



WOMEN IN CHARGE

independence through healing, education and support

Fall 2019

Thank you to Salt + Smoke

for donating the fantastic pulled pork, pulled chicken, falafel, stuffed mushrooms, pit beans and slaw we enjoyed at our 2019 Fundraiser. What a delicious spread!!

We raised over **\$94,000** at the annual fundraiser! Thank you to our generous anonymous donor who provided a **\$20,000** match for donations the night of the event. Thanks so much to every one of you for your donations. Great party and great suc-



Aliyah's Story

The first time I came to Women In Charge was about a year ago after I had my daughter in October of 2018. I realized I needed something to further my education to become more financially stable for two kids and find out what I wanted to do in life. I was living with my mom, but we started fighting.

I was doing dishes every day, taking care of a puppy that wasn't trained and basically keeping the house clean. I was even putting in my food stamps to keep food in her house. But then we started arguing – my mom would take out her man problems on me and my sister. The big argument was she wanted to claim

Cont'd on Pg. 3

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, HiSET 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.

***Thank you
to Individuals and
Businesses Who
Donated Items to Our
Auction***

*Abby Keough Custom
Creations
Al & Bea Amato
Amy Kinder
Amy Lovig
Ann Getz
Becky Ballard
Carl Stone
City Coffee & Creperie
Cynthia Akos
David Brown
David Kaskowitz
David Olander
Dessert Divas
Dewey's Pizza
Dressel's Public House
Drury Hotels
Fair Shares
Fleur de Lisa
Garden Heights Nursery
James Brauer
Jane Pisoni
Joan Vatterott
Joanne & John Roman
Julia Reardon
Larry Kozuszek
Looking Glass Designs of
Lafayette Square
Lynn Wolf
Marti Miller
Mary Dee Schmidt
Mary Ellen Campbell
Mary Noetzel
Missouri Botanical Garden
Monica Matheny/
The Yummy Life
Normandie Golf Club
Norton's Fine Art & Framing
P & O Care
Pam Paulus
Pi Pizza
Robert Munaco
Sandy Marsh
Sharon Logan
St Louis Symphony*

Meet Rae'Jean

Rae'Jean, our newest instructor at Women in Charge, feels "womb to work" best describes this job for her. Her own mother attended a program much like Women In Charge when she found herself pregnant with Rae'Jean at age 16. After having Rae'Jean, she was able to use the program to finish her classes and get her GED. Now Rae'Jean is hoping to help women reach their fullest potential, just as others helped her mother.

Rae'Jean attended Tougaloo College in Mississippi, receiving a Bachelor's in English. She is now attending graduate school at SIU-E, pursuing a Master's in English with a specialization in Literature. As a first generation college student, Rae'Jean has witnessed firsthand how the power of education is able to transform one's life. With this passion for education, it has been an easy decision for Rae'Jean in decid-

ing what she ultimately wants to do in life: teach.

Rae'Jean is not ignorant to what many of our women are facing. Having experienced a number of hardships in her own childhood, Rae'Jean understands how socioeconomic barriers can prevent someone from excelling in school. Also, as a black woman having attended school in both the South and on the East coast, she understands the stark differences in educational programs. She understands how racial tensions and a lack of diversity often push students out of classrooms before they even have a chance to become truly engaged with their educational experience.

This firsthand experience and knowledge has cultivated Rae'Jean into the passionate teacher she is today. The students already love Rae'Jean and we look forward to seeing what the future holds.

Phone: 314 432 7300

Email us at:

vsharp@womenincharge.org

Check out our website:

WomenInCharge.org

*Like us on
Facebook!*

**Follow us on
Instagram.**

Board of Directors

*Robert Fox, President
Vicki Pohlman, Vice President
James Nowogrocki, Secretary
Scott Hunt, Treasurer
Katy Cortinovis, Toni Fitzgibbon,
Robert Johnson, Marti Miller,
John Sharp, Katie Sprung,
Tom Wheeland*

Staff

*Victoria Sharp Co-Director
Susan Wright Co-Director, Math
Instructor
RaeJean Alford Literacy Instruc-
tor /Tech Coordinator
Ann Getz HiSET Coordinator
Holly Haywood Child Care Staff
Natalie Wills Childcare Director
Lynn Wolf Social Worker/
Development Coordinator*

*And more...
Sue Caruso
Sue Rothschild
Taco Buddha
The Repertory Theater of
St. Louis
Trader Joe's
Urban Chestnut
Weber's Front Row
Wendy Frieden*

Love Out Loud

A flood of books and school supplies has thrilled the staff and students at Women In Charge! It started with a tweet by Rae'Jean about a sleeping student and a heated discussion ensued. Should a teacher refuse to allow a student to sleep in the classroom? What if the student is living in a homeless shelter with an infant? Compassion versus enabling – almost 300,000 likes and over 7,000,000 engagements – clearly the topic sparked interest. Numerous people felt moved by the plight of young, single moms trying to improve their lives, and



sent gifts of supplies to Women In Charge. The novels are meant to encourage a love of reading and

include books by Angie Thomas, Maya Angelou, Sister Souljah and Zora Neale Hurston.

Aliyah's Story: Cont'd from page 1

my kids on her taxes. But she wasn't doing anything for my kids, I was paying for everything my kids needed. She wanted to pay off her student loans with the money she got back. She said I needed to give her \$200.00 a month for rent or carry my kids on her taxes. So I basically packed up my kids' stuff and moved to my baby father's house. My kids were two years old and 4 months old when I was first starting to deal with homelessness.

My relationship with my baby's father wasn't good. I stopped going to Women In Charge because I didn't know how to catch the bus from his house. One good thing was I helped him with his mother. I would change her diapers, clean her up. She had kidney failure. She was nice, I could talk to her about anything. She would guide me on the best ways to raise my son. She would give

me money to put in my pocket for helping her. She told me she thought of me like her daughter.

I started leaving my baby's father's house because we were fighting – and I'd go stay at my sister's apartment. I'd go back and forth, but then my sister lost her apartment. Then my baby's father lost *his* house. So, I went to stay with a friend, which lasted about a month. While moving around I had to find all kinds of resources for my kids to get free stuff like diapers and wipes. I never had money to wash my clothes or my kid's clothes, so we wore dirty clothes all the time. I just felt like a burden - I was stuck, I couldn't help myself. I used to cry all the time; I felt like a bad mom. I felt like I couldn't raise my kids. I never want to let that happen again. And now I was hiding another pregnancy. I didn't know what I was going to do with this baby.

In the end of July, I moved in with my grandma. I love her

to death, but I don't like her. I knew I wasn't going to stay there permanently. I was going to find a shelter or maternity home to stay. I just knew I was at my lowest. I found Good Shepherd and went in for a tour. I knew it was going to be more structured, but I felt I needed that in my life. They helped me become more stable and able to get things done. I told them at Good Shepherd that Women In Charge is where I wanted to go, I started back in September. Now I'm able to put my kids in a healthier educational environment at the daycare at Women In Charge. At Women In Charge I'm getting a lot of help. I enjoy going. It is peaceful for me and I know I will be able to achieve what I want. *(Aliyah is a bright, articulate young woman, but at this point we cannot say how this story will unfold. Homelessness, with young children, creates chaos, no matter how much we hope for a happy ending.)*

Yum!

You know who you are! You have it figured out – the dessert table at the Women In Charge fundraiser provides some of the most scrumptious desserts you can find. No dry wedding cake with icky whipped cream icing here. The most die-hard chocoholics come away with that special smile on their faces. One can pretend to be bringing back a plate “for the table,” but really it is much more important to try each one of the many options yourself.

Women In Charge has been blessed with the Dessert Divas – a group of men and women who love to bake, and do it very well. We have heard numerous times how much attendees look forward to the dessert table every year. Several

years ago Sandy Marsh was chatting with her friend Bonnie Yoder and they came up with the idea of putting together a group that would provide, not just a small table of



desserts, but a full smorgasbord of dessert choices.

While most of the “Divas” just have years of experience pleasing their families and friends, Dana Barhard is a professionally trained baker who brings several delicious choices and Monica Matheony, blogger extraordinaire, provides the fabulous toffee. In fact, her recipe is on *theyummy-life.com*. These women are so devoted that even when Bonnie is out of the country, she has done the early organization and then found very capable “Head Divas” – Kathy Freese, Mary Ellen Campbell and Joanne Roman—to make sure the evening comes off without a hitch. From the presentation to the taste, the Dessert Divas are women in charge of an important part of the benefit!


WOMEN IN CHARGE

independence through healing, education and support

1483 82nd Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63132