



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



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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



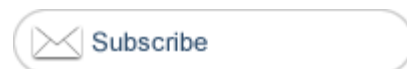
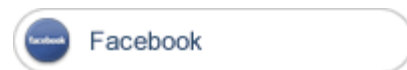
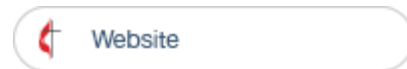
Dothan Graduation

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."

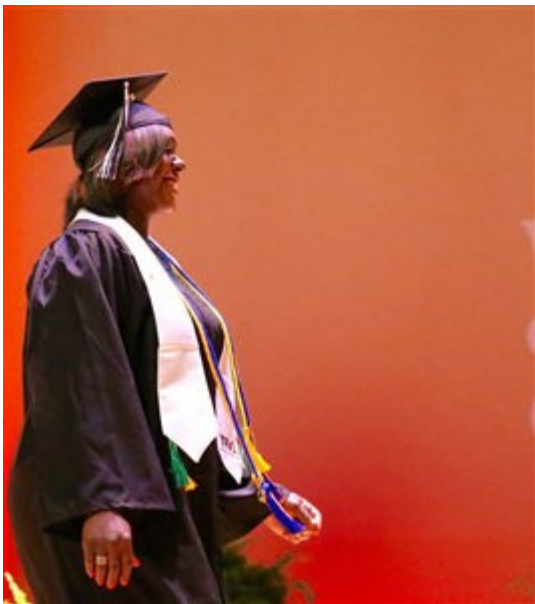
Want more?



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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.

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



June 27, 2018

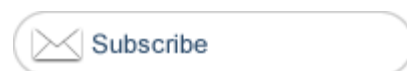
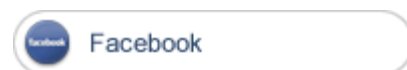
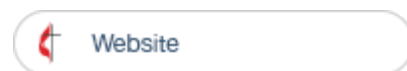


New COT Site Coordinator at Pine Hill



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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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

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