



July 24, 2018



## What Do Participants Learn?

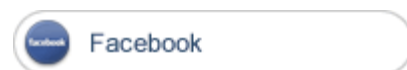
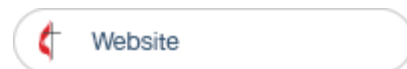
Have you wondered how Communities of Transformation helps families move away from instability, isolation, and dependence? You probably know that we do not provide direct services like a clothes closet or food bank does, but we want to share exactly how we are helping families create a better future.

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?

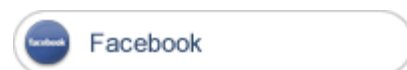
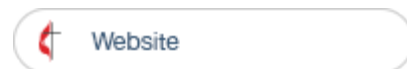
Have you thought about volunteering at Communities of Transformation? Have you wondered what your volunteer experience would be like? This month we are sharing more information about our volunteer experience. Maybe you will decide to join us!

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.



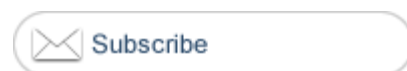
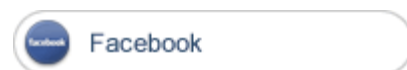
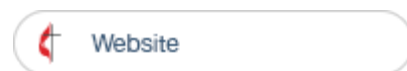
September 28, 2018



## 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.