



# Propel

A CAMPAIGN FOR  
WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER

# Dear Friends,

Since 1973, Women's Resource Center has provided programs and services to educate and empower women to workplace success. We partner with caring individuals and organizations throughout West Michigan to purposefully transform the employment outcomes for all women.

The issues faced by women in the workforce drive our programming and inspire our mission. We've worked hand-in-hand with women for nearly forty years as they have seen their own social situations change and the environment in the workplace evolve. Along the way, our programs and services have grown to more effectively motivate and inspire our participants, while giving voice to all women who seek meaningful employment in our community.

Our gender-focused mission is part of a greater movement to create an equitable and inclusive workplace culture, free of racism and discrimination, where individuals have the opportunity to achieve success and attain economic independence.

Now, the WRC is planning a move to a new headquarters. This will allow us to grow our programs and visibility throughout the community. We plan to invest nearly \$2 million in our new home while also funding program expansion.

Over the next year, a group of dedicated community leaders will be working hard to raise the funds to bring this plan to fruition. As a result of this effort and in partnership with our friends and supporters, Women's Resource Center will continue to provide first-rate programming and opportunities for our clients as they work toward their dreams.

We are approaching those who support our mission to seek your help with this important initiative. Please join us in supporting the PROPEL campaign as we seek to help women reach their full potential.



*Dick Spruit*

**Dick Spruit**  
Campaign Co-Chair



*Shaquanda Gordon*

**Shaquanda Gordon**  
Campaign Co-Chair



*Kris Spaulding*

**Kris Spaulding**  
Campaign Co-Chair

## Honorary Chairs

Stacie Behler  
Meg Goebel  
Annette Repasch  
Vernis Schad

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Karen Brush  
Melissa Collar  
Carol Crawford  
Doris Drain

Randy Freeburg  
Arlen-Dean Gaddy  
Megan Guske  
Carla Hendon  
Valerie Johnson  
Beth Kelly  
Diann Landers

Stephanie Naito  
Elyse Palmer  
Ron Snead  
Tod Stevens  
Penni Weninger  
Danielle Williams



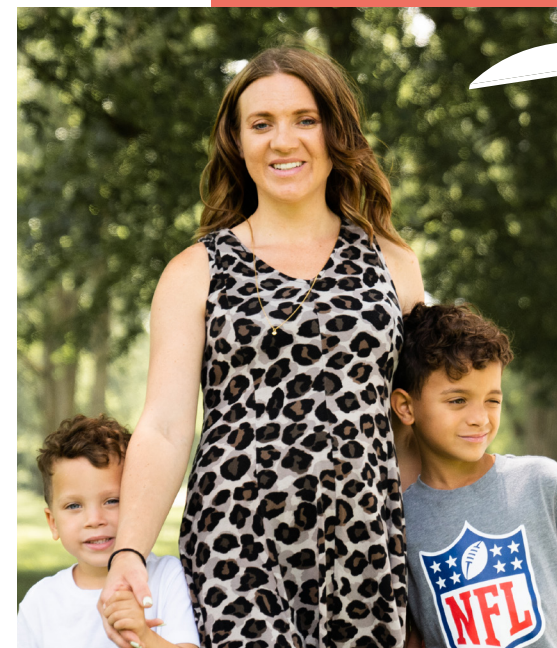
## Hope

### NEW BEGINNINGS PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Hope first encountered Women's Resource Center through a coaching session at a local nonprofit focused on strengthening young families. She was interested in the support that a career coach could offer, and stayed in touch with WRC through her schooling, internship, and eventual career.

Hope said, "It's like having your own personal big sister. My coach would video call me every Wednesday morning just to see how my week was going. WRC helped me put my resume together and they gave me clothes for my interview, not only for my internship but the position I'm in now. And through the pandemic, they came alongside me and helped me with finances. They even helped my son, Robert, get new eyeglasses and find a job after his high school graduation."

"It's been really good having someone to support me, especially when I feel like I can't achieve things. I know I always have my coach to be that extra cheerleader to back me up when I feel like I can't finish a task. Just having that person there has been what I needed the most."



## Faith

### EMPOWER PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

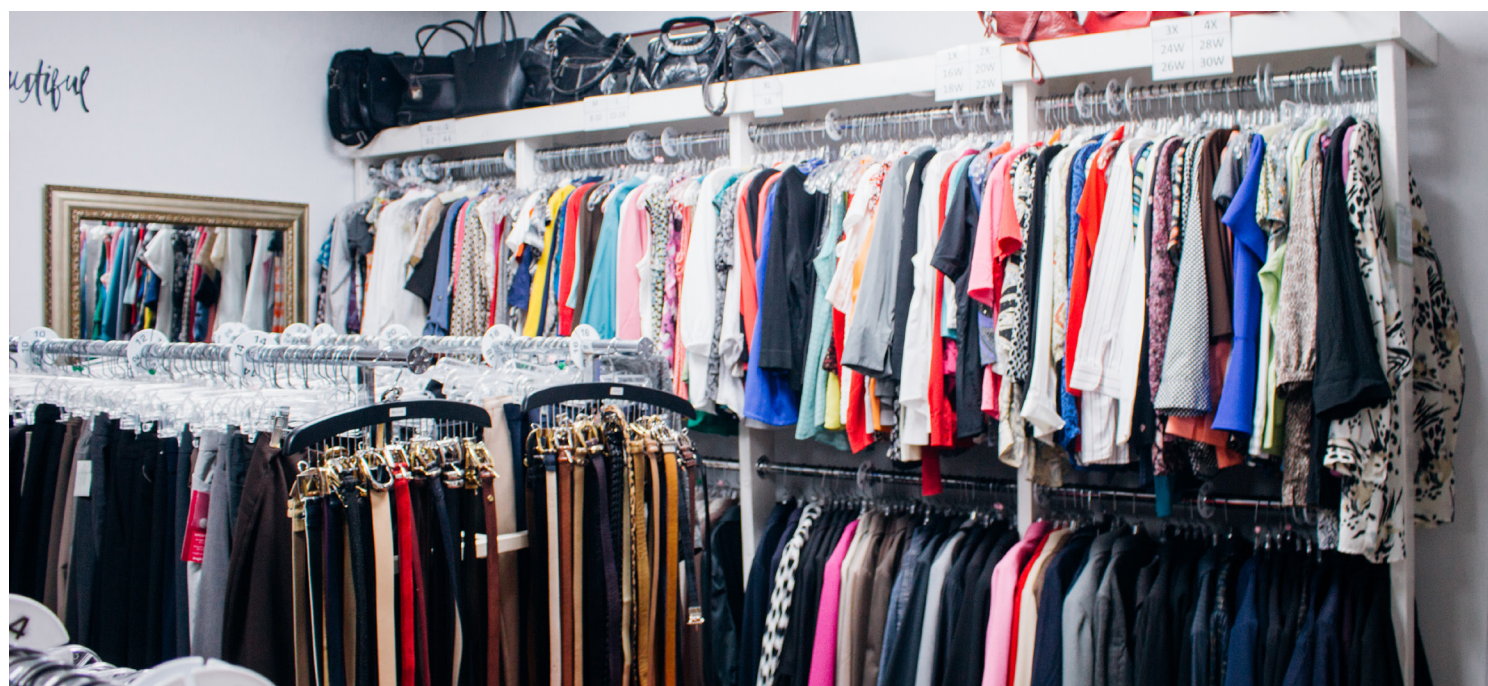
Faith first got involved with Women's Resource Center in 2019 after she had been out of the workforce for four years as a stay-at-home mom to her two boys. Faith said, "I was an emotional mess when I came to WRC. The biggest encouragement was just how my coach listened to me. She helped construct my resume, but also listened to me."

"The first job I got into—she was there to congratulate me on the way. And then she was there with encouragement when that job didn't work out. I could have gotten really down on myself, but I continued to pursue my passion. Then I got my new job. For me, it was so fulfilling. I wasn't making as much money, but I love what I do."

"To have my coach take the time to check in on me, see how I was doing... it was life-changing. She believed in me. She saw something that I didn't see in myself."

## MISSION

*Equipping women to achieve purpose, fulfillment, and financial stability through meaningful employment.*



## EQUIPPING WOMEN FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS

For nearly 50 years, Women's Resource Center has championed women in the workplace. We instill hope, inspire confidence, and empower women to seek careers that are personally and financially fulfilling.

Today, more than ever, we are compelled to serve women with the resources they need to break out of poverty. An increasing number of women are single heads of households. Many of them juggle multiple low-wage jobs that keep them trapped in a cycle of unsustainable wages. In addition, a growing number of women must find a way to break free from past mistakes and build positive momentum after being incarcerated.

Women's Resource Center provides a welcoming, safe, supportive, and relevant environment that helps eliminate barriers and equip women with the tools to achieve fulfillment and purpose in employment.

## EMPOWER

Our participants receive one-on-one coaching and gain access to a full-service business center, which includes computers for online job postings, printers, copiers, and other essential materials.

We offer computer and credentialed level classes, a scholarship program, and an intensive Skills for Success week-long class where women learn or enhance their resume-writing.

## BUSINESS BOUTIQUE

We provide participants with professional clothing, shoes, and accessories at no cost. Women who shop at the Boutique not only enhance their marketability in the workforce, they also find increased self-confidence.

## NEW BEGINNINGS

This program provides gender-responsive mentoring services to women currently incarcerated at Kent County Jail and up to 18 months after they are released. We offer individual employment development plans, life skills workshops, job placement assistance, and other basic needs critical to successful workforce reentry.

*52% of our job-ready participants secured employment within one-year of program participation.*

*79% of our employed participants received wage increases in 2020.*

# Programs & Services

## ADVOCACY

Our participants enjoy several additional services aimed at empowerment. Advocacy services include our Divorce Information Workshop & Seeking Employment Together support group.

## WOMEN MENTORING WOMEN

Caring volunteer mentors offer one-on-one advice and encouragement while developing a personalized plan of action with each participant. Our well-trained mentors help participants address their immediate and long-term needs using relevant community resources. Our mentors are supportive individuals who encourage participants to make the commitment towards lasting personal growth and change.

## 2,500+ SERVICES PROVIDED EACH YEAR, INCLUDING:

- Mock interviews
- Resume coaching
- Interviewing workshops
- Resume workshops
- The Business Boutique
- Seeking Empowerment Together support group
- Employability classes and mentoring at the Kent County Correctional Facility

THE CHALLENGE

Since 2016, Women’s Resource Center has operated out of a below-ground floor office on Front Street. **This location has several challenges, including:**

- **We lack visibility.** Our office space is hidden and difficult to find. With increased visibility we could serve more women in our region.
- **We are running out of room.** We do not have the space necessary to offer a full range of our programs, while demand for our services is increasing.
- **We are not close to our target population.** We are located approximately six miles away from the neighborhoods of our target participant population. Closer proximity to our current and prospective participants would improve mentoring and coaching relationships and lead to improved outcomes.
- **We currently experience flooding.** Because of its location below ground level, our space frequently floods with heavy rain and swollen rivers.

A NEED FOR EXPANSION

Last year, we served over 600 women in our community. **Over the next several years, we expect this number to exceed 700 (a 17% growth rate).** In addition, the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in more individuals seeking our services and we anticipate this will continue for the foreseeable future as the economy continues to recover and displaced workers seek new opportunities.

THE OPPORTUNITY

A new site will address all the challenges posed above: more visibility, greater space for programs with the potential for growth, an office that is safer and healthier, and space in the neighborhoods of those we serve.

*“Thank you for the work you do and connecting us to such a great candidate. We look forward to working with her.”*

Cunningham Communications, Inc. (local employer)



Lorie & Selena:

GROWING TOGETHER

Selena has been involved in Women’s Resource Center for over 10 years, first as a clothing donor to the Business Boutique, then as a workshop participant, and most recently in a mentoring relationship with volunteer Lorie. Through her experiences with WRC, Selena has grown in her career and been motivated to learn more about the other departments at her company, take initiative at her job, and become more invested in her daily work.

Lorie and Selena meet over video call to touch base on career goals, professional development, and any challenges that Selena faces. Selena said, **“By strengthening and encouraging women, our community is also being strengthened.** WRC does great work, and I look forward to participating and giving back to them for years to come.”

While looking for places to volunteer, Lorie was introduced to WRC. She said, “I was immediately drawn to the diverse group of women from all backgrounds and ages that were seeking assistance to find meaningful job opportunities. It was at that time I knew this was the organization that I wanted to be a part of.”

“Mentoring Selena is truly a privilege and an honor for me,” said Lorie. “It is gratifying to see her unfold professionally at her work and to witness her personal growth. Her openness and willingness to get involved and learn to better herself is truly an inspiration to me.”

“Women’s Resource Center has been around for a long time in Michigan and has led the country in addressing so many issues facing women past and present. **Their passion and commitment to assisting women to succeed is truly demonstrated every day through the service of their dedicated employees and volunteers.**”

**“The workplace world has changed over the years, especially the last year or so through COVID-19. What has not changed is how each woman has the potential to succeed in anything they want to pursue.”**



# How You Can Help

Campaign Expenses **\$150,000**

Endowment **\$300,000**

Program Investment **\$300,000**

Fixtures, Furnishings, Equipment **\$250,000**

Property Requisition and Renovation  
**\$1,000,000**

**CAMPAIGN  
BUDGET TOTAL**

**\$2,000,000**

Women's Resource Center's PROPEL campaign is seeking \$2 million in community philanthropy to help move our headquarters to a new location.

You can help us achieve this important goal by supporting this campaign through:



**A ONE-TIME CASH GIFT**



**A MULTI-YEAR PLEDGE  
COMMITMENT**

*(may be paid over a three-year period)*



**A GIFT OF APPRECIATED ASSETS**

*(i.e. stock)*



**AN ESTATE GIFT**

Your charitable gift is tax deductible to the full extent of state and federal law. Please check with your tax advisor to determine how your gift may affect your personal tax situation.

## ***Lisa's Story***

Thank you for your help not only with my resume but with giving me the confidence that I could pick myself up and move forward.

I was fired from my job on February 20th. A friend of mine recommended that I get in touch with Women's Resource Center. Shortly after the initial interviews to determine my needs and how you could best assist me, COVID hit. Everything was shut down. But you still arranged for help with my resume. I sent you my resume, you arranged a coach, and after a couple of phone calls and reviews and coaching and encouragement, I had a really good resume.

Once things started opening up, I had several interviews which led to my being employed in an ideal position. I know that the improvements and professionalism of my resume are what got me noticed.



# Campaign Endorsements

Dr. William Baer  
 Mayor Rosalyn Bliss  
 Tom Buteyn  
 Marisa Fahnenstiel  
 Barbara Fisk  
 Bruce & Lisa Gustafson  
 Deborah Guyton  
 Jerry & Nancy Hickey  
 Rep. Rachel Hood  
 Win & Kyle Irwin  
 Commissioner Joe & Jessie Jones  
 Christina Keller  
 Terri Lynn Land  
 Michael Lomonaco  
 Bradford & Dr. Andola Mathis  
 Bill & India Manns  
 Noreen Myers  
 Bill Pink  
 Patrick & Rachel Scott  
 Mel Trombley  
 Ben & Jennifer Wickstrom  
 Tim & Shoran Williams  
 Steven A. Workman  
 The Grand Rapids Alumnae  
 Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.  
 Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. Pi Rho  
 Zeta Graduate Chapter GR



## Toni's Story

Toni spent 12 years in a great career in downtown Grand Rapids. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit and she lost her job. Her world was turned upside down, and she didn't know where to start to get back on her feet. She got connected to a career coach at WRC and was connected to crisis support, essential health supplies for her family, and job-seeking training to find a new position.

"COVID came out of nowhere. It came and it infected everybody's lives," said Toni. "The whole world had come to a stop for us, and the bills did not. They kept coming."

"I don't just get 'things' from WRC; I'm able to have a conversation with my coach and say 'Here's what's going on in my life right now.' Most of all, I love that you guys listen."



## Contact Us



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# *Propel*



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STRATEGIES FOR WORK. SKILLS FOR LIFE.

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