

What is a Support Circle?

Support Circle Teams are made up of 8-10 volunteers that partner with individuals and families who are experiencing - or at risk of - homelessness, and who are transitioning into permanent housing. Teams provide Partners assistance with:

- **Relational support:** Team members meet regularly with their individual or family Partners to share information, build relationships, and function as a support system for their Partners. This is the Team's most important role.
- **Material support:** Teams provide or collect items such as furniture and other household goods (often gathered from congregations and civic groups).
- **Practical support:** Team members might provide transportation by taking partners grocery shopping or to appointments, helping them work out budgets, tutoring them for GED classes or offering other assistance their Partners may need.
- **Financial support:** Each team contributes and/or raises funds which are used for Partner and program expenses.



Contact Us!

For information about joining, starting, or helping a Support Circle, please contact:

Support Circles

Inter-Faith Council for Social Service
110 West Main Street
Carrboro, NC 27510

Shannon Gigliotti
Program Coordinator

Phone: (919) 929-6380 x16
Email: supportcircles@ifcmailbox.org

Site: www.ifcweb.org/supportcircles



Support Circles



WHO ARE THE SUPPORT CIRCLE PARTNERS?

Support Circle Partners are individuals or families who are living in shelters or transitional housing programs or are receiving homelessness case management services from Orange County DSS or other homeless service providers. Clients apply to the Support Circles Program with assistance from their case manager.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

Support Circle Teams make a one-year commitment (which can be extended), meeting at least once per month with their Partners (often considerably more). Phone calls and emails are encouraged; each Team member is encouraged to meet with their Partner at least 4 times. All the Support Circle Teams in the program meet together once a month to share successes, challenges, and ideas for improving the Support Circle experience.

HOW ARE SUPPORT CIRCLE TEAMS FORMED AND MATCHED WITH PARTNERS?

Teams can be made up of one or more faith-based or civic groups, or any group of friends or families, and are matched with their partners after considering their respective needs and qualities. Partners and Support Circle Teams sign a contract or covenant at the beginning of their partnership, detailing their mutual commitments and obligations.

HOW DO SUPPORT CIRCLE TEAMS ENGAGE WITH THEIR PARTNERS?

Support Circle Teams and their Partners get to know each other and talk about what support the Partners may need to reach their goals. Their activities together vary based on these needs and the relationships that form. Support Circles may gather household items and help partners move, help fill out and submit job applications, provide transportation, tutor, work out a budget, etc. Relationally teams model healthy lifestyles, listen and care, and empower their Partner.

DO SUPPORT CIRCLES RECEIVE TRAINING?

Support Circle Teams receive training so that they have a clear understanding of their roles, and they learn skills and information that will help them become more effective in those roles. Training includes topics such as life skills, budgeting and finances, parenting, nutrition, time management, goal-setting, and stress management.

Support Circle Teams also learn about available resources such as social services, housing, employment, health care, child care, and education.

CAN I HELP SUPPORT CIRCLES EVEN IF I'M NOT A PART OF A CIRCLE?

Yes! Individuals, congregations, or any group can assist Support Circles by providing funding, resources such as furniture or household needs, or providing expertise such as tutoring, accounting, or job coaching.



The Support Circles program collaborates with other community organizations including:

- ***Freedom House Recovery Center***
- ***Orange County Department of Social Services***
- ***UNC Horizons***
- ***Community Empowerment Fund***
- ***Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness***