women making herstory

Since 2001, the Boise State Women's Center has honored 196 local "Women Making History": ordinary women leading extraordinary lives. This publication has become a tradition in our Women's History Month celebration. In the following pages, you will read about 24 women who are changing the history of Idaho. These women were nominated as Women Making History for their admirable work in our community.

Often the word “history” connotes images and thoughts of the past, but history is what we do every day. We hope to recognize women who have been influential in our community and to educate you about their work, programs, concerns, and successes. Most importantly, we hope to inspire each person who reads this publication to become involved and to make their own impact—make their own history.

Contact:
Boise State Women's Center
1910 University Dr.,
Boise, Idaho 83725
208.426.4259
http://womenscenter.boisestate.edu

why celebrate women's history?

The following excerpt was taken from the National Women's History Project Web site:

By walking history's pathways, we learn to step forward with confidence. The legacy of how others shaped society sparks our own longings to contribute. Everyone needs role models—footsteps enough like our own to inspire us.

Yet in 1992, a national study found that history texts devote only two to three percent of their total content to women. Educators are willing, often eager, to introduce women's history, but they lack materials and support. Only three percent of educational materials focus on women's contributions. Yet recently, legislatures in three states—Illinois, Florida, and Louisiana—mandated teaching women's history in their K-12 classes. The need for more accurate information about women's historical contributions is further confirmed in a recent poll funded by General Motors (GM). Conducted prior to GM's sponsorship of a Ken Burns film on Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, two women who "transformed a nation,” the results show that only one percent could identify Stanton as in some way connected with women's rights. In 1980, the National Women's History Project (NWHP) was founded in Santa Rosa, California, to broadcast women's historical achievements. The NWHP started by leading a coalition that successfully lobbied Congress to designate March as National Women's History Month, now celebrated across the land. Today, the NWHP is known nationally as the only clearinghouse that provides information and training in multicultural women's history for educators, community organizations, parents, and for anyone wanting to expand their understanding of women's contributions to U.S. history.

on the cover

Neapolitan, two-gallon, purple plastic ice cream containers made terrific critter aquariums for me and my siblings on summer camping trips in Eastern Oregon. I, however, was more interested in the Honda Trail 90 and Dad's 22-caliber revolver than I was in catching critters. My brother, Ben, he liked to fish the creek. It was mostly our little sister, Jennifer, who made good use out of those purple tubs. She would spend her vacation time wrapping snakes around her wrists and poring over nature books, identifying insects, spiders, beetles and reptiles. Her childhood doodles were accurate scientific illustrations of the creatures she had collected. Sometimes, her pet tarantulas would escape the confines of its plastic aquarium and crawl around the house. There was never a dull moment. All grown up now, Jen has never lost her love for the natural world. She fought wildfires in the summer while attending Oregon State University to earn a degree in Rangeland Management. She also spent a season firefighting at the Grand Canyon. Eventually, she settled in the mountains of Colorado as a rangeland manager for the U.S. Forest Service. Her daily duties include hiking, four-wheeling or horseback riding into rugged, remote country to manage range grasses and other vegetation. For the cover of the 2009 "Women Making Herstory" issue, I remembered Jen's clear vision of what she thought her future would hold, and how she never let go of that dream.
Bobby Ball
by Jannie Lange
Nominated by Robbi Barrutia

In 1989, Bobby Ball was playing around, sitting on the shoulders of a friend when she fell and broke her neck, leaving her paralyzed from the chest down with limited use of her arms and hands. From that point on, she would have to use a wheelchair to get around. Her children were nine and three at the time. She says the hardest part of the injury was not the injury itself, but coming back home to children who depended on her 24 hours a day—how do you parent from a wheelchair? When she was in recovery, her sister signed over custody of Bobby’s son to Bobby’s ex-husband. When Bobby went to take him home, she had no legal recourse on which to fight for custody. It was from that experience that she was inspired to become an activist for parents with disabilities in Idaho.

A few years after the accident, Bobby was asked to work on legislation requiring Health and Welfare to offer PCS (Personal Care Services) as an alternative to residing in a nursing home, and eventually started volunteering for a small nonprofit. She has not looked back since. She is now the executive director for Idaho’s Task Force on the Americans with Disabilities Act. She was asked to work on legislation requiring the state to have personal care services. It was working on this that inspired her to continue legislative work.

Before going to work full time for the Task Force, Bobby allocated a year to taking a computer course for people with disabilities. During that time, she was introduced to a group called Alternate Mobility Adventure Seekers (AMAS). The goal of the group was to take people with disabilities on exciting trips, providing them the opportunity to experience adventures to which they would otherwise not have access. Bobby looks back on the experience with amazement. "It was crazy!" she says. "We would take six or seven folks in chairs, all with significant disabilities, throw their equipment into a raft and do a five and six day Salmon River trip! AMAS solidified her belief that a person with disabilities is capable of doing anything a non-disabled person can do.

The director of AMAS, Roger Howard, left the program to become the director of the ADA Task Force and asked Bobby if she would "come along and be his sidekick." And she said, "Absolutely!" For many years, it was the two of them tightly packed into a tiny office in an old house near Boise State University. For 10 years Bobby worked for the Task Force, making it a full-time hobby to address legislation to help improve the lives of Idahoans with disabilities, and now has been director for 6 years. It was mostly due to being on the state independent living council (SILC) for 6 years. Task Force work is very different and we are not advocacy.

Every three years the State Independent Living Council (SILC) travels the state listening to testimony from people with disabilities to figure out how best to improve their lives. Bobby attended every session to testify about the injustices she knew all too well. She began to focus specifically on the courts and the discriminatory practices taking place therein. Cases of divorce, custody, and adoption were prominent. She says, "Basically, parents with disabilities were being discriminated against when it had anything to do with their kids and the courts."

Bobby and a committee, a group of powerful local organizations, designed a plan called FAMILY (Fathers and Mothers Independently Living with their Youth) to present to the local legislators. After working for six years with the legislature, FAMILY was accepted. As a result, there is now an official legislative bill protecting parents with disabilities from discrimination in the legal process.

The next hurdle for Bobby was The Medicaid Buy-In, now called Medicaid for Workers with Disabilities, on which Bobby and advocates worked for 10 years. The initial problem she addressed was the inability for people with disabilities to maintain their Medicaid, because after a person makes a certain amount of money, their Medicaid is pulled, leaving them without insurance. The problem leads people to choose to work less, leaving no additional income after paying for necessities. The Medicaid Buy-In created an infrastructure for people to work and keep their Medicaid, but buy into it, like an insurance company.

Bobby is so passionate about this legislation because regular insurance, even if offered, does not pay for personal care services. Every day a person must come to Bobby’s house to assist her in getting out of bed, showered, and off to work. Without a personal care service option, she and thousands of others like her would have to reside in a nursing home or rely on family or friends for assistance, but many do not have such consistent resources.

Another piece of legislation Bobby can add to her list of successes includes an act that many people without disabilities take for granted: if any car with a current disability tag or sticker arrives at a gas station, and two or more people are working at the gas station, one of them must pump the gas for the person with disabilities.

The size and accessibility of parking spots for vans (with lifts or ramps) that must have wheelchair accessibility is the focus of Bobby’s current research. The work is difficult and time consuming, but she says it’s worth it. “This is my life, and I want to make it better! I’ll do whatever that takes!”

Niccole Blaże and Mo Kelly
by Jessica Henderson
Nominated by Rochelle Smith

Niccole Blaże and Mo Kelly are the musical duo known as Blaże and Kelly. With a mixture of folk, rock, jazz and blues, they can set the tone in a room, but individually, they possess their own kind of grace and charisma. Niccole’s light humor and hearty laugh make for a little comedy and comfort, while Mo’s gentle smile and melodic sound generates warmth and hospitality. Together, the audience feels a profound sense of harmony.

Niccole began playing the guitar when she was eight years old. In 1996 and ’97, she collaborated with her friend Timmy D, singing and playing, then eventually featuring some of her own songs. Mo had seen one of their performances. Later, in the most unlikely of places, she met Niccole at a furniture store in Sandpoint, Idaho. “[Mo] had a beautiful aura,” Niccole says. “It’s really interesting [how] organic friendships take place.”

After that initial meeting, Mo began spending time with Niccole and Tim, which led the three of them to start jamming together. “She’s a natural born singer,” says Niccole. Mo’s vocal “training” came from high school, singing in the choir, and she plays songs by ear on the piano without any professional training.

It took a few years before Mo actually began performing with Niccole and Timmy D. She was singing, but not yet playing an instrument. Soon, however, she learned how to play the bass. A year later, Mo switched to a five-string fretless bass.

“Most people won’t play [a five-string fretless] 20 years down. It’s difficult,” Niccole says. “It was a challenge. More akin to the horn and warmer than the bass.” They both describe the switch and feel as a very organic process, working with friends, and exploring the music: switching the melody lines. “What really screws up bands is collaborating with people who have no chemistry,” she adds.

Though they had a band by November 2004 in Boise, they “kind of laid low” until April of the following year. Their “practice ground” began almost magically. “We started at The Trolley House!” Niccole explains. The Trolley House is a local diner, a remnant of Boise’s old streetcar system and a favorite neighborhood joint. “Victoria [the owner] gave us a shot...had us in there three times a week.”
At the Trolley House, the gig became concert-like where people came especially to hear them sing and enjoy dinner, helping them to build a base of about 800 fans. "We become the catalyst to get people together," says Niccole.

During their concerts, a group of people would sometimes invite a person who had been dining alone to join them. Then the crowd grew, and a large community of fans and friends developed. "There are certain crowds that there is the exchange of them 'digging the music' and their interactions," Niccole says. "Whether we're like sonic wallpaper or the main attraction people came to see, we cater to whatever," Mo adds.

Blaze and Kelly fans follow them around from venue to venue, but it became clear that they also wanted to hear the music in their cars and at home. And after releasing their first CD, the talented entertainers knew the demand was strong, and now have released three subsequent CDs: "It had all fallen [together at] the right time and the right energy," they say.

Their fourth CD, "Life is Beautiful," is a diverse mix of their own particular brand of blues, folk rock and jazz. "[We're] really proud of this collection," says Niccole. "We're hopefully going to get help to pitch the songs." Today, they tour primarily throughout the Northwest, states like Utah, California, and Oregon, and manage everything themselves. "[Mo's] a helluva booking manager," says Niccole.

Since 2000, Blaze and Kelly have come a long way in spreading joy through their music.

Their venues have become a communal setting for both friends and strangers alike. "We bring a lot of people together...from a positive place...a place of growth," says Mo.
Mo and Kelly described their concerts as being a place women gather and feel safe where they are able to stand together in solidarity. "It's been beautiful to watch it. We're very humble; it's a gratitude for where the music has taken us."

To give back to the community, Blaze and Kelly try to perform three to four benefit concerts a year. "Try to do good things and spread the love," says Niccole. Their generosity includes raising money for the Transitional Living Program for Women, the Special Olympics, a sick friend, and the BSU Women's Center.

When it all comes down to it, it's the powerful lyrics and engaging, warm personalities of Blaze and Kelly that provide for a unique concert experience. "We really try to entertain more than be musicians," says Mo.

According to their nominator Rochelle Smith, people who attend their concerts leave with more than just the feeling that they had a really good time. She describes something peaceful and satisfying. "You may even laugh or bowl like a dog. Most definitely, you will leave feeling like you have made a couple of new friends."

Jodi Brawley
by Elise Robbins
Nominated by Kelly Weak and Carrie Miller

When you speak to Jodi Brawley, you may as well be speaking to your best friend. Open, honest, and fun, Jodi is a fresh breath of air in the health education field at Boise State University. Working with the campus Health, Wellness and Counseling Services, she has pioneered programs that teach sexual health in a system that defines sexual education as "abstinence only." When she first arrived in Boise, she was amazed by what was not being taught in the local schools. One of her goals is to educate the campus community about health through promotion and prevention programs.

As an athlete in high school, Jodi accepted a scholarship to a small college. After an injury took her off the playing field, she continued to pursue her degree and eventually received a master's in exercise science and health promotion from California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo. After gaining experience teaching at a community college, she applied for jobs in growing communities, eventually landing her in Boise.

Jodi has been instrumental in making Boise State a healthier campus. She has worked in conjunction with University Housing to help provide condom machines for students living in the residence halls. However, the machines don't just provide condoms, they are also information stations. Next to each machine are racks filled with pamphlets that help inquiring students find answers about sexual health. A wide variety of topics range from consent to abstinence, including STI (sexually transmitted infections) testing and prevention.

Jodi was also involved in writing the grant that provided the money to install the machines on every floor of every residential housing unit. She is also active in another program called "Sex in the Lobby." A panel of professionals visits the residence halls and classrooms, by invitation, to answer questions frankly and honestly about sexual health.

Mentoring student interns is yet another way Jodi spreads the message. She assists students in setting up their own programs about everything from sexual health and awareness to physical well-being. Jodi says one favorite aspect of being a health educator is helping the interns grow and evolve into the next group of health educators. She also visits the University 101 classes to talk about the services offered at the Health and Wellness Center. In addition, she also teaches a University 101 class, helping first-year students learn how to succeed in the academic world and life outside it.

Working in the community is just as important as working on campus for Jodi. She servers on the Central District Health's Reproductive and Health Advisory Board. The board offers advice about local health trends and what services the Central District Health Department could provide to better serve the community. She also works on the Idaho Health and Welfare HIV review panel to help select health education materials used in schools.

Jodi's volunteerism also includes immersing herself in helping the Susan G. Komen Foundation, and she recently became a member of their board of directors. Beyond that, she is helping to educate the community about breast cancer through her work with Race for the Cure. She encourages others to support the event and to join the race with her. As she walks along, she finds herself teaching people about breast cancer. She talks to survivors and their families, always offering support.

Additionally, she takes the campaign for breast health and breast cancer awareness to Boise State with "pink-outs," when everyone is encouraged to wear pink in support of breast cancer survivors and finding a cure. She also helps to sponsor "Breastival," an event which seeks to further educate and raise awareness to students, staff and faculty members.

In the past, Jodi has also volunteered as an educator and a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, and for the American Red Cross as a CPR instructor. Her strong belief in giving back to the community makes Jodi a great role model for everyone who surrounds her every day. She works tirelessly to educate people about important issues. Her nominators, Kelly Weak and Carrie Miller, summed her up this way: "Wow! After all those events and activities, she is STILL giving 110%. Her energy and enthusiasm are contagious."
Just a little too squishy for her to pursue a successful career. Callahan would be the one to ask. But Janet is most likely not interested in career direction possibilities, and in matching with options, finding engineering to be attractive in the economic arena.

Indeed, many people may not be aware of the small percentage of women who make up the gender pie in the field of engineering. Janet was first acquiring her education, she did not have a single female professor for an instructor. But something like working in what seemed like a man's world wouldn’t prevent her from pursuing the career she wanted.

Though Janet had entered college with her sights set on pre-med, she soon found that the subject did not particularly interest her. Practically minded, she set out to research various options, finding engineering to be attractive in the economic sense, in career direction possibilities, and in matching with the classes she had already taken. She went on to earn her B.S. in chemical engineering, and in her senior year found her materials science and engineering course to be the perfect fit. She went on to earn her M.S. and Ph.D., followed by a highly successful career.

Currently, Janet is a professor of materials science and engineering at Boise State University, as well as the associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Engineering. She has also given an impressive number of presentations, contributed to many publications, and even applied for a few patents along the way.

What Janet loves most about her job is the problem solving. For her, the knowledge inherent in engineering is like a toolbox which one can use to solve the problems of societies, and the tools must be handled with imagination and creativity if they are to be used to their full potential. She perceives solving problems with engineering as being like a magical creation process, not of silhouettes or sonnets, but solutions.

"It’s one of the funnest things there is to do on the planet," she says. "You end up solving problems that no one has any solution for, problems for which there is no answer in a book.”

Janet also emphasizes that you do not have to love math to love engineering. Even she got a C in geometry back in high school. Nailing certain skills in mathematics is vital, but as long as you are willing to learn them, you can be an engineer.

Janet has never felt that gender has been a disadvantage in her job, or that she has come up against any discrimination simply because she’s a woman. Being a shy girl in high school and college, and a rather modest person, difficulties were more likely to arise from this than anything else. From new employment to promotions, she was unable, for quite some time, to shake the feeling of surprise at her achievements. But lately, Janet has come to acknowledge and understand the value of what she has accomplished. Still, she says studies have shown this phenomenon to be particularly common with females. "I would encourage all women to recognize their abilities are real. Don’t doubt yourself when you are recognized or promoted—you actually earned it!"

Though in the past Janet may not have felt herself to be as deserving as others believed, she has never second-guessed her actual ability to do her work. Or, actually, any work. This, she says, can be traced back to grade school. Janet’s father, also an engineer, believed there was nothing she could not do. About every other Saturday, Janet and her sister would find themselves awakened by their father who wished to impart a little education on just about anything. He’d say, for example, “You two are learning how to shingle a roof this weekend.”

If spending the weekends on a roof wearing nail belts during her early teens was not enough, there was also the lake, or the bridge, or the dock, whatever his latest project was. In fact, there was a time when some of Janet’s grades suffered because of lost time working for her father. Still, she does not regret the days of being one of her father’s “little slaves” as much as you might think, because, she says, “He taught me I could do anything.”

One of her hobbies now is building furniture. But she also likes to garden, fly in a Mooney with her husband, Tom, a flight instructor, and learn Tae Kwan Do with the youngest of her four children.

Of course, Janet’s job requires her to take on more than just engineering. As associate dean in the College of Engineering, she is passionate about searching for new ways to assist students, and working with others to find solutions that will improve education and boost retention rates. She has helped to create supplemental online mini-lectures for students. She has also participated in research about a student’s first math course experience, and how that experience influenced that student’s decision whether or not to continue in the field of engineering. The results of the research have helped BSU implement a more effective math placement system. Students may now take an online assessment which allows students to be accurately placed in an appropriate math class according to their current math knowledge. This is a better placement strategy than using students’ math SAT or ACT scores for placement, since those exams might have been taken some time prior to enrolling for classes at BSU.

As for restenosis, in case you were still wondering, Janet would tell you that the reclosing of the artery is actually caused by a scarring response by the vessel that was dilated by the angioplasty balloon—which is to say a proliferation of cells somewhat reminiscent to what is seen in cancer cells. So how do you treat that? Hit the cells with the right amount of radiation, and you’ve stopped the proliferation.

Ingenious ideas like that have earned Janet a few of her own patents. But of course, it’s not the actual patent that’s important to her. "What is important," Janet says, "is that the problem has been solved, and I didn’t have to touch something squishy to solve it, and that lives have been saved and bettered in the process."
Innovators in industry and academia meet at the Non Volatile Memory Technology Symposium (NVMTS) once a year. The symposium provides an opportunity for the free exchange of ideas and developments within the rapidly evolving field. Large companies, including IBM and Samsung, send representatives who intermingle with other scientists and researchers. The NVMTS is a crucial forum in that the sharing of knowledge furthers the development of such devices as flash memory. Dr. Kris Campbell, a professor at Boise State, organizes the annual event.

Kris grew up in rural Nevada and earned an electrical engineering degree from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas. She entered the workforce and eventually found herself employed at the INEL in Eastern Idaho, where she worked alongside researchers who had more of an environmental background than she had. She quickly realized that if she understood chemistry she could apply it anywhere, because chemistry is a fundamental science.

To diversify her background, she left the INEL and earned a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of California-Davis. Afterwards, Kris returned to Idaho and worked in the new field of memory research at Micron, where she was able to use her engineering and chemistry background, and her creativity to develop and invent new memory material.

Kris sought independence to explore processes and materials that might not necessarily be in the financial interest of the company. Then Boise State came along, offering her a professorship and the freedom of working in her own research facility. Since then, her research programs have thrived. Kris focuses on chalcogenide materials and new electronic memory technologies. She has more than a hundred pending and issued patents, a number which is incredibly rare for a professor at Boise State, not to mention a female professor.

Dr. Thad Welch, the chair of the Department of Engineering at Boise State who nominated Kris, said he believes one key quality about Kris is her work ethic. A normal engineering work day is ten hours, but Dr. Welch says Kris outworks average engineers, and the sheer number of tasks she is able to accomplish in a day is astounding. She is driven to discover and determined to push the limits of innovation.

"Kris’s research funding allows her to teach only one course per semester, rather than the usual two courses per semester typically taught by faculty. This allows her more time in the research lab and more direct interaction with students.”

Academic research is often slow-paced and less responsive, so she uses her experience in the industry sector to create a research team that is quicker and more responsive than is usually found in traditional university research. When a contractor contacts her, her lab is more prepared to adjust the focus of the research, or delegate resources instantly to complete a new proposal.

By learning how to work in a lab, operating the tools and understanding the procedures of a lab, her students receive invaluable experience and the best possible training. There are enough tasks and processes in a lab that students are able to experiment with different approaches and techniques while funneling their focus to areas in which they are more interested, and for which they are best suited. When her students go to professional interviews, they are prepared to talk about the steps within the research process or the functions of research materials and tools. They are one step ahead of other job-seekers because they have been trained to work successfully in a lab.

Dr. Welch points out another important form of experience that students receive in Kris’s lab—being influenced by Kris herself. According to Dr. Welch, she is at the top of her field and is well-known and respected worldwide. The amount of money she brings in with her research and contacts is staggering. Students acquire expertise and insight just by being around someone who is so renowned, and she is generous in the knowledge and the amount of time she shares with her students. Her students have no problem getting jobs after graduation because she has more than fully prepared them to work in the engineering field.

Additionally, Kris is wise enough to understand that the research she does is not about her. Mentoring students is essential to the progression of her research, and a well-trained new generation of engineers and scientists will take what she has accomplished into a new sphere of influence. In the documentary “No Direction Home,” Allen Ginsberg quotes an old Tibetan Buddhist: “If the student is not better than the teacher, then the teacher is a failure.” Every student who has researched under Kris has gone on to graduate school or is working within the industry.

Annie Clayville
by Lindsey Matson
Nominated by Lindsey Matson

Annie Clayville has been busy for several years volunteering for the cause of HIV/AIDS awareness in the local community. In 2006, she became involved with a.l.p.h.a. (Allies Linked for the Prevention of HIV and AIDS) through a Service-Learning assignment at Boise State University. Originally, she had chosen to work with an Alzheimer’s group, but seven students needed to be placed with other organizations that also needed assistance. Annie said they could put her wherever help was needed, and that’s how she ended up participating in “condom raids.”

On these raids, a group of volunteers would invade downtown Boise on a Friday or Saturday night to hand out free condoms and HIV testing information and to encourage people to practice safer sex. Participating in condom raids led Annie to meet the founder of a.l.p.h.a., Duane Quintana, who is HIV positive. Witnessing Duane’s dedication and listening to his inspiring story, sparked something in Annie, convincing her that she needed to continue her volunteerism with the organization.

Annie wanted to work with teens, so she was put in charge of Youth in the Know’s (YITK) social nights. Youth in the Know is a collaborative teen group, run by a.l.p.h.a., Planned Parenthood of Idaho, and Central District Health Department. The program is designed to give the participants the information they need to make healthy and informed decisions about sex, drugs, relationships, and other topics that teens routinely face. Annie was very passionate about her work with YITK. She believes that when young people gain the knowledge to lead a healthier lifestyle that they become peer mentors, passing on what they’ve learned to their friends.

As Annie continued to help YITK grow and prosper, she began to take on more responsibilities. She was named the education manager of a.l.p.h.a. and held that position until August of 2008. She is now the director of programs, overseeing several departments: education, positive support, HIV testing, counseling and outreach. She is one of a.l.p.h.a.’s designated educators who teach young people and adults about HIV transmission and prevention.

In 2007, Annie was certified as an HIV Test Counselor, and still continues testing clients on a regular basis. She really loves her
job that would require a degree. Although her ambitions have stigma attached to HIV/

Cyndee attributes her love of reading to the bookmobile visits that a.l.p.h.a. gives to people in the Boise community.

People frequently ask Annie, "How do you talk about sex so comfortably?" She answers by explaining how she was raised. Her mother was always very open with Annie and her siblings, helping them to feel comfortable enough to ask her about anything, including sex. To Annie, the subject has never been taboo.

Annie's natural ability to teach and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS is also driven by her two grown sons, Nathaniel and Jonathan, because she does not want them to experience the negative effects of HIV. Dale, Annie's partner, is also a great source of inspiration. He never lets her give up on anything, including sex. To Annie, the subject has never been taboo.

In collaboration with other victim-centered professionals, Cyndee helped establish the Nampa Family Justice Center, and she offered her expertise to design an examination room. In 2007, she brought the SAFE program, now a collaboration between St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Center and St. Luke's Medical Center, to the Family Advocacy Center & Education Services (FACES), a family justice center in Boise. When on call, she completes forensic evidence-gathering examinations of victims of violence. As the SAFE Coordinator, she performs peer reviews, testifies in court as an expert witness, assists with case resolution, and works to further evolve programs. She is currently exploring the feasibility of creating a program for nurses to collect forensic evidence for victims of relationship violence.

Cyndee's commitment to service and high quality patient care are demonstrated in her continued training and memberships in professional organizations. She belongs to the International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN), an organization that helps develop and promote information about forensic nursing nationally and abroad. In July of 2008, she completed the Advanced Idaho Victim Assistance Academy (IVAA), a training focused on victim-centered services and response. IVAA is one of few such academies offered in the United States, and Cyndee graduated from the first advanced course offered in Idaho.

While participating in the academy, she was also completing her bachelor's from Oregon Health and Sciences University, finishing in August 2008. Cyndee regularly teaches workshops and conferences related to sexual assault and orientation for new nurses for the SAFE team. The orientation process lasts as long as six months and focuses on care for victims of sexual violence, evidence collection, and documentation, which helps in successful prosecution. She also organizes trainings for the community and colleagues in related disciplines, such as advocacy, prosecution, and law enforcement.

In acknowledging the vicarious trauma to nurses and the impact on quality of services, Cyndee prioritizes the wellbeing of the SAFE team. She provides the nurses time to rejuvenate by offering herself as a substitute, even when it's not her turn to be on call. Cyndee also exercises remarkable self-care. She enjoys spending time with her seven grandchildren, and she especially enjoys listening to her six children reminisce about their childhoods. Camping and visits to the coast are regularly scheduled summer events for Cyndee and her husband Bill Cook. She also enjoys photography and cooking, and hopes to one day document her family's story and to trace back through her family tree.

With a personal motto like "Do unto others as you would have done unto you," it is no wonder Cyndee is appreciated by her patients and their families. With a warm, welcoming approach, she makes a world of difference to people who have experienced trauma. Her colleagues all over Idaho respect her for her tireless advocacy for victim-centered services, compliance with best practice, and coordination of complex services.

Cyndee has been in nursing for 25 years now, and her personal and professional journeys are deserving of honor. The programs and training she has shepherded, advocated for, and implemented have improved forensic nursing, law enforcement response, advocate support, coordination of services and patient recovery.
Arlene Davidson
by Molly Smith
Nominated by Diane Boothe

Arlene Davidson and her husband, Peter, live beside the Boise River overlooking a wildlife sanctuary. Her ability to create scenic environments and her love of beautiful things are evident by the works of art gracing the grounds and the walls of their home. She has generously shared her talent with the Boise Art Museum by working as a trustee for the last four years. She also chairs the collectors' group at the museum, people who have banded together to support buying acquisitions of new art for the museum's collection.

Arlene is the middle child of three daughters raised in a small town in North Eastern Montana during the 1940's. As a child, she was a free spirit, always very active and inquiring about everything. It was her Aunt Hilda who recognized her interests and curiosity and exposed her to arts and letters as early as 5 years old. Hilda was a world traveler and had an extensive library in her home, and she gave many books to Arlene.

After Arlene graduated from high school, she enrolled at the University of Montana, majoring in English literature. During the winter of her sophomore year, she met her future husband, Ray, at Big Mountain Ski Resort in Montana. He was a rancher who offered her a summer job as a cook and she accepted. She had no idea what to expect on the ranch and was surprised to meet Ray's mother, a feminist who did not even know what a feminist was. "She ran a cattle ranch and was as emancipated as you would ever believe. She grew up just feeling women were equal beings." Arlene fell in love with the ranch, and with Ray. Six weeks after her arrival, they were married, and went on to have four children. Later, she was able to return to the University to major in Social Work.

When Ray became president of a life insurance company in Idaho, he and Arlene moved their family to Nampa. Devastated by having to leave the ranch behind, Arlene's entire life was suddenly changed. Being the president's wife, she was expected to host dinners and join the country club, the complete opposite of the life she wanted to be leading. After two years, she told Ray, "I'm not going to survive. I don't like this. There's got to be something more meaningful for me to do." She decided to go to work.

Arlene's first job was managing an Emergency Medical Services Program in Canyon County for migrants and low-income people. She worked primarily with migrant camps focusing on hygiene and living conditions. She helped people move out of the migrant stream and into regular jobs, allowing them the chance to finally settle in one place.

Arlene then became Ombudsman for the Elderly with the State Office On Aging, a career which lasted for 24 years. She loved her work because she was very interested in incremental social change through legislation. "You very rarely can make broad social changes fast. You have to work slowly and on the edges." She chaired and participated on various task forces and was a critical player in the enactment of a number of pieces of legislation affecting seniors. For example, she participated in working on the Natural Death Act which gives patients the right to refuse treatment if they're in a terminal condition. Prior to this legislation, hospitals pursued treating patients regardless of their wishes. Now hospitals are required to ask for a living will when patients are admitted. Another one of Arlene's major projects was the Adult Protection Act, which was passed in 1982. This Act protects people against financial and physical abuse by others. It also helps fund investigations and bring about justice. She also spearheaded the development of Boards of Community Guardians in counties throughout Idaho. In 1997, Governor Batt appointed Arlene Director of the renamed Commission on Aging responsible for senior services and program throughout Idaho.

How did she manage to work in such a demanding field as social work and have the energy left to be a mother? She credits the advice given to her by an old acquaintance named Cappy. He told her, "You will never be a value to other people in your profession unless you are very careful to create beauty in your own life. A place where you can retreat and regenerate so you can be supportive to others." Arlene heeded his advice by surrounding herself with beautiful pieces of artwork and creating restorative environments everywhere she lived.

After 28 years of marriage, Ray died of a massive heart attack while bird hunting with friends. Arlene went on to marry a wonderful man, Peter Davidson, and together they have embraced being grandparents and mentors to their eight grandchildren. "There's a whole world out there that can put you down. But there's one thing about being a grandparent; they will be totally supportive and that's a wonderful thing. You don't have the tough parts of parenting, so you can be totally supportive of those kids." When asked what her greatest accomplishment has been, it came down to one word. Family.

Amy Dreps
by Jamie Lange
Nominated by Dr. Lisa McClain

Amy Dreps was raised in Glendora, California, and grew up in the arms of a very loving family. Upon graduating from high school as a straight A student, she was voted most likely to succeed. Then she ventured off to San Diego State University to study business. It was during her first year in college in 1976 at the age of 20 that Amy was diagnosed with bipolar disease. Needless to say, her life from then on had changed forever.

"I was having a good time on campus, going to the beach," she says. "My breakdown took me by complete surprise." Amy's parents acted quickly by taking her to a psychiatric hospital, and it was through intense therapy that she learned about the disease and the language surrounding it. Prior to this, Amy knew nothing about mental illness, depression, or manic behavior. After a short stay at a hospital, she was released and set her goals on completing her education. She graduated in 1979 with a Bachelor's of Science Degree with an emphasis in Marketing.

According to Amy, bipolar disease is a mental illness that gives a person the ability to bounce back from the manic ups and downs. It's a mood and affective disorder with a psycho-social base caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. Counseling and medication are required to create a balance. Through counseling, she has learned that maintaining a grounded routine is what can really help her to stay well, along with support groups, friends, and family.

In 1994, Amy moved to Spokane, Washington, and began volunteering for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), eventually being hired as a paid employee. It was there that she coordinated a statewide convention for NAMI, supervising a group of volunteers making sure that every little detail was covered. She says her ability to recruit volunteers is her specialty. "I just know how to put people in positions that will better benefit the organization, as well as giving them a sense of accomplishment." Amy believes the key to working with people is treating them equally, as well as taking the time to also learn from them. "Working with others has taught me so much about myself," she says.

To advance in the social service arena, Amy decided to go back to school to get a master's in social work. She was enrolled at Eastern Washington University when she and her husband were in a car accident. Amy was lucky and walked away, but her husband's back had been badly broken. Forced to quit school to take on the role as bread winner, Amy moved to Moscow, Idaho, and started working for Opportunities Unlimited, a developmental disabilities agency. Not feeling completely satisfied, she started browsing the classifieds one day and noticed a job opportunity in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, as an independent living specialist. She interviewed with the director and was hired shortly thereafter. That was in 2003 and she's been there ever since.

As the coordinator of the Coeur d'Alene office of Disability Action Center Northwest, Amy is a woman with a disability who serves as a powerful role model and advocate for people with disabilities in her community. She is also active in the Independent Living Movement, which is a branch of the Disability Rights Movement worldwide. Independent living is a philosophy and a movement of people with disabilities who work for self-determination, equal opportunities, and self-respect. Amy also refers to her position as a "quality of life coordinator" serving five counties from the Idaho-Canadian border to St. Maries.

The Disability Action Center's core services are advocacy, information referral, peer counseling, and skills training. The goal is to empower and educate people and to spread the message that there is nothing not-normal about having a disability. Amy says, "Normal" is a setting on a dryer. Amy has also focused her efforts on studying violence against women with disabilities and their unique needs.

Amy was very touched when she found out that she had been nominated for Women Making History. She says, "It is hard when a person has had a roller coaster life living with an illness." Despite having to deal with bipolar disease, she has always been able to bring herself up, higher and higher each time. She is humbled that someone recognized her passions for fighting for the rights each person deserves.

Amy has touched the lives of thousands of people who are striving to lead the same kind of life that non-disabled people lead. She says she could not be where she is today if she did not have the support of her wonderful husband of nine years, Josef, her family, and her wonderful co-workers. She is truly a trailblazer—making the way for a better life for so many people, and making history along the way.
kt farley
By Jannie Large
Nominated by Kris Sansing

kt farley was born in Salt Lake City but raised in Orem, Utah by her very loving and wonderful family. Her father is a software engineer who taught her at a very young age the ways in which computers work. She has always been curious about the intersection of spoken language and programming languages. Her father nurtured and guided this interest. "My interest in language, in the construction of sentences, lent itself really well to an interest in software engineering because both types of writing have intricate requirements in order to create something, be it program or prose, that will sing. There has always been something infinitely pleasurable for me in mastering a new set of syntactical rules." kt credits her father's great teaching ability for her current technological successes. In college, at the University of Utah, kt decided to study English and Gender Studies while using her computer skills for job opportunities. She was always doing work in application development or application support and working in a technical capacity. In 2000, kt traveled to China to teach English for six months in Xi'an. In 2004, she returned to China to study Chinese at Nankai University in Tianjin, China. After a summer studying abroad, kt came back to Salt Lake and accepted a position as Program Coordinator for the Gender Studies Program at her Alma Mater. One of the major projects on which she worked was Go-Girls Technology Project, for which kt created a curriculum to teach web design to young women from underrepresented areas of the community. She also began working with a group called SWERVE; a group designed to support social and civic engagement for LGBTQ women.

When kt heard about a Web Coordinator opening at Boise State, she decided to move to Boise and take advantage of Boise State's reduced tuition for full time employees. Having access to some affordable education has allowed her to really focus in on and develop her technical skills. She was promoted to the position of Webmaster at the end of her first year working for Boise State. Also, while in Boise, she started her own side business helping non-profit organizations build web sites. She built the web site for the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence and Men Today Men Tomorrow and also works with the National Women's Health Network in Washington D.C. kt focuses on working for non-profit organizations because many do not have access to reliable technology consulting and oftentimes are taken advantage of by others. Kris Sansing, kt's boss at BSU says, "The work that kt does in web development is impressive in part because of who she chooses for clients. Nearly all of her freelance work is done with non-profit organizations. She would make much more money if she did more commercial sites, but decided that's not how she would use her talents."

Here at Boise State, kt manages sites for many offices within the Division of Student Affairs, including the Women's Center, Cultural Center, and the Student Union. Her future goals include attending law school in the fall, focusing on intellectual property law or international law. Kris Sansing said, "kt exemplifies what it means to be a woman making history. She has excelled in a male dominated field and remained true to herself and her values. She's ethical, passionate, and will be successful no matter what she chooses to do." Boise State will surely miss kt farley.

Sue Fellen
by Kris Sansing
Nominated by Kelly Miller

In 1982, Sue Fellen attended an exercise class at the YWCA. The class didn't interest her much, but something else called her attention. "Once I got into it, I just couldn't let go. The stories I heard from these women and children... I just couldn't believe that one human being could treat another human the way that these women and children were treated." Sue learned on the job, read every book she could get her hands on, and traveled to every conference she could find to educate herself.

After two years as a crisis counselor, Sue was offered the job of Shelter Manager. Then, after a serious discussion with Sherm, she took the position. Two years later, she became the director of the Crisis Center. But she didn't stop there.

In 1994, each state had received a grant of $48,000 from Health and Human Services. The money was to be used to form a coalition that would assist local agencies with work in the domestic violence arena. It was a new opportunity that required leadership, an important role Sue wanted to take on. "I applied and was hired," she says. "I was told to go out and start a coalition. And I thought, 'This is interesting.'"

That same year, she became president of the Network to End Sexual Violence and sat on a volunteer coalition that met quarterly to trade books and conduct training and to "try to get some laws passed." Sue, along with many other dedicated individuals, including U.S. Senators Joseph Biden and Orrin Hatch, began working on an important piece of legislation—The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

VAWA was the first comprehensive federal legislation responding to violence against women and was introduced in 1990. It was not until four years later that there was finally traction on the issue in both the Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. VAWA was officially signed into law in August of 1994 as a part of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (PL-103-322).

During Sue's work on this legislation, she traveled to Washington, D.C. and met other coalition leaders and directors. She volunteered to join the National Network to End Domestic Violence, a board that assists state coalitions with training and help lobbying. Sue sat on the board from 1994 to 2006. "It was a huge movement, all of a sudden," she says. "When I got involved on a national level, it was just amazing the caliber of women involved. I learned so much from those women."

Sue's first order of business as director of the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence was to reunite members and solidify programs. There had been some falling out among the partners and Sue began the work needed to bring them back to the table. The following year, the grant dollars increased and Sue was able to initiate more outreach and training.

Sue's dedication to the coalition has resulted in growth from a single staff member, herself, to a staff of 10. She says, "The staff I have now is wonderful. They cannot be replaced." In fact, one of Sue's current employees, Kelly Miller, is the person who nominated Sue as a Woman Making History. She was surprised by her nomination and her selection. "I kind of go along thinking I do my work because I'm passionate about it, and I don't think of it as being anything much different from what other people do."

But what Sue does, and how she does it, is different. In 2004, she started a group called Men Today Men Tomorrow. She saw the men doing the battering as the people getting all of the negative attention and decided to form a group that would allow "good men" an opportunity to join her in making changes that benefit everyone in the State of Idaho.

Of her decision to create Men Today Men Tomorrow, she says, "I have a wonderful husband and wonderful son. Why not get together all the good guys that are wonderful role models for their daughters and their sons? I'm proud because all men are not bad. It takes not only us as women, but men to join in with us, and to fight this thing together."

As Sue explains, coalitions do not do direct services. Their work is more with writing grants and bringing money into the state so collaboration with partners can continue. One such collaboration is the Idaho Summit on Domestic Violence, hosted by the ICASDV. The summit is a daylong conference that focuses on training. In October 2008, the ICASDV presented the topic "Children Exposed to Domestic Violence" to over 300 participants.

Sue remains dedicated and passionate. Her desire to continue in this work is strong "because new things happen." She says, "I see what we've done with the teens and Men Today Men Tomorrow. If there's a need and you can fill it, then I think you should be there to do it."
Mary Gardiner
by Jessica Henderson
Nominated by Keith L. Anderson

On the corner of Broadway and Front, not far from City Hall, is the Boise office of the University of Idaho. It’s where Dr. Mary Gardiner, professor in the Department of Counseling, School Psychology, and Educational Leadership, commits herself to changing the educational system through the power of knowledge.

In her 34 years of experience, she has also held positions as public school teacher, tutor, college associate dean (WSU), researcher and advisor. She has written four books, four book chapters, and numerous journal articles with regard to school leadership, cultural and diversity preparedness. Today, her life’s work provides information to enhance educational success and reduce Idaho’s dropout rate among students of color.

“I’m not a big hero,” she says. “I’m a mom. I’ve got two boys, 11 and nine, and I go to work.” Mary may be humble about her accomplishments and her commitment to the job, but others see her as a person who has made important contributions that bring about change and encourage progress.

Her “little program in Boise” prepares future/current school principals and superintendents, and administrators working in higher education. Part of Mary’s work is advising students and serving on a number of committees. With the power of motivation, she counsels them about ways to achieve success and understanding oppression for students of color within a predominately white Idaho.

“My passion is all about enhancing human potential and reducing the ‘isms,’” she says. “My Christian beliefs influence me.” Mary comes from a background of Anglican faith. “My family wasn’t super religious,” she says as she recalls reading the Bible around the kitchen table, remembering life on a ranch that centered on “family being everything.”

“We were not wealthy, we were privileged,” she explains. “My family is the biggest education of all and the best.”

Living on 1,200 acres of land in Australia allowed her to appreciate the advantages of higher education. Though with all her books and degrees, she explains, the significance of her work didn’t seem to matter until she began her own family in 1997 by adopting her son, Ryan, who happens to be of African American descent.

Mary first moved to the U.S. in 1987 to attend the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. She had traveled from Australia to America one time prior, for a service club conference. “I wanted to do some doctoral work in another country, preferably English speaking because of my limited language skills,” she says. “I fell in love with the U.S.”

The entire population of Australia, she explains, is similar in size to New York City. The United States provided more diversity and “much more different and interesting” experiences. She began by immersing herself in her studies at the University of Virginia as a research assistant in the Department of Educational Studies.

In 1999, Mary began working at Washington State University in Pullman as an assistant professor. A divorced woman, in 1997 Mary became a single mother after adopting her first son Ryan. She worked in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling Psychology, had earned a tenured position, and was also offered the associate dean position of the college. “I worked my way up,” she says. “Work was very positive.”

Throughout her 19 years in the United States, Mary maintained a work visa. It allowed her to be a permanent “alien” resident within the United States out of respect for her Australian family. It was not until 2006 she decided to become a naturalized U.S. citizen. She has two American children Ryan, her adoptive son, and Kyle, whom Mary gave birth to in 1999. “I can understand [the frustration of the immigrant],” she says, “The feeling of insider/outside.”

In 2001 Mary moved to Boise with her second husband and children. She began working with the University of Idaho as a professor in the Division of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership. Living in a predominately white Idaho presented certain struggles. With the lack of diversity, some children did not understand Ryan or his family. “Kids have said things they shouldn’t have, or always want to touch his hair,” she says. “He’s had to educate them.”

Mary explains that when she adopted Ryan in 1997, she did not fully understand the complexities surrounding adoption, but she was willing to learn. She had put herself up as a potential parent for a child of any ethnicity. Through an adoption agency, PLAN, located in McMinnville, Oregon, they were able to contact Lutheran Ministries of Georgia where she was able to connect with Ryan’s biological family. Mary knows how lucky she is, “I’m very glad that I did [adopt him], but it’s not been without difficulty for Ryan.” Mary is currently single and together with help from her ex-husband, David, who also lives in Boise, is doing her best to raise two children into well adjusted, educated, and enlightened men.

Through her research and raising Ryan in a multiracial household, she has an educational opportunity to mentor students about overcoming oppression and discrimination within schools, society and higher education. "I make it meaningful," she says. "They have the power to do the difference. If I can connect with them in this mission...together we can make a difference."

According to former doctoral student, Dr. Keith L. Anderson, Mary was willing to listen and persuade him to become more of an advocate for equality, "not [just] for people of color, but for women." Mary acknowledges Dr. Anderson as “a well educated black man in Idaho from whom I have learned a great deal. I’ve had to keep his spirits alive that a tenure-track position will emerge for him in higher education,” she says, “He has so much to offer in educating the next generation.”

Since 1991, Mary has advised more than 17 students with their doctoral dissertations. Her encouragement has led former students to take their degree and use it to influence the educational system in Idaho. She believes leadership can help make a tremendous difference. Dr. Anderson says, "Dr. Gardiner has proven that one person’s caring influence can surely reach out and touch others."

Hiwow Kassayebet
by Jessica Henderson
Nominated by Christy Babcock Quintero

College can be a stressful time of meeting term-paper deadlines, reviewing pages and pages of handwritten notes, juggling schedules and putting in a lot of hours at the library. Though the primary goal is getting that degree, higher learning also means opening new doors. And students like Hiwow Kassayebet know how to take advantage of an opportunity when she sees it, especially if that opportunity means helping others.

As an international student at Boise State, she recognizes the problems that exist with language and cultural ignorance, and she wants to help others experience a smoother transition than she did. As a woman in the engineering department, she also understands that she is serving as an example to other young women who want to pursue a career in a field dominated by men.

Surrounded by a close-knit family, Hiwow studied engineering as a college student in her home country of Ethiopia. And because her father is a civil engineer, it was natural for her to take the same path. After earning her first degree at Nazareth Technical College in electronic technology, she began searching for a school in the United States. “While I studied there [in Ethiopia], I kept trying to transfer to the U.S.,” she explains.

“The degree is accepted worldwide with better opportunities in
the field I'm in." While working in Phillips, Ethiopia at Ethiopian Electronics Pvt. Lt. Co as a Sales Engineer, Hiwot was accepted by Idaho State University (ISU) where she received the Non Resident Tuition Waiver and moved to Pocatello.

After two years in eastern Idaho, Hiwot transferred to Boise State. "It [ISU] was too small...and had little opportunities," she says. "They were very helpful," she adds. "I got [the Boise Gem Non-Resident Tuition Waiver]." At the time, BSU's College of Engineering ranked 12th in the nation, a fact that also influenced her decision.

At Boise State, Hiwot is able to engage in the research she enjoys while working with a group of "amazing people" that have become her friends. "They made my stay in the engineering building enjoyable," she says. "They're very helpful, fun and motivate each other...because of them, I love the engineering building more."

It's clear that Hiwot's ability to network has made her transition to Boise State very successful.

Now a 26-year-old college senior working her way up to a second degree in electrical engineering, Hiwot's experiences in Idaho as a multilingual student have inspired her to help other international students adjust to a new way of life. Sharing her own story with students from all around the world can spare some difficulties and misunderstandings on and off campus, because she knows all too well "how it is to adapt to a different culture."

"A lot of people assume I'm Indian; they don't know how diverse [Ethiopia] is," she says. "Most of the things that come into their minds are safaris and jungles. It's a third world country, but there are opportunities for education."

After receiving an email from Boise State's International Programs Office, she was invited to become a member of the International Student Association and Multilingual Student Advisory Board, whose mission is to support nonnative English speakers, to help them feel welcome. Hiwot's main objective is to promote cultural and linguistic diversity. With her volunteer work and position as a Resident Advisor, she is able to immerse herself into the community and promote change from within.

In 2007, Hiwot and six other students hosted a food and supplies drive for the City Light Home for Women and Children in the Bronco Stadium parking lot. "People are becoming better about events," she says. "American students can help other students on a one-on-one basis from other areas and learn about their culture. I've met so many good friends."

According to Christy Babcock Quintero, Hiwot's advisor, Hiwot is a genuinely compassionate woman with an all-encompassing heart as well as a true champion for diversity, acceptance, and inclusiveness.

"Boise State is a better place because Hiwot Kassayebetre goes to school here."

Hiwot became a member of the School Society of Women Engineers, a worldwide organization she discovered through university meetings and associations. "It's a very powerful organization," she says. "Thousands of women engineering majors...at conventions every year in a different state. The convention in Boston was pretty fun."

The organization reaches out to the community by helping with the Girls' E-Mentoring Program, a program designed to connect young women at the middle and high school levels with women in science, engineering, and technology fields. The organization hosts events highlighting engineering professors and other people in the profession.

Hiwot continues to go beyond her educational commitments at Boise State to use her talents in bringing people together. Somehow she just finds the time despite term-paper deadlines and final exams. She says, "It's not as difficult as people assume if you have the passion for it." We are lucky to have her in our community.
when Charlotte attended the University of Idaho (Uof I) in Moscow in 1957 when the ratio of men to women was four to one. She double-majored in education in home economics and nutrition. She chose nutrition because growing up on a dairy farm she realized the importance of healthy eating at a very young age.

Her senior year at the U of I was pivotal; she was the chairperson of the Northwest College of Republicans and she interned for the State Republican Headquarters. The internship allowed her the opportunity to attend the National Republican Convention when Nixon and Eisenhower were nominated and the keynote speaker was J. Edgar Hoover.

The experience piqued her interest in working with the legislature. That same year, Charlotte was introduced to AAUW through one of her classes and she became a member, a decision that would result in many new opportunities. She also married her college sweetheart that year. Her husband's job required frequent transfers around Idaho and Charlotte, fortunately, was able to find AAUW organizations in almost every town in which they lived. Through AAUW, she made many friends and became an activist.

When her youngest of three children turned three years old, Charlotte decided to become a home economics teacher. She knew the importance of thinking for herself and acting as an individual, not basing her decisions on what someone else might want or think. She says, "Don't base your self-esteem on your spouse's accomplishments. Maximize your own potential either by volunteering or working full- or part-time. Everyone has a way to contribute." She taught home economics in several schools including Capital High and Bishop Kelly. In addition to teaching, she coached the Bishop Kelly cheerleaders for five years, accompanying them to summer camps all over Idaho and parts of Washington. She also headed the Key Club and a Drag Racing Club.

Through her work, Charlotte touched the lives of countless children with her love, always referring to them as "her kids." Sylvia Charlton, parent of a former student, remembers Charlotte being very supportive of female students, always ensuring equal opportunity academically as well as in sports, and taking an active interest by attending countless extracurricular events. Sylvia believes that Charlotte was an ethical and spiritual role model for all children.

Charlotte, now retired from teaching, has taken the job of secretary of the Family and Consumers Science group. A devoted grandmother, she loves to cook and do yard work and is also teaching second grade education at her church.

"Whether you're a stay-at-home mom or a professional, you need to know what's going on in your community," she says. "Stay knowledgeable about your community's needs and become an activist where you see you can make a difference. You cannot make a difference if you don't know what's going on.... Stay involved in every stage of your life."

Jewel Marmon
by Carissa Sindon
Nominated by Lindsey Matson.

Jewel Marmon was working as a medical assistant at Planned Parenthood of Idaho when a friend invited her to attend "Forever Red," an a.l.p.h.a. (Allies Linked for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS) annual awards ceremony. Something life-changing happened that night—Jewel was drawn in by a strong sense of unity and purpose. She also learned about Michael Daniel Siebert, a man living with AIDS who would not let a potentially debilitating disease stop him from working to improve his own life and the lives of other people in his community. Jewel became inspired to be that person who selflessly helps others, someone who can make a difference. When she left that night, she knew she had to get involved in a.l.p.h.a. That was four years ago, and she hasn't looked back.

When Jewel first began working with a.l.p.h.a., what position she held was of no concern to her. She started as an office assistant and later moved on to serve as Volunteer Services Manager, a role that made her responsible for training and orienting new volunteers. She enjoyed matching the needs of a.l.p.h.a. with the talents of each volunteer, and coordinating appreciation parties and making awards for them—letting them know that their hard work didn't go unnoticed. In 2006, she received the organization's "Spirit of a.l.p.h.a." award, an honor given to extraordinary volunteers. She cares about people and helping them succeed.

a.l.p.h.a. provides many valuable services, including free HIV testing. Jewel points out that in a time when health care is unaffordable to so many, offering free testing is an especially valuable service. She also points out the organization's compassion for the community. a.l.p.h.a. wants people to be able to accept and live with their test results. If a person tests positive, a.l.p.h.a. is there to offer support, and if a.l.p.h.a. cannot help, they direct people to other agencies that can.

a.l.p.h.a. also provides education about the prevention of HIV/AIDS in schools and the community at large. Part of the education is encouraging people to know their HIV status. Jewel says there is a lot of negative stigma and misinformation surrounding HIV/AIDS, and there are people who hate her for what she is doing. She encounters people who still think that HIV/AIDS is a "gay disease" or that it is only a problem for
intravenous drug users. According to her, many people think they are invincible. a.l.p.h.a.’s message is that HIV/AIDS affects everybody.

Jewel doesn’t let the negativity deter her from her mission, because she knows what she’s doing is important. Without a.l.p.h.a., many people would not receive valuable information about HIV/AIDS, including their own HIV status, and still many others would not know where to turn when in need of support, resources and services.

Over the last four years, Jewel has watched a.l.p.h.a. expand its operations from a two-room office space to an entire house, and the organization is still growing with hopes to expand into other communities around Idaho. She has also experienced her own increase in responsibilities. She is now the administrative director for a.l.p.h.a., a position which requires her to oversee inner functions of the organization, as well as creating and implementing new policies and procedures that will improve the services a.l.p.h.a. provides.

In January, Jewel will be attending Boise State University where she plans to major in health communications with a minor in human resources. When asked what her inspiration is for choosing her major, she says she wants to work for a nonprofit in a health-related field, such as HIV/AIDS, mental health, or possibly infectious diseases.

Through her work, Jewel hopes to change the negative attitudes and the stigmas in our culture about diseases, and she understands that through education all things are possible. Education provides a trickle-down effect—people who learn turn around and teach others, a chain reaction of positive energy.

Jewel tirelessly and passionately does for others what Michael Daniel Siebert did for her; she inspires people to be their best and to take their efforts outside of themselves and into helping others. This can only help to make the world a better place.

Lindsey Matson
by Wanda L.E. Viento
Nominated by Annie Clayville

Lindsey Matson is a rising star. She has accomplished more in her 19 years than many people have accomplished in their entire lifetime. Her life began in Meridian, Idaho, the first of two daughters born to Kim and Rob Matson, and she described her formative years as ideal and idealistic. Her parents had encouraged her to explore anything she wanted, and to be anything she wished to be. They instilled self-confidence and an independent spirit. Lindsey’s heard the stories about other parents who had not supported their children in their hopes and dreams, and at this time in her life she recognizes the gift that her own parents have given her. She credits both mother and father for being unconditionally supportive in her growth and development. She said, jokingly, the only thing she wishes they had done differently was to make her floss more often.

As a child she wanted to be an astronaut, then an architect, then a space station designer, then a volcanologist. Later, as a teen, she started volunteering in her community and discovered how much she loved working with people. Her experiences led her to pursue a degree in social work and she is currently a sophomore at Boise State University. Along with her major, she plans to minor in addiction studies. Her college education is being sponsored by many scholarships, such as the Idaho Promise B Scholarship; four different scholarships from the Pride Foundation; and the Larry Selland Leadership Scholarship Award. Many people have recognized her outstanding contributions and potential. “Education is the key to everything,” she said. After earning her B.A., she plans to pursue a master’s degree, also in social work.

Lindsey’s community work began when a speaker from a.l.p.h.a. (Allies Linked for the Prevention of HIV & AIDS) visited her health class in eleventh grade. Listening to Duane Quintana share his story of living with HIV opened her eyes to the power of individuals creating social change, so she signed up as a volunteer for a.l.p.h.a. that very night. Duane, she said, is one of her “biggest heroes,” and volunteer work with a.l.p.h.a. has continued to be a significant part of her life.

Annie Clayville, who also works at a.l.p.h.a., said Lindsey “is an articulate woman with a passion and desire to inspire and educate the youth of our state. She organizes events that also demonstrate to the youth that they have a voice in their own communities. She helps them write letters to legislators, clean up the community, educate other youth and even helps them learn public speaking skills by giving them opportunities to teach in their weekly meetings in preparation for teaching in their own schools.”

The summer after her junior year in high school, Lindsey trained with the Red Cross of Idaho to be able to work on testing night at a.l.p.h.a., which required a higher level of knowledge from the volunteers. When her senior year started, she participated in Youth in the Know (YITK), a collaboratively sponsored group with a.l.p.h.a., Planned Parenthood of Idaho, Central District Health Department, and the HIV Services Clinic. YITK is a peer mentoring program designed to help youth to educate and mentor other teens in the areas of sexual health, safe relationships, mental health, and drug/alcohol use and abuse. Lindsey felt so empowered by the knowledge she had gained and by her ability to help her friends as a peer mentor that after she had graduated from high school, she became the social night coordinator for the group.

Lindsey kept going. With each year came yet another step in her commitment to helping people, to making the world a better place. After her first year of college, she trained with the Center for Disease Control to be a test counselor and took the RESPECT client-centered training so she could provide a higher level of support to people with positive HIV test results. She has been a participant in the Know Your Status testing days, when a.l.p.h.a. tests over 100 people in a single day, an experience she described as being “really cool.” Just before her sophomore year at BSU, she was offered the position of Education Manager at a.l.p.h.a. and she accepted with delight. Now, in addition to everything else she does, she is responsible for making sure that knowledgeable speakers are available to educate people in local schools and businesses about the facts of HIV transmission.

Lindsey has been just as involved in college as she has in her community. Before she had even started classes, she came to the Women’s Center seeking employment. She worked her first year as an office assistant and then moved into a program assistant position. She has participated in the Student Leadership Summit and has been a member of the Organization for Gender Equality in Education. She has also served on student affairs search committees and the women’s leadership conference planning committee. In addition, she completed a Service Learning project at the Interfaith Sanctuary working with homeless people. And if that wasn’t enough to keep her busy, during the summer she worked with children and adults with developmental disabilities at SI Start. All this she does while attending classes, holding down a job, volunteering, and keeping up an amazing 3.8 grade point!

Lindsey credits her love for her younger sister, 15-year-old Molly, as being a motivator for her wanting to help so much in making a difference. She said that Molly is the most important person in her life, and she wants to make the world a better place for her.

Her nominator, Annie Clayville who works with her at a.l.p.h.a., summed her up this way: “Lindsey doesn’t just talk about what needs to change, she goes out there and makes it happen.”
Dr. Lisa McClain
by Kali Furman
Nominated by Stephan Crowley

Teacher, mother, advocate, wife, author, and parishioner, are just a few words that could be used to scratch the surface of Dr. Lisa McClain. She is currently the director of the Gender Studies Program and an associate professor of history at Boise State University. She is a woman on the move. Whether she is teaching a class, working with the Idaho Equal Access Collaborative, spending time with her family, or volunteering at her church, Lisa is always giving one-hundred percent of her passion and dedication to the people with whom she works.

Born into an Air Force way of life in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, Lisa grew up living in eight different places before the family finally settled in San Antonio, Texas, where she graduated from high school. She then went on to earn three degrees from the University of Texas, Austin: a B.A. with high honors in history and journalism; an M.A. in history; and a Ph.D. in history, with emphasis on the Renaissance and the Reformation.

It was during graduate school that Lisa met her husband Doug Sims, to whom she has been married now for ten years. They moved to Boise in 2001 when Lisa accepted the teaching position in the history department at the university. They have two children, nine-year-old Anna and six-year-old Will.

Despite a busy schedule, Lisa has managed to find the time to write a book, deliver numerous conference papers, give speeches and interviews, and get involved with over a dozen different committees. She attributes her children as the biggest motivating force to keeping it all going. She says, “Having kids, you realize you want to model for them the type of world you want them to live in and the type of people you want them to be.” She realizes she cannot do everything, so she chooses to focus her time on specific issues. “I only have so much energy,” she adds.

Lisa is a founding member and partner of the Idaho Equal Access Collaborative (IEAC). The IEAC is made up of the Idaho State Independent Living Council, the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, and the Boise State University Gender Studies Program. The goal of the IEAC is to give women with disabilities equal access to the tools and resources they need should they ever become a victim of sexual or domestic violence. Lisa was first inspired to begin the project after a student with a disability wanted more information about women with disabilities, but Lisa did not have anything in her curriculum. After doing some research, she realized there was not much information out there. Upon introduction to another member of the Collaborative, she was invited to help begin the project.

Lisa is constantly taking experiences from one part of her life and applying them to another. She draws motivation from her family for the work she does with the IEAC: Three members of her family have disabilities, including her son who has autism. She says the important thing is “giving people the resources and the opportunities to make the most out of their gifts.”

Family is not the only source of motivation for Lisa. She also gets inspiration from some well-known and diverse historical figures, such as Gandhi, Teresa of Avila, St. Francis of Assisi, and Julia Child. She admires Julia Child because she was “a woman who lived life on her own terms.” And also because Lisa loves to cook. She also enjoys hiking or being on the river, and reading in her spare time.

Much like the famous cook that inspires her, Dr. Lisa McClain lives her life on her own terms. She is a woman of unbridled passion, committed to family and to social justice. She firmly believes change is possible, and her infectious and generous spirit makes you believe it, too.

“There are a lot of things wrong with the world, but there are also a lot of things right with the world,” she says. “And if you can build on the things that are right, and use your anger against the things that are wrong in a productive way to bring about change, there is almost nothing you can’t do.”

Dr. Vera McCrink
by Christine Fuller
Nominated by Susan L. Johnson

Some might say the road Dr. Vera McCrink has taken to obtain her education is similar to a scenic byway. From earning an associate’s degree to a Ph.D., she has passed many mile markers along the way. And sometimes she inched her way through one class at a time. The journey has been more than inspiring. It’s been rewarding and successful. Vera is now the first female dean of the Larry Selland College of Applied Technology at Boise State University.

Vera began her college career at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, earning her associate’s degree in respiratory therapy and discovering a love for teaching. Motivated by that discovery and a passion for learning, she continued her education, working on a bachelor’s degree at Park College with a branch in Dayton, Ohio. Earning her B.A. took quite some time for Vera, because she had to balance being a mother, a teacher, a respiratory therapist and a student: the quintessential nontraditional student.

In 1991, Vera and her family had an opportunity to move from Ohio. She and her husband, Frank, pulled out a map of the United States and began contemplating where they would like to live. Soon enough they set their sights on Idaho for the mountains and close proximity to the ocean. To learn more about Idaho and job opportunities, they subscribed to The Idaho Statesman, in which Vera found an ad for a job that matched her qualifications. She applied. Waited for the good news, and before she knew it, a job was waiting for her at the Larry Selland College of Applied Technology in Boise.

After the move, Vera still needed two more classes to complete her bachelor’s, so she signed up at the Park College/University branch at Mountain Home Air Force Base. She also took the four classes required for teaching at Larry Selland. Once she finished the four courses, she then completed eight more credits required for a master’s in education. She was driven to do this because it’s important for her to be an example, showing her students the value in continuing education. During the graduation ceremony for her master’s, Vera was so moved when the Ph.D. graduates were awarded their diplomas that she realized her schooling wasn’t over. She soon began working on the next level, afterwards receiving both her master’s and Ph.D.
in education from the University of Idaho. Vera has held many positions in the Larry Selland College of Applied Technology. From 1991 to 1999, she taught respiratory therapy. In 1999, she became the center manager, otherwise known as the department chair, for health programs. And in 2006, she became the associate dean of instruction. The following year she assumed the role as the dean.

When Vera began her position as dean, she was excited and anxious. She attended a leadership conference sponsored by the American Association of Community Colleges, during which she was required to read Now Know Your Strength, a book that came along at the perfect time. Vera learned that “you have to work towards the place you are because of the strengths you bring to it.” Reading the book was powerful and liberating, because it gave her the ability to focus on her strengths and prioritize her duties as caretaker of the college.

As the Larry Selland College undergoes the complicated transition of becoming the College of Western Idaho, Vera has worked tirelessly and responsibly with great influence through the process. Nothing is taken lightly. At times she has had to make unpopular decisions that affect many people, but as dean she is responsible for the budget of the entire college, and being a good custodian of the public’s money is crucial.

Harmony is another strength Vera exemplifies as dean, and she has gone to great efforts to create an environment of open communication by focusing on the needs of the employees and supporting them. She holds weekly meetings with groups of six to eight people, giving them opportunities to ask questions or voice their concerns. Every week during the summer of 2008, she facilitated an open forum where employees were invited to discuss the transition of the college. These forums were recorded and shared via computers. Vera found the method to be very helpful because it gives employees a safe place to ask questions.

As a leader, Vera finds that listening is one of her most important skills. Listening gives her the ability to understand what her employees are thinking and the problems they are facing, which helps guide them in the right direction. She feels that it’s important to lead by example and she works just as hard as all the other employees, as they are all integral parts to the whole.

Vera sometimes escapes the confines of her office and takes time for what she calls a “Walk-About,” the most enjoyable aspect of her job. During a walk around campus, she gets to observe the classrooms and the labs, watch students learn and engage with faculty. It’s important to her that she understands how each department functions and what their needs are. It’s also vital for her that students recognize how much she cares about the programs and the college. It’s through interaction that everyone can have the opportunity to work together.

Dr. Sondra Miller
by Josie Evans
Nominated by Caile Spear

Dorothy Parker, an early 20th century poet and playwright said, “[T]he cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.” Dr. Sondra Miller subscribes to many of Parker’s philosophies, including her insatiable desire for knowledge. A self-described “school-a-holic,” Sondra’s educational journey began as a non-traditional undergrad, working full-time and commuting to school at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, defying the odds by pursuing a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering.

According to National Science Foundation and Census data, compiled by the Society of Women Engineers, women make up more than half of all undergraduate students in America, but only 20% of engineering undergrads. Such gender disparity is greater among those who earn doctoral degrees in engineering, and even more so for female professors of engineering.

After earning her bachelor’s, Sondra went on to earn her master’s in environmental engineering, also from SUNY Buffalo, and then a Ph.D. in environmental engineering from the University of Iowa where she studied with fellow engineer Dr. Keri Hornbuckle. Today, she is a professor of civil and environmental engineering in the Department of Civil Engineering at Boise State University.

So, how did this New Yorker end up living in Nampa, Idaho and working at BSU? As a newly-single, “recovering Catholic,” Sondra decided to move west and work with a relative who owns a food manufacturing plant. Through involvement with the Society of Women Engineers, she met Dr. Molly Gribb, a faculty member of Boise State’s Department of Civil Engineering, and Dr. Cheryl Schrader, the Dean of the College of Engineering. Within a few months of meeting them, Sondra began working as an associate engineer with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and soon picked up a few classes as an adjunct professor at ISU. Two years later, she participated in a competitive application process for her current position, surpassing over 100 applicants to get the job.

As a professor, Sondra is interested in the personality types and learning styles that are represented, and underrepresented, in her field. She refers to distinct methods for processing information to point out that among her students, very few of them are the perceptive, patient, big-picture thinkers, while most of them are the analytical, logical, hard-working thinkers. Sondra admits that her personality type is 180 degrees from most of her students. She uses this vantage point to encourage her students to approach their discipline from a different angle.

Her nominators, Dr. Caile Spear and Melissa Wintrow, wrote, “Sondra’s classes are interactive and hands-on, not just learning from the text.” She cites unconventional activities, like bike rides and cartoon movies that Sondra’s students apply to the study of engineering. Indeed, Sondra learned the basics of engineering through baking in the kitchen with her mom, who did not work outside the home until Sondra and her younger sister had graduated from high school. She also worked on cars with her dad, a pipe fitter and a marine engine specialist who retired from both the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve and Eastman Kodak.

Sondra hopes that through her teaching style, students will learn for the sake of learning and not just for the sake of checking off boxes to earn a degree.

Sondra spends a great deal of time teaching, researching, and writing. Boise State’s status as a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction is due in no small part to her current research projects on air quality, reuse of water, and environmental modeling. The projects, sponsored by the Federal Aviation Administration, Hewlett-Packard, and the university, amount to more than $100,000 in funding for her department.

Her other research interests include understanding the fate and transport of anthropogenic compounds and their effects on the environment and human health.

As if that isn’t enough to fill up her calendar, Sondra also serves as the Faculty-in-Residence for the engineering residential college in Morrison Hall. This is her second year in a living-learning community with a group of 22 first- and second-year students. Dr. Spear, the Faculty-in-Residence for Health Professions, wrote that the math and science grades, as well as class participation, of Sondra’s residents are higher than those of engineering students who are not in the residential college. She says Sondra draws her “students into new realms of exploring the world around them,” and “several students have become involved in engineering research projects” through Sondra’s encouragement.

Sondra also works with children who have been diagnosed with cancer. She has spent the last four summers volunteering as a camp counselor at Camp Rainbow Gold with her partner, Scott Meatte. Camp Rainbow Gold is an accredited camp sponsored by The American Cancer Society, and supported with private donations and the hard work of volunteers. It’s a retreat for children that takes their minds off cancer and provides them with a week of fun in the mountains of Ketchum, Idaho.

Although work at the camp is exhausting, Sondra says it’s rewarding and that volunteers “get the bug.” A close friend, Dr. Spear calls Sondra’s compassion and caring remarkable.

Dorothy Parker wrote, “If I should labor through daylight and dark / Consecrate, valorous, true / Then on the world I may blazon my mark / And what if I don’t? / And what if I do?” Because Sondra makes her mark, young women everywhere can follow in her footsteps, and make their mark, too.
Dr. Mary Perrien
by Kali Furman
Nominated by Jessica Reed

When the word "family" is mentioned, some people smile fondly, others awkwardly look away, others openly cringe. It means something different to all of us. But when Dr. Mary Perrien hears it, she shines. For her, family means something different to all of us.

Congratulations to those being honored.
Department of Political Science

Dr. Mary Perrien

has been a constant source of inspiration and hope. They gave her the motivation to be the first person in her family to graduate from college, and they continue to give the support she needs to successfully do her job as the Chief of the Education and Treatment Division of the Idaho Department of Corrections. They give her hope for the future.

Born and raised in California, Mary was very close to her family growing up, especially her mother and grandmother. "They taught me to be strong and to survive the tests that life would put me through. My grandmother, despite being of a different generation, held very clear rules about 'appropriate' female behavior, covertly counseled me to not allow society to limit me. She convinced me that I could be whatever I could dream."

Mary earned her undergraduate degree in psychology from San Jose State in 1991. Originally working in the field of child psychology, primarily with child victims of sexual abuse, she eventually switched her focus to working with sex offenders. "I wanted to help prevent victims," she says. She then went on to earn her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Hawaii in 1998.

Mary has worked with offenders at both the state and federal levels in the corrections field. She has been a staff psychologist, a supervisor, manager, hostage part negotiator, and has served in critical incident stress management. Where some people would only see the negative side of the job, Mary looks at the positive, seeing her work as a challenge both professionally and personally. She knows her job is being able to ensure and improve public safety. Her strength comes from a strong network of peer support, co-workers and family members.

Corrections is a field that has historically been male dominated, and being a woman in such an environment has its challenges. Mary says, "I've been in corrections for over fifteen years, and even back when I started there were still... people that didn't believe that a woman should even be in a male prison, let alone be in any supervisory or administrative position. It's certainly come along way." She firmly believes that women are especially good for corrections and working with offenders. "We have a different way of looking at how to resolve things, remembering that they [inmates] have a family, people who love them."

When Mary is not working, she is active in her community. She is an advocate for people with mental illness, working as a member of the State Mental Health Planning Council. She is also a huge advocate for cancer research, education, prevention, detection, and treatment—having lost her mother to breast cancer.

In addition to all her work, Mary has been married to her husband, Jim, for 20 years and they have three children. She loves spending time with her family whether it is outdoors, cooking, or getting ready for the holidays, her favorite time of year.

Incredibly intelligent and humble, Dr. Mary Perrien says that the thing she always remembers is this: "I am where I am because of many wonderful people, men and women, who took the time to help me as I pursued my dreams."
During her education at UNM, Jen focused on understanding forest fire history over the last 8,000 years, as well as the impact forest fires have on soil erosion. She says gaining a greater understanding of fire history can allow for a greater understanding of forecasting future fires. While conducting research, she examined the soil for charcoal and other evidence and went on many fieldwork expeditions which were often dirty, rugged, and usually more accommodating for men. But she never hesitated to participate. It's always been about the work, a big priority for her. After she graduated with her doctorate, Jen moved back to Idaho.

After spending several summers in Payette studying forest fire history, soil erosion and the environmental issues that affect it, Jen went on to teach at Boise State University in the Department of Geosciences. When asked about gender equity issues in the workplace, she is quick to acknowledge that they exist, but she also praises her colleagues. She says that they have always created a welcoming environment for her and she's never felt discriminated against because of her gender. She's thankful and offers much gratitude to the faculty, staff, and students in the department.

And Jen also praises Boise State University for offering programs and organizations to encourage women to pursue their dreams. When asked what advice she might give to young women who desire careers in fields traditionally occupied by men, she encourages women of all ages to not allow anything to hold them back.

Jen says that educators at every level should encourage women to pursue whatever field they desire and also to inspire confidence. She believes that the greatest tool in dealing with any issue, whether it is global warming or sexism, is to provide students with knowledge. It is this philosophy that inspires her to teach, to reach students through events such as "Focus the Nation."

Focus the Nation, held in Boise February, 2008, was designed to bring awareness of global climate change. Jen’s involvement in the project is a testament to her commitment to education and raising awareness for environmental issues. When asked how she responds to people who do not believe in global warming, and who reject environmental consciousness, Jen says, "The earth doesn’t care if we take care of it. The earth will continue to exist whether we are here protecting it or not. We as people should take care of the environment to preserve humanity."

There is no greater way to honor Dr. Jen Pierce than to acknowledge her work and efforts as a woman succeeding in the field of geosciences. Her story should be an inspiration to every woman of every age in every field. If you desire something badly enough, then no person or no thing should stand in your way.

Connie Puente
by Kail Furman
Nominated by Amber Messa

How do you choose your career, your path in life? Connie Puente put it simply, "Sometimes your career chooses you." She did not plan to become a probation officer—her initial goal was studying pre-law. She became a probation officer, because, inevitably, it chose her.

Connie was born in Twin Falls in the winter of 1975, the youngest of seven children. Upon graduation from Twin Falls High School in 1993, Connie attended the College of Southern Idaho. Once she had earned her associates degree in '95, Connie set out to "explore the world." In 1997, she arrived at Boise State University where she began working on her bachelor's in criminal justice.

After graduation in 1999, Connie began working at the Brown Schools of Idaho, which was one of eleven boarding schools and educational facilities for troubled children in Texas, Idaho, California, Florida and Vermont. One year after completing her degree, she began working as a probation officer in Jerome County, a job she still holds today.

When Connie Puente talks about her job, and especially the young people with whom she works, passion and conviction radiate. To most people, working with convicted juveniles and at-risk youth might seem burdensome. Connie, however, bursts with energy. She says, "If you don't keep laughing, it will eat you up." She says the thing that keeps her motivated is, "That one kid. The kid who comes back, sometimes years later and says, 'thank you.'"

Connie works with at-risk youth in several different ways. She does not just work as a probation officer, but she also serves as a proctor for the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), a program devoted to working with youth between the ages of 16 and 24 to help them earn their HSE/GEDs, the equivalency to a high school diploma. Students who have earned a HSE/GED can attend Boise State University. It was when Connie was a student at BSU that she first learned about the program as a tutor for HEP.

Connie also refers to after-school programs and informally mentors other at-risk youth. She speaks fervently about the importance of education. "People have the tendency to get overwhelmed, and it is important not to bury our heads in the sand," she says. "Socially, you have a responsibility you just have to accept."

Constantly drawing from positive experiences and positive people, Connie has a very upbeat attitude. She recalls fondly one of her role models, Judge John Varin—or, as she calls him, "the guru of the juvenile justice system." He inspires her because of his "tremendous ability to impact people." She's also inspired by her junior high basketball coach, Joe Keeney. She still reflects on something he told her long ago: "Regardless of what you do, you are the one who is responsible for it."

Even though the sign on her door says her hours are nine to five, Connie works much longer than that. "It's a small town, people find you," she says. When she does manage to find some time away from the job, traveling is her reprieve, and Hawaii is one of her favorite places to visit. "I could never get bored at the beach." She also enjoys spending downtime on the home front with her 26 nieces and nephews.

Connie's coworker, Amber Messa, who nominated Connie for this well-deserved honor, sums up Connie's career and life: "The amount of compassion she shows on a daily basis is inspirational. Our program's success is largely due to people like Connie who go above and beyond to give the opportunity for at-risk youth to continue their education and improve their quality of life."
Andrea Shipley
by Emily Whitesides
Nominated by Andrew Weston

Executive Director of the Snake River Alliance Andrea Shipley is thankful that she can make a living doing what she loves.

"Every time we talk to somebody else about something that is critical, we're accepting our responsibility in the world and we're sharing with each other," she says. A good example of how Andrea is doing what she loves is speaking out against a proposed nuclear power plant in Elmore County, or raising awareness about the importance of preserving Idaho's waterways.

Taking personal responsibility for the environment became a priority for Andrea after taking a Native American literature class in college. At the same time, she saw new potential in herself and changed her major to creative writing. Through this experience, she realized that she was privileged in her life. To have privilege meant to struggle less and enjoy more. Others, so many others, didn't have privilege.

"That realization pretty much rocked my world in what I thought my own personal responsibility was and my own capabilities," Andrea says. She underwent a transformation and began a work-study program at the Women's Center at the University of Montana, where a friend had convinced her to read some of her own poetry at "Take Back the Night." After presenting her work, Andrea found her medium and her voice.

After finishing the work-study at the Women's Center, she moved into a job at Planned Parenthood, as a community organizer focusing on equality and economic justice. The experience, she says, was another influential time in her life, because she learned how much people can effect change, and how one person can help.

Andrea ended up in Idaho on a whim. At first, she had trouble finding employment and made a living washing dishes and taking care of people with disabilities. She also did some contract work as a spokeswoman for Your Family, Friends, and Neighbors (YFFN), a Boise-based gay-rights group. She helped write a grant proposal to help fund organizing efforts in Idaho.

As one of the founders of the Idaho Equality Committee, Andrea has been a leader in the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning) community. "The most inspiring thing...is the tenacity and the courage that it takes to be that [LGBTQ] in Idaho—even today," Andrea says. She's thankful for the opportunity to make a living doing what she loves.

"I was an awkward young person. My parents were both very hard workers. Mom always wanted a girl that would wear dresses and pigtails, and I was NOT having it. For the scholarship night in high school, I wore my gown, but I had my Converse All-stars on...it's the little things, it goes back to how you nurture yourself. It's those "little things" that help strengthen the leader in her.

"Becoming a leader takes a lot of time," she says. "There's a personal process...it takes years to learn how to temper the personal, emotional experience in reaction to the work, the amount of support and nurturing and sustainable nest you need as a leader, and then the actual work itself." Some would argue that it also takes a natural charisma and high-energy personality to be a leader, the kind that Andrea comes by naturally.

When asked whether she believed in fate, she says, "If you would have asked me a couple years ago, I would have told you fate was bunk. Now I know for myself that things are pretty tied at times, and how interesting it is when you think you're done with one thing in your life, and it will come back.... The most important thing in setting boundaries is how to do it in a way that's meaningful to you.... I know people always say, 'follow your gut,' but it's true. When you get that gut feeling, you know when you've done the right thing."

So how does Andrea continue to be so bold? "Daily affirmations—they are the soundtrack to life that you create for yourself. I really believe that art...is what defines our life, it's what inspires, it's what moves us, it's what gets us out of 'I eat lunch now, I work now, I eat dinner' then all of a sudden you hear 'Patty Smith' in the middle of your day and then everything's changed and you recognize a color on a tree that you didn't before."

"Digesting of politics, I think is really critical for young leaders. It's internalizing what we see as unjust in the world...and making it ours and then pushing it out in our own language, in our own feelings, in our own artistic or crafty or pragmatic way. That's the space that we lose a lot of our young leaders in, because that space is uncomfortable, it's disheartening, and you don't always get the support you need."

Whether you read Andrea's work or hear her voice, you will know that she is out there fighting for equality in every aspect of society, and that the environment has a friend for as long as she's around.

Jayne Sorrels
by Nora Kitchen
Nominated by Abigail Wolford

During the winter of 2005, the City of Boise was faced with a crisis—as many as 300 men, women and children were living unsheltered inside the city limits. It was an emergency situation, exacerbated by the necessity of solving the problem quickly for so many cold and hungry people. As a result, the Interfaith Sanctuary was established by the collaborative efforts of a small group of social workers and 40 religious leaders of all different faiths. They shifted into high gear and offered a solution for the homeless.

If you want to get very far in starting a project from such frantic beginnings—no money, no building, no staff, and no experience, it takes an exceptionally capable leader. For the shelter, its staff, volunteers, and the homeless they serve, Jayne Sorrels, a former nun, has been more than just capable. She has been outstanding. Today, Interfaith Sanctuary has evolved into a year-round nonprofit entity, staffed almost entirely by volunteers and housing over 125 people each night.

During the shelter's precarious beginnings, Jayne worked 80 hours each week to keep the shelter afloat. The only time not spent on her work or spiritual practices were the early mornings. She would often rollerblade at 2 a.m. on the Green Belt, providing herself a little time to relax in nature. She occasionally garnered looks from passersby, those perhaps not expecting to see a rollerblading nun so early in the morning. By five o'clock, though, seven days a week, Jayne would be walking in the shelter door.

Some say Jayne is a superwoman. Some ask why she does so much. To her, there is no asking because there is no choice. From the moment she had heard of the homeless crisis, she knew she wanted to be part of the solution. She says, "There was no question. It was like everything in me said, 'I have to be a part of this. I have to. I have to.' There's no doubt, I have to be a part of this."

Things have settled down a bit for the Interfaith Sanctuary since 2005. Jayne still spends time organizing staff and volunteers, and working with and supporting the people the shelter serves, but not at the blistering pace of 80 hours a week. But that doesn't mean she has much spare time, and that's okay. Jayne's
work is her life—and this is exactly the way she likes it.

Fittingly, one of Jayne’s role models is Mother Antonia, a nun who lives in a jail cell in Mexico, residing and identifying with the people she serves, nicknamed the prison nun. Always having felt that same spiritual calling toward serving others, Jayne also searches for that deeper connection. Compassion, she says, has been the theme song of her life. “All of this has been a study in compassion for me, in a lot of ways like in my own personal path, to understanding the difference in what Buddhists refer to as idiot or blind compassion and genuine compassion. And there's a difference.”

Of course, working with people who are homeless requires courage to confront difficult situations. It can also be difficult to witness the outcomes of those situations. It’s helpful, Jayne says, to detach herself from seeing results. She does her service work, as she believes all people should, because she has to, whether or not the effects are actualized. Even when faced with painful images, Jayne strives to keep her heart as open as possible, a promise she made in her very first week of working at the sanctuary, standing among the sleeping homeless men, women and children.

“I just stood there, and I connected to God and said, 'I'm going to keep my heart open. I'm not going to shield. I'm going to keep it open fully. I'm not going to protect myself and I'm not going to run.' Because something that I know is that if you try to protect yourself from the pain and suffering that is all around you, you also then create a barrier to all the love.”

Though the vast majority of homeless people visiting the sanctuary are from the Boise community, some are from elsewhere. Having been to shelters all across the west, many of these people name Interfaith as the most unique because of the caring and respectful staff and volunteers. Whether the shelter attracts volunteers with such generous spirits, or it is the act of giving back that creates such generosity in people, it is not difficult to imagine that it is Jayne’s example that helps to create such a heartwarming atmosphere.

Currently, Jayne is training to become a spiritual director, offering herself as a companion to those setting out on their own spiritual journeys. At the same time, her hopes for the future of the Interfaith Sanctuary is that it will be able to grow not just as a charitable organization, but as a transformative one as well, a place that can provide guidance and services to help the homeless people who are ready to move on and improve their lives.

Jayne is always looking toward improvement, a quality that as a nun earned her the title Maha or “one who aspires to be one’s great being.” And though Jayne is no longer a nun, having chosen to take a different route in her spirituality, the title has stuck, along with some others. To many, she will always be Mahajayne, Mama Jayne, or Mother Jayne.

Everyone at the shelter is part of Jayne’s family. To her, this is the greatest reward. She not only has her biological family, including three grown children of her own, but a vast extended family. And the possibility of that has also been Jayne’s greatest surprise—the possibility that one person can in fact love so very many others.

Mary Stohr
by Emily Whitesides
Nominated by Craig Hemmens

Mary Stohr has been a professor of criminal justice at Boise State University for fifteen years. She is a mother, wife, mentor, author, leader and a good listener. Editor of the North End News, she helped to preserve the schools we know and love in the historic North End, such as Longfellow, Washington and Boise. She has published books and over 30 academic articles, including one co-authored by her husband, Craig Hemmens, on Bruce Springsteen, the Boss himself.

The third oldest of eight children, Mary grew up in Yakima country, among lush, irrigated apple, cherry, pear and peach orchards. She considers her childhood idyllic as she was surrounded by a loving family and was able to exist uninhibited by the beautiful landscape of rural Washington.

After graduating from high school, Mary worked as a baker in a donut shop in Seattle. One night, she was robbed by a ‘stick-a-finger-in-your-back-and-pretend-it’s-a-gun criminal,’ and her bike was stolen. When she figured out the robber’s ploy, she jumped over the counter and chased him down the street. The police showed up soon after, and when the officer asked her what she would have done if she had caught the criminal, she said that she thought she could take him. This experience was one of her inspirations for getting involved in criminology. If her eyesight was better, she would have been a police officer.

Her first job was in an all-male prison in 1983. She was just the third of the lineage of females in the criminal justice system in the area, and the first who had come from outside the city. While she endured much harassment by co-workers and superior officers, she stuck with the job until the end, when she was transferred and began school once again to work towards her goals of obtaining her doctorate. There were some inmates who gave her trouble, but many were appreciative of having a female around. She says many prisoners even expressed their contentment—she seemed to encourage more respect and less violence in such a rigid and artificial environment.

Mary described the harassment that she received as the "labors of Hercules." In her book, Mary writes that while "no slaying of many headed monsters was necessary... Hercules was out of favor with the gods (in my case the warden was a god and I was out of favor because I was female) and was required to perform labors in order to make amends."

Those labors included being trained by a sergeant who repeatedly told her about assaults on the staff, working the 2:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon shift that was assigned to her as punishment. She also worked the shift with a sergeant who told her that he had had a nervous breakdown. Ironically, because of Mary’s anxiety from lack of sleep and her unsettling partner, she made incessant rounds and bed checks. As a result, no one escaped during the four months that she worked that shift.

The warden also created a job for Mary that required her to build a trail around the facility, preparation, he told her, for installing a perimeter fence. But Mary found out later that the warden never had any intentions of building a fence. He gave her the assignment thinking it would make her quit, that she, being a woman, wouldn’t take a crew of ten to twenty men out into the woods by herself, instructing them on how to "build a trail." But she surprised him.

Because of the rural setting of her childhood and her experiences of being raised in a family with boys, Mary was not afraid to take on the challenge of leading a group of men on a trail-improving expedition. Eventually, she was promoted to counselor when the position came open, and needless to say, the warden had lost in all his efforts to discourage her.

Mary enjoys being a professor of criminal justice at Boise State. She says that one great thing about the job is, "there are boundaries, guidelines, rules, but once you figure them out, you can find freedom within those bounds." In a school setting, she is surrounded by people who are self-actualizing, who are pushing the limit and trying to find what they are supposed to be. "Most of the time people are pretty darn happy in the university setting, and they’re hoping to be happier, and you can be a part of it."

Mary is strong and relentless, quietly focused and humble. She is someone who always leaves places and situations better than how she found them. Instead of running away from a challenge, she willingly takes it on, diligently working until she has succeeded in her endeavor. Mary Stohr makes her place in the world the best that she can, and in turn, everything that she touches is better for it.
Women's Leadership Conference

Are you a Boise State woman who wants to connect with other women leaders and learn new leadership skills? Develop your leadership potential at the one-day, free, on-campus Women's Leadership Conference. Previous leadership experience is not required.

Saturday, March 14, 2009
9am-5pm
Student Union Lookout Room

Register online at http://leadership.boisestate.edu/womensconference/index.cfm

Registration ends March 6, 2009