



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



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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.



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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.





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.

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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 Clss

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](#).

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