



*Community Focused
Relationship Driven*

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A nonprofit organization

Office Hours

Monday—Friday
10 a.m.—4 p.m.
Closed Saturday & Sunday

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Peace Connections Newsletter

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

In the fall of 2013, the next Circle Leader Training Class was ready to start. Eight new class members prepared to enter the Fellowship Hall of the First United Methodist Church, some for the first time. There is something nerve-racking about starting a new adventure, whether it is kicking off a new class, day #1 of a new job or the first step in a new relationship. As this group of strangers gathered their courage and prepared to embark on an unfamiliar journey, another group formed in hopes of one day offering their own knowledge and support.

Circles of Hope provides a powerful approach to addressing poverty in Harvey County. It provides individual education, group dynamics and the power of human relationships. Throughout each Circle Leader Training Class, participants gain budgeting skills, explore personal beliefs regarding money, rate their individual and community resources and create a plan to improve their future. During each class, group members learn that they are not alone in their battle to gain control of their finances. Many share the same dreams of going back to school, obtaining a better job or improving relationships within their family.

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Isac, Brad, Nevaeh, Hunter, Bryna and Audrey pose for a family photo

Brad and Bryna were two of the individuals who bravely walked into that class. Each was a single parent, battling the challenges of raising two children on their own. The Circle Leader Training Class provided security and weekly support. They received dinner, childcare, comfort and understanding.

Graduation brought a sense of accomplishment and increased self-confidence. Now it was time to put everything they had learned into practice. Brad, Bryna and their classmates were each matched with their own group of Allies, who served as mentors. These are intentional friends committed to meeting as a group for 18 full months. As they attended weekly Circles meetings and maintained their monthly commitment to meet with their Allies, Brad and Bryna formed a friendship, as did their children. Through their connections to Circles, Brad and Bryna were recommended to complete an application for Habitat For Humanity and just this January, they celebrated by closing on their first home.

Since joining Circles of Hope, Brad received a promotion at work. Bryna completed her college degree. Both are proud homeowners and are excitedly preparing for a spring wedding. This beautifully blended family remains actively involved with Circles of Hope, Harvey County and Kansas Circles. They continue to set goals and achieve them, surrounded by a community of support.



Brad & Bryna's new home, in the building process.



Nevaeh, Hunter, Audrey & Isac playing in the backyard of their new home.

Upcoming Events

February 15th, 6:30 - 8:00pm - Poetry Slam. Join us at Norm's Coffee Bar to welcome guest poet, Sara (Miss Conception) Glass. Admission is free, \$3 entry free for poetry readings.

March 28th, 6:00 - 9:00pm - Poverty Simulation. Hesston Mennonite Church. Spend a few hours participating in this real-life experience. Discover what it feels like to live a month in economic poverty.

March 29th, 4:30 - 5:00pm - Peace Connections' Annual Meeting. Take the grand tour of our new office and get caught up on how your contributions made an impact in 2015.

March 29th, 6:00 pm - Open House. Enjoy refreshments and community activities while checking out our new space in The Hub, 601 N. Main, Suite 303.

April 2nd, 8:30am - 4:00pm - Circles of Hope Ally Training. Would you like to form an intentional friendship with someone outside your regular circle? Help provide encouragement to a family striving for economic stability? Sign up to become a Circles of Hope Ally.

May 10th, 6:30 - 8:00pm - Circles of Hope Information Night. Would you like to find out more about Circles of Hope? Ask questions and gain insight into the Circles program in Harvey County by attending our Information Night.

BOARD SPOTLIGHT:

There's No Grass Growing Under These Feet

When Jeanette Stucky volunteers for a task, she puts her whole heart into it. Jeanette has been an active board president for Peace Connections for the past three years. She began her service as a board member in 2010. After moving to North Newton more than seven years ago, Jeanette was drawn to Peace Connections as a way to get involved and to help her community. The 'hand up' initiative of Circles of Hope appealed to her. In addition to serving on the Peace Connections board, Jeanette volunteered as a Circles' Ally. Despite the challenges associated with non-profit boards and competition for funding, Jeanette continues to be inspired by the mission. She is committed to her work to help families out of poverty. "It is heartwarming to be a part of the success stories told by the Circle Leaders" Jeanette says. The continued expansion of the Circles initiative throughout Harvey County and Kansas is her hope for the future.

Jeanette also volunteers at the Community Playschool and Et Cetera Shop. She is secretary of KLIC, an investment group and serves in several capacities at Bethel College Mennonite Church. She and her husband, Steve, are host parents to three Bethel College students.



Jeanette hangs handmade curtains at Peace Connections' new office.



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You can support Peace Connections through everyday shopping!

Register your Dillon's Plus Shoppers Card by visiting

www.dillons.com/communityrewards

and designate Peace Connections when shopping online at

smile.amazon.com

10 FOR TEN



Children from the 2015 SEAK program enjoy sculpting with homemade play-dough.

Thanks to your contributions, the Summer Enrichment Activities for Kids (SEAK) will celebrate its 10th year this June. We express our deep appreciation for the years of ongoing support and invite you to help commemorate this event! To help keep the Summer Activities a strong and viable program in Harvey County, we seek to raise \$10,000 dollars to celebrate our 10th year. For more information about the SEAK program and its volunteer opportunities, please visit www.peaceconnections.org



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

If you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter,
check here () and place in return mail.

Vision: Thriving communities sustained by peace and social justice.

YOU HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE

Ways To Give

Monthly Giving is our sustaining grace. Call or come by for details on how to set up a convenient monthly automatic gift.

Secure Online Donation through PayPal is available anytime through our website at www.peaceconnections.org

Volunteering is a wonderful way to give. Our volunteers provide nearly twice the value of all other donations combined.

Thoughts and prayers are always welcome!

Peace Connections seeks to inspire transformation in people and systems by building relationships, resourcefulness and resilience.

This newsletter is published four times per year by Peace Connections, a non-profit.

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Newsletter Design and Layout: Jennifer Rose

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The Board of Directors meets monthly at 601 N. Main, Suite 303, Newton, KS. Meetings are open to the public.

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