



CommUnityZone

*Each of us can make a difference, together we make change*

“We could not bury our heads in the sand. Our community chose Bridges to address the problem of poverty. It’s a complete and clear roadmap. Everyone - volunteers, city government, businesses, churches, schools, police - now understands the need to collaborate with people in poverty. **Bridges gets the job done.**”

- Tom Martindale  
Bridges Coordinator  
Muskogee, Oklahoma

This is a sponsorship proposal for the program

## **Getting Ahead in the Valley**

**Coming Together, to Build Communities where Everyone can Live Well**

Using the formula defined in the book, “Bridges to Sustainable Communities”, we plan to address the issues surrounding rural poverty and the barriers to economic mobility by creating programs and building relationships that will sustain people as they journey from "in need" to self-sufficiency.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

*Getting Ahead in the Valley* is most easily described in four stages. Because the program is designed to meet the unique needs of individuals living in poverty, the certified facilitator and all volunteers are trained to remain flexible and adaptive.

### STAGE 1: RECRUITMENT

The Program Coordinator will begin participant recruitment approximately **two months** before the program is scheduled to begin. Participants are referred to the program from existing local partnerships in the greater Lewisburg, Milton, and Sunbury areas; participants may also choose to sign up for the program on their own.

### STAGE 2: ORIENTATION

A **few weeks** prior to the beginning of the program, the cohort of approximately 12 participants\* will receive an orientation to the program. Orientation includes meeting one another and establishing a common ground that they will share throughout the 16-week program.

\*NOTE: *Getting Ahead in the Valley* plans to host at least **two** full 16-week programs to serve a total of 24 people in 2020.

### STAGE 3: THE PROGRAM

Each cohort meets **once a week for 16 weeks** in a group-work, kitchen-table model that serves as a pause to the chaos of the moment to focus on the concepts that will help them move out of the cycle of poverty. Throughout the duration of the program, the group will investigate and identify a commonly recognized community issue to report on and offer suggestions for improvement. This design empowers participants to focus on concepts that will help them move out of the cycle of poverty while building a meaningful community.

+ **Benefits!** Participants in the program will receive meals for themselves and their children each week, a \$25 gift card stipend per session as an incentive and extra support, and professional-grade workbooks to aid in their research and resource-building during the program.

### STAGE 4: ONGOING MENTORSHIP

While the curriculum is designed to last for 16 weeks, research shows that supportive relationships developed by the participants in the group serve as a **powerful motivator to persevere in overcoming obstacles faced in poverty**. Individuals from the community will be recruited and trained to volunteer as mentors to be matched with each family to provide ongoing support based on the family's self-identified needs. The Program Coordinator will monitor matches for fit and effectiveness throughout the ongoing mentorship. Allies and their assigned families will continue to meet on a monthly basis for **up to 12 months**.



## CURRENT PARTNERSHIPS

From individual volunteers to non-profit agencies, churches, and other local agencies, *Getting Ahead in the Valley* is truly a grassroots community effort to support our neighbor's growth into long-term stability through relationship building and resource navigation.

- **CommUnity Zone:** The CommUnity Zone is acting as the 501(c)(3) umbrella agency to house *Getting Ahead in the Valley*, coordinated and led by certified facilitator, Rose Williams, the Program Coordinator.
- **Union-Snyder Community Action Agency:** Union-Snyder CAA is supporting the program through grant writing and development efforts as well as customer referrals from its wide variety of programs and services that support people living with low income in Union and Snyder counties.
- **Members Choice Financial Credit Union:** MCFCU is offering free financial literacy 101 classes to participants in the program that focus on basic economic empowerment skills and financial knowledge to serve as a road map to financial well-being.
- **T.I.M.E. (The Improved Milton Experience):** T.I.M.E. will contribute meeting spaces for both child-care and classes in the Milton area, on top of a program to combat food insecurity.
- **Penn State Cooperative Extension:** Penn State Cooperative Extension is providing nutrition courses to participants who are caring for a child under the age of 19 and elect into participating in their Nutrition Links program. In the six - eight sessions, participants focus on helping families gain knowledge, skills, and confidence in making decisions about diet, physical activity, food safety, and developing a healthy lifestyle.
- **CSO (Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc.):** CSO has written a letter of support for this program and will assist in suggesting participants for the class.
- **Transitions** will provide support services for the 12 months of the program.
- **Shape of Justice:** Will provide menstrual products for women.
- **Recycled Bicycles of Harrisburg:** Will provide bicycles when needed.
- **Unite Way/ Local Vision:** Will provide beds when needed.
- **Golden Rule:** Will provide rides and ramps when needed.



## PROVEN SUCCESS

This groundbreaking program arises from a paper written in 1999. Since 2001, “Bridges Communities” have sprung up in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Slovakia.

- Kosice, Slovakia (pop. 250,000), as well as the neighboring city of Presov (pop. 100,000) have endorsed and **implemented the Bridges program since 2008.**
- Jennifer Brunner, Ohio’s first female Secretary of State, comments, “The Bridges concepts work at the individual, community, and state levels. I have seen this in action as many **individuals rise from poverty ...**”
- Bonnie Bazata, Executive Director of the Bridges program in South Bend, Indiana, “As we employ Bridges in our community, we are finding new collaborations, new energy, and **renewed hope...**”
- Stephen Luecke, Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, “The Bridges Out of Poverty program...has served as a catalyst to bring together social service agencies, government, institutions, and businesses to form partnerships that **we had envisioned but never before achieved.**”
- Clinton Moore, Director of Family Services for Habitat for Humanity in Boulder, Colorado, “This model allows our community to partner with our families **to transform their lives.**”
- Lindora Cabral, Sister of Mercy in Burlington, Vermont, “One of the important mental models...has been the research on the four areas of poverty. This research isn’t based on one area-the choices of the individual in poverty-but it also includes the absence of human and social capital in our communities, as well as exploitation and political/economic structures....if a community works together to eliminate all these causes of poverty, **there is hope for a sustainable community.**”
- Elizabeth A. Wahler, PhD, LSW, Assistant Professor at the Indiana University School of Social Work, “The findings from this program evaluation of Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin’- By World (“Getting Ahead”) suggest that the program... is **facilitating positive changes** in poverty-related knowledge, perceived stress, mental health and well-being, social support, self-efficacy, hope, and goal-directed behavior and planning.”



## BECOME A SPONSOR!

*Will you help us reach our goal of \$50,000 to ensure sustainable delivery of this impactful, proven program?*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sponsorship Level	Commitment	Impact
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustaining Sponsor	\$20,000	Sustaining Sponsors ensure the long-term viability of the entire Getting Ahead program – from hiring staff to work supplies and everything in between!
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outreach Sponsor	\$12,500	Outreach Sponsors help us to get the word out about this program
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stipend Sponsors	\$10,000	Stipend Sponsors insure food sustainability for each family through the course of the program.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gathering Sponsor	\$5,000	Gathering Sponsors make it possible for the program to hire part time staff for administrative, childcare and other support services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supply Sponsor	\$2,500	Supply Sponsors help us provide workbooks and other materials to make each session throughout the 16 weeks as valuable and productive as possible.

For questions regarding sponsorships, volunteering, or individual donations, please contact Cynthia Peltier at (570)713-7479 or [community.zone.lewisburg@gmail.com](mailto:community.zone.lewisburg@gmail.com).

**Thank you for your willingness to contribute to the  
Getting Ahead in the Valley program!**

