting food dollars, making a good shopping list, reading and understanding product labels, portion size, and making healthy food choices. There was a cooking demonstration and everyone had the opportunity to sample the recipes.





More Than a Bird Book Study

COT Eufaula held a book study this summer on [More Than a Bird](#) by [Liz Huntley](#). This inspiring book was well-received by all who read it. *More Than a Bird* is the story of Huntley's childhood, filled with abuse, separation, and cruelty, and how she journeyed out of those oppressive circumstances to become a successful attorney, wife, and mother. Liz Huntley has spoken at our Evergreen site in the past, and the members there read the book then. Several members of COT heard her speak recently in Columbus, Georgia. Her message really resonates across our communities!

The title of the book is taken from Matthew 6:26:

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Site Coordinator Beverly Brown's programming has led to other site coordinators choosing to study this book as part of their curriculum.

September 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please contact the site coordinator for more information.

Brewton

Tuesday, September 4 **No Meeting**

Tuesday, September 11 Meeting

Tuesday, September 18 Meeting

Tuesday, September 25 Meeting

Dothan

Tuesday, September 4 Meeting
Tuesday, September 11 Meeting
Tuesday, September 18 Meeting
Tuesday, September 25 Meeting

Eufaula

Monday, September 3 No Meeting
Monday, September 10 Meeting
Monday, September 17 Meeting
Monday, September 24 Meeting

Evergreen

Saturday, September 1 Workday at the Community Garden
Saturday, September 8 Workday at the Community Garden
Thursday, September 13 Meeting
Thursday, September 20 Meeting
Thursday, September 27 Meeting

Mobile

Thursday, September 6 Meeting
Thursday, September 13 Meeting
Thursday, September 20 Meeting
Thursday, September 27 Meeting

Montgomery

Tuesday, September 4 Meeting
Tuesday, September 11 Meeting
Tuesday, September 18 Meeting
Tuesday, September 25 Meeting

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Monday, September 3 No Meeting
Monday, September 10 Meeting
Monday, September 17 Meeting
Monday, September 24 Meeting

Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:00)

Thursday, September 6 Meeting
Thursday, September 13 Meeting
Thursday, September 20 Meeting
Thursday, September 27 Meeting

Selma

Wednesday, September 5 Meeting
Wednesday, September 12 Meeting
Wednesday, September 19 Meeting
Wednesday, September 26 Meeting

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



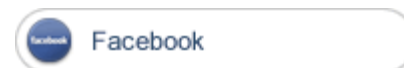
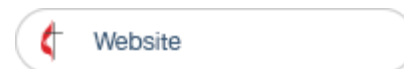
September 28, 2018



New Conference Coordinator



Want more?



Contact us

Courtney Albrecht
Communications Coordinator
[Email Courtney](#)

Katy Wrona
Conference Director
[Email Katy](#)

As announced on August 1, 2018, the Alabama-West Florida Conference has named Katy Wrona the new Conference Director of Communities of Transformation. We are grateful for the leadership Fred and Laurel Blackwell provided, serving COT since its inception. They will always be a part of the story of Communities of Transformation. Katy was an integral part of COT, launching the Mobile site under Fred and Laurel's tutelage, and sharing in their passion for helping people.

Katy served as a Global Mission Fellow through the United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Ministries from 2014 to 2016 in Mobile. Since coming to Alabama through this program, she has worked to launch and develop the Mobile COT site. Katy's expertise in grant writing and management has been important to the success of Communities of Transformation. Katy has also coordinated the QuadW Missional Internship program in the Mobile area and worked with youth and children's ministries at various churches in the Mobile area. Katy is an active

member of Mobile United's Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Ignite Mobile Inc. She is also a member of St. John UMC.

We are excited to see where Katy's passion and vision will take Communities of Transformation as we move forward!

Taste and See Events

As the school year began, our Montgomery, Eufaula, and Phenix City sites held Taste and See events in anticipation of beginning new classes. Taste and See events are a great opportunity for sharing the story of Communities of Transformation.





COT Montgomery had more than forty people attend their most recent Taste and See event. Guests included potential participants, referral agencies, and UMC pastors.



Former participants Shawn Snowden and Raheema Ware spoke to guests at Eufaula's August Taste and See events. COT worked together with Eufaula's Housing Authority to publicize and host the events where nearly forty guests learned more about COT Eufaula! Thanks so much to Saint James Episcopal Church who provided refreshments for both events.

COT Phenix City had successful Taste and See events in August, too, with new volunteers and participants joining. Brady Baird is the volunteer trainer, and participant-turned-volunteer Tracy Threatts is working with Catherine Phillips, the participant trainer. We are grateful for new participants and volunteers! You can contact your local site coordinator for more information about the next Taste and See in your community.

Five Dimensions: Spiritual

Participants and volunteers who participate COT training first cast a vision for their lives and their community. They look at resources that can help bring about that vision, then they look closely at each of the five dimensions that must be balanced for a high quality of life.

The first dimension they examine is the spiritual dimension because it impacts every aspect of life, making change possible. The spiritual dimension involves personal growth. Both participants and volunteers begin to find a purpose and meaning to life, and they learn how to experience love, joy, and fulfillment. They embrace personal ethics, values, and a code of living. They learn that spiritual habits include acceptance, surrender, kindness, love, service, gratitude, forgiveness, simplicity, and humility. As each group defines and examines each habit, they start to think about how to cultivate spiritual habits themselves. Writing a mission statement is an important part of each person's experience. This statement allows them to identify and work toward goals that lead to a stable future. Each of the five dimensions is reinforced through programs studied all year round.

October 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please contact the site coordinator for more information.

Brewton

Tuesday, October 2 Meeting

Tuesday, October 9 Meeting

Tuesday, October 16 Meeting

Tuesday, October 23 Meeting

Tuesday, October 30 Meeting

Dothan

Tuesday, October 2 Meeting (Taste and See)

Tuesday, October 9 Meeting

Tuesday, October 16 Meeting

Tuesday, October 23 Meeting

Tuesday, October 30 Meeting (Game night!)

Eufaula

Monday, October 1 Meeting

Monday, October 8 Meeting

Monday, October 15 Meeting

Monday, October 22 **No Meeting**

Monday, October 29 Meeting

Evergreen

Thursday, October 4 Meeting

Thursday, October 11 Meeting

Thursday, October 18 Meeting

Thursday, October 25 Meeting

Mobile

Thursday, October 4 Meeting (Child Development)

Thursday, October 11 Meeting (Child Development)

Thursday, October 18 Meeting

Thursday, October 25 Meeting (Halloween Party!)

Montgomery

Tuesday, October 2 Meeting

Tuesday, October 9 Meeting

Tuesday, October 16 Meeting

Tuesday, October 23 Meeting

Tuesday, October 30 Meeting

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Monday, October 1 Meeting

Monday, October 8 Meeting

Monday, October 15 Meeting

Monday, October 22 Meeting

Monday, October 29 Meeting (Costume Party!)

Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:00)

Thursday, October 4 Meeting

Thursday, October 11 Meeting

Thursday, October 18 Meeting

Thursday, October 25 Meeting (Celebration!)

Selma

Wednesday, October 3 Meeting

Wednesday, October 10 Meeting

Wednesday, October 17 Meeting

Wednesday, October 24 Meeting

Wednesday October 31 No Meeting

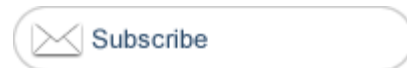
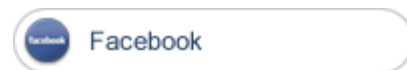
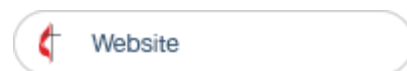
Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



October 30, 2018



Want more?



Contact us

[Katy Wrona](#)

Conference Director

[Courtney Albrecht](#)

Communications Coordinator

Meet Mobile's New Site Coordinator Rebecca Levins



When long-time Mobile site coordinator Katy Wrona was named Conference Director for Communities of Transformation, the leadership team went to work right away to find a new coordinator for the Mobile site. Rebecca Levins shares how she came to be the new Mobile Site Coordinator:

I'm super excited to be working with Communities of Transformation! The story of how I came to COT is the story of God's timing and provision. I had been looking for a job for about 6 months. More than once, I had found an opportunity that seemed really promising and then it just unexpectedly fell through. I was getting very discouraged and frustrated. In the midst of this frustrating search, my husband and I decided to join the choir at our local church. The first night of choir practice I was standing

next to one of the most friendly people I had ever met. She was asking me all about my life, and I told her I had been looking for a job and that my background was in human development and family studies. She kinda gave me a funny look and said she might know of something that would be a great fit for me. She invited me to COT to come see what it was all about. It turned out that my new friend was Mobile's participant trainer, Amy, and that they had only just begun to look for a new Mobile site coordinator that week. I came that first night, loved it, and the rest is history. Now it's obvious why God didn't answer my prayers when all those other job opportunities fell through. It's because he had something better in store.

Rebecca will attend training to become a VISTA, like all our site coordinators. We're excited to have her on our team!

Phenix City Birthday Celebration



COT Phenix City celebrates birthdays during the first meeting of every month. These little celebrations foster a sense of community in all members. In October they celebrated six birthdays including Caden Lee, who turned 8, and Brady Baird, pastor of our host church. Caden is pictured with Rev. Brady Baird and

site coordinator Joan Gatewood.

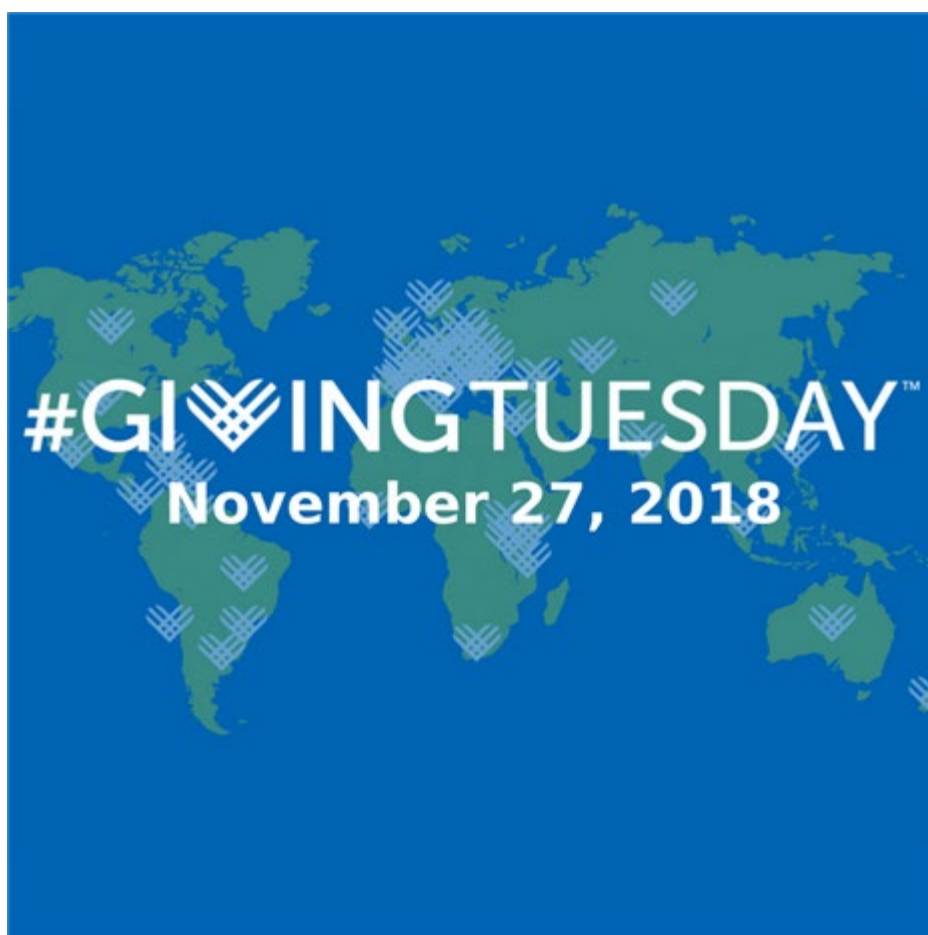
Continuing the Five Dimensions: Relational

Participants and volunteers who participate in Communities of Transformation look at resources that can help bring about a better future story for themselves and their community. They look closely at each of the five dimensions of life, considering where they have work to do. Last month's newsletter focused on the Spiritual dimension. This month we are sharing how we look at relationships.



One aspect of our Awaken curriculum is looking at building successful relationships. Participants learn to identify whether a relationship is healthy and how to maintain healthy relationships. They look at different kinds of relationships and the impact that each kind can have. Participants and volunteers examine the stages each relationship goes through and how to work through each stage. They learn how culture and stereotypes influence relationships. Members are encouraged to be open-minded about being in relationships with people of different backgrounds. They learn about how to maintain healthy relationships with a diverse social network. Our commitment to building relationships makes Communities of Transformation unique!

Save the Date: Giving Tuesday is November 27!



Giving Tuesday is an opportunity to give back to your community. Celebrated the first Tuesday after Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday is a day to give back. Contact your local site coordinator to find out how you can give of your time, or [CLICK HERE](#) to give online.

November 2018 Events

All meetings are 5:30 - 8:00 p. m. unless otherwise noted. Please contact the site coordinator for more information.

Brewton

Tuesday, November 6 Meeting
Tuesday, November 13 Meeting
Tuesday, November 20 Meeting
Tuesday, November 27 Meeting

Dothan

Tuesday, November 6 Meeting
Tuesday, November 13 Meeting
Tuesday, November 20 **No Meeting**
Tuesday, November 27 Meeting

Eufaula

Monday, November 5 Meeting

Monday, November 12 **No Meeting**

Monday, November 19 **No Meeting**

Monday, November 26 Meeting

Evergreen

Thursday, November 1 Meeting

Thursday, November 8 Meeting

Thursday, November 15 Meeting

Thursday, November 22 **No Meeting (Happy Thanksgiving!)**

Thursday, November 29 Meeting

Mobile

Thursday, November 1 Meeting

Thursday, November 8 Meeting

Thursday, November 15 Meeting

Thursday, November 22 **No Meeting (Happy Thanksgiving!)**

Thursday, November 29 Meeting

Montgomery

Tuesday, November 6 Meeting

Tuesday, November 13 Meeting

Tuesday, November 20 **No Meeting**

Tuesday, November 27 Meeting

Phenix City (all times Eastern)

Monday, November 5 Meeting

Monday, November 12 Meeting

Monday, November 19 **No Meeting**

Monday, November 26 Meeting

Pine Hill (meetings start at 6:00)

Thursday, November 1 Meeting

Thursday, November 8 Meeting

Thursday, November 15 Meeting

Thursday, November 22 **No Meeting (Happy Thanksgiving!)**

Thursday, November 29 Visit to COT Evergreen

Selma

Wednesday, November 7 Meeting

Wednesday, November 14 Meeting

Wednesday, November 21 **No Meeting (Happy Thanksgiving!)**

Wednesday, November 28 Meeting

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

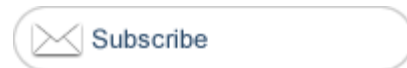
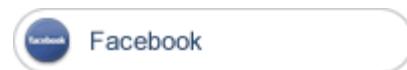
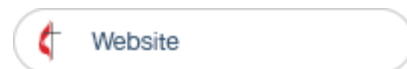


November 29, 2018



South Walton Site Development

Want more?



Contact us

[Katy Wrona](#)

Conference Director

[Courtney Albrecht](#)

Communications Coordinator

Emily Proctor, the community chaplain in South Walton county, Florida, is working with Communities of Transformation to start a new site near the Santa Rosa Beach area. Emily was excited to report that over forty people attended the initial community meeting on Thursday, November 8. Twenty-six people indicated interest in serving as volunteers in some capacity, and over \$10,000 was pledged to help launch the new site! Two local churches also expressed a willingness to host the weekly meetings. Contact Emily Proctor at emilyproctor.cot@gmail.com or call 850-783-0237 to learn how you can be a part of COT in the panhandle.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read a story published in *The Walton Sun*.

We Remember: One Year Later



In the year that has passed since we lost our beloved Laurel, we have grieved together and committed to working together to honor her memory in all we do. Communities of Transformation strives to be the living embodiment of Laurel: working tirelessly to help others thrive. We are so thankful for her influence and ministry. We invite you to share your favorite memories of Laurel on our Facebook page [HERE](#).

Happy Fall!



Sites around the conference celebrated fall with a variety of parties and festivals. COT Dothan (pictured) enjoyed a costume party. COT Mobile had a Thanksgiving dinner provided by Ashland Place UMC. After dinner, each person present wrote notes of appreciation on orange strips of paper that they made into pumpkins.



Taking time to get together outside of our regular meeting schedule helps strengthen relationships within our communities. Thanks to all who planned our fall fun events!

Continuing the Five Dimensions: Intellectual

Participants and volunteers who participate in Communities of Transformation look at resources that can help bring about a better future story for themselves and their community. They look closely at each of the five dimensions of life, considering where they have work to do. Last month's newsletter focused on the relational dimension. This month we are looking at the intellectual dimension.



The intellectual dimension may sound daunting at first, but we can all benefit from expanding our thinking. While academic learning is one part of the intellectual dimension, we also look at learning styles, emotional intelligence, and practical intelligence. Our site coordinators plan programming that can stimulate our intellectual dimension and help with every-day tasks. Some popular topics include financial planning, resume writing, and disaster preparedness. Our book studies have become popular, too. *More Than a Bird* by Liz Huntley has inspired many of our members, and they have found that reading together can be fun!

New Photo Gallery!

[CLICK HERE](#) to view our new Photo Gallery! This month we have additional photos of Fall Festivals and event around the conference and photos from our "Beyond Relief" event in South Walton county.

Events

- Dothan's Christmas fundraiser, Heartwarming Stories of Christmas, is **Sunday, December 2**.
- Phenix City has a Celebration on **Monday, December 10**.
- Montgomery has a Celebration on **Tuesday, December 11**.

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



December 18, 2018



Great News!

As we come to the end of the year, we want to share with you a recap of what is happening at Communities of Transformation. We are wrapping up our year with Great News!

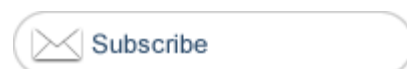
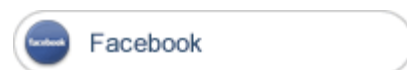
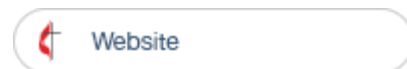
Pine Hill



In January of 2018, our site at Pine Hill in the Demopolis District began regular meetings. Thanks to the groundwork laid by Reba Wiley, our site has a home at Pine Hill UMC and a dedicated leadership team. New site coordinator Brenda Autry joined our staff when Reba retired, and under Brenda's leadership the site celebrated their first class of participants and volunteers in October.

Selma

Want more?



Contact us

[Katy Wrona](#)

Conference Director

[Courtney Albrecht](#)

Communications Coordinator



COT Selma is grateful to Gene and Jamie for providing meals so faithfully! Site coordinator Margaret Bennett leads an amazing group of volunteers who are determined to make a difference in their community.

Brewton



Brewton celebrated six participants completing the Awaken course in October, and three of them have new jobs! Site coordinator Shae Hines works tirelessly in her community to help make a better future story.

Phenix City



COT Phenix City was thrilled to receive a grant this year from the Phenix City Mayor's and Council Ball. Site coordinator Joan Gatewood has worked to secure financial support from a variety of funding sources, and great things are happening in Phenix City!

New Director



We have a new director this year! Former Mobile site coordinator Katy Wrona was named director effective September 2018. We are excited to be moving forward in 2019! When Katy accepted the position of director, we had an opening for a site coordinator in Mobile. We are happy to have Rebecca Levins in that role now.

South Walton



We are finally expanding into Florida! On November 8, Emily Proctor held an initial interest meeting at Christ the King Episcopal Church in Santa Rosa Beach. With more than twenty-five potential volunteers and over \$10,000 pledged to start the site, we are looking forward to welcoming participants who are ready to create a better future for themselves and their families.

Mobile



New site coordinator Rebecca Levins hit the ground running this fall! COT Mobile participated in the Wesley Foundation cook off, hosted a Fall Festival at the

Vision Center, and made appreciation pumpkins for Thanksgiving. They will close out 2018 with a Christmas party. We're excited to have Rebecca on staff!

Evergreen



Our site at Evergreen had been in the development stage while site coordinator Anita Watson worked in the community and in the garden building relationships. On November 29, Evergreen COT celebrated their first five participants as they completed the Awaken curriculum. The highlight of the night was when a first grader shared a poem dedicated to his mom, "I'm glad you're graduating and thank you for working for our new house. We're on our way now!"

Eufaula



COT Eufaula enjoyed an outing in downtown Eufaula. Site coordinator Beverly Brown planned a dinner and fellowship event for members to get together in the community. They are taking Communities of Transformation outside the building and into their community!

Dothan



Dothan community members hosted "Heartwarming Stories of Christmas" on Sunday, December 2. The special fundraising event benefiting COT Dothan featured storytellers reminiscing about Christmas memories. Thanks to all who

hosted and attended!

Montgomery



COT Montgomery celebrated the graduates of their Awaken class in December, then they held a COT Awards ceremony. Site coordinator Jennifer Lancaster gave out homemade trophies for awards such as the "Cruising and Crushing It" award to Melissa Hill, the "Mama Bear" award to Jackie Slaughter, and the "Making Others Great" award to Robin Mackey. What a fun way to celebrate our gifts and graces in Communities of Transformation!



Continuing the Five Dimensions: Physical

Participants and volunteers who participate in Communities of Transformation look at resources that can help bring about a better future story for themselves and their community. They look closely at each of the five dimensions of life, considering where they have work to do. Last month's newsletter focused on the intellectual dimension. This month we are looking at the physical dimension.



The physical dimension in our Awaken curriculum generally refers to health. We look at physical health as well as mental health. Class participants are asked to evaluate how much sleep they get, the kinds of foods they eat, when they last visited a medical provider for a check-up, and how they respond to stress. These health needs are often addressed in later programming as part of Communities of Transformation meetings. We have a strong partnership with the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, and they offer programming on healthy eating, exercise, and other related topics. Our Mobile site is just finishing a study of mental health where members learned about stress management, anxiety, and depression. We want all our members to live a healthy lifestyle!

Special Events

January Book Study- Brewton *More Than a Bird*

January 17- Brewton Pastors' luncheon

January 21- Pine Hill MLK walk

January 24- Pine Hill Taste and See

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.