



“Reducing poverty by building skills and relationships that strengthen families and individuals.”

Quarterly Newsletter

Welcome to Thrive! Butler’s first ever Quarterly Newsletter. We feel it is important to keep our donors and our communities in general, informed on the progress we are achieving on our Mission, “Reducing poverty by building skills and relationships that strengthen families and individuals”. If you are not familiar with Thrive! Butler, we are a relationship-based poverty reduction initiative in Butler County. We offer a free 16-week



Getting Ahead course to individuals who are below the poverty line for government assistance. Each week in our safe environment, we share a meal donated by individuals in the community, church

groups, civic organizations or area restaurants. We offer childcare, if needed, so parents can focus on how not to be poor and to look forward to a better future story for their family. We provide a \$10 gift card to help with gas and transportation during our 16-week Getting Ahead meetings. Our Childcare Coordinator includes a brief lesson on topics being discussed by parents during the children’s evening activities

During those 16-weeks, the participants first help us to understand what it is like to live in poverty. We then focus on helping each participant learn the role they have played in maintaining their own poverty. We help participants develop an understanding of the differences in social classes and the varying perspectives in approaching many life issues. We also guide participants to define education and job goals, spiritual and emotional goals, relationship goals, and physical health and wellness goals.

After graduation the Team Leaders, as are they are now called, are matched with Ally’s, volunteers from the community to accompany them on their journey out of poverty, meeting twice each month for 18-months. Allies are trained to be good listeners and offering guidance to the Team Leaders in achieving their stated goals.

Since we began in late 2017, we have graduated three



classes of Team Leaders, and we have matched the first two, one in El Dorado and one in Andover, with Ally’s from the community, and will begin that process with our third group in El

Dorado shortly. We recently celebrated our first class who had officially reached the end of their 18-month journey with Thrive! Butler, but we know they will visit us often and keep us updated on their progress.



We have some wonderful video testimonials on our website, www.thrivebutler.org that will show some of the



great results our Team Leaders have achieved during their time with us. Our staff and our board are so proud of the commitment they made and kept by attending each week, and for the progress they have made



with their Ally's and on their own. Thrive! Butler is making a difference in people's lives, both the Team Leaders, and with our volunteers. Our next Andover class will start October 10th, and the next El Dorado class in January. Those in poverty can apply on our website.

We are always in fund raising mode so that we can continue this good work. However, we want to thank the people who have donated to our cause, and the people who have provided meals since we started this effort in both El Dorado and Andover. Some of those donors have provided a meal every month to one of our classes, and others every other month. Make no mistake about it, all our meal donors have just been amazing, and we appreciate how they have contributed to our success. Each week the meals we are able to provide to our participants and volunteers have been good, healthy meals that provide great nutritional value for everyone.

Other contributions have been in the form of Grant Awards, local government donations, and individuals and civic organizations who have been so generous in providing funds so we are able to provide a small Stipend to our Getting Ahead and Matched-Team Facilitators, purchase the workbooks for our participants, provide Childcare, obtain the weekly incentive gift cards during our 16-week Getting Ahead course, and for all our printing needs and supplies required to provide the experience necessary for our participants to stay committed to their journey. A few of our major grants will be coming to an end soon, and we cannot continue this work without the support of our communities. Donations are always welcomed and needed to keep this education process moving forward. Donations can be sent through the mail to PO Box 811, Andover, KS 67002. We also have a Donate button on our website as an additional option.

DONATE

Thrive! Butler is very fortunate to be guided by a strong and diverse Board of Directors. We meet once each quarter to review our financial position, issues related to our sites, our participants, our volunteers and our class schedules. We are also very fortunate to have Mid-Kansas Community Action Program in Augusta act as our fiscal agent. This means we can operate under their 501 c 3 tax number, and all our financial transactions are executed and monitored by their Executive Director. They have been instrumental in helping Thrive! Butler get started these last few years, and they are also able to recommend some of their clients to a Thrive! Butler class. They have been great partners in this fight against poverty.

Executive Director's Corner

By Phil Benedict



After retiring from the aviation industry that I had been a part of for 35 years, I find this non-profit work at Thrive! Butler to be just as rewarding, and at times, just as challenging. It took me a while to develop a relationship with our participants and Team Leaders, but I now find these relationships to be so valuable to me. I am so happy to know our participants, Team Leaders and our volunteers. We work hard to ensure the curriculum and the process we provide is meaningful to these wonderful individuals and their families, and that the outcomes we look to achieve is in concert with our donors as well.

I think one of the best parts of this position is the networking with community leaders in our county, the chamber members from the three chambers we are members of, and supportive businesses and individuals who I have had the opportunity to meet. It has also allowed me to present the Thrive! Butler story to several churches and civic organizations, something I truly love to do.



I like the work we are doing by providing a Hand-Up rather than a Hand-Out to those living in poverty. There are many wonderful and necessary agencies that provide emergency assistance to those in need. However, we are different, in that we are taking these individuals on a journey out of poverty, which takes commitment and time. This is the rewarding part of what we do, and our facilitators are wonderfully skilled at providing this education with our collaborative partners from the community like ORION Education Centers, Workforce Centers and the United Way of El Dorado just to name a few.

If you know of an organization that would like to hear more about Thrive! Butler, let me know by writing to me at thrivebutlerks@gmail.com or through our website, www.thrivebutler.org. I hope to share this part of the newsletter with members of our Board in the future, and I am always happy to hear from members of the community regarding Thrive! Butler, and the volunteer roles we have and need in each of our locations. I hope you make time to support our effort, and to be a good listener to those on their journey out of poverty.

Without intervention, it is likely children living in poverty, will become parents living in poverty.