



## April 2020 Newsletter

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### A Message from our Executive Director



Across the nation, every single person, family, business, church and organization is adjusting to the new reality we are currently facing. Communities of Transformation, as an organization, is rooted in creating a community by breaking bread, sharing good news, and supporting each person. Today, we are faced with how to support families from a distance. I have been blessed by the adaptive leadership shown by the COT Team as they step back, adjust, and keep moving forward in serving the community.

We may not be able to meet in person but COT is still creating and strengthening our communities. Our site coordinators are working to share community resources, news, moments of inspiration, and so much more. Phone calls, texts, and cards are creating beautiful moments of joy and connection. COT went live on Zoom and over eighty COT members gathered together the first week to share their good news and see familiar

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### Central Office Staff Contacts

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faces. Our calendar has been updated to reflect all new online meeting dates and times. COT members young and mature are connecting through social media to share pictures from home, to share the latest news from the CDC, to support community businesses, and to help members feel less alone.

In Communities of Transformation, we strive to walk with families/individuals to move them out of isolation. Even now with so much uncertainty in the world, you are not alone. If you were part of a COT site years ago, you are still a part of our community and I encourage you to reach out to the current Site Coordinator to see how you can reconnect today. If this is the first time you have heard of COT, please reach out to anyone on our team to learn more about how a COT community can walk with you.

We do not know how long this will last or what is next but we do know that even now, God is moving. Even now, relationships are growing stronger and communities are finding new ways to support their neighbors. Even now, laughter and tears are being shared and healing is taking place.

**Katy Wrona**  
**Executive Director**

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## Connecting in New Ways

COT is adhering to all social distancing guidelines provided to our local communities due to COVID 19. Until further notice, no local COT site will be meeting in person. The COT Team has been working hard to find new ways to connect with our communities.

Many of our sites are providing weekly Zoom calls as their weekly meetings to connect, share good news, and bring a little joy from a distance. If you have not connected with us through Zoom, please find our schedule below and contact your local site coordinator today!

### Weekly Zoom Meeting Schedule

Date   Time	Site
Eufaula	Monday   5:30pm CT
Phenix City	Tuesday   5:00pm CT
Dothan	Tuesday   5:30pm CT
Montgomery	Tuesday   5:30pm CT
South Walton	Tuesday   6:00pm CT
Pine Hill	Tuesday   6:30pm CT
Mobile	Thursday   6:30pm CT

Our Pine Hill Site Coordinator is attending Zoom meetings with local service providers to share information with her community. Our Phenix City COT members sent cards to celebrate a birthday. Our Evergreen COT site shared their love through painting and placing yard signs for their COT members.



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## Recognition of Service



On April 13, we recognized the last day of VISTA service for our Eufaula Site Coordinator, Lasheena Flemming. We are grateful for her year of service and her leadership at COT Eufaula. Lasheena's love of God and love for the community was the foundation on which the site continued to grow. We are excited to see where God leads her next in her service of Him but we will miss her!

Our COT Eufaula Leadership Team is receiving resumes and conducting interviews for our new Site Coordinator. If you are interested in learning more about how to serve with our organization, please email our director, Katy Wrona, at [katywrona.cot@gmail.com](mailto:katywrona.cot@gmail.com).

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## Volunteer Appreciation Week



This week (April 19 - 25th) is National Volunteer Appreciation Week! The ministry of Communities of Transformation wouldn't be possible without our amazing volunteers. Their dedication, love for the community, and willingness to be vulnerable creates a supportive, nurturing, and safe environment where transformation is taking place. In every COT community, volunteers are providing meals, serving on boards, providing instruction and care in the children's program, walking with families and so much more. Saying thank you will never be enough but our COT communities want to take a small moment to say how much we appreciate you!

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## Praying Together

During these challenging times, we look to our spiritual foundation or begin to connect in new ways. Across our sites and staff, prayer concerns are being lifted up and shared. The power of prayer is an unstoppable force. How can the COT team pray for you? What is heavy on your heart? How can we walk with you during this time?

**Please email [ashleighhicks.cot@gmail.com](mailto:ashleighhicks.cot@gmail.com) and Ashleigh will add your prayer requests to our prayer list.**

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### A Message from our Executive Director



Hello COT family,

This summer has been one that no one could've predicted. All of your support for one another and your community during these challenging times has given a little more strength to each of us. I know every zoom meeting, phone call, socially distanced gathering outside, gardening work day, and more has made a difference. I am inspired by how our COT communities have rallied around each other.

I know we all miss seeing our COT community in person. It is not the same without walking in and having the feeling of coming home. I know any decision at this time is hard as there is still a lot unknown. I just want to take a moment to thank our leadership teams who are working hard to make a transition plan and put the health of everyone at the site first.

We will be together again. We will be stronger after we weather this storm. We will continue to move forward. Please let your COT community know how they can support you until that time. I continue to pray for each of you and your COT communities as we journey through this pandemic together.

**Katy Wrona**  
Executive Director

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## Call to Listen and Stand in Solidarity



At the beginning of June, Bishop Graves led a call to listen and stand in solidarity with people of color. He invited the conference to first join together in prayer. COT participated in the 24 Days of Prayer in several ways. Our COT team was given a day of the week to be in prayer for the daily prayer focus and our director and training coordinator created one of the prayer videos. In July, the Connectional Ministries Offices organized another Vital Conversation Training. These Vital Conversation experiences are provided by the General Commission of Race and Religion. This experience provided a safe place for conversation, discussion, and questions about race and white fragility. Members of our COT team attended one of the sessions. Liz Brown, our Selma Site Coordinator shared this about her experience; "I really enjoyed the direct approach and video content they used for creating discussion. They asked questions that were to the point, and it opened up better opportunities for better in depth discussions in a short amount of time." Our COT Executive Director, Katy Wrona, and Training Coordinator, Rosaland Harrison, each co-facilitated a training session. Rosaland shared that "Serving as a Vital Conversation Facilitator was an enjoyable experience. Celeste Eubanks provides excellent training and even assisted during my session. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the initiative." This call to listen and stand together is just the first step towards change.

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## Stories of Transformation



As part of our efforts to strengthen our social media presence, the COT Central Office has launched a new videos series called Stories of Transformation. This series will lift up a small part of the stories walked by our Awaken Students / Graduates, Volunteers, Staff, Donors, Community Partners, and others. A new story will be shared every Friday afternoon! We are excited for the opportunity to share the stories of community partners who provide resources to our local sites, Awaken Graduates who have continued walking their journey, churches who invest in our ministry, staff who work behind the scenes, and so many more! We also invite you to share your story. Please email Katy Wrona at [katywrona.cot@gmail.com](mailto:katywrona.cot@gmail.com) if you are interested in being featured in our Stories of Transformation series.

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## Recruiting New Site Coordinators



We are currently recruiting new Site Coordinators for three of our sites, Pine Hill, Eufaula, and Phenix City. Our Site Coordinators work to develop this ministry by utilizing community volunteers, building a broad base of support, and developing a diverse Leadership Team to guide the volunteer initiative. COT is an Americorps VISTA organization and this position would be a VISTA role.

Primary responsibilities for the position include:

- Organize and lead COT weekly meetings
- Arrange programs from local outside organizations
- Build and develop relationships within COT community
- Seek opportunities for COT outreach and fundraising
- Develop partnerships with other local agencies and entities
- Develop relationships with possible participant referral organizations
- VISTA reporting

If you or someone you know is interested in any of these positions, please email your resume to [katywrona.cot@gmail.com](mailto:katywrona.cot@gmail.com).

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## Awaken Leadership Class

**Enroll Today**

Awaken Leadership Class | 10 Week Course  
Weds. Starting Sept. 30 | 6pm CT

Join us in a small group of people who come together exploring life experiences, learn from each other, and make some choices about your personal role in creating your future.

**Topics include:**

- budgeting
- building healthy relationships
- spiritual growth
- managing stress
- physical health
- goal setting

@CommunitiesofTransformation | [www.communitiesoftransformation.org](http://www.communitiesoftransformation.org)

Join us in a small group of people who come together exploring life experiences, learn from each other, and make some choices about your personal role in creating your future.

**Topics include:**

- budgeting • managing stress
- building healthy relationships • physical health
- spiritual growth • goal setting

**Register Here:**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdtkbJP8iHSvNhB51LJdqpHEIfdaZEe7hlg8RA8mRNR6rlk67Q/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdtkbJP8iHSvNhB51LJdqpHEIfdaZEe7hlg8RA8mRNR6rlk67Q/viewform?usp=sf_link)

The class will be held on zoom so you will need a device with video capability.

Your curriculum will be mailed to you with a welcome package. To provide a mailing address, please complete the google form in the link above.

*This leadership class is a ten week commitment that requires active participation.*

We look forward to seeing you on the 30th!

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## Game Night!



The **COT Central Office** is launching a new **monthly event**. We are working to provide new opportunities for the COT communities to fellowship with each other and just have an evening of fun. Hope you can join us.

Game nights will start at **6 pm CT Aug. 26 and continue every last Wednesday of the month**. Please let Katy know if you have any questions by emailing her at [katywrona.cot@gmail.com](mailto:katywrona.cot@gmail.com).

**Register in advance** for this meeting:

<https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJcrf-mtqTotHtHZXHtl-OeSDXIEnnzaGfUq>

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## Praying Together

During these challenging times, we look to our spiritual foundation or begin to connect in new ways. Across our sites and staff, prayer concerns are being lifted up and shared. The power of prayer is an unstoppable force. How can the COT team pray for you? What is heavy on your heart? How can we walk with you during this time?

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### A Message from our Executive Director



Hello COT family,

This fall began with many things still unknown. Our community churches, schools, and businesses are working to safely open their doors and some are unsure of when that will happen. What is not unknown is the intentional support of friends, family, neighbors, and our COT communities.

Our COT team continues to serve in new ways. Many have responded to the community relief needed after the destruction of Hurricane Sally. Others are working in community gardens and food banks as the needs of our communities have changed.

We continue to find new ways to connect online. This fall we launched three new programs; Stories of Transformation, Virtual Awaken Leadership Class, and Virtual Game Night. More information is provided on each program below in the newsletter but I want to invite you today to connect with our larger COT community in a new way today.

I am excited to announce that Communities of Transformation was awarded a grant from the Alabama State COVID-19 Relief Fund. We are blessed by Governor's Ivy support of nonprofits and organizations who are working to continue to serve during these hard times. I am reminded once again of God's light in the midst of the storms.

We will be together again. We will be stronger after we weather this storm. We will continue to move forward. Please let your COT community know how they can support you until that time. I continue to pray for each of you and your COT communities as we journey through this pandemic together.

**Katy Wrona**  
Executive Director

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## Connecting Through Technology



Our society has been challenged like never before to connect in new ways. Communities of Transformation is not alone in this journey. The Central Staff continues to strategize and seek new opportunities to share our mission, develop leaders, and provide opportunities for building relationships.

In September, we launched our first Virtual Awaken Class. We are so excited to provide the opportunity for sites to continue to recruit new Awaken Students to be part of our sites during this challenging season. Rosaland Harrison, COT Training Coordinator, and Ashleigh Hicks, COT Graphic Designer, have spearheaded this new project. They have worked together to create presentations, develop a google classroom platform, and design the overall structure of this new class. Every Awaken Student enrolled in the class is also part of a local COT community. This partnership continues the COT model of walking with individuals as they accomplish the goals they have set for themselves. Please be in prayer for these strong individuals who have stepped out of their comfort zone to start this new journey.

Our Stories of Transformation Video Series features a focus area of COT every week as we share the stories of COT Awaken Students, Volunteers, Staff, and Community Partners. The first season will feature ten episodes including an anniversary segment. Season 2 will launch in the first quarter of 2021. If you have not had an opportunity to experience our new series, please check out our COT Facebook page!

Our Virtual Game Night events occur on the last Wednesday of the month. We hope to continue to build stronger relationships among all the COT communities as well as provide a fun night of fellowship. Check out the flyer below for our October Game Night!



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## 9/11 Remembrance Day



Our COT Team is intentional in participating in service and remembrance days for federal holidays every year. For all our COT communities, our hope is to provide awareness, education, and service opportunities. The 9/11 Day of Remembrance this year was no different.

Our Mobile and Montgomery Site Coordinators led programs during their weekly meetings. This led to deep discussions among all community members. Our Evergreen and South Walton Site Coordinators participated in local community events in the form of a memorial walk and flag ceremony. Our Dothan Site Coordinator provided goodie baskets to local first responders. We hope you can join us in our next service opportunity in your local community for Veteran's Day.

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## Recruiting New Site Coordinators



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