We are 416 chapters and 8437 members strong!
This edition of The Dish has blue links and red links. Find out why!

International Women’s Day
Dining for Women celebrates everyday

Looking out at a beautiful blanket of snow, it’s hard for me to imagine the first day of spring is March 20th. I look forward to spring’s warmer temperatures when the outdoors bursts forth with vibrant color. It is an amazing time of growth and renewal.

An ideal time for us to grow and renew our resolve for change comes on International Women’s Day, March 8th. On that day, we celebrate the incredible work that women across the globe are doing to secure women’s rights and shape more equitable societies. It is a day to reflect on the work yet to be done. It is a day to think about the hundreds of thousands of women whose voices aren’t heard and are excluded from realizing their full potential. Does this sound like what we do every day at Dining for Women? I believe so.

The work that we do together is so very important, and it takes each and every one of us to move the needle for real change for women and girls across the globe. I encourage you to take this opportunity to reflect upon our connectivity with women everywhere and how together we are creating positive change. Women and men together have the obligation to once and for all make subordination of women an issue of the past. Thank you for all that you are doing to make this a reality.

On the menu
Jaryae Cooper on International Women’s Day
13th month campaign final results
Featured program: BlinkNow
Three things you need to know about BlinkNow
Follow DFW travelers through Southeast Asia Journey
DFW’s website gets a big makeover
New grant cycle opens April 1
Hangout with BlinkNow’s founder - Maggie Doyne
About this month’s dish
Milestones from chapters around the US
Board of Directors

Grant cycle opens April 1
We will be opening a new grant cycle on April 1. We rely on you to notify organizations you are involved with about our grant availability. Six programs will be selected for the January-June 2015 time period. From April 1 to April 30, we’ll accept Letters of Intent from qualifying organizations. From that group, we’ll invite some to complete a full grant application. Information on the process is available on the grants page of our website and on the new website.

BlinkNow Spotlight on March 7 at 2 p.m. ET

Featured Program
SPOTLIGHT
You helped us exceed our 13th Month goal

The final numbers are in from this year’s 13th Month campaign and with your help we raised $148,378. That exceeded 2012’s total and our more ambitious budget goal for 2013.

More significantly, we had at least one member from 76 percent of our chapters participating. Your personal generosity as well as participation in DFW fundraisers and awareness efforts were huge factors in our participation rate and in the size of the average donation.

The great response enabled us to start some initiatives this year that we hadn’t thought we could - chief among them our new website. The site will launch on or about March 15. Learn more.

Thank you for making the 2013 campaign an incredible success.

Featured Program: BlinkNow Foundation

For women and girls in Nepal, equal opportunities do not exist. A lack of education makes Nepalese girls greater targets for enslavement as sex workers or unpaid domestic servants, or working in low-paying and often dangerous sweat shops.

Women are often abandoned by fathers and husbands, who leave for India to find work. Some men send money, but often they do not return and women become desperate if they cannot care for their children.

A government study has found that “suicide has emerged as the single leading cause of death among women in Nepal aged 15-49, outranking ... accidents and disease.”

BlinkNow’s Kopila Women’s Empowerment Center opened in 2013 and today has 70 women enrolled in daily classes, learning life skills and literacy and gaining tools to launch their economic self-sufficiency and improve the health of their children and families.

Those skills help women to value education for their own daughters, reducing their risk of exploitation and early marriage. Find out how Dining for Women’s $40,000 grant will help BlinkNow. Link on new website.

DONATE

Three things
(you need to know about BlinkNow)

The March Program Spotlight will be held on Friday, March 7, at 2 p.m. ET. Our guest will be Maggie Doyne, executive director and founder of the BlinkNow Foundation. You will be able to view the event live on the Dining for Women Events page on Google Plus or on YouTube. Can’t make the live event, no problem, the recording will be available on demand.

Did you miss our conversation with Jennica Sehorn, assistant director of Kakenya? Take 25 minutes and view it online, on your phone or tablet.

About this month’s dish

Pecan Pralines. Yum. They were prepared for the Springfield IL-3 chapter meeting in February by its leader Mary Caroline Mitchell, a Louisiana native. The pecans used were grown by Mary’s family on their pecan orchard in Goster, LA.

Full disclosure: the photo is not their actual dish due to technical issues. But I couldn’t not use this story.

The February meeting also included a special guest - Dr. Ha Ngo, deputy director of the Center for Education, Promotion and Empowerment of Women program in Hanoi, Vietnam. Read more about her visit (and on the new website)

Remember: We invite you to send us a photo (make sure it fits pretty much these same dimensions) of a dish from one of your meetings - preference given to those of you who cook food from the countries our programs are in. We’ll pick one each month and credit your chapter. Please use the link provided above!

Milestones

If your chapter has a milestone, celebration, anniversary, special guest, please take a moment to take a photo and send it to us. (Don’t forget the caption and location information!). We may post them here, on the web page, on Facebook or Flickr...
Maggie Doyne was 18 when she visited Nepal. What was meant as a break before college, became her life's work. She was moved by the number of impoverished children struggling to survive.

She returned home to Mendham, NJ, and began raising awareness and money to start a school in Nepal.

With $5,000 saved from babysitting and funds raised from her community, she purchased a parcel of land and - brick by brick built the Kopila Children's Home. She's never looked back.

“I created The BlinkNow Foundation as a vehicle to share my ideas with other young people, especially children in the U.S. I believe that in the blink of an eye, we can all make a difference.”

Read More
On the new website

Strengthening communities

The Kopila Women’s Empowerment Center selects participants based on need and motivation. Currently the women in the program are relatives of the children in the Kopila Valley School.

These deep roots strengthen the community and the success of the program. Many of the women have been invested and involved in the construction and operations of the children’s home, school, medical clinic, and gardening program, and there is high demand to participate.

By selecting women and girls with a strong personal commitment, the program reinforces its goal that women use their training to make positive contributions to their communities.

Learn about the issues
On the new website

Dining customs and recipes

The Nepali cuisine marries the culinary traditions of India and Tibet to create a diet consisting primarily of dal (lentils), bhat (steamed rice) and tarkari (prepared vegetables). Sometimes referred to as “The Trinity”, these three staples are sometimes supplemented by meats.

Although it is traditional to eat with your right hand, silverware is starting to make an appearance in some urban areas and embraced by young city dwellers.

Nepal’s answer to a cheeseburger may be Momo, a steamed dumpling made in several different shapes and filled with meat and/or vegetables.

Momo and more recipes
On the new website

March 2014 Sustained Program: Friendship Bridge

Friendship Bridge's mission is to provide microcredits and education to Guatemalan women so that they can create their own solutions to poverty for themselves, their families and their communities.

Through their Microcredit Plus program - which combines small loans averaging $250 for four-to-12 month loan terms and participatory education - women start, expand or diversify their businesses and learn practical, applicable lessons on everyday topics including business, health and self-esteem.

Learn More
On new site
DFW travelers exploring Cambodia and Vietnam

Our group of intrepid journeyors is well along on its exploration of Cambodia and Vietnam. We are charting their progress through regular diaries and some great photos. Because of the website transition, we are posting these in a Facebook gallery. But don't worry if you don't use Facebook, these galleries are public.

Follow the posts on Facebook

Endnote

A new year, new website.

We are really excited about the new website and are busily working to get it launched in March. Throughout this newsletter, you see links in red, those will work on the new site once it is live - on or about March 15. We had to give you both since we're not exactly sure when the new site will be ready.

The existing site has served us well for 11 years, but there are so many new capabilities we will take advantage of with the new site.

- There is a full-text search throughout the site.
- Consolidated program pages pull all the information and links for a program together on one page from first grant to final reports.
- Social sharing makes it easy for you to share what Dining for Women is doing with more than 300 social networks with one click from any page or blog post.
- The site's responsive design means that whether you are on a desktop or a smartphone, the website will be readable and functional!
- Recipes are now individual cards that you can search by country or cuisine type. Make something exotic for your next meeting!

These are just a few of the new features. The site itself has an updated look and feel. Please stay tuned for more news on the launch!

Our Vision
We envision a world where millions of people’s lives have been transformed and extreme poverty has been reduced because Dining for Women connected people in creative powerful ways that assure gender equality.

Our Mission
Through collective giving, Dining for Women inspires, educates, and engages people to invest in programs that make a meaningful difference for women and girls living in extreme poverty.

Our Culture
In all we do, we model our deep belief in collaboration, education, inspiration, and transformation.