

# A

## ASPIRE

FALL 2017



### *Determined*

“ I like challenges and going through the CNC training was definitely one of the most challenging things I’ve had to go through in my life. ”

**STACY**

WRC PARTICIPANT



# Hello

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Dear WRC friends and partners,

As I close in on nine months in my work at Women's Resource Center, I am both thrilled and humbled to be part of this amazing organization. With your support, an engaged Board of Directors, and a passionate team, we are empowering the lives of many hardworking women in our community.

As we look towards 2018 – our 45<sup>th</sup> year of helping women – we are more committed than ever to addressing issues faced by women in the workforce. This is what drives our programming and inspires our mission.

Recognizing that women thrive in a supportive and empowering environment, our services are designed and delivered in a holistic manner, tailored to meet the unique needs of each woman.

At Women's Resource Center, we encourage, inspire, and equip women from all walks of life to reach higher and go further in their employment aspirations. In this newsletter, you will learn more about New Beginnings, our program with Kent County Corrections that provides mentoring services to women pre-release and up to 18 months post-release.

We could not accomplish this good work without you! It is only with the ongoing support of volunteers and community partners that Women's Resource Center can offer services that help local women and their families achieve better tomorrows.

Thank you for your partnership!

Warmest regards,



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Gaddy'.

Sandra Gaddy  
Women's Resource Center CEO



# DETERMINED TO CHANGE *Stacy*

*S*tacy sits on a chair, legs crossed and back straight, sipping coffee while wearing a professional blue blazer. “I am not a failure,” she says, and despite her agreeable nature, there is a firm determination behind those words. “I’m not going to regress to where I was a few months ago.”

Stacy began the new year in the Kent County Jail. While she was there, Stacy took part in New Beginnings, a job readiness program for women at the facility. Stacy was partnered with a mentor to help her with job training skills and retention, during and after her release from jail. She also attended classes taught by Women’s Resource Center to improve job readiness, so she could be ready to approach the job market upon release.

As her release date got closer, Stacy jumped at the opportunity to enroll in our new Training to Work Program, an 18-week job training with Grand Rapids Community College. Training would set Stacy on a new career path, with significantly higher earning potential than the average entry level job seeker.

Stacy enrolled in the Machinist/CNC Technician Course and maintained her relationship with her mentor. Now she can set up and operate manual and computer controlled metal machining equipment as a CNC

operator—a high-demand job in West Michigan with starting pay at \$12-\$18 per hour.

“I started the program within 30 days of getting out of jail,” Stacy shares. “That’s how excited and eager I was to start it. It’s been a blessing for me.” Julie Harper-Shears, her Career Coach states, “Stacy knew by finishing this course she would be equipped both with skills and livable finances. Even through adversity – losing housing and being food insecure – Stacy continued to go to school.”

“I like challenges and going through the CNC training was definitely one of the most challenging things I’ve had to go through in my life,” Stacy continues.

You can tell just by looking in Stacy’s eyes that she is not backing down. She knows where she is headed and now she is equipped to get there. With her Machinist/CNC certificate, a solid résumé, interviewing skills, and the backing of her mentor and Career Coach, Stacy is ready to face the future.

The mentoring and job training from the Women’s Resource Center has reignited Stacy’s passion to work hard and move on from her past. On top of her incarceration, she was battling addictions and an eating disorder. Ladies from the Women’s Resource Center who had struggled with those very same issues came alongside Stacy to encourage,

## Stacy's Story

challenge, and support her.

“I’m disappointed that I spent 30 years of my life trying to figure it out. But this last year has been just amazing for me,” Stacy says. She is thankful for the women who walked her through the training and also gave her a support network of people who truly cared.

Today, Stacy is hopeful and confident. She has goals for her future and a community of people to help her get there.

“I would really like to further my education,” she says excitedly. “I have a certificate in AutoCAD and I’ve been in and out of the tool and die trade for a long time.” She is seeking a full-time position in this field, ready to put her training to good use.

“I’m very thankful that I got this opportunity through Women’s Resource Center. It’s been amazing,” she says.

We are so grateful for partners like you who make this possible! Thank you for helping Stacy and others like her achieve their full potential through meaningful work and personal growth.

# New Beginnings

At Women’s Resource Center, we strive to help women become self-sufficient and financially secure so they can break the cycle of poverty for their families.

New Beginnings is a program doing just that.

New Beginnings provides workforce and life development services, mentoring, and wraparound support to incarcerated women at-risk for recidivism. We are seeing a remarkable impact by working with women in jail and continuing with them up to 18 months after their release.

- 85 women have been served in 2017
- 60% of women secure employment
- 75% continue New Beginnings after their release

**Thanks to you, New Beginnings is making it possible for women to gain the skills, confidence, and support to achieve success and stability for themselves and their families.**



Stacy leaves WRC, surprised with a gift and balloons to celebrate her completion of the program.



# WINE, WOMEN & CHOCOLATE

More than 300 friends gathered in early October to support Women's Resource Center's 11<sup>th</sup> annual Wine, Women and Chocolate event.

The ballroom of Cascade Hills Country Club was full of excitement, laughter, and friends. Guests enjoyed the various vendors sampling wine and chocolate while placing bids in the silent auction.

Many guests were touched by the heartfelt testimonials of Michelle and Stacy. They shared their personal journeys of overcoming many difficult obstacles and the impact our programs, volunteer mentors, and coaching team have made in their lives.

With the support of our guests and sponsors, Women's Resource Center raised over \$55,000. **Thank you for supporting our education and employment services to help women thrive!**

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Furniture City Creamery | Jaden James Brewery

Lemon Creek Winery | Painted Turtle Hard Cider

Patricia's Chocolate | The Crushed Grape Merchants

*Upcoming Events*



## SAVE THE DATE

**Annual Pillar Award Luncheon JW Marriott  
Thursday, March 15, 2018**

Join us as we celebrate 45 years serving the workplace and economic needs of women in West Michigan



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

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## Meet Michelle

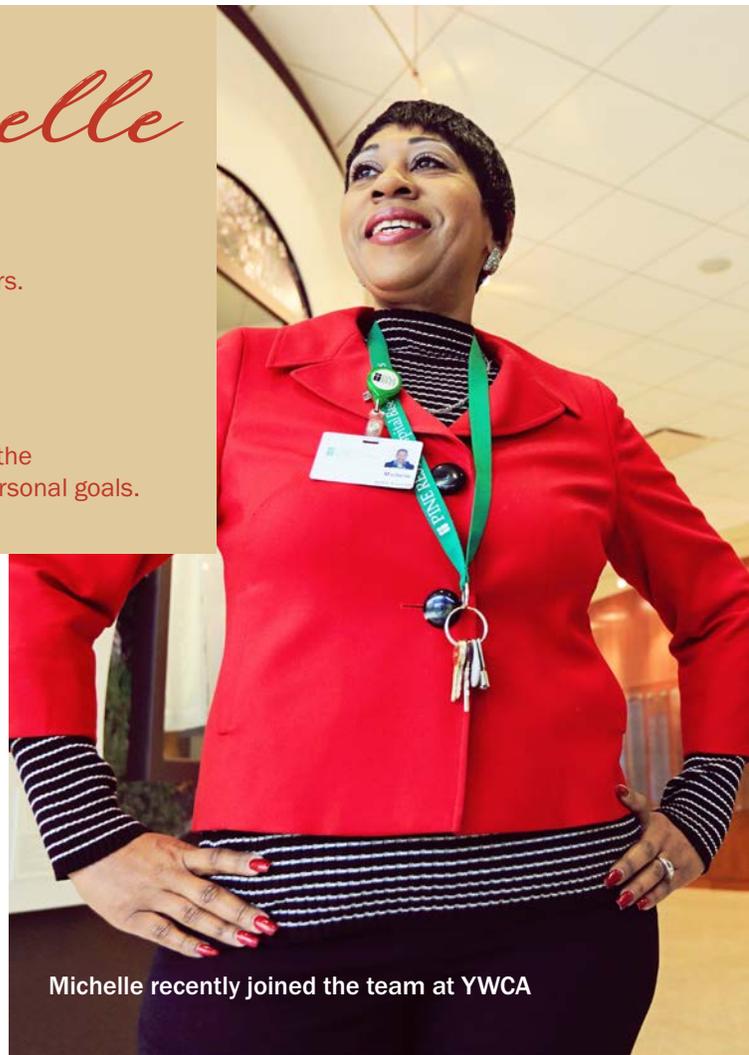
Michelle had a job she didn't enjoy and it wasn't covering the bills. So she came to Women's Resource Center.

- A Career Coach helped create a plan to overcome barriers.
- Workshops improved her job-seeking skills.
- Volunteers helped with her résumé and interviewing.
- The clothing closet allowed her to dress to impress.

With your support, Women's Resource Center gave Michelle the support she needed to achieve both her professional and personal goals.

## Help Empower Women

Will you donate to Women's Resource Center to empower more local women to change things for the better – for their families, their communities, and their world? Visit [grwrc.org](http://grwrc.org) to learn how to donate.



Michelle recently joined the team at YWCA