



WOMEN IN CHARGE

independence through healing, education and support

Spring 2013

What's New?

The Assistance League of St. Louis purchased five new computers for our computer lab. Our students are thrilled with our speedy internet connection and updated software. Thanks so much Assistance League!



Above: Students enjoy the new computers



What's growing? Peas, corn, green beans, avocado and flowers! Science class is exploring botany and our window sills are

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Tonya's Story

I was the baby of three children. When I turned five, my dad disappeared. My mom was a workaholic alcoholic. She chased for love, for her own comfort and didn't give me comfort when I needed it. I had no responsible chores, no curfew, no nothing. I found a job at the age of 14 as a cashier at Washington University. I worked there for two years, then met my first boyfriend. I chose the man over my family and school. We lived in a crowded house on the northside, no bed of

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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.

Wondering what a day is like at Women in Charge?

Take our new virtual tour of the campus!
at
WomenInCharge.org

"Like" Us on Facebook, too!



The children also enjoys the new computers!

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filled with cups of dirt and seeds. Such excitement when the seeds sprout, a new experience for our more urban students. Our students were creative designing experiments with limiting light, using coffee grounds in the soil and using alternatives to water. New growth, new hope—what an inspiration for our women!

The **AT&T Pioneers** created lovely Easter baskets for the children of our participants who celebrate Easter. Each basket arrives with toys, games and candy. Moms tell us the children are thrilled on Easter Sunday when they open up their baskets. Thanks very much Pioneers!

CN U RD THS... LBS

You thought lbs meant pounds? Today it means, "laughing but serious".

Sprinkling texts and emails with abbreviations used to be about saving time, now some acronyms and popular uses of slang and poor grammar require even more keystrokes! Using email to send resumes still requires the ability to write a standard format cover letter, with standard spelling. Oh the humanity!

How would a potential employer like this: I hope to c u soon, even just 4 a visit :D

Or this: imma send ya resume lata.

Or this: I will be there tuz 4 sure cuz I am tryin to find a job.

Between language and computer classes, the instructors at Women In Charge are doing their best to teach communication skills that will help our students progress in the job market, and life. Meanwhile we try to wade through some of the more interesting emails we receive! How are we doing?

Dnt ax me dat, I be roflmbo. (Don't ask me that, I am rolling on the floor laughing my butt off.)

Wish List

- Yoga mats, blocks & blankets
- Kleenex
- Folders with pockets
- Pencils & Erasers
- Dish Soap & Pump hand soap
- Paper Towels, toilet paper
- Calculators—*Casio fx260*

Cont;d from page one, Tonya's Story

my own, basically a little party house. I finally got fed up and wanted to go back to my mom's house.

I met Keneth at McDonalds, I was the cashier and he was the manager. At work I needed a ride and we connected. He was really independent, a motivator. He taught me how to clean the house, manage money. He was the housewife, I only needed to cook. He bought my first car, we enjoyed each other's company. In our first year together we had a daughter, I was 22. Keneth was a great father, he provided a roof over our head, paid the bills.

We had a bumpy road with financial problems. When I got pregnant again he wasn't working. He started selling drugs to make ends meet. A man came into our home to rob him and demanded drugs and the money and then shot him in the head in front of me and my daughter. He had been selling drugs for only two months. I was 6 months pregnant, heartbroken, lost and confused. It's not easy to replace somebody like that. We were like soul mates. After I had the baby I moved back to my mom's house and started building a life with my mom and stepfather.

At first I was giving up. I worked in home health care, moving from job to job. I was doing heavier smoking and drinking, trying to hide my emotions. I was not a good mother for my girls, I almost gave them up. I felt I was an unfit mother. At 26, the bills, transportation all stressed me, and I had a nervous breakdown. Then I started going



Amy and Marlene admire the fruit.

Orange You Going To Help?

The wildly successful Fruits and Vegetables grant is about to run out. A generous donor has agreed to **match donations** totaling up to \$1000 to allow us to continue the weekly purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables for our students and their children in our daycare.

Imagine beautiful bowls of grapes, strawberries and bananas coming into the classroom for breakfast, as compared to donuts and Doritos. Large salads are being consumed for lunch thanks to the purchase of greens and vegetables. The children are getting fresh produce instead of canned., and are trying new fruits and vegetables. Please help us continue this great program by making a donation!

to church.

At church I felt a spiritual life from God and felt okay. This was the beginning, like a new door opening. We got adopted by a family at Christmas, and we got our own house. My girls see church as a positive thing for me and them. The journey continues.

I don't take any physical or verbal abuse because of how my stepfather hurt my mom. For the last ten years he has been beating my mama, but the last straw was when he choked her out. It's a burden on me because she

might take him back, and I'm in the process of raising my two girls, so its hard.

I like different challenges, and I like the goals that are provided at Women In Charge. I have a better attitude. Before I wouldn't care, now I am committed to getting my GED because of the confidence and support from the teachers. The women that run this program speak for the name itself, they are in charge!

My family and friends see a change in me, I am more energized and happy. I'm starting to care for myself. I have my own house. I am in a good place.



Thank you to **The Giving Tree** at **Christ the King Catholic Church**. Donated gifts are used all year round. A very pregnant teen just happily went on her maternity leave with a cute outfit, baby socks and baby lotion for her new son! Another perpetually late student was gifted with a new alarm clock. Thanks to all those who partici-

Thank You to the foundations that supported Women In Charge in 2012

Assistance League of St. Louis

100 Women Who Care

Boeing Employees Fund

Cardinals Care

Children's Trust Fund

Missouri Foundation for Health

Old News Boys

Seattle Foundation

St. Louis Philanthropic

STL Business Travel Association

TJX Foundation

Vatterott Foundation

Women's Foundation

And

Three Very Generous Anonymous Donors!


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