Our Mission Statement

Women In Charge heals the spirit, builds confidence, and educates women in need so that they may provide a better life for themselves and their children.

We offer Adult Education and Literacy instruction, GED preparation, individual and group counseling, career counseling, parent mentoring, yoga and computer classes. The program is free of charge. A free on-site children’s program is available to participants. September through May, hours are: Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 2:30 PM. Summer hours are: Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 12:30PM.
Kadie’s story: cont’d from page 1
said something smart to him. He grabbed me by the neck and threw
to me against the wall and punched
me in the face. I went into my room
and took a whole bottle of pills.
The ambulance came; the hospital
kept me all night. I had to lie about
how my face was messed up by
saying somebody jumped me. My
father wouldn’t let me go back to
school, so I started doing hair.

My dad used to call me names.
My sisters were skinny and I was
the thick one. My dad would tell me
how fat I was and he tore down my
self esteem. When I was 18, I still
wasn’t allowed off the porch. One
night my dad yelled at me to get
inside, and I didn’t want to, so my
dad beat me up again. After that I
took my mom’s bottle of blood
pressure pills. As soon as I turned
21 I met Mike and at first he was
nice and cool. I felt safe with him
for a whole year.

After I got pregnant he showed
me his true colors. I couldn’t take
the verbal and physical abuse any-
more. I packed up all my things in
the middle of the night when he
wasn’t home, and took a cab to my
mother’s house. He kept trying to
get to me. Three weeks later my
mom and I moved to another house
partly to get away from him. A
social worker told me about
Women In Charge and I started at-
tending classes. One day I was
coming home from school and Mike was waiting for me. I let him
see his son, and Mike said he
wanted to work things out. After a
couple of months he turned out to
be the same abusive person. Mike’s
father was an alcoholic, a drug user,
and abused his mother. Mike was
done everything his father did. I
left a restraining order against him
and moved into a new place so he
couldn’t find me. Of course I
dropped out of school.

It was peaceful for a while, I got
my own place, but he found me
again and ended up staying with
me. It was the worst mistake I ever
made. There was no one to protect
me. I was fighting for my life. One
day he was on me and I couldn’t
breathe. I was so mad, I maced him
and I cut him. I just went crazy.

I’m trying to get past all that now.
One day I went to church and asked
God, please show me today if Mike
is the man for me. I went to his
mom’s house and I ran into another
woman who had a key to his house!
I was done with him. I’m back in
Women In Charge now, and after
all that, I still take care of my par-
ents.

Women in Charge is helping me
with being focused and being pa-
tient—I’m trying to learn how to
trust other people. If they are simi-
lar to Mike, I don’t want to deal
with them. I’m still holding a
grudge.

Women in Charge is helping me
learn to love my self. My attitude
has changed to be more patient, to
feel good about myself because I’m
going to accomplish something.

When I first came to Women in
Charge, I didn’t know my multipli-
cation, now I’m working on geo-
metry. That’s a long way. Vicki
taught me how to communicate bet-
ter, how to react with others when
we disagree, how not to go off the
deck but to talk about the situation
to resolve the problem.

I’m focusing on school, but I
have to work not to remember what
happened to me. I’m not depressed
anymore. I’m getting my life back,
I am taking back what people tried
to take from me; my happiness. I
was being controlled, now I am the
WOMAN in charge.

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A Special Thanks to
Sandy and Sigrid
for teaching a weekly writing
class to help our women pre-
pare for the GED essay.
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Walking Thru the
Minefield:
For Profit Colleges

You have seen the commercials on TV
appealing to young people, those who
may have obtained their high school
diploma, but have discovered that does-
n’t mean you will find a good job. The
 commercials show happy, well-
employed people, loving their job and
driving new cars. They speak of how
quickly you can earn certificates; they
make enrollment easy and hold your
hand through the financial aid process.
Unfortunately too frequently we have
students who are daunted by the enroll-
ment process at the community college,
and succumb to the ease of enrolling at
a for-profit institution. Typically stu-
dents drop out and then have thou-
sands of dollars in debt. Some com-
plete the program, but discover there
are no jobs because their certificate is
not for a degree program that is valid or
that employers recognize. Enrollment
at for-profit schools has grown dramati-
cally over the past decade. They spend
heavily on marketing: television ads
and billboards. The average tuition is
times higher than community col-
lege. Sadly while 10% of American
students are enrolled at for-profit insti-
tutions, they account for 50% of all
student loan defaults.*

In June of 2011, the federal govern-
ment released new regulations requir-
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students for “gainful employment” or
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Meanwhile we try to guide and direct
our students to the next level of educa-
tion, to prepare them for a job that can
truly support their families, but the lure
of “quick and easy” degrees and certifi-
cates represents a real problem.

*Senator Tom Harkin website: For Profit
College Investigation HELP committee
analysis of US Dept. Of Education data.
expect them to be here that often? We tell them that they should treat this program like a job, good practice for their adult life. No employer would let them come 50% or even 75% of the time and remain employed. But this is school and not a job, they say. Truly, it is like we are on two different planets……

We love our teens, so while the population can present challenges, we know we can help them in many ways. They are mothers themselves, so while learning how to get up on time, dress appropriately, work responsibly and respectfully, they must teach their children the same behaviors. Many of our teens lack good role models, or worse, were badly abused.

Natalie, the children’s program Director, is part of our parent mentoring team. Recently she worked on communication skills with one teen mom, by inviting her into the classroom to enjoy play-dough time with the children. The teen mom sharply addressed her daughter saying, “Girl, give me those scissors!” Natalie addressed another child by saying, “Let’s use the play-dough scissors instead.” The young mother saw the different reactions of the children, and then proceeded to model Natalie’s words and actions. She learned about redirecting, giving choices, and disciplinary options.

We are very grateful to The Children’s Trust Fund who recently awarded Women In Charge a grant to further our work with teen moms. See Page 4 for more information on how you can help.

Above: Students surround Jessica, the newest addition to our staff.

Welcome Jessica!

After years of working two jobs, coupled with classes, an internship, and three daughters, one might be surprised that Jessica Menhkus even had time to interview with Women In Charge. She had never heard of us, but upon learning about what we do, she became intrigued. She liked the idea of improving the lives of women; healing as well as educating.

“Everyone in my family is either a cop or a teacher”, Jessica says, so although her Bachelor’s degree is in psychology, it was quickly followed by a Master’s degree in Education from Webster University. Jessica commutes from south county each day, with her two younger daughters who attend the Women In Charge childcare program. Jessica’s role at Women In Charge includes teaching science and computer classes, plus team teaching reading, grammar and math. Jessica created our Face-

book page ([www.facebook.com/wicue](http://www.facebook.com/wicue)) and is currently working with The Foundry to create a new website for Women In Charge. We desperately needed someone to wear the “tech” hat at Women in Charge, as well as to help in the classroom, so Jessica is a perfect fit!

Where Are They Now?

Laura: Forest Park Community College
Crystal: Park Express
Anni: retail at Burlington Coat Factory
Lori: Florissant Valley
Check out our new website!
Available April 2012
www.womenincharge.org
-Read success stories
-Make on-line donations
-Find out more about us

Our thanks to the newly formed branch of 100 Women Who Care for choosing Women In Charge to be the first recipient of their generosity. Women In Charge received $3,500! For more information on this program contact Sandy at (314) 726-6737.

How can you help prevent child abuse and neglect in your community? One way is to purchase the official Children’s Trust Fund license plate that features green handprints and the words “prevent child abuse”.

Make an annual contribution of $25 or more by sending a check to: Children’s Trust Fund PO Box 1641 Jefferson City, MO 65102-1641 Or go to www.ctf4kids.org or call 1-888-826-5437. CTF will send to you a donation receipt and an application for plates.

Women In Charge
independence through healing, education and support
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