

# Maintaining Connections in a Virtual World

The week after we closed our doors in mid-March, we sent an email blast to all active Members with links to news and resources that might help them during the pandemic, from unemployment benefits to at-home schooling. The email was so well-received that we updated it with new information the next week and sent it again ... and then again the week after that ... and every week since.

In addition to those weekly emails, our coaches have regularly offered tips and information through our social media channels. We have hosted a virtual roundtable for employers, a virtual job fair (see inside for more information), and a series of virtual breakfasts to introduce Cincinnati Works to more business and civic leaders.

And through it all, our coaches have been calling, texting, emailing and video-chatting with Members every day - maintaining the relationships that our Members have long valued.



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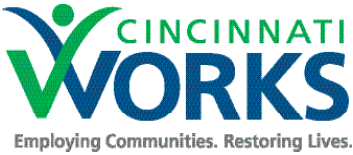
Employing Communities. Restoring Lives.

“Looking back, I can’t believe I have made it this far. And this is nothing, man. This is nothing. It is really cool to get to help people on a daily basis.”

~ CW Member Evan Van Skalk, whose story is featured on our website

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# 462

Since we shifted to remote services in mid-March, our coaches have connected with 462 Members to discuss a variety of issues, from quick check-ins to deep conversations. 178 Members are actively engaged in ongoing coaching sessions.

# 89

In the early weeks of the pandemic, 89 Members received emergency funding through a partnership with the Family Independence Initiative and Stand Together Foundation. While our doors are closed, partnerships like this become more valuable than ever.

# \$25,000

The Cincinnati Works Young Professionals Board is leading its annual fundraiser, with a goal of raising \$25,000 to support our Members and our mission. You can contribute at [charity.gofundme.com](https://charity.gofundme.com).



# Using Partnerships to Narrow ‘Digital Divide’

Since the pandemic forced us to close our doors in mid-March, we have witnessed a painful truth: The “digital divide” is real, and many of our Members are on the wrong side of it.

Job seekers who do not have easy access to computers and reliable internet service are at a significant disadvantage when so much of the hiring process happens online.

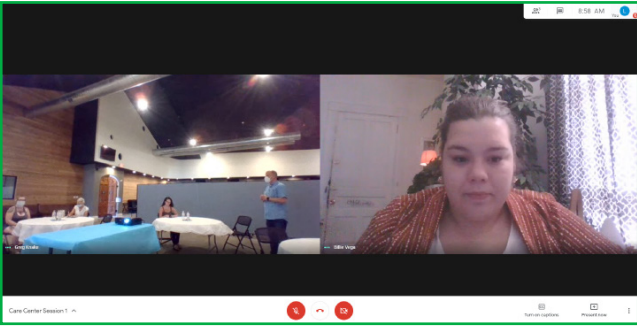
So we have leveraged key partnerships to help narrow the divide:

- We have borrowed laptop computers from the Cincinnati Public Library for some events, including our redesigned and virtual JumpStart job-readiness workshop.
- The Library also allowed us to use space Downtown for a virtual onboarding session for new Members.
- Through our relationships with City of Cincinnati officials, we have been able to use a large, well-ventilated office space downtown for JumpStart participants who do not have a reliable computer or internet service at home.
- Our coaches and staff have led virtual training for clients of Dress for Success Cincinnati and The Care Center in Loveland.
- Even our internal teams have partnered in new ways, so our more tech-savvy staff members have been available to assist with JumpStart and other online events.



We utilized laptops from the Library for a job fair.

The Library partnership, in particular, has been invaluable in recent years as both organizations have found creative ways to tap into each other’s services and expertise.



Billie Vega led a virtual training for clients of The Care Center.

all members of our community. They have been open to finding creative ways to provide services while maintaining social distancing and health guidelines.”

“We are grateful for the Cincinnati Public Library and the breadth of services they have offered during this pandemic,” said Leslie Kish, Director of Strategic Partnerships at Cincinnati Works. “While resources have shifted online, we know that not all have access, but the library has continued to serve as a valuable resource to



# News and Notes

✓ Cincinnati Works Member and staff member **Belinda Coulter-Harris** is featured on a new downtown mural produced by ArtWorks and Ohio Justice & Policy Center. The mural is a testament to the value of second chances, and it features five women who returned from prison to work for social justice. As customer service representative and intake specialist, Belinda is often the first person our Members see when they come through our doors, and she has become a mentor to many of them.

✓ Professional Development Coach **Martha Nicks** recently earned the Facilitating Career Development certificate from the National Career Development Association, and she is pursuing additional credentials from the NCDA.

Cincinnati Works was founded 24 years ago on the belief that employment offers a path out of poverty, and 1-on-1 coaching makes that path viable. Poverty is complex, and a job alone is not enough. We are proud to support Martha and all of our coaches as they seek to learn more about themselves, their Members and their profession.

✓ We are partnering with WCPO for a series of virtual job fairs, connecting job seekers to two or three local employers who are currently hiring for frontline positions. Each event will be held on a Friday at or near the end of the month, and participants get brief 1-on-1 interviews with representatives from the local employers.

WCPO is promoting the events and the employers as part of The Rebound, an initiative to help their viewers recover from the economic ramifications of the pandemic. The events will continue at least through November.

✓ When the Cincinnati Museum Center laid off more than 170 full- and part-time employees earlier this summer, they contacted us about helping the former employees prepare to find new jobs. So we hosted a two-day job fair for them, featuring more than 20 local employers and 1-on-1 coaching sessions with a staffing specialist, financial coach, mental-health counselor and JumpStart facilitator.

✓ We are excited to welcome three new members to our Board of Trustees:

- **Danyele Harris-Thompson**, Senior Manager at Kao Corporation
- **Chris Powell**, CEO of Talmetrix
- **Carol Walker**, Human Resources Director at Hillenbrand Corporation

We also welcomed two new staff members this summer, both of whom will work on-site at local employers through our Workforce Connection program:

- **Sharon Carr**, Workforce Financial Coach
- **Justin Tucker**, Workforce Coach

Our thanks to the corporate sponsors whose investment enables our work:



Belinda Coulter-Harris is pictured lower right. Photo of mural from OJPC social media.



Promotional image for virtual job fair.



Job fair and coaching session in the rotunda of the Cincinnati Museum Center.

# Phoenix Program Outreach Continues

The pandemic has not slowed Mitch Morris and his Phoenix Program outreach team. They have been busy every weekend since early May, walking through our most vulnerable neighborhoods and offering an alternative to the street life: 1-on-1 career coaching and access to full-time employment.

In addition to their regular outreach efforts, the Phoenix Program has hosted community cookouts and resource fairs in Roselawn and the West End, as well as a “ride for peace” in Avondale that doubled as a tribute to essential workers in our local hospitals.



Above and left: weekly outreach; right: cookout in Roselawn; below: Ride for Peace in Avondale



# Member Spotlight: Michael Mitchell

Former Cincinnati Works coach Tevis Clark dubbed Michael Mitchell the “Phoenix Member of the Year” – an unofficial recognition that was less about Mitchell’s accomplishments this year and more about how consistently he has lived the ideals of the Phoenix Program.

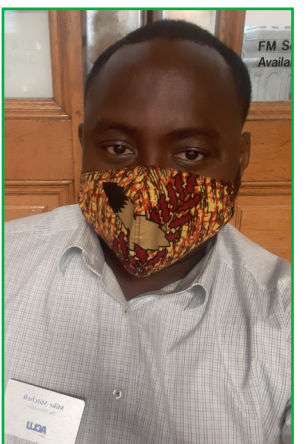
Given a second chance at a career, he has engaged with Cincinnati Works regularly, overcome multiple barriers, taken a leadership role within the community, and made time to lift others at the same time he lifts himself.

“He’s rocking!” said Lisa Mauthe, Director of Financial Wellness and one of multiple staff members who have worked with Mitchell this year.

Mitchell is employed as a community organizer for the ACLU; he is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Microenterprise Initiative, which supports low- to moderate-income entrepreneurs; and he is active with All of Us or None, a grassroots organization that advocates for formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. He has spoken at Cincinnati City Hall and the Ohio Statehouse.

In addition to working with Clark to prepare for job interviews, Mitchell worked with legal advocate Alyssa Beck to address past missteps and earn his driver’s license, and he has worked with Mauthe and the financial coaching staff to develop a spending plan. He received an emergency loan through Project LIFT and was able to pay it back.

“Michael has overcome many barriers and made tremendous progress,” Clark said.



To ensure our impact continues for another generation, please consider supporting our mission in your estate plans through our Founders Legacy Society. For more information, contact Karen Sieber at [ksieber@cincinnatiworks.org](mailto:ksieber@cincinnatiworks.org) or 513.744.5631.