



# People Empowering People Helps Build Communities

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The People Empowering People (PEP) program is a personal and family development program with a strong community focus. Provided by UConn Extension, PEP builds upon individual life experiences and strengths to encourage growth in communication and problem solving skills, parent and family relationships and community involvement.

The PEP program was created by retired Extension Educator Cheryl Czuba and is coordinated by Cathleen Love, professor at UConn Extension. Over 1,000 people have graduated from the PEP program in the past 15 years.

UConn PEP offers participants the opportunity to set goals, develop relationships and make connections. Participants share their stories and find their voice and they begin to believe they can make a difference.

In the words of one of the UConn PEP graduates, “I learned so much from my participation in the UConn Extension PEP program. I learned from every UConn PEP participant in my wonderful group. I learned or rather re-learned things like trust in groups. I came to appreciate different lifestyles and different ways of thinking, living, caring, sharing and teaching. The UConn Extension PEP program helped me renew

my faith in how wonderful people are. It has reopened my eyes to how important differences are in people, in every aspect, but yet in the end, how we really are the same and that we, each one of us, can make a difference.”

Another participant tells us, “I enjoyed every moment of our classes ... I loved the stories we shared, the tears we shed, the laughter, the trust within the group and the comfort we felt in sharing and speaking with one another. Our “PEP” talks empowered us to accomplish or obtain something. Every moment, every word, every tear, every laugh and every lesson will be a permanent tattoo, not only in my mind, but in my heart.”

During the UConn PEP program, one woman set a personal goal to go to college. She is now working on her bachelor’s degree. She believed she could do it, set her goal, and her passion and commitment gave her the courage to follow through on her dream to go to college.

The student says, “The opportunity to participate in UConn Extension PEP changed my life ... This program built and renewed my confidence in myself. For that I am so appreciative.”

PEP participants realize their leadership potential and take action to invest in themselves, in their families and in their communities.