



# WOMEN IN CHARGE

independence through healing, education and support

Fall 2012

## What's New?

Is it the dining room at the Ritz?? No, it is the Women In Charge kitchen with our **gorgeous “new” second hand furniture** from the American Orthodontic Association. Large tables and comfy upholstered chairs beckon you throughout our site. Now if only we could get some new computers...

Ouch! In 2014 the cost of taking the entire **GED rises from \$40 to \$120**. Many of our women struggle to save up just for the \$40, another hurdle has just been placed in their way.

The new GED attempts to make the USA more competitive in the global workforce. The five paragraph essay has been replaced with two longer essays, drawing data from test materials and personal knowledge. Math problems become more complex and require a greater understanding of underlying principles. All tests will

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*Marlene with new volunteer, Sari Frieden*

## Carleen's Story

When I was 8 years old I would sneak the Mogen David Wine from my parent's liquor cabinet.. When the level got down I would fill it with water, and darken it with soy sauce. I was a middle kid in a large family with strong women. I had what I needed and most of what I wanted. I was raised Catholic. When we went to communion we used to drink from the cup, and on

holidays we could have a little wine. There was always alcohol around me, so I would go get my mom a beer, and half would be gone by the time I got it to her.

In high school I took a break from alcohol for a while, I was Freshmen class president and on the honor roll. But sophomore year I started dating boys, smoking, drink-

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## *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.

*Cont'd from page 1: Marcella's story.*

ing, using crack cocaine. I would take anything that would make me feel different. I quit school, ran the streets and got pregnant at 19. I lost my first three kids to the system because I was taking drugs. My fourth child was born with drugs and alcohol in his system. Next I was pregnant with triplets, and all three died after two days, with drugs in their systems. I wanted to jump in the grave with them. I was done with God.

One day I was so hungry I was walking the streets trying to "catch a date" and I met a guy who was looking for drugs, so I sold some drugs to the guy who was an undercover cop. Then I spent 93 days in jail with two year's probation.

Jail saved my life. By being locked up the baby was born drug free. There were drugs in jail, but I didn't use because if the baby was born with drugs I had no chance of keeping her. Five kids were already gone in the system. I went to Queen of Peace for rehab and parenting classes. Then I went to St. Philippine and stayed for six months. I got Section 8 housing. I was scared, fighting for my life. I didn't want to get high, but parts of me did want to get high and I knew it was going to kill me. I attended AA meetings at Queen of Peace. At my 6 months clean and sober meeting there was a speaker who had 10 years clean and sober. She started telling her story and it was my story exactly. I turned to my social worker and said, "Did you tell her my story?" The worker replied, "No that is her story." I knew then that I could do it.

Every year on August 14<sup>th</sup>, I celebrate another year of growth, an-

**Fun Fact:** We have had five women pass the GED exam since the start of this school year!



Students enjoy fruit, compliments of the MFH Grant.

## Is That Your Avocado?

Who ate the pomegranate? These are actual phrases heard in the Women In Charge kitchen! Now that we have a grant to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, the days of donuts or McDonalds for breakfast are gone. Fresh fruits and vegetables disappear from our kitchen faster than we imagined. The Missouri Foundation for Health awarded Women In Charge a grant to purchase fresh produce in order to teach and encourage good nutrition. Bananas, strawberries, carrots and grapes are gobbled up without question. Taste tests of mangos, pomegranates and kiwi fruit has been fun and delicious (although one student was spotted spitting the kiwi into the trash can!) Roasted broccoli and cauliflower delighted all who tried it, and a pumpkin will be roasted this week. Thank you MFH!

other year free of drugs and alcohol. I came to Women In Charge this summer. Women In Charge gives more than just math and English classes, the teachers care. They give me one on one tutoring, computer training and even yoga. I never did that before and I love it. I know I am a positive role model here. When I see someone acting out, I hold my tongue, and talk quietly to her later. I tell her how she could handle the situation in a more positive way. I see myself in all of

them. I want to keep helping people the best I can and don't continue to beat up on myself for what I did. I work as a CNA and want to get my GED so I can go to nursing school and become an RN. Someday I'd like to have my own 24 hour care business.

"Now I am working on the 11<sup>th</sup> step: prayer. I pray for God to make me a channel of His peace, and I thank Him every morning for another day clean and sober."

*What's New: Cont'd from page 1*

be administered on computers at commercial testing sites. Our computer lab must be brought up to date to allow for on-line practice.

“Smart Money”, a program created by the FDIC, is presented to our students by a volunteer instructor, Carol Wofsey, every other week. Topics such as **budgeting and credit** are discussed. Carol will also take each woman to the St. Louis Community Credit Union to help them open a savings account. The credit union has offered to give the first five dollars free.

The October Cooking & Nutrition class featured a vegetable casserole and barbeque chicken sandwiches. The vegetables were roasted with a topping of seasoned yogurt. Every bite was eaten, which we refer to as “**The Miracle of the Broccoli!**”!



At Gala 2012: Terry Bridges, Mary Pat Erker, Ben Dressel, Pat Gallagher and Elizabeth Sharp

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## Haiku from English Class

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I'm very alone  
Quiet but smart, afraid to  
Open up to world.  
-Anonymous

Today's a bad day  
Please do not talk to me yet  
Not in a good mood.  
-Je'Lyzza

Season is autumn,  
Leaves are changing and falling  
Happiness and joy.  
-Connie

I like Thanksgiving  
I love to help cook the food  
The best is dressing.  
-Connie

We Women In Charge  
Smart, all taking charge  
On top of the world.  
-Anonymous

Each day I m blessed  
I am full of gratitude  
Thank God for my life.  
-Marlene

### *Where Are They Now?*

*Phyllis—postal clerk*

*Randy-Walmart Cashier*

*Larisa-MA program for  
Accounting at  
Fontbonne*

*Keisha—has regained  
custody of her five  
children*

Many of our students are seeking  
entry-level employment.  
If you know of any non-fast food  
Opportunities, please tell us!  
(314) 432-7300



*Above: Executive Director Victoria Sharp, Board Member Scott Hunt, and retired Board Member Sr. Carol Ann Callahan at the 2012 Gala. Sr. Carol Ann was honored for her years of service.*

**Thank you**  
to all who attended  
the autumn Gala,  
donated items, or  
worked on the event!  
The Gala raises  
about one third of  
our annual revenue  
so we appreciate  
your  
support very much!!

  
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