



TRANSFORMED

Women's Empowerment Initiative

A Ministry of the Presbytery of Philadelphia

"Seek the [shalom] of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its [peace] you will find your [peace]." – Jeremiah 29:7

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Presbytery of Philadelphia Unveils Plans for Major Women's Initiative

Many of you have heard by now of an exciting and promising initiative unfolding in our midst: The Presbytery of Philadelphia Women's Empowerment Initiative ("WEI"). This initiative offers a chance to creatively and positively engage and impact less advantaged communities within the bounds of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. The WEI is envisioned as a vehicle to empower women in disadvantaged circumstances to overcome systemic obstacles and to realize self-sufficiency and fullness through acknowledgment and utilization of dormant, yet, innate, God-given strengths.

The Women's Empowerment Initiative will offer congregations in the presbytery a meaningful outreach ministry, allowing them to creatively partner in advancing the cause of healing and wholeness for women and their children

"We Christians and especially Presbyterians are very good at providing ministries of compassion. In the future, we need to provide ministries of empowerment, thus putting ministries of compassion out of business."

Ed Gehres, Executive Presbyter
Presbytery of Philadelphia

and, ultimately, their entire families and communities. Through partnering in the Initiative, congregations and other faith-based community organizations will have a viable ministry initiative to reengage their respective communities. Congregations will be encouraged to work collaboratively, channeling their various gifts and resources to ensure a successful operational base.

Groundbreaking Initiative to Be Housed At Former Reeve Memorial



The Presbytery of Philadelphia has designated the Reeve Memorial building to be used as administrative office of its Women's Empowerment Initiative. Presbytery also agreed to cover utilities in support of the Initiative for a 2-year period.

"We must learn to think together in an integrated, synergistic fashion, rather than in fragmented and competitive ways..."

Joanna Macy

"Together, we can create a community where all are treated with dignity, regardless of their sex or skin color or orientation, regardless of whether their family came here on a slave ship or the Mayflower four hundred years ago or through Ellis Island at the turn of the century or from Central America last year."

Linda Chavez-Thompson

Significant Support Acquired For New Initiative

The Presbytery of Philadelphia has garnered much interest and support for the Women's Empowerment Initiative, scheduled to begin operations January 2007. The Synod of the Trinity has demonstrated its support of the Initiative through a \$25,000 start-up grant and commitment of a \$500,000 capitalization loan. State and private funding and technical assistance have also been secured.

YOU, TOO, CAN HELP!

We welcome your contributions — monetary and in-kind donations as well as donations of time. Tax-deductible monetary donations may be sent the presbytery office designated "Women's Empowerment." Call to learn about in-kind needs and volunteer opportunities.

Women's Empowerment Initiative Goal: Self-Sufficiency

The idea of a "women's centers" is not new. The presbytery's initiative, though, is a unique venture because of key revenue generators. Three core components are designed to be self-sustaining, revenue generating entities: the portable medical benefits, temporary employment, and home ownership initiatives will be marketed to the general public in Philadelphia in addition to being available for utilization by those women directly associated with the Initiative. These components, with proper incubation, will generate sufficient revenue to supplement and defray the cost of other vital support services offered by the Initiative. The result: less dependence on "outside" funding.

"There is a story of heaven and hell. In both, everyone's arms are too long and stiff to feed themselves. In hell they're starving because they can't feed themselves. In heaven, they feed each other."

Anonymous

Mission Statement

The Women's Empowerment Initiative is dedicated to impacting the lives of women disadvantaged by social or economic circumstances. The Initiative will enable women to enhance and develop their quality of life and become architects of their future by presenting opportunities for spiritual, educational, and economic transformation. The Initiative is committed to empowering women, thereby strengthening families and transforming communities.



Board Brings Notable Accomplishments and Commitment

An impressive array of community, regional, and national leaders have been confirmed as board members of the Women's Empowerment Initiative. We will introduce them in the next issue of TRANSFORMED. The "official" transition from the Design Team, chaired by Rev. Barbara Ndovie, will take place at the inaugural board meeting of the Women's Empowerment Initiative on July 12th. Associate Exec Bill Reinhold serves as primary presbytery staff representative for the initiative.