

She Speaks: A Participant's Perspective

The Perfect Name for a Wonderful Place



Terryann
Goodridge-Dunlap

Women Blessing Women is the perfect name for a wonderful place. It was only less than six months ago that I came through the door at WBW. I was greeted and welcomed with open arms. I worked on my GED, job readiness and employment skills.

The staff was more than helpful and ready to assist me. They immediately helped me with my resume, job applications and interview preparation. Within a few months, I earned my STNA (State Tested Nurse Aide) and a job as a home health care aide, which led to another job at Sunset Health Care. Now I have two jobs!

It was so convenient for me to work on my GED and two jobs at the same time, because WBW is more than willing to work with my schedule. A volunteer or staff person is always available to assist me in any subject area.

Not everyone learns or works at the same level. They work with you, and you set your own schedule and learn at your own pace, which is one of the benefits of coming to WBW.

After a few months, I felt that I was ready to do practice tests. It didn't take me long to prepare for taking my GED exam, because I had a larger goal in life—to become a nurse. Time was running out, so I worked overtime on my GED.

Now I have passed my GED, I still have my two jobs. I have applied to UT and have started to work on my BS in nursing.

Being at WBW has really been a blessing for me. Thanks to the volunteers and staff for their blessings, I have achieved my goal here and am one step closer to my dream of being a registered nurse. Thanks, Women Blessing Women.

—Terryann Goodridge-Dunlap

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The Makings of Me

My name is Jazmine Barhill, and I am 20

years old. I started off pretty rough at Women Blessing Women because I was hard on myself



Jazmine Barhill

because I didn't graduate with my class the year before. My family was pretty rough on me too. I had a lot of pressures including being in a controlling relationship with my boyfriend.

I came to WBW in Sept. 2007, and because of my relationship with my boyfriend, I lost my focus and was not able to stay consistent in my studies.

I wound up away from home and in deeper trouble. I came back to WBW in January 2008. I really focused this time on me, and at last I felt free and strong enough to get out of the relationship that was pulling me down. I got a job, then found out I was pregnant with Zola, and I knew I had to get it together. I am a mommy now, and if I want to be able to give her what she needs, I need to "step up" my plan.

I am unstoppable now! I am on the move and I do not look back. I graduated with my GED in fall of 2008 and am currently at Owens College in Culinary Arts. I plan to work in a five-star restaurant in the future.

WBW helped me. It was a quiet, comfortable environment where I could breathe, relax and focus on my goals and did not need to raise my hand to go to the bathroom.

My verse to you is: Be still and know that I am God—Psalm 46:10. My words of advise: Live, love, laugh and learn.

Women Blessing Women

Mission

To serve, bless, and empower women to achieve their potential, obtain living wage jobs, and break the cycle of poverty.



Women Blessing Women

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We're Proud of Our Participants!



Latrice Lewis



Lorranda Dickerson



Daveta Atkins



Tina Jones



Precious Braswell

TAHRA Helps WBW

The Toledo Area Human Resource Assoc. held its inaugural silent auction event on Dec. 10, 2008 at the Pinnacle. The auction benefited two great causes: the National Human Relations Foundation (SHRM) and Women Blessing Women. The fundraiser netted \$2,500 for the empowerment program.

Thank you to Tom Foos, Chair, TAHRA, and the members of the Toledo Area Human Resource Association, who volunteered.

Speakers Bureau

Need a program speaker for your professional group, club or organization? WBW speakers would be glad to present our program. Call Lynn Langel at 419-691-2261 or Chris at 419-241-9789.



Stacey Armstrong

Welcome New Volunteers, Sept.-Dec. 2008

- Debra Balthaza-James
- Ren Becker
- Bonny Becker
- Patricia Besner
- Kerry Ann Casey
- Kimberly Cook
- Christi Filimon
- Matt Fisher
- Julie Grasson
- Shonita Green
- Nadine Hadley
- Cortney Huntley
- Heather Pope
- Patricia Resendez
- Bola Saka
- Crystal Standifer
- Melissa Sweet
- Trisha Thompson
- Wendy Weihrouch
- Hayley Woak



Crystal Hogan

Congratulations! Earned GED Sept.-Dec., 2008

- Daveta Atkins
- Jazmine Barnhill
- Terryann Goodridge-Dunlap
- Lasharay Thomas

Obtained Employment Sept.-Dec., 2008

- Stacey Armstrong
- Precious Braswell
- Samaria Carter
- Heather Chizmar
- Lorranda Dickerson
- Kelly Doty
- Tyra Gaiter
- Crystal Hogan
- Tamicka Jackson
- Katasha Jones
- Tina Jones
- Brandi Kanavel-Vo
- Latrice Lewis
- Deonna Ligon
- Ebony Moore
- Jessica Rainey
- Leslie Roberts
- Teleah Winfrey

Cook-Off Nets \$5,544

Some 196 attended The Chili for Change and Soup for Success event held on Nov. 2, 2008, at St. Ursula Academy. Chili and soup entries were cooked up by the Catholic Chronicle, Lourdes College, WBW participants and board, Sisters and Associates of Notre Dame, St. Francis of Sylvania, St. Francis of Tiffin, the Ursulines, and the Mercy Sisters. Thanks to the major sponsors: Mercy Health Partners, Pepsi Americas, The Andersons, 13-ABC TV, Lourdes College, Hafner Florist and the Women Religious of the Toledo Catholic Diocese. Thanks also to Hefner Florist, Kroger, McDonalds, Pepsi, Sofo Foods, Arrow Print & Copy and Georgette for their in-kind donations. Kudos to the event committee: Laurie Neary, chair; Sr. Cheryl Darr, SND; Sr. Diana Kleman, OSF/T; Sr. Maria Pacelli, OSF/S; Pat Remley; Sr. Sandy Sherman, OSU; and Lindsay Williams.

The Power of Ten

In celebration of its tenth anniversary, the participants of Women Blessing Women held a special workshop on Dec. 16-17 to honor the accomplishments of the past and look forward to successes ahead. Several of the recent graduates and new hires were invited to speak to the current participants about their experiences at WBW and where they are now in pursuing their goals:

Terryann Goodridge-Dunlap earned her STNA this year and secured two jobs in the field. She graduated with her GED in November and begins at UT in January studying to be a registered nurse.

Stacey Armstrong has been working at a new job at Heartland for several months and is empowered to do even more with her life.

Jazmine Barnhill earned her GED last fall and hopes to start at Owens Community College in the spring in culinary arts. Katrina Barnhill, Jazmine's mother, is a former participant. She works at a factory and is an accomplished saxophone musician, playing at several jazz clubs and as a solo for parties in Toledo.

Marisa Austin has been going to college, but needed to complete her GED before she could graduate. She finished her GED last January and will be graduating this spring with her nursing degree from Brown-Mackey College. According to Marisa, "It's a blessing to be around other women who are going through the very same things that you are. You can look at your sister and say, 'You



From left: Jazmine Barnhill, Stacey Armstrong, Terryann Goodridge-Dunlap, Marisha Austin, Alisha Flowers participated in the Power of Ten workshop.

keep your head up. You be encouraged—You're going to make it.'"

Alisha Flowers earned her GED in 2007 and has been working at Wal-Mart since that time, receiving several promotions. "Never give up...you will succeed. WBW has everything you need (to succeed)," said Alisha at the event. She plans to attend college in the future.

Precious Braswell completed her GED, began college, and obtained a job with St. Vincent's Medical Center housekeeping, all within a few months in the fall of 2008.

Cindy Mason completed her GED last year and is studying at Owens Community College, earning all A's and a spot on the Dean's List.

Lattice Lewis was recently hired at Liberty Nursing Home where she had been volunteering. Her employers are thrilled with her work ethic and compassion toward their clients.

Current participants were inspired by these women's stories. A comment by Tammy Desembly summed it up, "I used to think about all that I didn't do and the years that I missed, but I can't afford to focus on what I didn't do. I'm still breathing today so I can do right now what I need to do. I'm going to be here." All of the women were then challenged to think about the power they have to change in the next ten months. Some women shared their goals for the coming ten months and commented on the appropriateness of WBW's name: It has truly been a blessing in their lives.

Board Members Wanted

Do you have experience in finance, marketing, fundraising, strategic planning, policy-making, etc.? Do you want to have a voice in setting the direction for WBW? Consider becoming a member of our board. Contact: Laurie Neary, board chair, 419-882-5791 x 254 or Chris at 419-241-9789.

Thanks!

WBW thanks these groups and businesses for their in-kind gifts:

- Black Ministry of the Catholic Diocese
- Central Catholic High School
- Geneva Roger's sewing group
- honey i'm home
- Manhattan's Restaurant
- Mercy College
- Mercy Health Partners
- Pepsi
- The Tansey Group
- The Toledo Blade
- Victoria's Secret



Geneva Rogers, left, and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur display some of the 19 sets of hats and scarves they made in their sewing group for women in the job program.

Search and Raise dollars for WBW

It takes just a few seconds to search the Internet using www.GoodSearch.com. Enter “Women Blessing Women” as your favorite charity, and we will receive a penny every time you search.

GoodSearch.com also has a link to GoodShop, its sister site. Shop online at over 700 stores and WBW can receive up to 37 percent of your online purchases.

Save the Dates

- Spring Blessing Luncheon and Fashion Show, Sat., June 9, 2009
- Chili for Change, Soup for Success fundraiser, Sun., Nov. 8, 2009

Board of Trustees

Honorary Board Members

Hon. Marcy Kaptur
Hon. Judith Ann Lanzinger

Ex-Officio Board Member

Sr. Nancy Mathias, OSU, Vicar of Religious

Elected Officers

Laurie Neary, Chair
Lynn Langel, Vice Chair
F. Michael Bercher, Treasurer
Sr. Annette Langenderfer, OSFT, Secretary

Elected Members

Sr. Carolyn Giera, OSF/S
Linda Miller
Pat O'Shea-Remley
Lou Ann Sheppard
Sr. Dorothy Thum, RSM

Staff

Chris Palmerton, Director

New Year's Resolutions

by Laurie Neary, board chair

The beginning of a new year brings with it many resolutions and promises of betterment. While resolutions are often focused on self improvement and quickly disregarded or forgotten, the new year still presents an opportunity for fresh beginnings—not only for ourselves, but for our community. Past failures should not prevent us from once again making a resolution. Although it will require sacrifice, willpower and genuine dedication, 2009 must be a year in which Women Blessing Women exceeds all our definitions of success.

While this is my own personal resolution for 2009, it is in no way possible to achieve without the support of board members, staff, volunteers, donors and participants. I ask each of you to join me in taking WBW to a new level. With our strategic plan, we have a guide for achieving the success I know we all envision and desire and benchmarks for measuring our success. Implementation of this plan to increase awareness in the community, elevate the expectations and involvement of the board members and move in the direction of financial stability will require participation from legions of supporters like your-

selves. I challenge all of us to think outside the box, pray, contribute ideas, seek out support, and promote WBW to anybody and everybody.

The new year appears to be promising. New members on our board have the ability to lead us in the development of a new strategic plan, as well as a business plan. The speakers bureau is up and running, our first annual campaign has begun, and new creative ideas for partnering with other nonprofits are being discussed. We have just celebrated the ten-year anniversary of this noble organization. Please do your part in helping me achieve another milestone—a successful New Year's resolution!

My Job, My Ministry

by Aireal Clinton, job developer

I first learned about Women Blessing Women while I was attending Lourdes College. I was taking a human values class, and had the option of doing a service learning project or writing a paper. I chose the service learning project. When I saw WBW on a list of places to select from to complete our project, it grabbed my attention. I volunteered at WBW as a



Laurie Neary



Aireal Clinton

tutor in some math and reading classes. After completing my project, I had to write a short paper about my experience. I actually wrote more of a term paper, because I had gained so much knowledge.

I recently graduated from Lourdes College with my BS in psychology. One day I saw an ad for a Job Developer at WBW, and I immediately called Chris, the director. I was hired. I work with the women who are referred to WBW from Job and Family Services, and help them find employment.

I have enjoyed my experience at WBW and especially helping women who live in poverty. I don't see my position as a job, but as my ministry. I look forward to coming to work every day to help my clients.

While continuing to work at WBW, I plan to attend graduate school online with Marygrove College in the fall to obtain my M.A. in social justice. Eventually, I would like to teach workshops

on how society can improve the systems that serve individuals living in poverty to truly break the cycle of poverty.

My advice to the women seeking jobs in this down economy is to keep looking and take action. It has to be a daily task. It's important to keep a positive mindset and believe in yourself and in God and you will succeed.