HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

JUNE 13, 2016

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held on Monday, June 13, 2016, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Lori Wilshire, Chair, presided.

Members of Committee present: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderman June Caron
Alderman Tom Lopez
Alderman Don LeBrun
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Mike O'Brien
Alderman-at-Large Brian McCarthy

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS - None

Chairman Wilshire

We are honored this evening to have Chief Justice Broderick to discuss Change Direction New Hampshire and before I get into any of it, I'm going to invite him up. We appreciate you being here this evening

Chief Justice Broderick

Thank you very much. I'm delighted. I know you have a busy schedule so I won't take long but I appreciate the opportunity. For those of you who I do not know, my name is John Broderick and I was on our Supreme Court for 15 years. I left the court and went to the Law School University and now I'm in my own business. What brings me here tonight is something that I think should concern everybody in this State and that's mental health. The campaign I'm here on is called "Change Direction New Hampshire". The woman whose genius it is is a child psychologist from Maryland. Here name is Barbara Van Dahlen. In 2008 she started a program called "Give an Hour" where she asked people like herself around the country to donate at least an hour of their time for free to provide one on one counseling to a Veteran or a family member of a Veteran. Because of her work which has a huge impact, she was recognized by Time Magazine in 2012 as one of the 100 most influential people on the planet. It's not a bad list to be on by the way.

I was asked to call her last fall by the head of behavioral health at Concord Hospital and I spoke to her and I said Barbara what are you trying to do. She said John what I'm trying to do is make the five most common signs of mental illness as well known and as widely known as the signs of a heart attack or a stroke. When she said that to me, I thought that's an ingenious idea. She said John you and I know the signs of a heart attack and a stroke and we didn't go to medical school. She's right. Why do we know this? I do know this because most of us know that lots have been said. She said John this campaign is important when I give you these statistics. Half of all mental illness in the United States arises by age 14. By age 14. Two-thirds of all mental illness arises by age 24 and the mentally ill are the last to know they have mental illness. The leading cause of disability in the United States and Canada is mental illness. It's a pretty well-kept secret in America. She said last year John more people died of suicide in America than died on America's highways. I think we've all seen reports that up to 22 Veterans of the arms forces in America commit suicide every day.

Because of my own family's journey through mental health and my son who was afflicted with mental illness at age 13, he didn't know it and we didn't see it. So when she told me that, she was talking to me. I realize what I had known and that I couldn't be the only ignorant parent in New Hampshire. So I said how can I help? She said why don't you get a Steering Committee together. I said let me see what I can do and I did that. In short order not because of me but because of the issue. So I reached out to the Attorney General, the head of Safety, the head of Corrections, the head of HHS, then Nick Compass now Jeff Myers. I reached out to hospitals and citizenry and business leaders. Everyone said I'll be on the committee. She came up here in November. Congresswoman Annie Kuster was in town and I asked Annie to meet with her. She did and she called me later and she said I love that woman. She's doing something really important. I said I love her too.

The Steering Committee met in January and we said we need to raise some money. I said so how much do you think we need? I had no idea. So I said $150,000 that seems like a lot of money. They said why don't you try to raise that. In about 35 days, I raised it and not because of me but because of the issue. I want to hospitals one of which is in Nashua. We had a kick off for this event this public service, nonpolitical public information campaign. On a Monday morning on May 23rd at the State House in the House Chamber, they were not in session and I thought that's pretty bold we might not fill a third of those seats. We filled every seat in the room. The Catholic Bishop came, the Episcopal Bishop with whom I met was out of State. He sent a representative. The woman who Chairs the New Hampshire Council of Churches was there, Senator Shaheen, Congressman Guinta, Annie Kuster, Governor Hassan, Senator Ayotte who is a big fan of this program by the way was unable to be there. Not because she wouldn't have been. I've never seen anything like it. What I realized when I spoke that morning and listened to others speak is that mental health stories affect almost everyone. It may be true in this room too. She said to the audience that day how many raise your hand if you've not been affected in any way by mental health or mental illness of somebody you love or somebody you knew. Not one hand went up. I asked her later is that common and she said no one ever raises their hand. Everyone has a story. Then I started reaching out to newspapers to help us cover it. Every newspaper I spoke to, they had stories. Since this was launched and since my own family's journey through the valley of mental illness was well chronicled but not completed by the way, people have shared their own stories with me that I know they don't share anywhere else because they're ashamed of it. We've all been taught to be ashamed of mental health problems. That's how we function.

So what's this campaign about? This campaign very simply is not about politics, not about partisanship. It's hard to find anything today. Maggie Hassan and Kelly Ayotte could agree on. They both agree on this by the way. That's the acid test. It's about informing parents, children, teachers, coaches, extended families, civic leaders. What are the five most common signs of emotional suffering? What are they? Because half of them arise a lot of people under 14. My own son who had mental health issues said to me when he saw the crowd here, he said Dad if I had seen that card when I was 15, I would have said my god that's my problem. But when I was 15 they were advertising Ivory Snow products on television and Purell Shampoo. That's it. You never talked about mental health in polite company. We still don't. It's the only illness from my childhood that's still treated like it's not an illness – like it's a character flaw. It's something to be ashamed of. You know that's true. We all know that's true. In 1957 I was a child. I remember 1957. It was a good year. My parents were both living and I had no responsibility. It was terrific. In 1957 the only person that said the word "breasts" publicly was Hugh Heffner a Playboy magazine founded in 1954. Nobody else said that. In 1957 I had a good friend whose mother was sick. I came in from playing. I was in the kitchen with my mother, just the two of us, and I said: Mom, what's wrong with Jimmy's mother? She looked very pained and she leaned down to me and she whispered with just the two of us in my kitchen. She said she has cancer. She whispered the word "cancer". Some years later, somebody had the courage to put the words "breast and cancer" next to each other to get a megaphone and a color and look at what has happened in breast cancer. I can't look at the color pink without thinking of it. Last year 250,000 or so women were diagnosed with breast cancer which is a quarter of a million too many but the outcomes they can look forward to are dramatically different than if we had remained silent. When Aids fight in the United States in the '80s and everyone said maybe these are bad people why is this happening. Then Magic Johnson of the Los Angeles Lakers said I have HIV.

Suddenly Magic has HIV. We love Magic Johnson. We had to solve that problem. I would be more apt today to ask you what your policy is on transgender bathrooms than I would about mental health and they're all important. I don't mean to belittle transgender bathrooms.

So what I've been doing is going around wherever I can get an audience because I know this campaign will matter. I would have mattered in my household so that people have the opportunity to say we want to be part of that or they don't. The cost of it is almost zero. I met some weeks ago 30 school superintendents. Most of them came to our launch. Remember the population half by age 14. I said I want it in the public schools. I want these posters up. I want people to talk about it. I want teachers to know about it. I want coaches to be aware of it not so we have the Salem witch trials. It's not about that. It's about helping young people. The woman who's the President of the State Bar Mary Ten who I admire greatly. She came to the launch. She took home one our cards – 5 signs. She put a magnet on it and she put it on her refrigerator. Exactly what we should be doing and she said I have two sons 12 and 14 and we started talking about the 5 signs so they would know. We said to my children if you ever have any of these things you need to tell mom and dad about it. Don't be frightened by it or if you have friends you're concerned about, you should tell us about it because we need to know. My son said to me, and this is so true by the way of mental illness, its counter intuitive but it becomes more obvious the deeper you go. He said dad if you have a sore throat and I said do you have a sore throat and it will get better in 3 days on its own or you can take an antibiotic and it will get better. You could deal with the pain for the next few days because you know it wasn't you. It was the sore throat. He said when you have a mental illness, you think you are the sore throat. You think that is who you are. You don't think it's an illness. You see it as a personal weakness. I guarantee you there are kids going to school in Nashua, New Hampshire, who suffer from social anxiety, depression, they don't tell you because they don't know it. If they knew it, they'd be ashamed. Their parents are like I was probably. They're not looking for it. Eventually we reach the following statistic which ought to concern everybody in this State. The largest providers of mental health services in America are jails and prisons. Does that make sense? It makes no sense. Nothing will change unless we decide to change it. So when I was over the other day I went over to an Ed Board over in Keene Sentinel. The publisher sat in and they wrote a great piece by the way. Very supportive. He said to me how will you be able to sustain this? I said it's not for me to sustain this. It's not my job. My job is to share what I've learned from this campaign. It's up to everyone else to see if they think it's worthwhile. As I said the day we launched it, and I believe it to my core, we can either deal with this problem now or we can consign another generation of young people to the shadows.

I was talking to a pediatrician the other day at Dartmouth Hitchcock in Manchester. I really respect this gentleman. I said hey Doc what does your gut tell you about the number of kids who are OD'ing on drugs? How many of those kids do you think have underlying mental health problems? Oh he said the vast majority of them do. A lot of them are self-medicating or escaping. So every time I hear people talking about it, they say we need more treatment centers and they probably do. We need to roll the video back to when they're coming through that garden hose what pediatricians are doing or the protocols they're using. The same pediatrician said John we have a great protocol at Dartmouth Hitchcock now on this issue for kids. I said how long have you had that? He said about three years. I said what did you have before that. He kind of laughed. I said what did you have ten years ago. He said nobody was doing anything ten years ago. Mental illness is a quarter of an inch below the surface in almost every treatment in many families. It was true in my own family. So when I see these signs and I know the potential. My goal would be to have one of these cards on every refrigerator in NH, in every lavatory in NH, in every classroom, in every corridor, and in every school in NH. It's the only time I wish NH had more billboards because I'd rent that space too. I'd put these signs up. If you do this, if Nashua says we're in, I will guarantee you that you will save lives and change lives. You may not know who they are but you'll affect lives. In my own family circumstances, I said that night or that morning in the Chamber every time you help somebody with mental health problems, you help a lot of people who love those people with mental health problems. If something is not right in the lives of one of your children, someone is not right in your life either. We all know that's true. So many parents like me, I'm not being righteous believe me I was pretty ignorant, they don't even know they should be looking for this. The

kids don't know either and if their children are like my son was, they won't even know that's a problem that could be treated. They'll think it's just a personal weakness. I'd like to leave this material here. I'd like to provide you with further material if you're interested. I've been meeting with school superintendents. I met with the head of the school administrators today. If we want to do this, in NH we can do it. The reason she chose our State by the way she said you're first in the nation when it comes to politics. You ought to be first in the nation when it comes to this campaign. I could not agree with her more. So anyway I thank you for the time. If you want any further information, by all means reach out to me. I'll leave these few cards here so you can see them. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them but if it's just me talking it won't matter. I won't matter what I say and I myself could not sustain this. If the people in NH think this is important, when I tell you it will matter – she told me Barbara Van Dahlen was over in London. Prince Harry by the way just did a spot for Five Science. The world family, the younger Royal Family in Great Britain is dealing with mental health. Prince Harry did a PSA for this campaign and she was out there meeting with a British foundation and was telling them proudly about NH and what we were doing. This was before our launch. They said let us know – NH they're first in the nation aren't they? She said yes they are. They said to her does British Foundation maybe NH will figure out the model here too and they'll be the first in the world on mental health awareness and we could be. We're small enough that we could be. So anyway that's my pitch. I would welcome your support and if you want further information, I'm happy to provide it.

Chairman Wilshire

Thank you. I know Alderman Lopez has been chomping at the bit to get some questions.

Alderman Lopez

Do you know what the five signs are because we do have a viewing audience? Sudden change in personality, withdrawal from social groups, self-care. Can we just go over them so people watching know what they are.

Chief Justice Broderick

So there are just little smiley faces or frowny faces. Easily understood. The first one is not feeling like you? Feeling agitated? Are you withdrawn? Are you caring for yourself? Are you feeling hopeless? Those signs which she came up with I showed them to the people at Dartmouth Hitchcock up in Lebanon and they ran them through the Psych Dept. and they said they're perfect. So there are a lot of kids out there that we don't understand are in trouble and they're never going to tell you because they don't know it. It will make a difference. I'd love to see Nashua play a big role in it. I practiced law here for a while at 127 Main Street and my second son, my youngest son was born at St. Joseph's Hospital. It was a little smaller then than it is now. So I have a lot of affection for this city. I'd be grateful if you guys decide, ladies decide this is something of value. I'd love it if the entire Aldermanic board – by the way Mayor Donchess came to the launch. He was there which I appreciated. So if I can leave these few cards I will. I don't know who I leave them with.

Chairman Wilshire

Anyone else have further questions?

Alderman O'Brien

Well I'd just like to ask the Chief Justice, we do have the Public Health Division and have you had the opportunity to speak at those wonderful people over there because they do have an outreach program and perhaps some suggestion – some of the cards over there may go a long way to help out.

Chief Justice Broderick

I haven't done that Alderman and I will. What I was hoping is that if this body thought this initiative was valuable – there's a big difference between my going in there and saying hey I want to talk to you about something and the Aldermanic board saying you ought to listen to this guy. I think what he's talking about will matter here. That's why I'm speaking to the school superintendents in school districts. I could go to every school it would be more time consuming and they would probably say it's not really my call. If there were a sense, and I don't mean this evening, and this Board and Mayor and Aldermen said we think this is important. We'd like our city departments to take a look at it. They would be more receptive than if I walked in and said do you have a few minutes. That's part of the challenge. I meant I went to Keene. I spoke to the Keene folks Mayor and Aldermen there or City Council. It's the same in Portsmouth. I am convinced that this campaign is ingenious. I didn't design it but I'm telling you that my son said dad people I meet with recognize themselves and parents like you and mom will recognize my problems, and teachers will, and coaches will, and siblings will, and eventually, eventually will change the culture around mental illness so you don't have to be ashamed to say I have depression. You wouldn't dare tell someone. You'd say your knee was replaced before you'd tell them you had depression, or your spouse did, or your daughter did. Why is that? It's silly. There's the people who know what they're talking about tell me there's many treatment options available today. In many cases there's better treatment for mental health than diabetes but until we talk about it, people won't come forward. I hope you'll think about it. If I just barge in on people, they're just going to say well wait a minute I don't know if we should be doing this. This Board sets policy in many ways for this city. If the Board thinks that this is important, it will become important.

Alderman Lopez

I think it's very important and I definitely will talk to Bobbie Bagley about it. I think she'll be very receptive to it. She herself was an instructor at Rivier University and I think she may have been the one who actually told me about these signs. What I particular appreciate about the method that you just described is the questions are being targeted to the person. It's a question you should ask yourself rather than other people applying that label. I know from my own background with mental health counseling, it's very important that a person actually seek help and reach the decision that they want to affect a change in their life. They want to do something about it. That being said, I also think it's very important for us to have this public conversation. I participated in the 22 kill challenge a little over a month ago and it was important enough that there was a lot of people who approached me afterwards and took it on themselves. There is a lot of awareness like you said just beneath the surface that more needs to be done and we need to reach out to one another. I think Nashua is definitely going to be very supportive of this effort.

Chief Justice Broderick

Well it would be wonderful if the city were and everyone is dealing with it in the shadows. I think it's time as my wife would say to put on your big boy pants. I think we're there. I think we're there. So we can either deal with it now through the genius of this campaign or we can pretend that we don't have to deal with it now. It's free by the way. Conversation and awareness is free.

Alderman McCarthy

Yeah I just wanted to comment. It really struck me when you said the largest provider of mental health services is the correction system. Thinking about it, I grew up in suburban New York just outside the city and I was aware at the time that I grew up in the '50s that there was this immense set of asylums in the New York area that simply ceased to function somewhere around the '60s or '70s. It occurs to me that at that point as you said we didn't talk about it. We treated it in a way that probably wasn't very good or very positive and then we simply stopped doing that and we didn't acknowledge the problem and said well these people will just be mainstreamed whatever that is. There's no mechanism there to do that and

to get them the support – even the support they had when they were simply basically incarcerated in the mental health system.

Chief Justice Broderick

This statistic and by the way this campaign is not an advocacy campaign to get more money to mental health. That's a political issue and other people will do that but I will say this. You reach an age in your life where you realize dots actually do connect. In 1988/1989, NH had the number one rated mental health system in the United States of America. Number one. Today the same people rate us around 42nd in the nation in community for mental health. So a lot of those people are going to emergency rooms, some are going to county jail because they act out. Not dealing with the problem doesn't' mean it doesn't cost you anything. It costs about $35,000 a year to incarcerate someone at the State prison. Bill Wrenn who I admire greatly. He's the Commissioner of Corrections and I think he's terrific. He doesn't have the resources to do it or to do it the way they'd like to do it. The beauty of it is these young people pass through those halls. We know where they are and a lot of them are in your public schools. We know where to find them. I mean it's not a mystery but we need to be informed and aware and their parents do too. It will matter. It's a great public service. It will save lives. It will cost you nothing but the fact that it will save you not only to anguish but it will save you huge money over time. It really will.

Alderman LeBrun

Thank you Madam Chair. Thank you for being here Judge. It's very informative. Are you familiar with a lady by the name of Jo Manchur?

Chief Justice Broderick

Oh she's on my Steering Committee. I love Jo Manchur.

Alderman LeBrun

Very good. She does tremendous work. Are you familiar with the work that she's doing with Stigma, PTSD, TBI and that sort of thing?

Chief Justice Broderick

She's an amazing woman. I said to you do you ever sleep? I've never seen the woman – she has 90 ideas a minute and she matters a lot in this stage. She's done a great work for Veterans. This campaign is broader than just Veterans although it applies to Veterans. This applies to everyone. Unlike what Barbara Van Dahlen is doing on a given hour where you need people in talking and counseling which is valuable, this is something everyone can do and it will affect everyone. A last story. I had a fellow that came up to me after our tragedy – and by the way my son is doing so much better, it's just amazing. It's the person to find that (inaudible). The fellow I met one day was about 40 years old and he said hey Judge how are you doing? I said I'm doing okay and how's your son? He said my mother has been depressed for years. Just think about that for a moment and my father won't take her to get any help. I said don't be too tough on your father. He's learned that. He's learned that. It's shameful. He said yeah that's what he tells me. We have consigned a lot of people to those shadows. We're going to create another generation of them if we don't act. I've never believed in anything more than this. This is the most important thing. I've been in this State for a long time and done a number of things. This is the most important thing I've ever done because I know it's valuable and it's free. It's pretty unusual. So if the city is interested and you need more information, or you take it up at a larger audience, or you want to hear from someone other than me, please let me know and we'll arrange it. I'd love it if the city got behind it in a very public way.

Chairman Wilshire

You do have a bigger audience than is here because we are broadcasting this on TV16 so.

Chief Justice Broderick

I understand. One time when I was on the court I went on Concord public television community TV and for the next three weeks I thought I'd been on NBC nightly news. They said I saw you on TV.

Alderman Lopez

I also want to point out that we invited three different peer support program organizers and they're sitting behind you. So not only are you able to reach us as Aldermen but I believe peer support is one of the most effective approaches to raising awareness of not just mental health issues as they exist and what to do about them but where to go and who's willing to help. So I think there's a lot of people that are listening right now to what you're saying.

Chief Justice Broderick

Peer support is very important. I agree with you. Barbara Van Dahlen was she here would tell you she agrees with that too. You have to inform people. They have to know what to do and what they're looking for. In any event, I really appreciate all your time you gave me. So thank you.

Chairman Wilshire

Thank you. Thank you very much for being here this evening. Good luck with your campaign.

Next on our agenda is Models of Peer Support groups. Tonight we have June St. Laurence here from Circles of Greater Nashua and Jen McCormack and Galina from One Greater Nashua Cultural Navigator Program. If you would care to join us, please come forward.

Models of Peer Support Programs

- Circles Greater Nashua
- H.E.A.R.T.S. Peer Support Center of Greater Nashua Region
- One Greater Nashua Cultural Navigator Program

June St. Laurence

I'm June St. Laurence. I'm from Circles Greater Nashua and I'm the Chapter Coach and we're an anti-poverty initiative.

Jen McCormack

I'm Jen McCormack. A lot of you folks here know me as the Library Director but I'm also an active participant in the One Greater Nashua Coalition and in particular the cultural navigator's initiative that stems from there.

Galina Sokach

I'm Galina Sokach. I'm also from One Greater Nashua and focusing on navigators.

Chairman Wilshire

Thank you for being here this evening.

June St. Laurence

Circles Greater Nashua is brand new. It's a model however that exists across the country. There are 80 chapters throughout the United States. We are the first chapter in New England and there are also chapters in two provinces in Canada. As I said earlier, we are an anti-poverty campaign. So anti-poverty. Our goal is to eradicate poverty which is pretty major when you think that's not a small goal. As our Founder and CEO Scott Miller says, you don't just eradicate a little bit of cancer. You don't just do a little bit. You go after all of it. So the same thing for poverty. I've given you some handouts. We have a brochure here that talks about Circles and how it exists, how it's successful, and what makes us unique. So what happens in Circles is you take an individual, a low income family, a family in poverty. You bring them together. We bring about 15 to 20 together. That's called a cohort. Those individuals start with a 12 week training and in that training we ask them to set goals. What are their dreams? How do they want to grow? People in poverty generally don't get asked that question. They're so busy living in the tierney of the moment right. That day to day how to get by, how to make ends meet, what do I do when the car broke down, my child is sick I have to miss work, now I may lose my job. So we get them having aspirations. We have them take a look at who is in their family for support, in their community for support, and how healthy are those supports. We look at economic goals. We look at education goals. We look at financial literacy. We do this in 12 weeks as you can imagine in a small simple scale but we get them talking and we get them looking at skill assessment. When they complete the 12 weeks, we then call them a circle leader and the circle leaders is a name we give them because they're the ones who are in charge. They're driving the bus as I like to say. It's not about us going in and telling them what they need and how to become financial self-sufficient. It's about them setting their own goals. We also work with their children. We do this by meeting once a week month after month for almost two years. We also after they have graduated as that circle leader, we pair them up with two community volunteers that we call "allies". An ally is an individual who wants to walk beside a family or an individual in poverty. That person doesn't have to come with a unique set of skills because they're not there to solve the problem, to fix that individual, or the issues that come before them. They're there to walk alongside them, to be the cheerleader to support, and to say gee I know somebody maybe you could give them a call or I have this resource. We also bring their children along with education. So we have two years of curriculum while the parents are partnered up with allies and have gone through children, their children are in school, in essence are alongside with them. We bring them together once a week. There's a community meal. We partner them with community members beside the allies but individual who want to make a difference. Who want to change things for the City of Nashua for our example or throughout the country? In doing this, we address systemic barriers. Barriers that exist inherent in what they face in the day and day out. An example of that is called "the cliff affect". So an individual in poverty may be on subsidies which over the two years we help to take them off of all subsidies and what they're doing is they're trying to increase income. When they come to us, they may only be at 100 percent of federal poverty guidelines. So for a family of four, that's around $24,000. As we all know, it's very difficult to live on $24,000 and support four. We work to bring them up 200 percent above the federal poverty guidelines or around $48,000 and change. In doing that, we work to bring up that income, take away those subsidies, those entitlements but many times as their income comes up say $50, they lose and entitlement that might cost them out of pocket hundreds of dollars. So it de-incentives. So what happens is as a community we can work to address those barriers. Maybe as income goes up, there's a gradual decline to the entitlement programs instead of it dropping off like a cliff.

Payday Loan Lenders is another group but we as an agency can't solve them and they as individuals trying to gain self-sufficiency, they can't solve that on their own either. It takes a community approach. It strengthens our community and our State. So that's another example. What makes us unique is we work on social capital. So beside the education that they get, they get the partnerships with those allies. Those individuals from middle to upper income levels modeling other ways to be, other types of language, other types of friendships. Something you may not get when you have grown in generations of poverty. So in this model and these partnerships, we do social capital. We link them to resources already existing in the community. We're not trying to reinvent anything but to partner with the agencies

that already exist. We try to bridge the social economic barriers by putting them with allies who can provide support and companionship in the journey out of poverty and then that peer to peer component. That bonding. Walking with others who are trying to get out of poverty. We are not the experts. They are the experts in their own lives. They know what it is like to be in poverty. We do not and we respect that. Then we do that big view approach pulling the community together to address poverty so that makes us unique and also trying to break the cycle of poverty by working with children. In a nutshell, and it is a complicated model. There's many layers to it but it's deep. It's successful. They find for every dollar invested in Circles $2 is returned to the State by giving back monies that would have been spent on childcare subsidies, food assistance, healthcare, etc., and $4 comes back to the community in earned income – new earned income. We have employment soft skills training also as a model so we're working with employers in the Greater Nashua community. They are soft skill training. Many people lose their jobs when their car breaks down, their child is sick, etc. so we put in emergency plans, etc. so it's all a program that gets them thinking ahead. So you'll find many materials inside this folder that explains in more specifics and I would then like to show you a video that will explain how Circles works across the country.

Presentation of the video.

Thank you for this opportunity to tell you about this new initiative that we are bringing to Nashua. We would love to partner with any of you when we are up and running especially for the resource teams and that big view. We hope to bring this so that we can work with the low income families in Nashua. I come from 10 years working in transitional housing at Ann Marie House, have worked with Alderman Lopez through the Soup Kitchen work, and this is an exciting initiative that brings a full scope of material, ideas, empowerment, etc. from start to finish. It's not just working with the leader but will make change for all who face poverty. So thank you for this opportunity.

Chairman Wilshire

Thank you. It's a very interesting concept. How do you find your clients? How do you take a family and put them into your program?

June St. Laurence

Sure. Well right now I have to say we do not have a group, a cohort that we're working with because as most nonprofits we're trying to get the money to get started. We're looking to do a partnership or have an umbrella organization over us and we have conversations going on with a number of agency partners. How it's done all over the country is to partner with those stakeholders and take referrals. Schools can refer which is to me very exciting because you're looking at a multi-generational approach. It can be the guidance counselor at school. For example Ledge Street that says you know I have this family who I think are motivated to change their lives and get financial self-sufficiency. It could be someone like the Soup Kitchen. It could be a transitional housing program. It could be the Adult Learning Center here in Nashua. So many agency partnerships all could refer. We're also part of Nashua Area Interfaith Council. We're an initiative under them. So even clergy and rabbis, they all could refer.

Alderman LeBrun

Thank you Madam Chair. You mentioned you are a 501(c)3. Where and how do you get your funding?

June St. Laurence

Good question. We get our funding through grant writing predominantly donations. We have a GoFund me page up and running right now. We have a donor who is matching up to $15,000 f funds that we can raise. We have a Facebook page, a web page, so you can find more about us that way. So the typical nonprofit avenues is how we look to raise our finds to get started. We have a small budget. We're not

an expensive program. We're $90,000 to get our first cohort together. Right now my co-working and I are working for free as volunteers. So like anything else that you believe in passionately and know can change lives, we're involved in just trying to get funds to get started. Thank you.

Alderman Lopez

I actually had a similar question. I also wanted to add an observation regarding my thinking for bringing in different peer support programs. Even in this meeting where June was having trouble raising the volume on the computer, all of us are leaders in the community and we weren't sure who should step forward, who should do something. Mary Ann took the lead. Mike and I were sitting here with a possible theory that could happen. As soon as somebody took the lead, the rest of us were there helping offering advice. It was normalized. That's one of the very valuable things that we could see in the peer support community with programs like Circles where nobody is really sure what to do about the person they see struggling or having difficulties solving a problem until somebody takes the lead and starts doing it. One of the things I like about the Circles program particularly is they train the future trainer. It's somebody who can pull themselves out of their situation, become a leader in their own life and a deciding factor, and then bring that experience forward to the next person. It changes you from being the student to the teacher. So you generally learn more about yourself through that process as well. That's one element of Circles that I particularly like. I know there's an upcoming presentation from One Greater Nashua so I'll reserve what I like about them until they're done.

June St. Laurence

It changes us too and that's what's great. It changes our community. We learn right alongside the low income family. We just came from a conference and I asked someone you know what's the toughest part? They said it's not training the Circle leader. It's not raising that family which most of us would think about as being the toughest – how do you do it? How do you solve things? It's the rest of us in learning how difficult that walk is and what barriers are in the way that we've put there inadvertently to keep people struggling. So thank you.

Chairman Wilshire

Thank you. We appreciate you being here.

- One Greater Nashua Cultural Navigator Program

Jennifer McCormack

One Greater Nashua is actually the name of a coalition working in Nashua and I know many of you have heard about us. We gave a presentation to the Board 4 or 5 months ago. I was invited as the Library Director to join the One Greater Nashua Coalition about a year and a half ago. The work of the coalition for the people watching on TV, it's one of four sites across the state working on immigrant integration. So the big work of One Greater Nashua is to change the community like everyone else that's talked about tonight to welcome newcomers to Nashua, help integrate them, make them part of the systems in the community that are already here, and find what ways for them to contribute, find what they have to give the community, make them feel welcome and connected. So I as the Library Director was invited to join the work of One Greater Nashua because the Hartford Public Library has been doing similar work probably for four years now. They have a cultural navigator program there that we adopted that model and have modified it somewhat for Nashua. I think our program is going to work better. So it really is a trained group of volunteers and about 2/3 of them are immigrants themselves and the other third are established Nashua residents or New Hampshire residents who are trained and dedicated to reaching out to new families – immigrant families. It doesn't have to be immigrant families in Nashua as a friendly face in the community. Kind of a mentoring or coaching relationship to help them feel more part of the community. I'll give you a couple of examples of the work that they've done so far. Galina and I were

talking about this. I've come up with a couple since then. So a group of the navigators went to the international dinner at Nashua Community College and they were able to connect with a group of 2 or 3 people and I can't remember what country they were from. They were new to Nashua, needs some friends, they made a good connection there and hopefully your relationship will progress from there. A group of navigators were at Greeley Park for the diversity event that coincided with the start of Summer Fun. There was a family there from Syria who had no friends or connections in the community. One of the navigators speak Arabic and was able to start a friendly relationship there. Another navigator was at – one of the high schools had a dinner for families of ELL students and one of our navigators made a connection with a Russian family there that's new to the community. They kind of have that friendly face. So the hope is that people who have experience with being an immigrant themselves will work in partnership sometimes with an established resident to just be that friendly face. That good connection to the community for the newcomer family. We hope to have a navigator here tonight to talk a little bit about their personal experience but that didn't happen. Galina did the development program for the current set of navigators. So I would ask her to talk a little bit about the kind of training they get so you have a little understanding of what they're working from.

Galina Sokach

So when I was asked to do training, coaching, to navigators my mind was what would these people need? I mean who are the clients system that is newcomers. There are people that will be navigators. Maybe immigrants with a few years' experience in US. They will be a local established community. It was many years ago but I have experience of my own transition from one country to another country. I think that the very obvious to me was to start to talk about basic human condition. Now a basic human condition is that we would like to respect ourselves, self-esteem, and we would like to preserve ourselves to survive. If you start to talk to people what is important for you, you start to and these people could be from different countries. They start to realize that there is huge universality and they start to see others in themselves and themselves in others because there is a uniqueness how (inaudible) and how I arrived right or left, and what does it mean to respect to elders. Do you talk or do you just quiet and listen. The basic human condition is that you would like to be respected and you would like to be acknowledged. What was interesting was that this whole navigator that we started 20 people approximately but they were there from 10, 15 countries and they were all newcomers. Right except where one America to Americans and they didn't talk to each other. You see they even were foreign to each other. The only common gene was that I'm an immigrant and that I have somehow established my identity. They didn't talk to each other. At the end of their trans sessions, there was so many insides that people just openly they just said wow you're the same like I am and they probably heard that you know before I would be very upset what do you think I had 3 heads or what do you think? It was just discovering for people.
You know what was interesting, the discovery wasn't so much intellectual and it was the basic human condition. They felt safe. So now I can sit and talk to you and you're not so much unknown that you don't take my place. I don't take your place and actually no one is what I thought you are because people said wow you have education. An American woman said to woman from India you have education. I thought all people coming there who cannot read there and they just you know clean floor. It was just really a very how moment that. So what I want to say that (inaudible) on the basic level of life, who I am, what do I want, what I'm afraid of, what's important to me, and through that there was no emphasis on any (inaudible) including American. It was a human culture and people live their lives. They see well differently and they see world differently and they see world a little bit with the spears just because they didn't know about this world and it's normal to preserve yourself. Down the road maybe after 5 or 6 sessions, there was a political situation with ISIS, and political conversation should support immigration or not, and it was very interesting to see how these 20 people reacted on that situation. One woman who is from local, right, and she said we love immigrants and we want to help but we don't want them and it was about Muslim. Because they are and person who also was navigator said I am one of them. It was interesting that she worked with these person in the navigator group already for 6 weeks and they were friends and they discussed everything. She didn't realize that he is one of them. So for her, it was also a little bit stop moment to say can we just say black and white how we have consideration.

That to me is very important when people just start to see that their society is from a humanity point of view and there are is a little compassion maybe. That starts from understanding who you are. When you understand yourself as a complex, brave, and coward, ambitious, and envy. When you see who you are in the reality and why you sit at this table, and who and what you really represent in your thoughts and your actions, you start to see the situation around a little bit different and I think that it is extremely important in this situation now. Extremely. You don't want children to be isolated in the school. You don't want people at work look at each other with the fear. Neighbors with the fear and we cannot ignore reality. Even in (inaudible). So I really like the Judge conversation. You cannot ignore that. You have to face it. So that was navigators and there could be a lot of examples. One situation of one woman who was raised here by a Spanish family in New York and lived there probably 20 something years. She said you know everyone says New York is melting pot, right? She said that is true so many cultures, so many colors, so many different people. She said you know these all people don't melt. They sit in their own small you know like it's not all chairs and all kinds of chairs in one port. She said I came here and I finally start to feel like I'm one of others and actually that person start having anxiety after 9/11 start to go down because she's so nervous of people around that look differently.

Jennifer McCormack

Just as quick addition. I left out some of our part our partners. So the other major partner institution with the Cultural Navigators is the Adult Learning Center. Also the coordinator the navigators has an office there which is a really – she also works in the schools as an outreach coordinator. So there's a lot of connections there and we're looking forward hopefully this fall to hosting a series of informal coffee events at the library kind of as an establish night during the month or a couple during the month to keep those connections growing in the community.

Alderman Lopez

So when One Greater Nashua first formed as part of the immigrant integration inclusion initiative, it was basically trying to address a very specific practical issue. They did a study based on life expectancy and found out that women of color had a significantly shorter life span than any other demographic and that the number one factor influencing that was community inclusion. So women of color weren't feeling as included in the community. They didn't feel as welcome. They didn't' go out and get involved and because of that. They didn't have people looking over their shoulder when they got sick or when they had health conditions and all that stuff. So One Greater Nashua as it was formed and was trying to tackle the issue – how do you address somebody who doesn't feel included without unintentionally excluding them by making them the target of a very specific initiative. So the group had decided let's try to make Nashua a more welcoming place overall. Nashua's in the top 100 most diverse cities in the United States. So that's a strength and the group recognized it and realized that there are many Nashua's. There's the Latino Nashua. There's Main Street Nashua. There's North End Nashua. What if there was One Greater Nashua. So what I like about One Greater Nashua particularly is it sees the full potential of our entire city working together as a community but it's a little bit easier said than done when you're an immigrant coming to a new place. One of the specific challenges that was identified in discussing with immigrants what their experience was was a lot of people had very diverse backgrounds but were essentially treated as though everybody coming to the US was a blank slate. So you have somebody who didn't really have a very advanced education and may be mostly experiencing manual labor being given the same job as somebody who might have literally been a nuclear physicist or a doctor. Most of the systems that place the support vocational advancement don't happen overnight. There can be a psychological impact to coming to a new place, trying to learn a new language, just learning what new food is, where everything is, where you're located. You can lose your sense of self identity because of all of that change. I'm sure any of us who went to college or took on a new job, we felt we weren't ourselves when we first started because everything was so new. We were busy trying to figure out who we were at that point.

The strength of cultural navigators as a peer support program comprised of other people who have been in that similar situation and particularly the way Galina presents it as not focusing on your own individual culture so much as the shared experience is you're allowed to be around people who understand you and people who can support you and emerging as yourself. So it's easier for you to integrate and find your way in Nashua and feel like you're part of the community and from that you draw the self-confidence, the courage, and the resources to reassert all of the work that you put into getting your degree or following a vocation and building a life. So that's what I like the most about the One Greater Nashua culture and navigator's model is it literally helps people navigate the now that I'm here how do I find my basic needs and then how do I become who I really want to be.

Chairman Wilshire

Very good. Questions? Thank you very much for coming here this evening. It was very educational. I appreciate your time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – None

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Wilshire

I was particularly interested in the Change Direction New Hampshire discussion this evening and all the discussions this evening. That one really struck me as something we could do. It really did. He's so passionate about it and everything he said made so much sense that we kind of sweep mental health under the rug until is surfaces until is an acute situation that has to be dealt with. I think his 5 questions on how to identify if someone has mental health. Know the 5 signs. Very interesting. I was really very impressed and I think this is something – I think we could buy into as a community. I really do.

Anyone else? Thoughts?

Alderman Lopez

I completely agree with that. I think the way that it was delivered is so succinct and so simple. You don't get to try to diagnose. You don't get into rule outs or any of that complicated stuff that they try to handle in an actual full-blown mental health evaluation. These are simple questions that a person can just ask themselves or be aware of that they are indicative of a change in your behavior. The thing about mental health is it's not so cut and dry as you're perfectly good or you're perfectly disabled. There isn't really a stamp that says "sane" and "insane". There's a lot of different variations of it so sometimes it might be a little adjustment disorder or it might be something that's emerging that if you recognize these signs like oh I haven't really been taking care of myself as much. I just went from taking a shower from once a day to once every couple days or have I cleaned my apartment lately? Am I getting irritable with my friends? When you start asking those questions, you start becoming introspective and I think that process alone for some people can just help them say I need to get out more. I need to make some changes. I need to start investing in myself. If they can't make that next step, then they know they should reach out and say know what I have a problem. I need to talk to somebody about it. One of the first things a practitioner is going to say is why are you here today? How is a person supposed to answer that? Usually they'd say I hope you would tell me what was wrong. It's a catch 22. If you can get a person to a place where they have some self-discovery happening and they're in a position to help out or to seek help out, then they're open to change and they're pre-prepared more or less for somebody to really go make a difference. I also think with that simple uncomplicated delivery system, it's not going to suffer from the telephone problem where you have one person saying their version of it, talking to another person who changes it slightly, and then it evolves through communication. It's simple enough and straightforward enough that

it can be easily delivered. So I think that the change direction model is very effective an I think I was happy that it was being combined with the peer support model because the two of them have a huge potential for change in Nashua for helping people who could contribute more and who want to contribute more in finding a path to doing that.

Alderman O'Brien

I was very glad that the Chief Justice took time to come down here and speak with us. I've been wanting to support as a State Rep. I supported the mental health courts which is a process of looking at some of the people who have mental health issues and trying to get them into some form of a care as compared to looking at them as criminals. I got to ask the Chair it was a very well presentation. I think I'm definitely in support of it. What's our next step? Where can we go with this and try to get this put in. I think the Chief Justice was right on target with his message and would like to provide a venue for him to get that out there.

Chairman Wilshire

I agree. I don't know. I'm open to suggestions but I like it. I agree with Alderman Lopez. It's simple. It's not overcomplicated. You can look at this and say wow. I was very impressed.

Alderman O'Brien

I think that a very straightforward starting point. Get more of these and find people that we can give them to. The Public Health Department for example would be a great starting point because they do a lot of outreach and that kind of thing. Maybe reaching into nontraditional forums too. People who aren't overtly identified as being a highly susceptible to mental health issues but it's all about disseminating the message.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

I would agree. I think that in terms of a next step for the city, it would be identifying those organizations or department within the city who have then the connections to assist and dissemination but looking in nontraditional avenues. So working with our churches, working with preschool programs, working with our school department, working with our hospitals by getting a core group of people together to start the conversation and develop some sort of campaign and just say on this day we're going to roll it out and we're going to have all of the material at all of these locations and work with the various boards of those organizations to have one concerted effort citywide.

Alderman Caron

I agree. I think the Judge gave a great presentation and of course he added his own personal part of that so I think the idea of these which is simple as Alderman Lopez says. The other thing is mental illness has been hiding in the closet for a long time. If we save 2 or 3 people from committing suicide because they didn't have any place to go, or they didn't know what to do. The other thing that we do talk about our teens and young but we also have the elderly. That is a very crucial part because there are a lot of elderly that are alone because families move away and they're left there and they have no one to talk to and here is something they could put on their refrigerator and say as Alderman Lopez said I need to get out. I need to make friends and be part of that. I think that as a board we should be looking at how do we do this as a group effort with all these communities and the school department. I think it's a great idea.

Chairman Wilshire

I agree.

Alderman McCarthy

Yeah I think there's a couple of things that make sense for us to do. One is the Board may want to draft a resolution endorsing the program. Two we may want to find some money to print cards for those who want to give them out. Three we ought to get the stuff onto the website as well.

Chairman Wilshire

Agreed. My first thought too was a resolution getting the support of the Board and just making it more public. Just the information available to our constituents whoever they are because this mental illness affects everyone to some degree or another.

Alderman O'Brien

Madam Chair I agree because let's look at what's got to be the initial point of contact here. It's got to be probably the police. It's got to be our firefighters who come into the day to day operations. It could be the emergency rooms and different things like that. This could be a good start like you said to start the ordinance and go with this. I would recommend perhaps maybe the Board of Health. Maybe we can have further discussions. A lead organizations that seems to already have some mission we can include this. Hopefully they don't mind but maybe assign that as well with them and coordinate with the police and fire and our hospitals and such.

Chairman Wilshire

Maybe Alderman Lopez being the liaison to the Health Department can have that conversation at the next Board of Health meeting at least with them.

Alderman Lopez

I really willing to do that but I think one of the points the Chief Justice made which was definitely very provocative was he didn't want to present it necessarily by himself because he would be seen as his vision and his idea. I think the Department of Health is the logical starting point but we should try to introduce it through other vectors because if it becomes only a public health campaign, people are going to just say it's another public health campaign. Where if we did start working with the Nashua Senior Center even some of the community events that are happening, Summer Fun, it's coming in through other ways at a different population more buzz will happen and there will be more awareness.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Yes I just in listening to our conversation here, the phrase "mental illness" has been used a couple of times. If you look at what Judge Broderick gave us, it's the conversation is around mental health. I think even our choice of words we need to think about that because just by using the word "mental illness", I think still carries a stigma that mental health doesn't present when you speak about it publicly. I do agree I think we need to start with the Health Department and then reach out from there. Certainly depression and anxiety among our senior population I think most of us don't think about it unless we know someone who's encountered that. It is certainly more common than the general public realizes.

Alderman McCarthy

I actually think that stigma around mental illness is part of the problem that you've got to take on. When we're sick, we say we're sick. If somebody asks you how are you feeling today, you don't say my throat is not well. You say my throat is sore, I'm sick, I have a cold, or whatever. You have to get to the point where that is not – there is no stigma there, that's just something that we deal with and we have to know – first we have to know to deal with it and then we have to know how to deal with it.

Chairman Wilshire

I agree.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

I agree with you. I just think we talk about heart health – being heart healthy and it puts it – in my encounters in dealing with mental health in past employment endeavors, looking at it as mental health also gives know the warning signs preventative piece. Yes people have mental illness just like people have coronary disease but talking about what can we can do to address it, and be ready for it, and give people the vocabulary and the resources and thinking about how do I keep healthy rather than once I get sick then where do I go. That's certainly an important point but the overarching piece and what I think is an important piece is how do I stay healthy? How do I help myself so if I start seeing some of these signs what do I do rather than getting to the point where I'm really sick. I think there are people who go through kind of transient periods of being more or less mentally healthy depending upon what's going on in their life. They lose a job, they have a hard time finding a job and they maybe become depressed but then they come back. I think there is a whole skillset that people need to have.

Alderman Lopez

I'm just going to comment that one of the things we're struggling with isn't exactly our fault. So psychology is more of a soft science than other traditional medical fields and because most of it like a subjective decision about what behavior is health and what behavior is not, the health illness model is considered the medical model of psychology. So when you're looking at that, you're really looking at a spectrum of what does most of the population consider to be health and what is outside the range of accepted and typical behaviors. There are other models of psychology like positive psychology for example that for some reason are not taking off in the New England area or even the east coast. I' guess we're too grumpy. The idea of psychology is you are who you are, you have these traits, and yes society acts different ways to those traits but that doesn't mean the traits are bad. It's the interaction and the boundaries of between societies. So there may be people who they don't socialize the same way but if you were looking at it from a positive psychology model, it would be more how do you teach that person to interact effectively with people than particularly change. I think this starts that conversation going because I think the medical industry is easier to understand and the psychology field has been drying for decades to reach that level of trust with the greater population that all right we what we're doing well enough that when I'm sitting down here and I'm opening myself to you and I'm telling you all my secrets and everything, you're going to have some professional feedback and it's not going to just be like witchcraft or something. So I think the medical model has taken off and it's what most people are familiar which is probably why the wanted to start with this but I agree with Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja that the idea here and the concept is fundamentally positive. It's more about how can I be more in the community and how can I help people than what's wrong with me. I think it is inherently positive model.

Alderman McCarthy

I guess the only thing if we continue to use the heart health analogy, I think part of the problem there is that cardiac science has evolved to a point where there actually are some answers there that are easy to convey and everybody knows them. If you simply ask anybody heart health, the deep fried pork roast or

the salad, there's a right and a wrong answer there and everybody knows what it is. I'm not sure that we know enough about how do I maintain my mental health to speak about it in those terms yet. I think we sort of have to say first step is let's deal with the illness side of it and about the best we can do is say if these things are happening to you, you ought to seek help from somebody who knows more about this than anybody in the general population does.

Alderman Lopez

I think that is completely true because – what I was saying before is psychology has traditionally be more correlational. Most people in the number of the room have this thing going on therefore this is something we can all agree is happening. We are in the psychology field actually starting to benefit from technology. We didn't have MRIs more than a decade and a half ago so now they're actually seeing what's going on the brain when people are having certain symptoms. There's a lot of work to catch up on.

Chairman Wilshire

Anything further? Okay.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

REMARKS BY ALDERMEN

Alderman Lopez

I have something of a sad announcement. One of the participants of the Mayor's Opioid Task Force unfortunately relapsed and overdosed. So we're organizing a vigil for everybody who we've lost to substance abuse and addiction. It's June 20th. It's at 8 o'clock over at Rotary Commons. I can send a formal invite to all of the Aldermen. I just wanted people to know that it's happening. It's happening on the summer solstice because that's the longest day of the year. So if you look at the recovery model trying to get through day by day, one day at a time, that's the day we thought it would make the most sense to acknowledge what's going on in our community.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN CARON TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja
Committee Clerk

know the five signs

not feeling like u?

feeling agitated?

r u withdrawn?

caring 4 yourself?

feeling hopeless?

changedirection.org/nh

Circles® Greater Nashua

Thriving Families, Thriving Communities

Circles Mission Statement

We strive to provide opportunities that inspire and equip families and communities to resolve poverty and thrive.

Laurie Skibba, Chapter Coordinator
laurie@circlesgn.org

June St. Lawrence, Chapter Coach
june@circlesgn.org

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Check Us Out:
Website ~ www.circlesgn.org
Facebook ~ Circles Greater Nashua

The Circles Approach

STEP 1

Identify people ready to move out of poverty.

STEP 2

Provide a 12-week class to develop a long-term employment and education plan.

STEP 3

Assign up to three community volunteers per family for a 6 month's commitment to help them achieve their goals.

STEP 4

Provide weekly support and problem solving meetings to assess Leader's progress toward goals.

STEP 5

Increase everyone's poverty IQ in order to resolve issues affecting poverty community-wide.

Step 1

- Agency and community referrals

Step 2

- Graduates of training are now known as Circle Leaders
- Establish S.M.A.R.T. goals
- Financial literacy
- Employment soft skill training

Step 3

- Community volunteers are known as Allies
- Intentional friendships
- Provides social capital

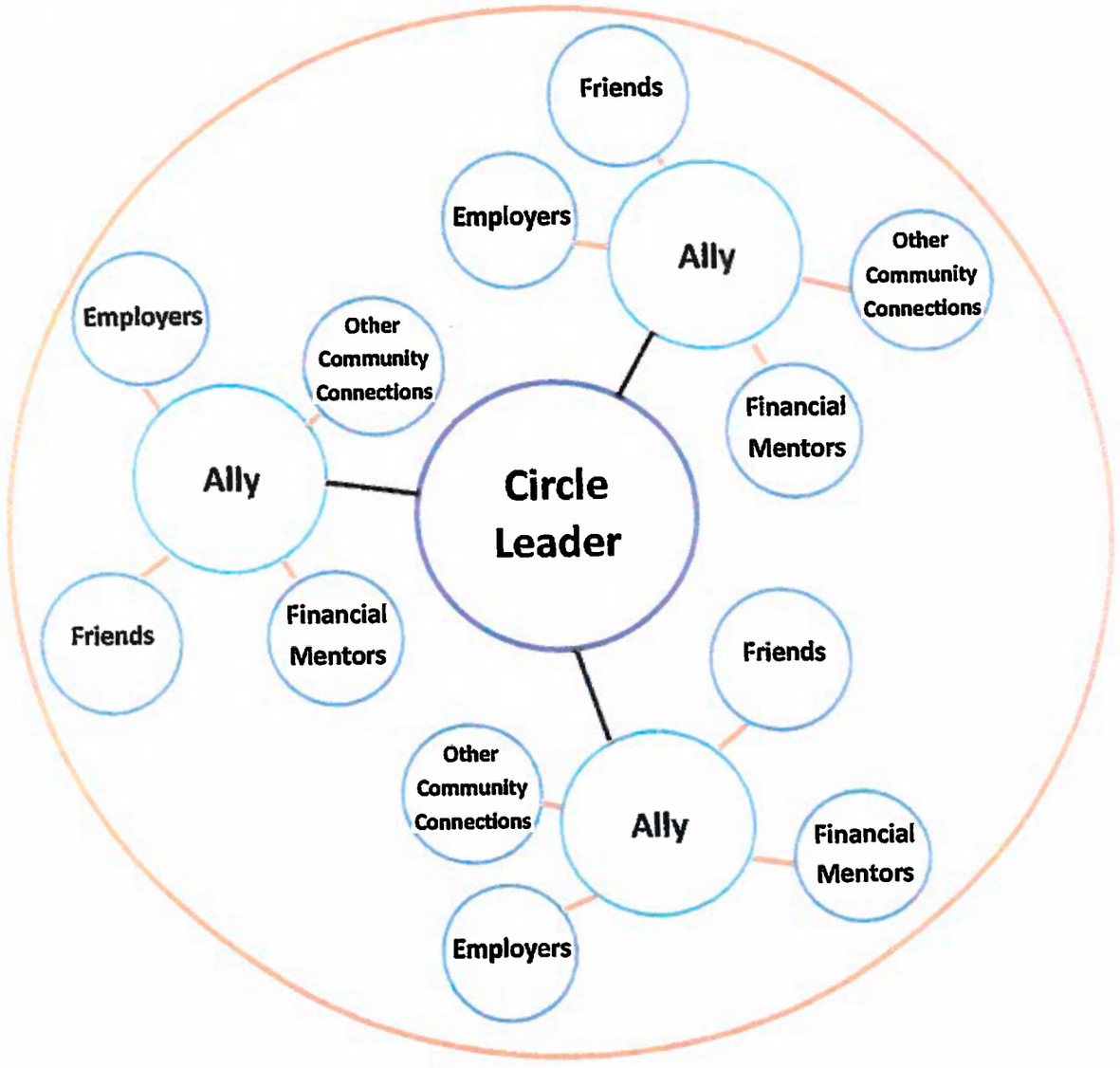
Step 4

- Meet every Tuesday with dinner provided
- Childcare plus age appropriate youth curriculum
- Circle Leader and Allies meet

Step 5

- Conduct "Big View" meetings where the entire community can address systemic barriers, such as "cliff effects"

The Circles Community



How Circles Is Different

- It's all about the money! Circle Leaders plot their own course to economic thriving!
- Success is measured when Circle Leaders achieve 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- Intentional friendships are created across socio-economic lines.
- Social capital is built through linking, bridging and bonding.
- Link...to community resources.
- Bridge...to other people who have more resources and social networks.
- Bond...to peers who have similar backgrounds and goals.
- It is a 2 generational model focused on breaking the cycle of poverty.
- Children attend age appropriate curriculum in financial literacy, building relationships, integrity, respect, nutrition, fitness, compassion, service, literacy, communication, learning habits, bullying, emotional health, goal setting, and mindfulness.

Strategy: Move Circle Leaders from Low-Skill to Middle-Skill Jobs

Some Projected NEW Middle-Skill Jobs[1]

- Food service supervisors/chefs/prep/servers = 2,142
- Computer occupations = 1,400
- Sales supervisors & representatives = 836
- Business operations specialists = 840
- Health technologists & technicians = 840
- Construction trade workers = 731
- Community service providers = 643
- Secretaries & administrative assistants = 590

Middle-Skill Jobs

Combined family income of $48,600 for a family of 4 is 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines

Eligibility Requirements for Circle Leaders

An individual who is beyond safety net services, yet is willing to work to achieve a more sustainable income:

- Income is below 185 % of the federal poverty guidelines.
- Does not receive disability or is capable of getting off of disability.
- Is not in major crisis (untreated mental illness or active drug/alcohol addiction, domestic violence situation, homeless); major crises have been stabilized:
- Willingness to give permission to Circles® staff to talk to referring source about individual's life situation, strengths and barriers.
- Motivated to work with others to become self-sufficient and independent of public assistance.

How Circles Unlocks Value For Business

Business leaders agree that it's unacceptable for children to go hungry and be without safe shelter in U.S. communities. Historically, business leaders donate corporate and personal funds to address poverty because they believe it's the right thing to do. Most of these donations contribute to providing a safety net of assistance for food, shelter and other basic needs when people can't meet those needs on their own.

However, a new motivation exists for business to be proactive in reducing poverty: Baby boomers represent the first generation in U.S. history that has not had enough children to replace themselves in the marketplace. With 10,000 baby boomers per day reaching the age of 65 and retirement, only 1.7 children per household exist to fill job vacancies.

Even more concerning, these 1.7 children are less qualified to fill the complex skills demanded by these vacancies. In a recent CNBC telephone survey of 500 top executives, 92 percent of respondents agreed that a job skills gap exists. Nearly half believed the gap was in "soft skills."

As companies turn to a more unqualified labor pool to find potential employees, Circles becomes a critical tool to the following:

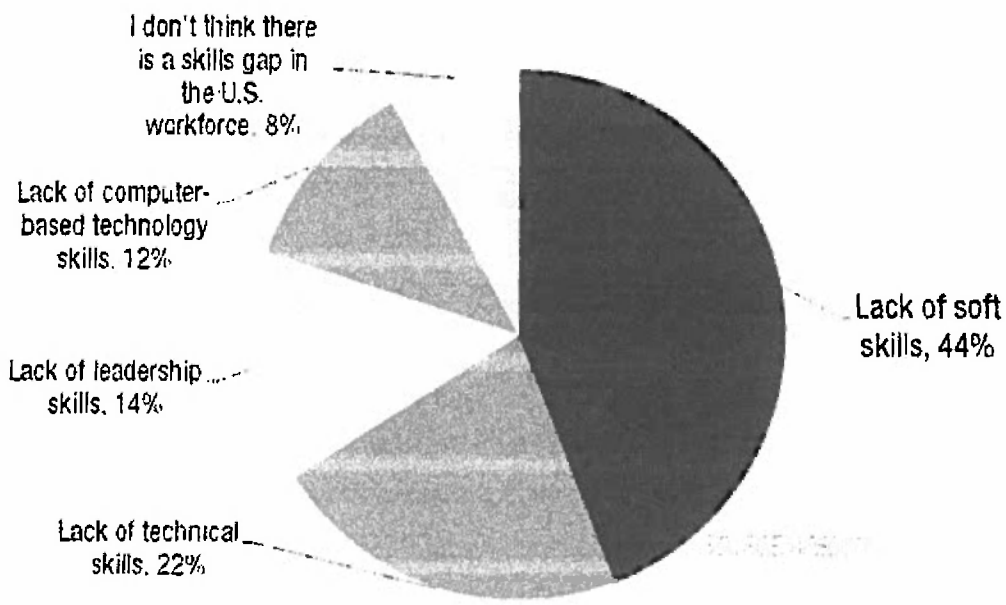
- Addressing the typical soft-skill problems caused by having a background in poverty
- Showing up on time, ready to work
- Managing conflict effectively
- Completing education and training

Circles does this by providing the following:

- Job Readiness Training
- SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) Goals
- Unwritten workplace rules training
- Transportation and childcare back-up planning
- Effective communication and conflict management skills building

Allies provide flexible post-placement support to new employees as they make necessary adjustments to retain and advance in their new jobs.

Which of the following do you feel BEST defines the "gap" in the U.S. workforce skills gap?



circlesusa.org