

## **Circle Ally Job Description**

### **The Circle ally has three primary goals:**

1. Make an intentional friendship with a family in poverty (Circle leader family) and join them in their quest to have enough money, meaning, and friends
2. Increase awareness of one's own stereotypes and class rules and be willing to face these
3. Use the experience of friendship with a family in poverty to advocate within the community for changes in the systems barriers that keep poverty in place

### **The Circle ally commitment:**

1. 4-10 hours per month
2. We ask that you commit to be a Circle ally for 18 months
3. After you are matched with the Circle, you will have:
  1. one monthly meeting with the circle scheduled at a mutually convenient time
  2. one monthly Big View meeting with other circles and the staff to discuss systems barriers,
  3. a regularly scheduled ally support meeting
  4. phone and in-person contact with your family as needed throughout the month

### **Support you receive:**

1. Three orientation sessions
  - a. Circles general orientation for allies
  - b. Bridges out of Poverty introduction to the rules of class
  - c. Orientation to how to build a circle for both allies and participants
2. Regularly scheduled ally support sessions
3. Collaboration with the others on the circle; you are not left in isolation
4. Staff available to answer questions, provide mentoring, and assist with conflict resolution

### **How can I be sensitive of differences across class lines?**

1. If possible, come to Circle meetings in casual clothes instead of business clothes
2. Find ways to introduce yourself that emphasize who you are, not what you do ("I'm from northern Minnesota and I live to ski" instead of "I'm the director of marketing for a global research company.")
3. Remember that you are a friend to the family, not a social worker
4. Don't expect Circle leaders to approach meetings the way you do in the business world
5. Read Bridges Out of Poverty or A Framework for Understanding Poverty to become more sensitive to differing rules across class lines
6. If you do social outings with the circle, look for no-cost options
7. When you have strong feelings about the Circle leader family, be willing to look at how your own fears or rules are being activated and talk to someone about it