

# Presbytery of Philadelphia Women's Empowerment Initiative

Volume 2, Issue 1

September 2007

## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



It has been a while since we published the Women's Empowerment Initiative (WEI) newsletter. But please know that the board, along with many supporters, have continued to labor on behalf of this worthy cause.

Much of our time has been spent in face-to-face sharing sessions — spreading the good news of the WEI, garnering support - both financial and physical; and solidifying

the infrastructure. This has involved not only planning and scheduling the initial round of workshops. Our major components - creation of an Alternative Staffing Agency and creation of a funding vehicle to assist with mortgage and homeownership funding - require extensive research and professional expertise. The business plans for both are being completed. Meanwhile, we are also scheduling a Sponsorship Event for potential major funders.



Brigette Sancho

On behalf of the WEI Board of Directors, I must express special gratitude for the tireless work of the consultants who have leveraged their marketing, promotions, networking, public relations savvy for the WEI cause. They are Brigette Sancho, President of **3DS Consultants**; and Stacy Straughter and Stanley Straughter of **Oaklane Consulting Group**.

We continue to thank God for your encouragement. Join us in spreading the word. Share this newsletter. Share your support. And, continue to pray for the WEI and the women with whom we partner.

*Wanda Tanner-McNeill*

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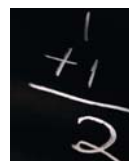
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## Did you know . . . ?

- ⇒ 2,830,694 children live in Pennsylvania.
- ⇒ A child in Pennsylvania is born into poverty every 23 minutes.
- ⇒ A child in Pennsylvania is abused or neglected every 2 hours.
- ⇒ A child in Pennsylvania dies before his or her first birthday every 8 hours.
- ⇒ A child or teen in Pennsylvania is killed by gunfire every 3 days.
- ⇒ Percent of fourth graders reading below grade level 67%
- ⇒ Percent of fourth graders below grade level in math 64%
- ⇒ Average class size in public elementary schools 22.2
- ⇒ Average class size in public secondary schools 23.2



\*Source: Children's Defense Fund ([www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org))  
The Dodd-Miller comprehensive **Act to Leave No Child Behind** (S. 448/H.R. 936) will help provide all children a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities in Pennsylvania, please visit [www.cdfactioncouncil.org](http://www.cdfactioncouncil.org).

## Upcoming Events

**WEI ANNOUNCES FALL SCHEDULE OF FREE FINANCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND FITNESS WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN.**

In an effort to help local women achieve the American dream of homeownership, the WEI will host a Financial Literacy and Home Ownership Workshop on Saturday, September 15th from 9 a.m. - Noon at The Partnership CDC.

Future workshops, scheduled through November, include GED prep courses, health and fitness, and stress management and parenting.



See the full listing of workshops on the back page of this newsletter.

# Presbytery of Philadelphia Empowerment Initiative

## Women's Empowerment Initiative Reception at Oxford

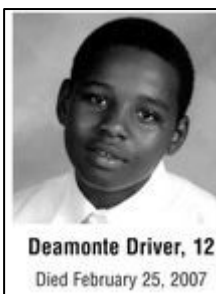


An opening reception introducing the Women's Empowerment Initiative (WEI) to the Mt. Airy/Germantown Community was held at Oxford Presbyterian Church on July 24. Oxford will be a satellite site for the initiative. A proclamation was given to Oxford by Senator Leanna Washington, one of our financial supporters.

The reception offered a time for many women (and men) to network and learn more about WEI. Philadelphia Presbytery Moderator Warren McNeill, addressed the group along with Rev URLA Eversley, Board VP and Wanda Tanner-McNeill, Board President. A presentation followed by Q&A period proved quite beneficial. Feedback and interests expressed by some of the attendees helped in choosing subject matter for upcoming workshops (see page 4).

## Advocacy in Action: All Children Deserve Health Coverage

**Deamonte Driver, died at the age of 12, Prince George's County, Maryland:** because he couldn't find a dentist who would accept Medicaid and his mother couldn't afford an \$80 tooth extraction. Alyce took Deamonte to a hospital emergency room where he was given medicine for a headache, sinusitis and dental abscess and then sent home, only to return and learn that the bacteria from his abscessed tooth had spread to his brain. The outrage is that his life could have been saved by far less costly health insurance to cover routine dental visits and an inexpensive extraction.



**According to the Children's Defense Fund, over nine million children in the U.S. are living (and dying) without health insurance.** In the last week of July, the House passed legislation that could extend health coverage to an additional 4.2 million children while the Senate version could extend coverage to 3.2 million additional children. These two different pieces of legislation now need to be reconciled before going to the floor of both the House and the Senate for one final vote. The Children's Defense Fund and the Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) encourage interested citizens to engage in the advocacy process, including conducting email and letter writing campaigns as well as instructions on identifying and contacting your elected officials. Visit these websites for advocacy tools: <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/home>; and, [http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?agename=healthy\\_child\\_takeaction](http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?agename=healthy_child_takeaction)

## Voices: African American and Latina Women Share Their Stories of Success

The Pennsylvania Commission for Women has reprinted their role model book, **Voices: African American and Latina Women Share Their Stories of Success**, which is available in bookstores across the commonwealth, as well as from Internet book retailers. The book profiles 50 Pennsylvania women who have reached the top in the fields of law, medicine, communications, business, technology, the arts, education and government.

Due to the critical need for visible role models for young girls, especially in the African-American and Latino communities, the role model book provides young girls with stories of people of similar backgrounds to encourage readers to become successful, productive women. Studies have shown that gender- and racially-matched role models promote educational and professional achievement, a decrease in drug or alcohol use and a decline in physically violent behavior.

The PA Commission for Women has donated a copy of **Voices** to every county and public school library throughout Pennsylvania serving students in grades six through nine. **Voices** can be purchased through many local bookstores.

**The only way to make sure people you agree with can speak is to support the rights of people you don't agree with.**

**- Eleanor Holmes Norton**

## Body Image, Weight, and Size

The following is an exclusive excerpt from the "Body Image" chapter of *Our Bodies, Ourselves for the New Century*. For complete information and resources, we recommend that you consult the chapter and the book in its entirety.



In many cultures and historical periods women have been proud to be large--being fat was a sign of fertility, of prosperity, of the ability to survive. However, the weight loss, medical, and advertising industries have an enormous impact on women across racial and ethnic boundaries. These industries all insist that white and thin is beautiful and that fatness is always a dangerous problem in need of correction. The popular notion that some communities are less influenced than others has meant that women of color in particular have a hard time being taken seriously when they have eating disorders. A black woman suffering from an eating disorder says: *After all, don't black people prize wide hips and fleshy bodies? Isn't obesity so prevalent in our communities because it is actually accepted? Don't black women have very positive body images?...Anorexia and its kin supposedly strike only adolescent, middle- and upper-middle-class white girls...Women like me are winging it, seeking out other sisters with the same concerns, wondering if we are alone on this journey.*

Low-calorie dieting has become a national obsession. Many of us are convinced that making women afraid to be fat is a form of social control. Fear of fat keeps women preoccupied, robs us of our pride and energy, keeps us from taking up space. I don't like myself heavy, I want to feel thin, streamlined and spare, and not like a toad. I have taken antifat thinking into myself so



**About Giving Circles . . .**

- ⇒ What is a Giving Circle: A giving circle is a type of pooled fund where members make grants together; sometimes called a “social investment club.” Giving circles are very flexible and allow members to express their creativity.
- ⇒ The number of giving circles in the United States has doubled in only two years, according to Daria Teutonico, director of the New Ventures in Philanthropy initiative, which recognizes 400 giving circles today.
- ⇒ “The African American Women’s Giving Circle has taught me that giving generously is the most empowering act of all.”  
- Claudia Thorne
- ⇒ “The appeal of giving circles is that anyone can start one or join one, and you don’t have to be wealthy. All you need is the desire to give and a passion to make the world a better place.”  
- Daria Teutonico

**Women Helping Women: The Power of Giving Circles!**

Have you ever thought: “If I were able to, I would donate lots of money to XXX cause. But, I just don’t have that much to give right now.” Women’s Giving Circles might be just the answer.

As members of giving circles, women are finding that by meeting together socially and pooling any amount of money, even loose change, they can make a difference in their communities and beyond.

Although some giving circles involve a mix of men and women, most only include women.

“The best part about the giving circle is that it brings a diverse group of women together around substantive issues – becoming more knowledgeable about finances and supporting other women,” said Ana Gloria Rivas-Vázquez, vice president of Hispanics in Philanthropy and co-founder of Smart Women with Spare Change, a women’s giving circle in Key Biscayne, Florida, that collects coins, bills (and now checks)

in a jar at the beginning of monthly get-togethers.

Claudia Thorne of the African American Women’s Giving Circle says: “The circle has encouraged me to do more. We didn’t start by just handing out money. Over many months, the two dozen of us met to plan our giving for 2006. We gathered in homes, in offices or sometimes at a restaurant one of us owned, not unlike a book group or an investment club. It was important for us to come together as a group and to hear the ideas of each woman. We worked by consensus and were concerned about the relationships we built with one another.

“We were committed to connecting with black women and girls in our community struggling to make it. You cannot turn your heads from the need, we tell ourselves. As black women, we are so linked emotionally.

We decided to focus on non-profit organizations working to effect change in one community and stay in the work

for the long haul. We interviewed representatives of nonprofits to find the right fit. We’ll do the same thing again this year.

In the end, last year we decided to give most our money to Facilitating Leadership in Youth, supporting their new mentoring program for girls, helping them build positive relationships with adults. Many of the girls are being raised by single mothers. Helping moms and kids is precious to me, as I am a single parent myself.”

—————  
*To learn more about Giving Circles, visit the Giving Circle Knowledge Center online at: [www.givingforum.org/](http://www.givingforum.org/)*



*(Continued from page 2)*

deeply that I hate myself when I am even ten pounds "overweight," whatever that means. We can be more relaxed about our weight

- By experimenting with what weight feels comfortable to us rather than trying primarily to be thin.
- By being more accepting of weight variations through the life cycle.
- By developing a clearer understanding of which health problems are truly associated with weight.
- By exercising and eating nutritious food to feel healthy, and letting our body weight set itself accordingly.

"We need a widespread rebellion of women who are tired of worrying about their weight, who understand that weight is not a matter of health or discipline but a weapon our culture uses against us to keep us in our place and feeling small. We need to quietly say no to ridiculous weight standards, reassuring ourselves that we're good and worthwhile human beings even if we aren't a size 6, and further, to protest those standards more demonstrably, on behalf of others as well. Both decisions require a change in attitude which, while not necessarily impolite, is rather less tolerant of the everyday demeaning comments about body size that women now accept as their due. In other words, we need to begin to throw our weight around."





# Women's Empowerment Initiative (WEI) Workshop Series

## Financial Literacy & Homeownership Workshop

**Time:** 9-12 Noon

**Facilitator:** Shawn McGeth, Partnership CDC

**Cost:** Free

**September 15, 2007**

**Location:** The Partnership CDC  
4020 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA



**October 20, 2007**

**Location:** Oxford Presby. Church  
8501 Stenton Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19150

**November 10, 2007**

**Location:** Holy Trinity Bethlehem Presby. Church  
1100 W Rockland St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19141

## Health and Fitness Workshop

**Time:** 10-12:00 noon

**Facilitator:** King One Fitness Coach

**Cost:** Free

**September 22, 2007**

**October 13, 2007**

**November 3, 2007**



**Location:** WEI Center  
4950 Aspen Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19139

## Personal Finance & Investing

**Time:** 9-11:00 am

**Facilitator:** Davor Obradovic

**Cost:** Free

**September 29, 2007**

**Location:** WEI Center  
4950 Aspen Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19139



## GED Preparation Course

**Time:** 10-12 Noon

**Facilitator:** Avery Davis, T.H.I.N.K.

**Cost:** \$60 Total (Cost of the Test)

**September 22, 2007**

**September 29, 2007**

**October 13, 2007**

**October 27, 2007**

**November 3, 2007**

**November 17, 2007**



**Location:** WEI Center  
4950 Aspen Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19139

## Women's Empowerment 101

**Time:** 9-12 Noon

**Facilitator:** Diana Hicks, DLH Inc

**Cost:** Free

**October 20, 2007**

**Location:** Oxford Presby. Church  
8501 Stenton Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19150

**November 10, 2007**

**Location:** Holy Trinity Bethlehem Presby. Church  
1100 W Rockland St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19141

## Stress Management/Parenting Workshop

**Time:** 9-12 Noon

**Facilitator:** Chrisandra Parker & Diana Hicks, DLH Inc.

**Cost:** Free



**October 27, 2007**

**Location:** Calvin Presbyterian Church  
1401 N. 60<sup>th</sup> Street - Philadelphia, PA 19151

### What is Empowerment?

*"Empowerment is a multi-dimensional process that helps people gain control over their own lives."*

**SIGN-UP TODAY FOR THESE EXCITING WORKSHOPS!**

**RSVP Required:** 267-455-0797 or email: [BrigetteSancho@hotmail.com](mailto:BrigetteSancho@hotmail.com)