

Monthly Networking Meetings (MNM)s

The Monthly Networking Meetings are an important feature for Getting Ahead graduates to develop effective strategies, resources and social capital for their move to economic self-sufficiency. During the two-hour gathering, a meal, conversation, and resources are shared between Getting Ahead graduates and community allies (people not in poverty). The goal



Graduates and allies sharing at the Monthly Networking meeting.

is for graduates to build social capital and relationships across economic class, *and* to learn about supportive community resources. It is also an opportunity for allies to gain first-hand knowledge about the experience of poverty and provide meaningful support and encouragement.

Each month the conversation focuses on one of the 11 Resource Areas from the Getting Ahead curriculum. We received a grant from the Office of Faith Based Initiatives to launch the first

eight meetings. We've had 77 graduates participate, half of them attending three times or more, and 123 allies and volunteers, with more than a third (46) attending twice or more. We also organize a "Tip Sheet" along with presenters and speakers providing additional resources and encouragement.

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
Graduates	27	27	26	31	35	35	34	37
Allies	13	10	16	34	35	38	55	40
Totals	40	37	42	65	70	73	89	77

MNM)s are a social experiment. Few other spaces exist in our community in which people intentionally connect across economic class and race. Together, we learn what is working and what is not working in our community's effort to end poverty and advocate for community change. It lays the foundation for community change and action based on mutual relationships of respect and understanding. We evaluate every meeting and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

I was expecting a nice time but this was so much more. The meetings give me that much needed support from positive God-sent people without whom I would be lost. I had three allies and all of them were very helpful and informative. This is very organized, very beneficial and uplifting. Thank you.

From a Getting Ahead graduate evaluating the Monthly Networking Meetings