

**“Bridges Out of Poverty” / “Getting Ahead”**  
**St. Vincent de Paul National Theme: SYSTEMIC CHANGE**  
**Initiative and Program Concepts**

*One of the first things we have to do is to gain a better understanding of the people we are trying to help!*

**1. “Bridges Out of Poverty” Workshops with DVD/Videos**

Workshops take a new look at poverty and recruit support for systemic change and the “Getting Ahead” classroom mentoring program. Workshops focus around the principles set forth in the book “Bridges Out of Poverty” and provide attendees with a better understanding of the people who live in the economic class we call “poverty” and how they relate to people in “middle class” and “wealth.” Interested community members, faith base organizations, and service providers are all invited to attend. The purpose is also to:

- Recruit volunteers wishing to be facilitators or mentors
- Generate financial support
- Generate in-kind support such as meals, child care, and hosting
- Obtain referrals of individuals in poverty who might benefit from the program

These workshops may help people better serve those in poverty because they now know more about them:

- Use the lens of economic class to understand and take responsibility for your own societal experience while being open to the experience of others.
- Look at other social disparities (racial, gender, physical ability, age, etc.), and address inequalities in access to resources.
- Define poverty as the extent to which a person, institution, or community does with resources.
- Build relationships of mutual respect.
- Base plans on the premise that people in all classes, sectors, and political persuasion are problem solvers and need to be at the decision making table.
- Base plans on accurate mental models of poverty, middle class, and wealth.
- Remove barriers to transition, and build resources.
- Address all causes of poverty (four areas of research).
- Build economically sustainable communities in which everyone can live well.

**2. “Getting Ahead” is a 18-20 week program led by trained SVdP members**

- A group of 6-12 individuals (Investigators) who are part of an underserved (poverty or near poverty) population but interested in building a future story for themselves and their children.
- Along with their mentors, the attendees investigate the impact that poverty and low wages have on them and what it will take to move from just getting-by to actually getting-ahead.
- The education experience helps individuals become experts regarding their own lives.
- The facilitators do not tell the investigators what to do or think. GA is about creating a future story.
- Just as who are today was decided by what we did yesterday - who we will be tomorrow is decided by what we do today.
- Whether we know it or not, we are all creating our future stories right now. GA is the tool that investigators will use to help create their future stories!

**Defining Resources:** *The more resources a person has in all these eleven areas, the easier it is to make better choices, to make changes, and to live well. Resources are interconnected, so having high levels of some (or many) resources makes it easier to build the rest.*

|                             |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Financial                 | • Emotional                 | • Mental/Cognitive           |
| • Language                  | • Social Capital            | • Physical                   |
| • Spiritual                 | • Integrity and Trust       | • Motivation and Persistence |
| • Relationships/Role Models | • Knowledge of Hidden Rules |                              |



## “Getting Ahead”



**Systemic  
Change**

- “Bridges Out of Poverty” Workshops
- “Getting Ahead” Mentoring Program

### ***Systemic Change is for Everyone!***

*Revised 10/17/2017*

By coming together as community members we can work to create pathways out of poverty for individuals, in neighborhoods and in whole communities through collaboration, education and support.

### ***What is needed? Your support is greatly appreciated!***

- Provide financial support for the “Getting Ahead” classroom program.
- Attend a Poverty Workshop.
- Schedule an informational session or poverty workshop at your church, organization or work.
- Refer individuals who may be searching for the opportunity to develop their resources and create their personal “Future Story” and journey out of poverty.
- Provide program support: Meals, child care, or set up for classes and presentations.
- Donate or purchase gift cards from grocery stores or gas stations as vouchers/stipends are paid to participants - called “Investigators” - for each class they attend in “Getting Ahead”.
- Donate In-kind “school supply” items: Folders, 1” binders, pens, pencils, markers, notebooks, and legal pads and anything to make the classes operate efficiently.
- Learn about and volunteer to be a mentor or facilitator working directly with “Investigators”.

### ***For more information or to volunteer or schedule an informational presentation:***

Contact Joe Kruse for Program Info at: [krusej@svdp-sheboygancounty.org](mailto:krusej@svdp-sheboygancounty.org)

Phone: 920-457-4844

Facebook: @SVDPSheboygan

### ***To make a financial contribution:***

Make check payable to: St. Vincent de Paul Society, Getting Ahead  
Memo Line: “Getting Ahead” program

Mail to: St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Attention: Joe Kruse  
4215 Highway 42 North  
Sheboygan, WI 53083

***To get on our email/ mailing list:*** Email Joe at [krusej@svdp-sheboygancounty.org](mailto:krusej@svdp-sheboygancounty.org) or complete form below and return to address above.

Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone-other: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Communications Preference:      Email \_\_\_\_\_      Snail mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Understanding Those Living in Poverty***

### **Introduction**

When dealing with people we serve, we sometimes struggle to:

1. **Understand** what is being presented or requested
2. **Discern** the truth of the situation
3. **Accept** their life style
4. **Attitudes** –ours and theirs
5. Their **inability** to follow a plan of action.

This is only a partial list. We do our best with who we are and the situations we find ourselves in.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul's vision is "**End Poverty through Systemic Change.**" And one of the first things we have to understand about systemic change is that **it has to start with us.** We have to adjust the way we look at things and the way we do things. **If you always do what you've always done, you will always get what you've always got. If you want to get what you've never got, you will have to do what you've never done.** The definition of insanity is "doing the same thing over and over, and expecting different results." We cannot expect different results if we continue to do things the way we have always done them.

One of the first things we have to do is **gain a better understanding** of the individuals and families we are trying to help. The presentation today is focused around the principles set forth in the book "**Bridges Out of Poverty**" by **Ruby Payne, Phil DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith.** This workshop will provide a better understanding of different economic classes – of environments of wealth, middle class, and, especially, poverty. The workshop will be a combination of viewing videos, discussion groups, and Q and A sessions.

A few things to keep in mind while viewing this material: **our focus here is on economic class,** not race/ethnic group or social standing. We often make generalizations whenever we try to understand a particular group of people. This information is not intended to allow us to put people in nice, clean boxes but rather to soften our hearts and give us a bit more insight into people and situations we encounter – to learn more about what the human experience looks like for a variety of our brothers and sisters. And, of course, there are always exceptions.

Finally, it's helpful to keep in mind that any change that takes place for those in poverty must be a choice they make, not one we make.

Let's begin.

Here's what participants say before and after taking Getting Ahead

**BEFORE:** depressed  
struggling broke  
isolated  
stressed  
stuck  
detached overwhelmed

**AFTER:** motivated  
happy  
growing hopeful improving  
stable  
confident

### Who are successful candidates for Getting Ahead?



- Someone who wants to change their circumstances.
- Someone who has tried to change their circumstances and was met with little success.
- Someone who is willing to partner with middle-class individuals and agencies.
- Someone who is able to commit to the 18 sessions which makes up all the classes.
- Someone who is not in a crisis that would prevent participation, such as mental health or substance abuse.



Questions About GA?



### What participants say about Getting Ahead:

*"Through Getting Ahead I was able to see clearly the resources I do have — i.e. mental capacity, motivation, and social capital. This truth has helped me to move forward out of poverty."*

*"Going through the program made me realize that I wasn't in this by myself. I was surrounded by people just like me who were humble enough to say 'I need help.'"*

*"The class has re-shaped my thinking process- the way I approach situations as possibilities, not obstacles."*

## FREE

Participants will receive:



- Workbook and meeting materials
- Stipend (form of gift card) for work and time involved
- Stipend to cover child care costs (if necessary) (determined on individual basis)
- A weekly meal prepared by volunteers
- Stipend for transportation (if necessary) (determined on individual basis)

Participants are expected to commit to the full 18 weeks. Space is limited. We will be signing up people tonight.

We will be conducting personal interviews to speak to you about GA



Getting  
**AHEAD**  
in a Just-Gettin'-By World



# ***'Getting Ahead in a Just Getting-By World'***

## ***Program Overview***

Getting Ahead is geared toward people in generational and long term situational poverty. It is a 16-20 session **facilitated** program for small groups (8-14 each) of individuals wanting to get out of poverty.

Participants are 'vetted' by HTA committee members. The participants must agree to engage fully in the program and accept outside help in the form of mentors. At all points in this process it is the participant who accepts the program makes the choices necessary to transition out of poverty.

In Getting Ahead participants, called "Investigators";

- explore and analyze their life now
- learn about the hidden rules of economic class
- assess their personal resources and those of the community in which they live
- make their own arguments for change
- build their own future stories, not someone else's
- make their own choices
- enjoy the power that comes from solving problems and controlling their own life
- make concrete plans to build resources and transition to economic stability
- become skillful at using the hidden rules of economic class to build resources and navigate systems
- prepare themselves to take a seat at the decision making tables in their community

The seminar series consists of ten modules. They include;

- My Life Now
- Theory of Change
- Rich/Poor Gap and Research on Causes of Poverty
- Hidden Rules of Economic Class
- The Importance of Language
- Eleven Resources
- Self- Assessment of Resources
- Community Assessment of Resources
- Building Resources
- Personal and Community Plans for Transition

# Module Summary of Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World

**Module 1: My Life Now** – Defining what poverty is like in our community

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** Base plans on accurate mental models of poverty, middle class, and wealth.

**Module 2: Theory of Change** – Understanding Tranny of the moment – Breaking out of the trap

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** Use the lens of economic class to understand and take responsibility for your own societal experience, while being open to the experience of others.

**Module 3: The Rich/Poor Gap and Research on Causes of Poverty** – Explore and understand all causes of poverty

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** Address all causes of poverty (four principal areas of research: Individual Behaviors and Circumstances, Community Conditions, Exploitation, Political/Economic Structures).

**Module 4: Hidden Rules of Economic Class** – Reduce judgmental attitudes and help people come together across class lines to solve problems

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** Define poverty as the extent to which a person, institution, or community does without resources.

**Module 5: The Importance of Language** – Helps us learn, solve problems, and create respectful relationships

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** Build relationships of mutual respect.

**Module 6: Eleven Resources** – Building individual, institutional, and community resources

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** Base plans on the premise that people in all classes, races, sectors, and political persuasions are problem solvers and need to be at the decision-making table.

**Module 7: Self-Assessment of Resources** – Assess ourselves

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** At the intersection of poverty with other social disparities (race, gender, physical ability, etc.) address inequalities in access to resources.

**Module 8: Community Assessment** – Assess the strengths and weaknesses of our community

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** At the individual, institutional and community/policy levels: Stabilize the environment, remove barriers to transition, and build resources.

**Module 9: Building Resources** – Investigate HOW to build our own resources

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** Build long-term support for individual, institutional and community/policy transitions

**Module 10: Personal and Community Plans** – Create a future story for ourselves and a mental model for community prosperity!

**BRIDGES CORE CONSTRUCT:** Build economically sustainable communities in which everyone can live well.