



Educate

Ashley is changing the course
of her future through education
– all because of you



A

ASPIRE

FALL/WINTER 2019



WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER
STRATEGIES FOR WORK. SKILLS FOR LIFE.

Employ

You're helping Petreane build
confidence through lifelong
employment support

Hello

"I raise up my voice – not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard...we cannot succeed when half of us are held back." – Malala Yousafzai

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Dear WRC Partners and Friends,

Such wisdom spoken from such a young woman in the quote above. Advocating for and giving voice to women who have been silenced or are afraid to speak aligns with my personal passion. It is core to Women's Resource Center's values and is simply the right thing to do. From time to time I am asked, "Tell me about the typical women you serve." I graciously respond, "We don't serve typical women." Each and every woman has a unique path and each has the potential to find a fulfilling career that will allow her to achieve economic independence and stability for herself and her family.

Women's Resource Center is the only gender-focused career development program in our community – and the oldest in the state. We are the only program targeting women returning to the community after incarceration in West Michigan. WRC programs like New Beginnings, in partnership with Kent County Corrections, impacts the lives of women and their families. In 2018, we served nearly 150 women. This year, we are on track to impact even more! With unwavering advocacy from WRC, our volunteer mentors, and Kent County Corrections, I am proud to share that EVERY woman at Kent County Corrections now has access to new undergarments and sanitary products.

Our workforce development solutions ensure every woman and her family have the opportunity to thrive – at work and beyond. True to the "Resource" in our name, we seek to work collaboratively by joining forces with other agencies focused on workforce development for underserved populations. We confront real issues that may start in the workplace, but have lasting consequences on our personal lives, our economic security, and our families.

Who do you know that could use WRC? I'll leave you with a final quote: "Every woman's success should be an inspiration to another. We're strongest when we cheer each other on." – Serena Williams

Help me cheer on Ashley and Petreane in this issue of *Aspire*. I hope you will read their unique stories as they share how they have persevered in education and employment. There are many women in our community who could use our support. During this season of giving, please consider supporting WRC today at grwrc.org or by joining EMPOWER, our new monthly giving program.

Thank you for helping women aspire to better futures!



Sandra Gaddy
Women's Resource Center CEO

Save The Date

Saturday,
March 14, 2020





“With motivation and support from WRC, I completed my GED through Jubilee Jobs and decided I wanted to go to GRCC MTec from there.”

Educate

ASHLEY'S STORY

*H*onestly, this isn't easy for me to write. I have been unemployed since July 2019. I am married and living with my husband in Caledonia. I've never come from a well to do family and I've always worked for what I needed or wanted. I've had dreams and goals all my life that I've been told I would never achieve. My goal now is to make sure that statement is never true.

During my time in the Kent County jail, I took the sober living program and started working with the Women's Resource Center. That gave me hope for a better future. I've always wanted to finish school and then go to college for a trade. With motivation and support from WRC, I completed my GED through Jubilee Jobs and decided I wanted to go to GRCC MTec from there. I've always been mechanically inclined and then got introduced to welding. I fell in love with it. I completed the Metallica Bootcamp and wanted more.

As of today, my educational goals are to complete the 18-week course for welding at GRCC MTec. I'm confident the program will help me obtain full-time employment in the welding field.

Eventually, I would love to own my own fabrication shop and build mega and mud trucks. That may require more education, business management, etc., but I am prepared and willing to do what it takes. It's not the easiest, but school is helping me stay on the right path and better myself for the future. **I've been working hard to get where I am today and will work hard to make my goals and dreams a reality.**

Employ

PETREANE'S STORY

*I*n 1979 at 23 years old, Petreane (pronounced Pa-treen) moved to Grand Rapids from North Carolina with her three-year-old son. Determined to make it on her own and provide for her child, she took advantage of continuing education classes, but felt she needed more.

"Women's Resource Center's name came up from one of my teachers, so I took her advice," shared Petreane. "WRC really helped me. I attended several classes and workshops to improve my technical skills, resume assistance, job interview prep, and clothing from the Business Boutique." The result? She obtained employment shortly after.

In 2011, Petreane moved away, but she returned to Grand Rapids in 2017 after the sudden passing of her husband. Even in such a difficult time, Petreane knew she had to move forward. Nearly 40 years after her first visit, Petreane returned to WRC.

"Before, all I saw was a dark tunnel. After WRC, I finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. Here, I see myself feeling more confident, knowing someone cares about how I feel and that they want me to be successful. This is important to me and is what makes WRC different." Petreane added, **"It also gave me motivation to do more knowing there are workshops and training that I can take FREE of charge and keep my skills up to date."**

In July 2019, Petreane was promoted to Teacher's Assistant. She attributes her success to the time spent at WRC improving her technical skills and one-on-one sessions with her Career Coach, Niesa. She takes pride in her work and has become a lifelong learner. Even now, she is in school and will soon receive her Child Development Associate (CDA) certification. "I feel that I can do most anything when I set my mind to it," she added.



“After WRC, I finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. Here, I see myself feeling more confident, knowing someone cares about how I feel and that they want me to be successful.”

WINE, WOMEN & CHOCOLATE

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Wine, Women & Chocolate in October. The evening was a big success! We had a sellout crowd and we raised over \$60,000. Once again, Cascade Hills Country Club provided a beautiful backdrop for the event. Special thanks to our fabulous tasting vendors: Brewery Vivant, Cakabakery, Chocolates by Grimaldi, Crushed Grape, Furniture City Creamery, i-lixir, Kilwins, and Lemon Creek Winery. We are also grateful to our participants, Teresa and Uniqua, for sharing their stories of how WRC has been a valuable resource for them.



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Mark & Linda Witte | Women United - Heart of West Michigan United Way

Save The Date WINE, WOMEN & CHOCOLATE

Thursday, October 1, 2020





WOMEN'S **RESOURCE** CENTER
STRATEGIES FOR WORK. SKILLS FOR LIFE.

Riverview Center
678 Front Ave NW Suite 180
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
(616) 458-5443 | grwrc.org



HOW YOUR GIFTS EMPOWER WORKING WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

MARIA

Empower Program Participant



Before WRC:

Unemployed

After WRC:

Human Resource Generalist in medical industry

Salary range for

HR Generalist:

\$37,000 – \$42,000

FRANCES

New Beginnings Program Participant



Number of children: 2

Before WRC: Unemployed

After WRC:

Working at Cascade Engineering for 7+ months

House mother at a transitional home for women

Purchased her first car this year

KRISTI

Empower Program Participant



Number of children: 3

Before WRC:

Healthcare aide, earning minimum wage

After WRC:

Medical Assistant at Mercy Health

Salary range for MA:

\$27,000 - \$37,000
(GR average at \$32k)

*Help
Empower
more
Women*

EMPOWER, our monthly giving program, is the easiest way to provide steady support that empowers women and their families through work. There are two easy ways to join – just check “monthly” as your giving option.

ONLINE

Visit grwrc.org/donate

MAIL

Complete the enclosed envelope and mail it back.