



223 Page Street, Toledo, OH 43620, phone 419-241-9789

Web www.womenblessingwomen.org

Women Blessing Women Facts

Women Blessing Women is a 501©3 nonprofit organization for women age 18 and over dedicated to empowering women living in poverty to achieve success, gain confidence and obtain living wage jobs. There is no fee charged for the organization's services. The organization serves all women without regard to ethnic background, race or religion.

Mission Statement – Women Blessing Women provides opportunities to the women of our community to reduce their dependence on society through educational training, life and career skills, for the purpose of fostering accountability, independence and self-sufficiency for themselves and their children. (updated August 2010)

Core Values: To change the lives of women by freeing their potential and nurturing growth in mind, body and spirit. (updated August 2010)

History – Founded in 1998 by the Women Religious of the Catholic Diocese of Toledo, the program at first served women and children from Aurora House, Bethany House, Sparrow's Nest and Project Mustard Seed shelters. A director was hired, and the program grew rapidly, opening its own site on Lagrange St. in 2000, thanks to a three-year grant. Women Blessing Women moved to 223 Page St. in 2003, a setting that is home-like, warm and peaceful. In 2005 the G.E.D, Job Education and the spiritual retreat programs, along with the empowerment workshops were merged into a new, more effective comprehensive empowerment program. An Endowment Fund was established in 2006 to provide funds for future expansion. Donations to the fund are invested and current earnings are reinvested, with a goal of reaching \$75,000. 2008 was a year of growth; a record number (441) of women were served.

The Employment Program – Women Blessing Women's employment/college readiness program addresses the root causes of poverty: lack of high school diploma, job readiness, job skills and behaviors. The program achieves its goals through tutoring, one-on-one mentoring and group sessions including:

- Résumé development
- On-line applications
- Job skills
- Work ethics
- Basic computer skills
- Basic literacy skills
- Career opportunities
- GED (General Education Diploma)
- Learning positive behaviors
- Relationship skills
- Conflict resolution
- Money management
- Women's health issues
- Self-esteem/confidence
- Stress/anxiety reduction
- Goal-setting
- Spiritual retreats
- Educational assessment testing

Funding – Women Blessing Women is funded by individual, corporate, church/parish donations, grants, contracts and fundraising.

Volunteers – Volunteers are the heart of the employment program. They serve as instructors, tutors, coaches, mentors, leaders, board and committee members, financial, administrative and marketing consultants. In 2010, 118 volunteers gave 7,289.50 hours of service with an in-kind service value of \$119,845.

Employment Program Statistics – During 2010 the program served 244 women. Of those women, 237 were active participants, 15 earned their G.E.D., and 30 percent advanced their grade level, 13 enrolled in college, and 25 percent were employed.

The Need for Employment Services – Recent statistics show that there is an overwhelming need in the Toledo area to assist women and their children to break the cycle of poverty:

- Toledo is the 10th poorest city (over 250,000 population) in America according to this list: <http://dcjobsourc.com/richest.html>
- Toledo is the 8th poorest city in America according to this list: <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/dispatch/2010/02/15/poverty-rate-toledo-oh/>
- 35% of Toledo children live below the poverty level: <http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Toledo-Ohio.html>
- Teenage pregnancies still continue to be on the rise: <http://toledoblade.com/local/2011/03/07/Lucas-Co-teenage-pregnancy-rate-climbs.html>

No high school diploma, teenage pregnancy/mom, welfare participant, generational poor are all measurement predictors to poverty.

Profile of the Typical Participant

- 28 years old
- Head of household
- Mother of three children
- Lives in Toledo ZIP codes 43604, 43608, 43620
- Dropped out of school in the 10th grade
- Tests at 8th grade level
- Became pregnant as a teen
- Lacks self-esteem/confidence
- Mentally, physically and/or sexually abused
- Little or no job experience
- Income at or below poverty level
- Has medical, legal and family issues

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