

Philadelphia Women's Empowerment Initiative

A MINISTRY OF THE PRESBYTERY OF PHILADELPHIA

WANDA TANNER-MCNEILL, BOARD PRESIDENT

Website: www.weiphila.org ~ Email: wei_pa@verizon.net ~ Phone: 215-878-4862

A WORD FROM THE WEI PRESIDENT

Greetings My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,



It has been a while since the Women's Empowerment Initiative (WEI) has brought the Newsletter to you. I assure you, though, that we have been busy implementing components of the Initiative that I think you will find both encouraging and exciting. Most importantly, we have begun to have an impact in the community and with our intended constituency that is nothing short of phenomenal. In this issue of the WEI Newsletter, we will bring you up-to-date with some of the programs that have been rolled out and others that are ready for introduction.

A major focus of WEI is curbing the destructive behavior of violence and gang-involvement among our young people in Philadelphia. This will be an ongoing focus. Our belief is that young people are the most effective means of positively impacting their peers. For this reason, we collaborated with and engaged youth speakers, performers and workshop leaders in the September 20th "Shalom Peace Concert" and the November 15th "Peace in the Streets: Anti-Violence Summit." On November 20th we celebrated the graduation of eight individuals from the WEI-sponsored GED program. Eight additional women are nearing completion. Acting General Presbyter Albert DerMosesian took part in the ceremony as did Rev. Ethelyn Taylor. Board Member Lynette Brown Sow was the keynote speaker. Many of the women are now interested in pursuing further degree study at Community College of Philadelphia; WEI will assist in this effort. On November 22nd WEI sponsored a tremendously successful **Domestic Violence Seminar** facilitated by Brigitte Sancho. Anna Banks from our Newark area WEI was one of the presenters. Take a look at the Photo Gallery on the back cover to see highlights of these events.

On this cover page we note just a few of the **Upcoming Events**. Visit page 2 for announcement of **Financial Peace University** and facts regarding **Violence Among Youth**. We are proud to provide an update on the 2009 phased-rollout of the **WEI Staffing Agency** on page 3, with interesting and alarming statistics on employment that affirm the need for the WEI Staffing Services.

We appreciate funding from the General Assembly Justice & Compassion grant, the presbytery's Peacemaking Team, Philadelphia Chapter of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus and the many churches of the presbytery for generous donations and support for the ongoing ministry of the WEI.

Grace and Peace to You!

Wanda Tanner-McNeill, WEI Board President

November-December 2008



Inside this Issue:

ARE YOU READY FOR FINANCIAL PEACE?	2
IT'S A FACT: STATISTICS FROM CDC YOUTH VIOLENCE FACT SHEET	2
WEI STAFFING AGENCY READY FOR 2009 PHASED ROLLOUT	3
WEI PHOTO GALLERY	4

Upcoming Events!

- ◆ **January 9, 2009:**
Financial Peace University begins.
- ◆ **January 10, 2009:**
GED Program begins.
- ◆ **January 31, 2009:**
WEI Networking Event, 10 am-2pm at the Women's Empowerment Center (WEC)
- ◆ **March 2008 (Date TBA):**
Women's History Month
WEI Open House at WEC.
- ◆ **Watch for Dates:**
 - ◆ Wine Tasting Fund-raiser
 - ◆ Computer Basics
 - ◆ Using your Digital Camera
 - ◆ And . . .

*Have you driven by the Women's Empowerment Center at 4950 Aspen St. lately?
Take a look at our new sign. And, visit the WEI website: www.weiphila.org*

Philadelphia Women's Empowerment Initiative

ARE YOU READY FOR FINANCIAL PEACE? REVOLUTIONARY SERIES WILL DEBUT IN JANUARY

Debt is all around us. And it is in our church, too. More than 70 percent of Americans live paycheck to paycheck. Over 35 percent of Christian marriages end in divorce, and money problems are the number one cause. Financial Peace University has a long history of helping families successfully confront these problems head-on.

The program is a 13-week, biblically based accountability curriculum that teaches you to manage God's money and resources in a godly way. It empowers you to make the right financial decisions to achieve your financial goals, teaching you to eliminate debt, build wealth, and give like never before. On average, families reduce their debt by \$5,300 and save \$2,700 in just 91 days.

This course, sponsored by Women's Empowerment Initiative (WEI), will be offered to anyone interested. Classes begin January 9, 2009 at Oxford Presbyterian Church.

To learn more about Financial Peace University, visit the website : www.daveramsey.com/fpu/church and check the WEI website: www.weiphila.org.

"And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord."

- **LEVITICUS 27:30**

IMAGINE YOURSELF DEBT FREE

Dave Ramsey's

Financial Peace
UNIVERSITY

Financial Peace University is a 13-week, video-based small group study that teaches families how to beat debt, build wealth, and give like never before.



CLASS STARTS SOON!

Call For More Information

January 9, 2009
Location: Oxford Presby. Church

215-732-1842 x-329

daveramsey.com

It's A Fact . . .

[Source: Centers for Disease Control, Youth Violence Fact Sheet]

- ◆ Among 10 to 24 year olds, homicide is the leading cause of death for African Americans, the second leading cause of death for Hispanics, and the third leading cause of death for American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Asian/Pacific Islanders (CDC 2006).
- ◆ Of the 5,570 homicides reported in 2003 among 10 to 24 year olds, 86% were males and 14% were females (CDC 2005).
- ◆ Male students are more likely to be involved in a physical fight than female students (41% vs. 25%; CDC 2004).
- ◆ In a nationwide survey of high school students, about 6% reported not going to school on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to and from school (CDC 2004).
- ◆ In 2004, more than 750,000 young people ages 10 to 24 were treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained due to violence (CDC 2006).
- ◆ In addition to causing injury and death, youth violence affects communities by increasing the cost of health care, reducing productivity, decreasing property values, and disrupting social services (Mercy et al. 2002).

THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE PREPARES TO LAUNCH SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS, WORKER-FOCUSED STAFFING AGENCY IN EARLY 2009. . . JOINS NATIOAL ALTERNATIVE STAFFING ALLIANCE.



Alternative Staffing Alliance Values

As Alternative Staffing Organizations, we:

- ⇒ View employment as the primary path out of poverty to economic self-sufficiency.
- ⇒ Reach out to disenfranchised people in our communities to help them access the mainstream job market.
- ⇒ Serve three customers —
 - * workers, to help them succeed in the workplace;
 - * business subscribers, to supply them with qualified, motivated workers; and,
 - * community-based and public sector organizations, to produce positive outcomes for their target populations.
- ⇒ Hold high standards of customer service and constantly work to improve the quality of our services.
- ⇒ Strive to maximize the quality of job placements offered, in terms of wages, working conditions, work experience and advancement potential.

Did You Know . . .

According to the October 2008 figures released by the U.S. Department of Labor - Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4.9 percent of women age 20 and over in the civilian workforce are unemployed; this compares with 3.5 percent unemployment among the same population in October 2007. More startling is the fact that unemployment among African American women in this same group was 8.8 percent in October 2008, compared to 7.0 percent in the same period last year. Based on the current economic crisis facing our country, this situation will only worsen.

Given the increasing economic downturn in our country and, particularly the threatened negative impact on women heads of household, we are convinced and convicted of the great need for the Women's Empowerment Initiative Alternative Staffing Agencies. The Women's Empowerment Initiatives' Staffing Services ("WEI Staffing Services") are worker-focused agencies designed to connect low-skilled women, especially single heads-of-households, with appropriate entry-level jobs through competitive temporary and temporary-to-permanent job placements. A major component of the services will be to equip women with the skills needed in the current workforce. We will partner with other agencies in this workforce training effort. WEI Staffing Services will also provide job placement and retention support services through contracts with local training organizations.

The following is excerpted from an article by economist Dr. Cecelia Conrad, Professor and Dean of Faculty at Scripps College. "*Black Women: The Unfinished Agenda*" was published in the September 2008 edition of *The American Prospect*; it sheds even greater insight on the plight experienced by women, particular female heads-of-household.



"Like black men, black women live in neighborhoods far from employment opportunities and with low-performing schools. Like white women, black women experience occupational segregation, a gender wage gap and the challenge of balancing family and work. We are discriminated against because we are black. We are discriminated against because we are women. We are discriminated against because we are both.

Because of the limited economic prospects for black men, black women are likely to be both primary caregivers and primary breadwinners in our families. In nearly 44 percent of black families with children, a woman is the primary breadwinner. with children and account for 14 percent of aggregate family income. Hence, the gender wage gap and the lack of labor-market opportunities has a bigger impact on the economic well-being of black families than it does for other groups."

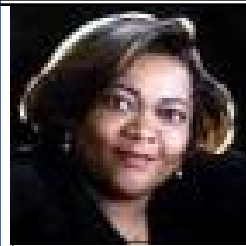
[View the full article at: www.prospect.org]

Are you convinced? We pray that you are and that you will heed calls to support the WEI Staffing Services.

Photo Gallery



Women's Empowerment Initiative . . . By Women, For Women, In the Community



Lynette Brown Sow

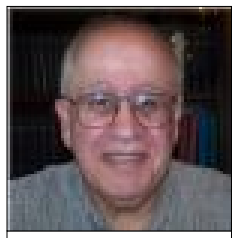
FIRST COMMENCEMENT CLASS OF 2008 WEI GED GRADUATES

Thursday, November 20, 2008, 6:30 p.m. at the Women's Empowerment Center

Atiya, Nafiya, and Tashia were among the celebrants. Nafiya was our first GED graduate and Brendon was the first male to complete the program. Twenty (20) persons have participated in some part(s) the program. Eight (8) graduated and another (8) have recently taken final test and are awaiting their scores. An additional four (4) are in the process of completing all GED program components. Nafiya has also completed the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corp. work certified program and is ready for job placement and wants to attend Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) in the spring, hopefully taking an online class. Tashia's proud family attended the ceremony, and she achieved her personal goal of obtaining her diploma before her daughters graduated high school. Atiya, who also wants to attend CCP, expressed to instructor Avery and all who supported her in this effort. Program participants included Lynette Brown Sow, WEI Board Member and VP of Marketing and Communications at CCP (Keynote Speaker), Rev. Ethelyn Taylor and Acting General Presbyterian Albert DerMovsesian.



Rev. Ethelyn Taylor



Albert DerMovsesian