

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty





Presenters & Collaborative Partners

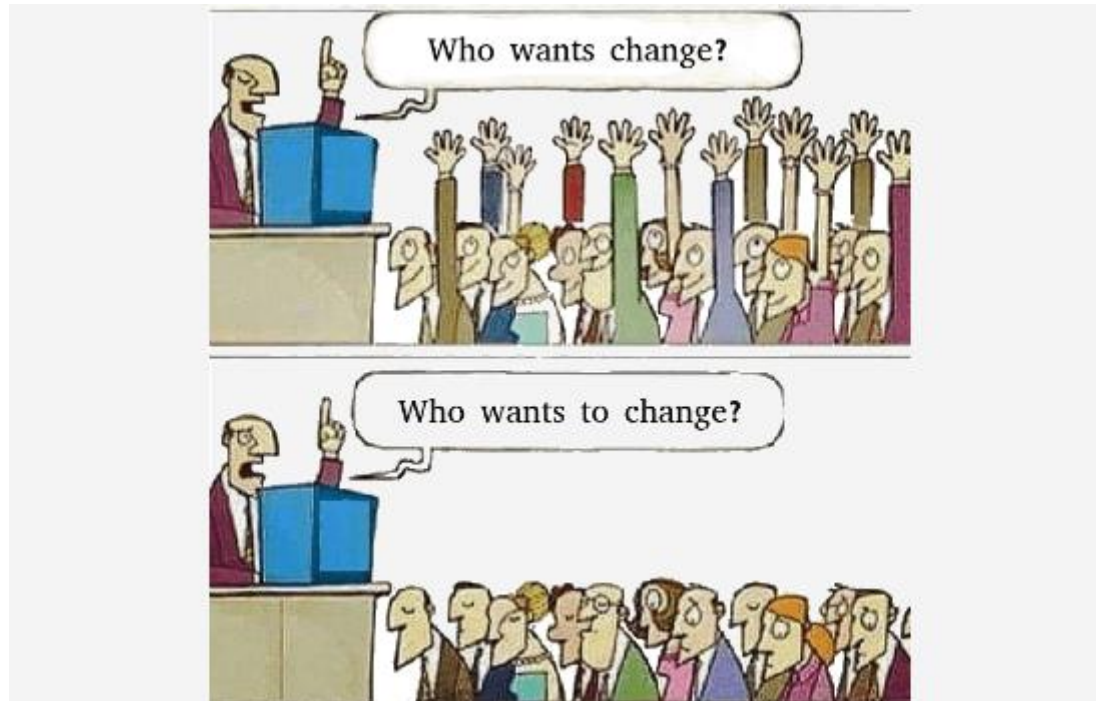
Kim Godin, National Circles Coordinator, The County of Lambton
Kim.Godin@county-lambton.on.ca

Sharon Smith, Ontario Works Supervisor, Housing and Social Services Department, City of Kingston sasmith@cityofkingston.ca

Helen Maberly, Manager, Family and Community Health, Kingston Community Health Centre Helenm@kchc.ca

Madison Hainstock, Kingston Circles Coordinator, Loving Spoonful
madison@lovingspoonful.org

Change – It's an us problem





Circles[®] Lambton

Thriving Families, Thriving Communities

Lambton County's Journey to Circles

- 2008 Child Poverty Task force
- Transforming traditional Employment workshops for Ontario Works clients
- Delivering Getting Ahead & Bridges Out of Poverty
- 2009 Lambton Circles is launched
- 2017 Lambton Circles becomes Circles Canada



Circles® Is.....

A community collaborative poverty alleviation strategy, which helps people transition out of poverty by building intentional relationships across socio-economic classes, identifying barriers that keep people in poverty and implementing innovative solutions to those barriers.

- The Circles® model focuses on three main strategies for people experiencing poverty: crisis management and life-stabilization; education, job placement and job retention; advancement and economic stability, leading to full self-sufficiency.
- Driven by people experiencing poverty who are motivated to make the changes needed to reach full self-sufficiency
- Effective at addressing the root causes of poverty with an emphasis on achieving meaningful individual and systemic change
- Consistent with the goal of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Plan to remove barriers and empower low-income Ontarians to break out of the cycle of poverty through increased education and employment opportunities

Collaboration is Key

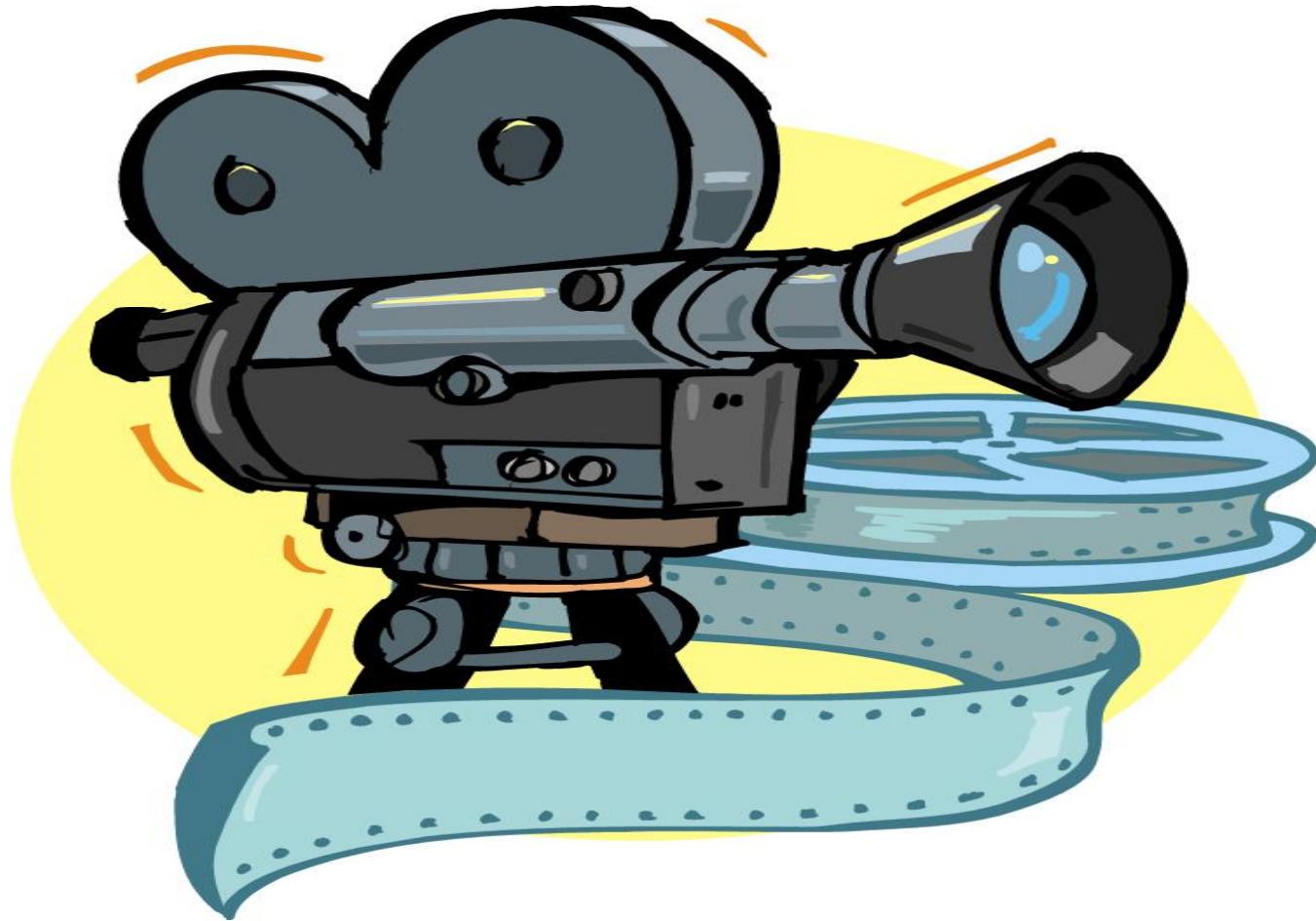
The success of the Circles® Initiative is based on collaboration between middle-class volunteer mentors, known as “**Allies**” who are matched with low-income families and individuals experiencing poverty called “**Leaders**” - empowering terminology as they are "leading" their way out of poverty.

- Experienced staff called "**Circles Coaches**", alongside a multitude of community partnerships:
 - Non-profit organizations, Community College, Adult Education & Employment agencies, Public Health and Health Centres, Faith-based organizations, Workforce Development Board, Criminal and Social Justice networks
- All working together to support the Circles Leaders goals and "plans of change" to increased education, career selection and sustainable employment in reaching their dreams.

How it Works



Lambton Circles Video





Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Lambton Circles Leader Testimonial Video

Lambton's Circles® Overview of Success

2009 to 2019 Powerful Data

183 Individuals have participated in Lambton's Circles since inception in 2009

- **80 %** Increased earnings
- **61%** Increased education
- **57%** Attended or graduated from post-secondary education

Careers have included: Nursing, Information Technology, Developmental Services Worker, Social Services Worker, Child and Youth Counsellor, Personal Support Worker, Office Administration, Maintenance, Apprenticeships & Trades

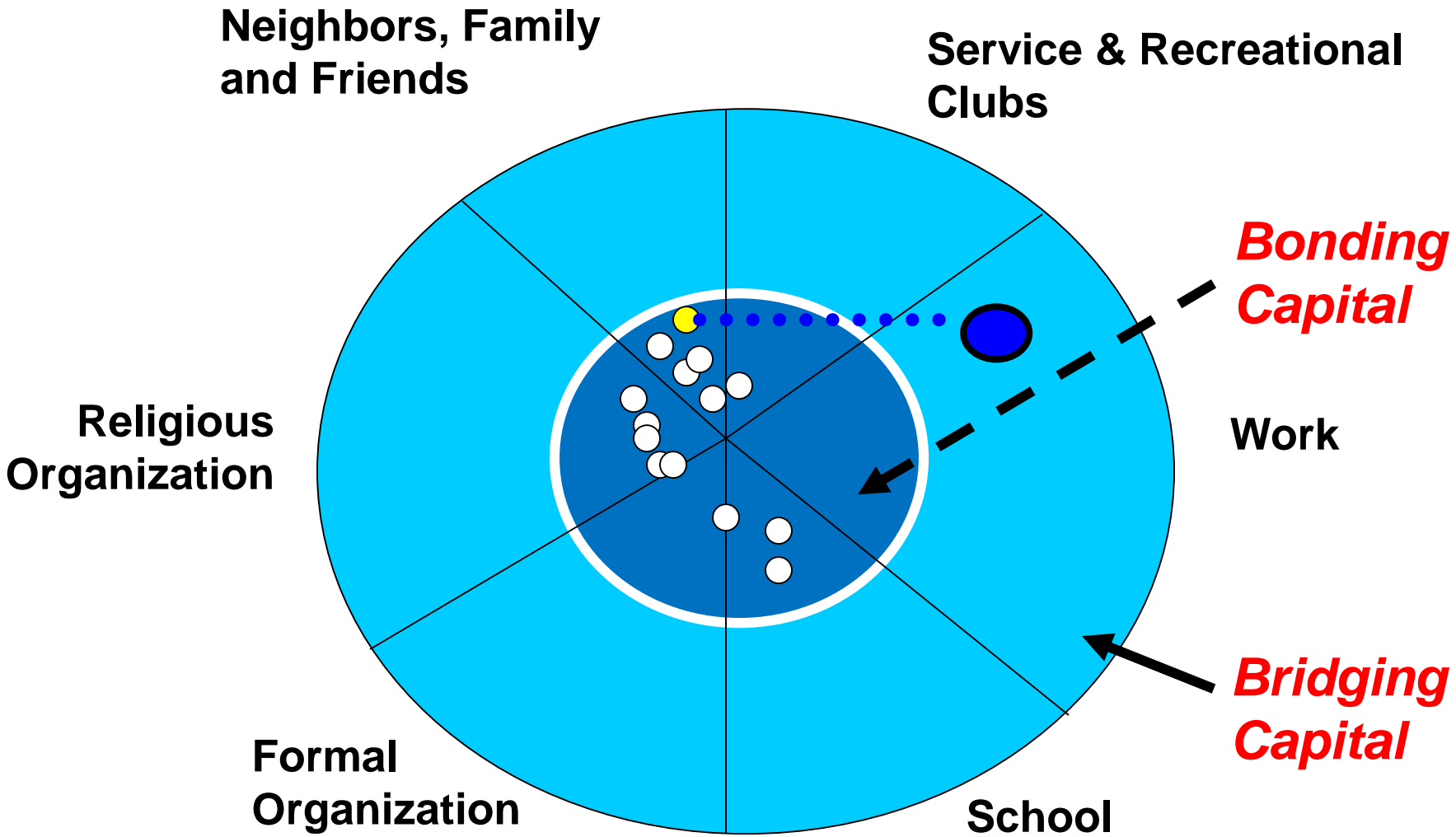
- **74** Lambton Leaders have met their goals and reached full economic self-sufficiency
- **22%** Voluntary withdrawals, the remainder are still active in Circles on their plans of change
- Circles Graduates projected Ontario Works cost savings to date of **\$1,947,202.66**
- Supported by over **164 Allies**, **50+** community volunteers and community partners who assist with meals, childcare and advocacy

247 Children participated with their parents

Circles children's programming focuses on activities that enhance a child's life experience, removes barriers and fosters the development of future goals & dreams

Life changing impacts that break the cycle of poverty!

Social Capital





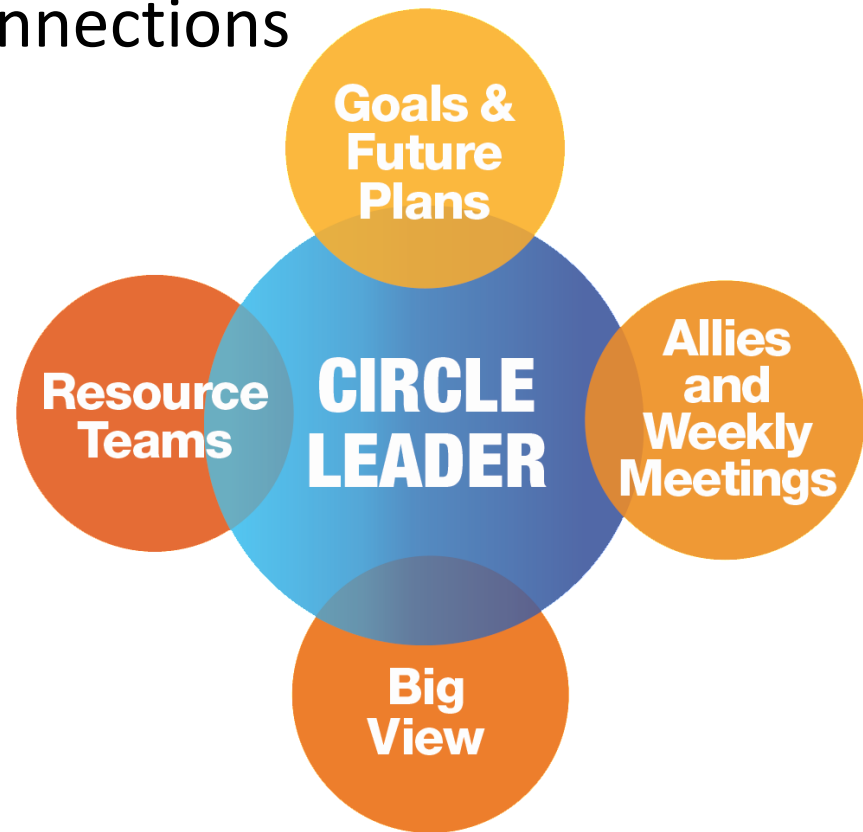
Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Lambton Circles Ally & Leader Testimonial Video

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Leverage Community Connections

- Project Design
- Emerging Opportunities



Circles Values

- Build relationships of mutual respect.
- Base plans on accurate mental model of poverty.
- Stabilize the environment.
- Address all causes of poverty.
- Base thinking on the premise that people in poverty are problem solvers.
- Use Hidden Rules to improve relationships and navigate the middle class world of work
- Define poverty as the extent to which an individual does without resources.
- Voice of lived experience at the decision making tables
- Build long-term support for transition to full self-sufficiency
- Build a sustainable community in which everyone can do well.

Cliff Effect



The Cliff Effect is when assistance programs remove benefits faster than people can earn enough to replace them.

SAIL for Clients

Supportive **A**pproaches Through
Innovative **L**earning

SAIL for Clients

“Designed around the universal success of SAIL For Staff/Management, ***SAIL For Clients*** represents an opportunity to foster an enhanced level understanding and engagement between workers and clients. “

Wade Grocott



Group session held at the public library

“SAIL has helped us gain confidence! We have learned that it is important to learn how to talk to others and not judge people.”

SAIL Participant



SAIL session at Rideaucrest Towers

“Do not let someone make anyone/make you feel like a small circle.”

“I can use the info to help myself and others around me. I can teach my children what I’ve learned.”

SAIL participants



Circles Kingston

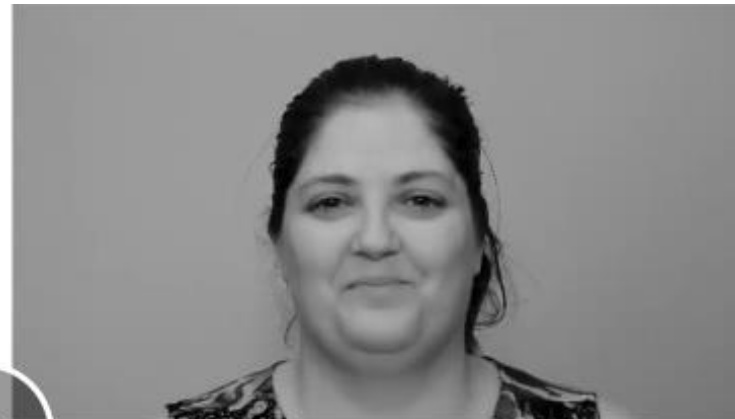
Thriving Families, Thriving Communities



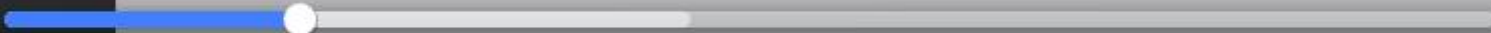
Kingston Community
Health Centres

Centres de santé
communautaire de Kingston

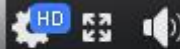




Circles Kingston is a proven poverty reduction program **supporting people toward their self-sufficiency goals by building community connections** across socioeconomic lines.



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Circles[®] Kingston
Thriving Families, Thriving Communities

Getting Ahead In A Just-Getting'-By World

Individuals work to better their lives by building the resources they need to thrive. 'Investigators' examine their own experience of poverty and build a plan for self-sufficiency and independence.

IMAGINE a Future Story

Resources

Financial

Being able to purchase the goods and services of that class and sustain it.

Emotional

Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. Shows itself through choices.

Mental

Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.

Spiritual

Believing in something bigger – science, divine, self.

Physical

Having physical health and mobility.

Support Systems

Having friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need. These are external resources.

Relationships / Role models

Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriate, *nurturing*, and who do not engage in destructive behavior.

Knowledge of Hidden Rules

Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.

Circles Meets Weekly

- Participants prepare and consume a meal together, actively building community and skills around good food
- Childcare and youth programming
- Adult programming focused on resources and strategies that support Leaders in their movement towards self-sufficiency
- Big View meetings explore and organize to address systemic barriers to ending poverty – community leaders, media, etc. may be invited



Circles Guiding Coalition

- Guiding Coalition members are community leaders, decision makers, and representatives of partner organizations interested in offering support to Kingston Circles
- Members make a commitment to working together as a community toward the elimination of poverty
- Members include representatives from:
 - City of Kingston's Housing and Social Services Department
 - Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
 - Ministry of Community and Social Services
 - Limestone District School Board
 - St. Lawrence College
 - Queen's University
 - Family and Children Services
 - Kingston Community Credit Union
 - The Mayor of Kingston

Evaluation

We use the HomeTrak data system to track progress in two ways every 6 months:

Life Assessment Tool

- Measures how Leaders are doing in: Food, Housing, Transportation, Support System, and Well Being & Mental Health
- Self-sufficiency measure on the scale of: Surviving, Vulnerable, Stable, Secure, Thriving
- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey

Progress Report

- Education level
- Income source and amount

Third Party Evaluation Team

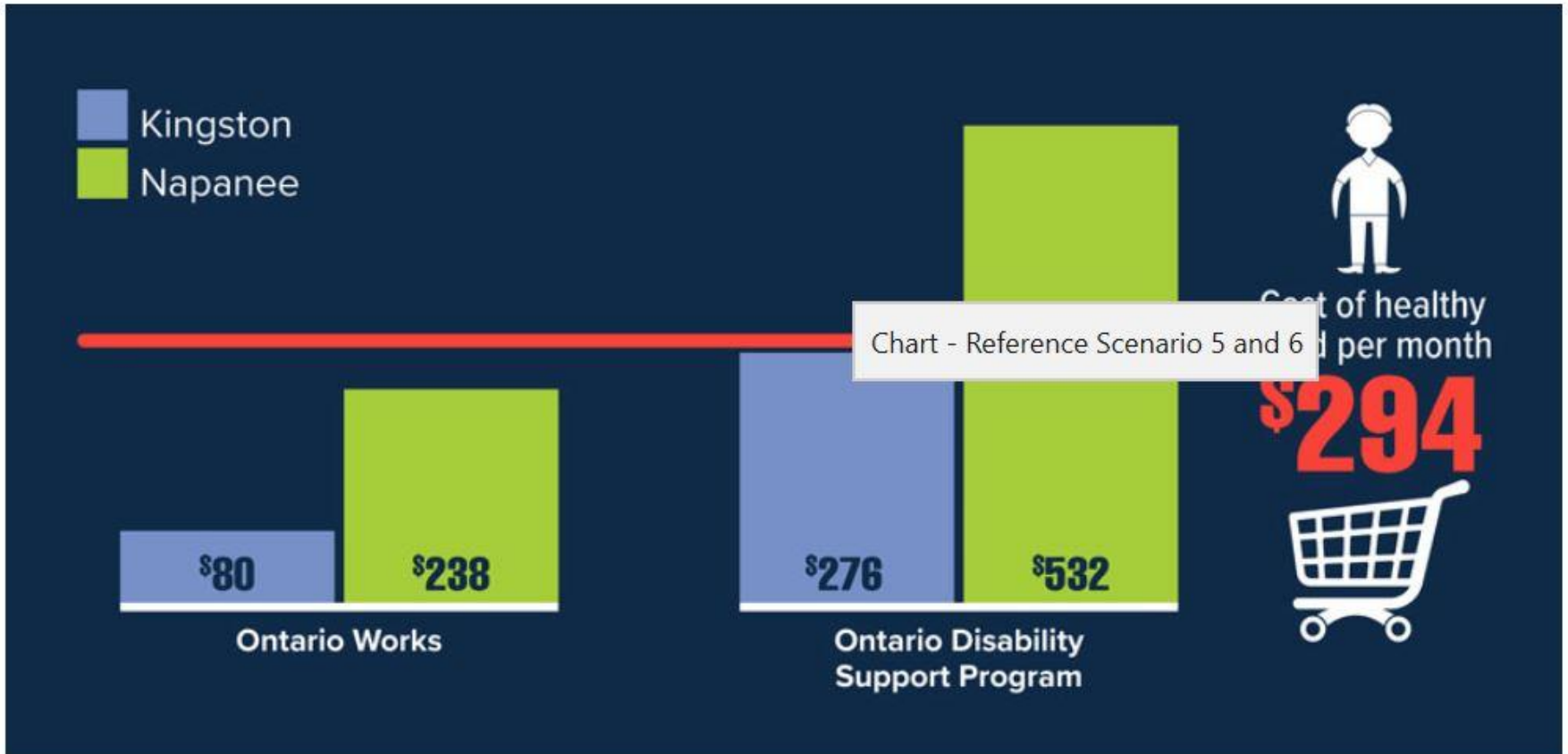
Kingston Circles Overview

Started in January 2018, as of September 2019:

- 95 participants have enrolled in Getting Ahead; 60 graduated (63% completion)
- 92% of graduates rate the GA program as 'great'
- 23 Leaders have joined two Circles
- 16 Allies have joined two Circles
- 35% of Leaders are pursuing education
- 65% of Leaders are pursuing employment

And we are just getting started!

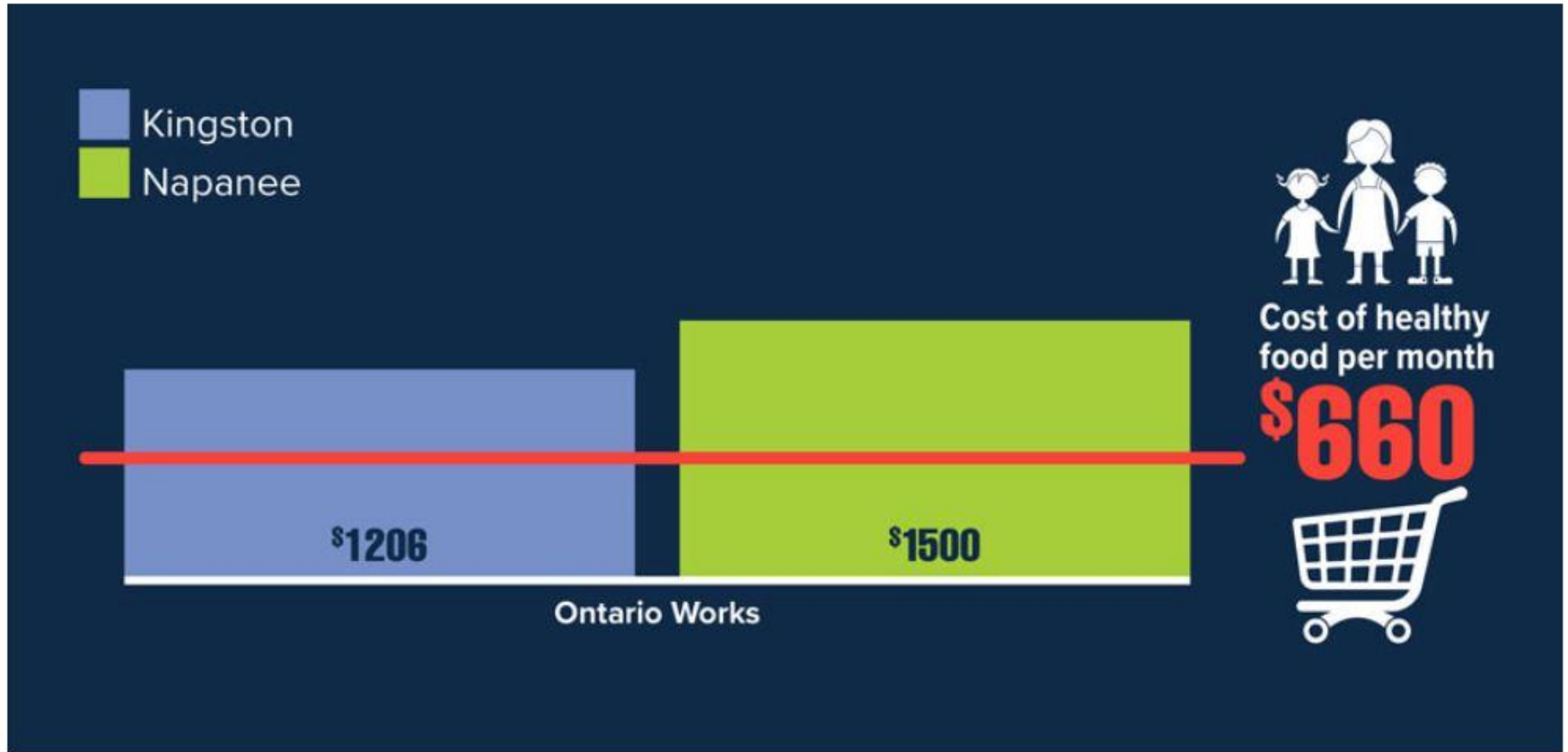
Amount of money left after the monthly rent has been paid for one person on Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program



Remaining monthly funds after the rent represents funds available for food and basic expenses, such as: heat, hydro, childcare, transportation, clothing, eye care, dental care, and personal care.

Amount of money left after the monthly rent has been paid for a single female parent with two children on Ontario Works

Twelve percent of households in KFL&A are female lone parent families.





 **Circles Kingston**
Thriving Families, Thriving Communities

“For me, I’m getting to know the other group members that I normally wouldn’t. There is a lot of talking that goes on that, if we weren’t cooking, wouldn’t happen.”

“In the kitchen, there’s no class. Chopping vegetables is chopping vegetables. It’s a great equalizer.”



 **Circles Kingston**
Thriving Families, Thriving Communities

The Circles[®] Kingston Process

PREPERATION & PROGRAMING

WHO

Circle Leaders:

Individuals experiencing poverty, working toward self-sufficiency

Circle Allies:

Individuals with middle- to upper-income, interested in building community connections & understanding

Circles[®] Guiding Coalition:

A group of community leaders and agency partners, collaborating on program design & direction

TRAINING

16-week "Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World" workshop, to create a plan for building resources and becoming self-sufficient

1-day "Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities" to provide an overview of the reality and impact of living in poverty

CIRCLES[®] PROGRAM

Weekly gatherings around a meal of Circle Leaders, Leaders' families, Circle Allies, staff, & volunteers to support Leaders toward their goals for self-sufficiency, including:

- Facilitated weekly Circles[®] meetings
- Cooking & food skills workshops
- Food for Thought skill-share discussions
- Monthly Big View meetings on poverty reduction solutions in our community

Guiding Coalition meets 2-4 times a year to advise on program design & direction

OUTCOMES

IMMEDIATE

Increased resources and support toward self-sufficiency goals

Increased ability to plan strategies to achieve self-sufficiency goals

Increased healthy cooking skills

Increased confidence in shopping for and preparing healthy foods

Progress toward poverty reduction goals

Increased awareness of reality & impact of poverty

Increased awareness of poverty reduction solutions

Increased connections between agencies

INTERMEDIATE

Increased training, education, and/or employment

Increased community connections across socioeconomic lines

Increased access to healthy food

Healthier eating habits

Increased community connections across socioeconomic lines

Increased advocacy for poverty reduction solutions

Increased collaboration between agencies for poverty reduction

ULTIMATE

Increased self-sufficiency

Reduced poverty

Reduced food insecurity

Increased supportive community connections across socioeconomic lines





Presentation Collaborative Partners

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