

By **Heather Webb**, Communications Manager, Britepaths

New Beginnings Over 3 Cups of Coffee

When you're looking to move into a better job, you can have great credentials and many promising leads, but still find it difficult to land interviews. Breaking into a better career path can be even more challenging when you're trying to rise from a lower-paying job, did not follow a traditional education path, or do not have social connections to tap.

Through its Financial Literacy and Project BRIDGE mentoring programs, Fairfax-based non-profit Britepaths (formerly Our Daily Bread) has been working for many years with low- and middle-income adults throughout the Fairfax County area to help them develop budgeting and financial skills and goals so they can overcome financial crises and work toward self-sufficiency.

Britepaths' staff and volunteers who work with these families have witnessed firsthand the challenges they face when they are working to attain better-paying jobs or advance a career path that will help them better support their families. In January, Britepaths launched 3 Cups of Coffee® to respond to this challenge.

3 Cups of Coffee® is a short-term mentoring program that pairs Northern Virginia residents who are job-ready with volunteer mentors who are professionals in a similar or desired field. They meet three times for one-hour conversations in a local coffee shop or café. Together, they create a customized plan that identifies career goals and job possibilities, while also focusing on building the mentee's professional network through tips and access provided by the mentor.

As research has shown, 80 percent of jobs are found in the "hidden market," and Britepaths' mentors, who bring a wealth of experience and knowledge, can help mentees develop their professional networks so that they too can realize their best career opportunities.



Britepaths is offering 3 Cups of Coffee® through a partnership with Pittsburgh-based non-profit Pennsylvania Women Work, which has found the program to be successful since launching it in their own community 2014. The program was founded at Britepaths through a grant from Morrison & Foerster Foundation.

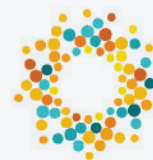
In January 2017, Britepaths' Project BRIDGE Program Manager Sally Meyer provided an orientation for the first group of volunteer mentors for the program, who are members of the Northern Virginia Society for Human Resources Management. She is now in the process of matching mentors and mentees, and welcomes community members who are interested in being mentors or mentees to contact her.

The ideal candidate to receive mentoring through 3 Cups of Coffee® has a resume, specific career goals and/or desired job sector identified, a minimum of a high school diploma or GED, basic computer skills, reliable Internet access and a professional demeanor and positive attitude.

An ideal mentor is an established professional living in Northern Virginia who is looking for a volunteer opportunity that will involve sharing their expertise and knowledge to help someone

develop professional networking connections and gain traction in their career.

For more information on how to get involved in 3 Cups of Coffee® as a mentor or mentee, visit <http://britepaths.org> or contact Sally Meyer, Project BRIDGE Program Manager, at smeyer@britepaths.org or 703.273.8829.



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Formerly Our Daily Bread

Learn More

Britepaths (formerly Our Daily Bread) has served struggling families in the Fairfax County area for more than 30 years. The non-profit provides Stability services: emergency and short-term food assistance and financial assistance grants; while also offering Resilience programs: Financial Mentoring, counseling and classes; Project BRIDGE mentoring and career development; and Naomi Project mentoring for new and expecting mothers. Seasonal supports include Back to School and Holiday assistance. Learn more and get involved.

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