Giving thanks for all you do

Dear,

During this season of "busyness," let us remember the daunting challenges faced by millions and be grateful for DFW; a platform which allows us to engage meaningfully with people, programs and issues we care about. In the last twelve months, your donations have directly impacted 47,000 lives. Now that's something to be grateful for! It's a privilege to be part of a solution that brings sustenance and hope to our global sisters.

I am thankful to everyone who makes DFW's impact in the world possible: members of the board, our talented staff, the dedicated education and program selection teams, our exceptionally committed regional leaders, mentors, chapter leaders and, of course all of the engaged DFW members, without whom, it would not be possible to change the world one dinner at a time. On behalf of those whose lives you've impacted, thank you.

Marsha

13th Month Board Challenge: Are you in?

On the menu

Support DFW through the 13th Month campaign
New board chair, member elected
Featured program: Smiles on Wings
Three things you need to know about Smiles on Wings
Sustained Program: Lotus Outreach
Volunteer opportunities
BOMA honored by UN
Travel Update
One-Heart receives grant check

Volunteers Needed

There are some exciting new volunteer opportunities for Dining for Women members interested in stepping up to a new level of commitment.

We have an immediate opening for a new Southwest Regional Leader as well as positions for members of the Program Selection Team. If there are foodies among you, consider our opening for a Recipe Curator.

These and other open positions are outlined in greater detail on our Volunteers page Learn more and apply >

BOMA Project honored by UN

"The class not only taught us how to earn more money, but also how to speak up during town meetings. Often women are scared to talk, but this class helped us realize that we also have the right to speak up."
The Dining for Women Board of Directors has thrown down an $18,000 gauntlet and they’re waiting to see if you’ll pick it up. We are tying this challenge to #GivingTuesday - a day set aside to focus holiday shoppers' minds on people in need.

The board will match dollar for dollar every online gift made to the 13th Month Campaign made through midnight (PT) Tuesday, Dec. 3 - up to $18,000. A donation to this campaign will have twice the value - or more if your company matches your gifts too - during this challenge.

After 11 weeks, we've reached $70,000. If you have already given, we thank you. But if you need a bigger push, this should be it. Don’t let the board leave this money on the table!

DONATE NOW

Fall board meeting
New board chair, member elected; mission/vision changes approved

Dining for Women's co-founder, Barb Collins, far left, was elected new board chair at the fall board meeting held earlier this month in Newark, NJ. The board also elected Anne Capestrain, chapter leader from Springfield, IL, to a new position designed to bring the grassroots chapter perspective to the board room. Read more >

The board also approved a new mission and vision statement. With the significant growth of the past few years, the board felt these changes more accurately reflect the organization today. The new statements are:

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.

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.

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

Featured Program: Smiles on Wings, Thailand

The BOMA Project - a featured program in 2010 and one of our current sustained programs - has been named one of 17 "Lighthouse Activities" by the United Nations.

The UN Momentum for Change initiative honors innovative climate-change solutions worldwide. BOMA was selected in the "Women for Results" category for programs that demonstrate the leadership and participation of women in addressing climate change.

This is a great honor and we are excited to be helping BOMA in its efforts to change the world. Read more >

Travel update

This fall has been a busy time for our travelers. Groups have visited Guatemala (with stops at five of our featured programs) and India where they visited with three programs including a visit to the artisans of Anchal (photo above).

Our next trip - to Vietnam and Cambodia from Feb 16 through March 1 - is nearly booked. If you are interested, there may be a spot, but you need to act quickly.

Learn more and apply >
"I am grateful for this opportunity to be able to achieve a college degree. I can now come back to my village to help my own people. My parents are so proud of me. I am the first student from Sobmuay to receive a bachelor degree. It is the highest honor. When I was a student in high school, I could only dream of going to college. My parents are poor. I live in a very remote place. How could it be possible? Now, I am a healthcare officer and I am doing so much to help my community."

Renu - Former health education scholar

Smiles on Wings is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of underserved communities in Thailand by delivering dental care and humanitarian aid, and providing education and training for the poorest rural communities in Thailand. There are as many as 280,000 Karen tribal people living in poor, rural, remote areas of northern Thailand.

Karen girls have little or no opportunity to go to school beyond fourth grade - the highest grade offered in local village schools. To go to middle school, the girls must leave home to attend a free government-provided boarding school in a larger village, often a hardship for families.

Dining for Women’s $36,867 will provide scholarships and job opportunities to five young Karen women to study nursing or early childhood education. Upon graduation they will return to their villages to provide essential healthcare and education services, assume leadership roles, and serve as role models to other girls and young women.

Donate to this program
Learn more about Smiles on Wings

Three things
(you need to know about Smiles on Wings)

Dr. Usa Bunnag, was born in a poor Thai village. She emigrated to the US at the age of 14 and, with the help of mentors and role models, she became a successful dentist. In 2003, she returned to her homeland and started Smiles on Wings to provide services to Karen village people.

But through mission trips, she learned how much could be accomplished by providing leadership and support to young girls. This inspired her to expand Smiles on Wings.

Role models a tool to fight gender inequality

No country in the world has achieved gender equality. Although some are much closer. The US, for example, is 23rd in the world with a 26 percent gender gap; while Iceland (#1) has a 13 percent gap.

Significant evidence exists to show that having role models makes a huge difference in informing the aspirations of women around the world. If you can see it, you can be it.

One of Smiles on Wings’ goals is to have women return to their villages to teach and to heal and provide a role model for the next generation of girls.

Rice is food and food is rice

In Thai, the word for rice is the same as the word for food. At a Thai table, guests should leave a small bit of food on the plate to indicate they are done eating. Cleaning your plate is a sign that you are not full. But don’t leave any rice; that’s considered wasteful.

More on Thai cooking

December 2013 Sustained Program: Lotus Outreach

This is the second year of a three-year grant. DFW will contribute $15,000 again this year to support Lotus Outreach.

Jennet Sambour, a member of the program selection team, presented DFW’s $50,000 grant check to One-Heart earlier this month. On hand for the presentation were CEO and founder, Arlene Samen (far right) and Emma Baumann, office assistant, Marilio Gabuardi, program administrator, and Jenny Holt, administrative manager.

Board of Directors

Barb Collins Chair and co-founder
Susan Stall Treasurer
Marsha Wallace Founder

Kirsten Bunch
Anne Capestrain
Barbara Wagner
contribute $15,000 again this year to support Lotus Outreach’s program that provides trauma counseling and reintegration assistance to victims of human trafficking, rape and domestic violence residing at a safe-shelter in the border region of Banteay Meanchey, Cambodia—a known hotspot for trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence.

"Lotus Outreach rejects the Cambodian assumption that women are inherently less valuable than men . . . improving the circumstances of one woman provides an exponential return for her family, her community and her nation."

-Lotus Outreach International

Find out more about Lotus Outreach

About December's dish...

This month's dish photo is g-nut and sim-sim sauce - a dish from Uganda featured with our recipes from ASSET in November. It was prepared by Judy Bacon of Boise, Idaho for their November meeting.

"I saw this dish on the DFW website (Current Programs, November, Recipes) and realized that, miraculously, I had all the ingredients in my own kitchen," says Judy. "If I were to make it again I might try to serve the sauce separately from the yams, but it worked quite well with everything piled together in a crock pot."

Thank you, Judy for the submission.

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!

Endnote

With the holidays upon us and a couple of birthdays to celebrate, your Dining for Women headquarters staff got together in the office for a little celebration of our own.

From all of us, we hope you had many blessings to count and a terrific Thanksgiving!

The headquarters staff
L-R: Jenica Jenkins, Gina League, Harriet Ligon, Jamye Cooper, Anita Davis, Laura Haight and Maggie Aziz