Reaffirming our mission for a bold New Year

By BARB COLLINS
DFW Board Chair

A vivid reminder of the value of our mission occurred during a conversation with the chief financial officer of our April featured program CREATE!. By chance, we spoke the day after the Dining for Women funding arrived. Opening the envelope brought tears to her eyes because she knew the gift came from many, many individuals. She likened it to little pieces from thousands of individuals, giving what they could.

We have come a long way from our humble beginnings with one chapter meeting at the home of founder, Marsha Wallace. At that time, we did not realize that we were in the forefront of many imminent changes. Giving circles have become a model for engaged philanthropy. Investing in women is known to produce sustainable results in reducing poverty and improving quality of life. Heroic women and men are championing a worldwide movement for gender equality with young Malala Youafzai leading the way.

The DFW model of education and engaged giving resonated with people, leading us to where we are today. Eight thousand members and four hundred chapters sharing a meal, pooling our donations, and leveraging our ability to impact the lives of women and girls.

The energy throughout our 10th anniversary conference was electric. It became clear that the organization is rising in influence; and that it is time to let it soar. With so much positive change, the Board of Directors initiated a reaffirmation of our mission, vision, and cultural values, aligning them with organizational evolution. While the language was modified, the intent remains the same as when we first developed these statements.

With a fresh new year, we celebrate our collective endeavors to provide the tools necessary for changing the lives of women and girls. We focus on a unified spirit. We dream boldly in our vision for the future.

Our Mission, Vision and Culture statements

Your generosity made 13th Month our most successful yet

This year’s 13th month campaign has been remarkably successful and we know why: It is because of your commitment, passion and generosity. Many members made more than one donation and also contributed to the Board’s $18,000 Challenge.

The campaign continued through the end of the year so final numbers aren’t available yet, but we have had at least 74 percent chapter participation and have raised more than $121,000.

Thank you so much for helping us make this the most successful campaign to date and for showing your support for Dining for Women.

2014 Leadership Changes

On the menu

13th Month thank you
2014 Leadership Changes
Featured program: Catalyst Foundation
Three things you need to know about Catalyst Foundation
Sustained Program: BOMA Project
Make sure your donations count in 2013
Hangout each month with our feature program
DFW members come together in an unexpected way
What “unsubscribe” and “spam” means
One last chance to join trip to Vietnam-Cambodia

2014 Leadership Changes

Changes in leadership offer both great opportunities and new beginnings, tinged with sadness. We are excited to see what new leaders will do, but sad to see those who have retired.

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Last call! A recent cancellation has opened a spot for one more woman to join the DFW trip to Cambodia and Vietnam from Feb 16-28, 2014.

We will spend time with Children of Vietnam, to which DFW has awarded two different grants, and meet single mothers who received funds to create a path out of poverty. In small groups, we’ll visit these courageous and resilient women in their homes and newly-established businesses. In Hanoi, we’ll spend time with girls residing in a foster home and in Cambodia, we’ll learn about the scourge of sex-trafficking and meet staff from Lotus Outreach who are making a difference.

Along the way, we’ll see some of the world’s wonders: Angkor Wat and the magnificent temple of Banteay Srei, the “Citadel of Women” dedicated to Shiva. Southeast Asia’s largest freshwater lake and people who live in a floating village. The 1,000 year-old capital of Hanoi with its French
On Dec. 31, Board Member Kirsten Bunch and Regional Leaders, Jeannette Artini and Eileen Brill Wagner will be stepping down from their roles.

**Featured Program: Catalyst Foundation**

The Catalyst Foundation is an humanitarian organization that aims to prevent the trafficking of women and girls in Vietnam. Centered on a holistic approach, Catalyst provides community programs which address basic needs, vocational training, counseling and education to the Raglai ethnic minority located in the poor and rural province of Ninh Thuan.

Catalyst’s Holistic Community Development Program is a four-faceted program that includes a Community Education Center which provides basic education to address the root cause of trafficking: extreme poverty. The program also includes a Vocational Training Program to help teen and adult women develop financial self-reliance. The “Project Backpack” program aims to enable children between the ages of 5 and 18 to attend school. The Community Medical Clinic offers healthcare services and educates the community on good nutrition, access to safe water, preventing illness, maintaining proper hygiene, and maternity care.

DFW’s grant of $36,000 will provide K-5th grade education for children in the community (Project Backpack), coordinate vocational training for women, provide community education classes to combat trafficking, and staff and supply the Community Medical Clinic. The number of women/girls that will be directly impacted by the program is 165 girls and 176 mothers. 477 total family members will be indirectly impacted by the program.

**Three things (you need to know about Catalyst Foundation)**

1. **The most popular targets of traffickers**
   - Girls between 5 and 18, single mothers and girls cared for by grandparents are at the highest risk to become targets of human trafficking. The Raglai community that the program serves is matriarchal, it is small and one of Vietnam’s oldest ethnic minorities. The Raglai are discriminated against and often refused housing, education and even identity papers.

2. **Sampling the cuisine may mean taking a walk**
   - Because Vietnamese food is somewhat complicated to make and takes a long time to prepare, many Vietnamese frequent street food stalls or small restaurants where the entrepreneur may only prepare one dish and sell it very cheaply. It is almost a guarantee that a street vendor who is surrounded by a swarm of people sitting on little stools on the sidewalk will make a living from selling food. This also means that it is easy for children to be trafficked.

3. **A four-pronged attack on trafficking**
   - Catalyst Foundation believes that fighting human trafficking must be a multi-faceted effort. Its program addresses four main areas:
     - Education for children between the ages of 5 and 18.
     - Community education and access to social services for women.
     - Vocational Education so
They live in abject poverty so the $150 they may be offered to sell a child seems like a fortune.

The Raglai speak their own indigenous language which makes it even easier for traffickers to take advantage of them.

The street has worked long and hard to perfect one or two dishes.

PS: If you are dining in someone’s home, leave a bit of food on your plate. Your hosts will feel they have been generous and provided you with enough to eat. This lovely Craftsman-style home in Portland was an unexpected link for two Dining for Women members in the same chapter.

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January 2014 Sustained Program: BOMA Project

BOMA is using its sustained funding of $15,000 a year for three years to launch 36 Rural Entrepreneur Access Project (REAP) micro-enterprises per year, or a total of 108 new businesses. Each new business provides a diversified income for three women, and our data shows that each woman cares for an average of five children.

The total three-year impact of the Dining for Women grant: 324 women entrepreneurs who will use the income to support an estimated 1,620 children. Many of these micro-enterprises will be launched near Archer’s Post in the Samburu District of Northern Kenya, a new region of expansion for BOMA.

About January’s dish...

This month’s dish photo is Crying Tiger Salad - a Thai dish prepared by Kelley Meister, a member of the North Capitol Hill (Seattle, WA, area) chapter. She made it for the December meeting when the featured program was Smiles on Wings - a program in Thailand.

Linda McElroy, chapter leader, submitted the dish pix. It’s sliced flank steak with a fish sauce vinaigrette and Thai herbs and vegetables. “It is remarkable in that she (Kelley) usually brings the wine since she has very little time to cook. So this is her first contribution in terms of a “dish”. I’d say she hit it out of the park.”

So do we. Thank you, Linda and Kelley.

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

Tradition dictates that each New Year we embark on some sort of self-improvement plan. Be a better friend. Get skinnier. Eat healthier. Go on a spending diet. The list goes on. Does this mean that the previous year just didn’t measure up? What if we choose to embrace what is already in motion? Does that break with tradition or violate some rule? I don’t think so.

Dining for Women is in motion. I think about the excitement of this past year - our 10th anniversary celebration and conference, the recognition of our work by Hillary Rodham Clinton, the presence of our organization in Times Square on a jumbo screen, and more.

But the biggest joy for me is providing $694,825 for 21 programs that improved the lives of 40,000 women and girls in 14 countries. In one year, working together, we have changed lives - not just for a day or a month - but for the long-term.

Yes, there are things we can all re-evaluate and improve upon in the new year. But I am energized to embrace what is definitely in motion: to find new ways to talk about DFW, to get more people involved, to work with you to do even more in 2014.

Dining for Women is in motion. Forward motion. Join us on the ride - and bring a friend.

Jamye Cooper
Executive Director

Our Vision
We envision a world where millions of people’s lives have been transformed and restored.

Our Mission
Through collective giving, Dining for Women inspires, educates, and empowers people to invest.

Our Culture
In all we do, we model our deep belief in collaboration, education, inspiration, and
lives have been transformed and extreme poverty has been reduced because Dining for Women connected people in creative powerful ways that assure gender equality.

inspires, educates, and engages people to invest in programs that make a meaningful difference for women and girls living in extreme poverty.

collaboration, education, inspiration, and transformation.