Honorees 2010

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"Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can't practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage."

-Maya Angelou*

The Boise State Women's Center is proud to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Women Making Herstory. We are honored that 222 women have graced the pages of our publication and shared their tales of courage. This year's publication theme is "Past, Present, and Future" which is reflected in the artwork on the cover; a woman looking back, a woman facing forward, and a woman looking to the future. It is the women of the past, who liberated the women of the present. The women of the present, our 222 honorees, are paving the way for women of the future. We are all part of one earth and nurture our individual and collective strength. It is often not easy for women to share their stories of success, which is one reason this publication is so important for our community. This publication gives us the opportunity to showcase Idaho women doing amazing work. We honor them with humble pride and thank them for sharing their lives with us.

The Boise State Women's Center celebrates courageous women every day. Our staff is consciously aware of women whose footsteps did not tread lightly. Our hearts beat fervently with anticipation of which doors we will open next. We stand in solidarity with our allies in the name of equality and shout silently to the world our convictions. We know some ears do not hear and some hearts do not know our words of young wisdom, yet our grasp to one another holds strong and we rise in defeat of ignorance. Our endeavors incite fear for those who are compelled to keep the status quo.

We steadfastly reject that which stifles recognition of women in their total glory. We recognize sexual orientation, non-traditional students, single parents, and women of color in the hopes of creating a community where courage is fostered and success manifests.

-Jamie Lange

*http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/maya_angelou.html
Sylvia
Sonya
Shelly
Susan
2002
Gaetha
Connie Thorngren
Tegwin Millard
Leah Taala
Joanne Mitten
Jane Moore

2001 Honorees
Cindy Clark
Pat Clark
Sue Cobley
Sally Craven
Opal Dickson
Tam Dinh
Pat Dorman
Lee Flinn
Amy Haak
Alicia Hochhalter
Jyl Hoyt
Helen “Binksy” Jacoby
Rocio Johnson
Gwen Kimball
Nicole LeFavour
Mary Rohlfing
Maria Lorenzana
Chris Loucks
Shelly McDonough
Tegwin Millard
Joanne Mitten
Jane Moore
Angela Newell
Lesleigh Owen
Gaetha Pace
Katherine Pavesic
Susan Pedde
Susan Qualls
Mary Rohlfing
Sonia Rosario
Jo Anne Russell
Jan Salisbury
Virginia Sarriugarte
Megan Sorvaag
Leah Taala
Connie Thornengren

2002 Honorees
Evelyn Ferrari
Ginger Florechinger-Franks
Alma Gomez
Lesley Goranson
Ruth Harris
Becky Hays
Alexis Higdon
Monica Hopkins
Nancy Jacobsen
Zeda James
Kara Anney
Kelley Johnson
Dianna Longoria
Kay Mack
Clarisse Maxwell
Ellie McKinnon
Dana Miller
Barbara Miller
Fatime Mohammad
Renée Mullen
Faida Muzaliwa
Stephanie Neighbors
Barbara Newell
Anita Pedraza
Leacadia Powell
Lalani Ratnayake
Lorry Roberts
Justice Cathy Silak
Phyllis Smith
Juandalynn Taylor
Margie Van Vooren
Bonnie Vestal
Marilyn Watts
Irene Wilcox
Dr. Stephanie Witt

2003 Honorees
Lynn Gabriel
Maria Gonzalez Mabutt
Dr. Christine Hahn
Dr. Ginna Huston
Vicky Irving
Lori Oyce
Jane Kinn Buser
Dr. Suzanne McCorkle
Pam Parker
Anne Pasley-Stuart
Beverly Pressman
Pat Pyke
Carolyn Rahn
Wanda Lynn Riley
Fatma Slaton
Maxine Sower Randall
Kelly Spafford
Dr. Valerie Teffen
Winnie Tong
Christina Van Tol

2004 Honorees
Anji Armagost
Hildegarde Ayer
Zella Bardsley
Evangeline Beaver
Peg Blake
Marie Blanchard
Ingrid Brudennell
Lorissa Wilfong Holt
Shirley Christoffersen
Maureen Clark
Karry Fischer
Maria Alicia Garza
Joanne Habben
Marla Brattain Hansen
Hann Hoffman
Maybeth Hogander
Jeni Jenkins
Angelina Kears Beain
Pamela Magee
Marcy Newman
Marie Osborn
Toni Roberts
Mary Evelyn Smith
Marjorie Belle Tucker

2005 Honorees
Maria Andrade
Laurie Appel
Deborah Baill
Leah Barrett
Peggy Bohl
Rosie Delgadillo Reilly
Julie De Lorenzo
Susan Emerson
Francelle Fritz
Dr. Heike Henderson
Mary Carter Hepworth
Dr. Lois Hine
Jessica Hinkle
Sue Holly
Gene Nora Jessen
Beverly Ann Kendrick
Beverly LaChance
Wendi Story McFarland
Jennie Myers
Dr. Linda Petlickoff
Lilianna Rodriguez
Dr. Sandra Schackel
Dr. Cheryl B. Schrader
Adriana Solis-Black
Shannel Stinner
Brooke Tyler

2006 Honorees
Dr. Sona Andrews
Jan Bennetts
Kara Bracia
Jennifer Edwards
Melody Sky Eissler
Rebecca Evans
Marcia Franklin
Sheri Garmon
Dr. Jill Gill
Norma D. Jaeger
Kali Kurdy
Pamela Lassiter-Stacy
Dr. Lynn Lubamersky
Yolanda Martinez
Ellie Merrick
Dr. Amy Moll

2007 Honorees
Flora Aldazabal
Ilene Bartlett-Hill
Diane Boothe
Shanna Branham
Dina Brewer
Natalie Camacho Mendoza
Nancy Casmerson
Melanie Curtis
Christelle Edmo
Nancy Egan
Megan Egbert
Josie Evans
Tesse Evans
Noemi Hererra
Janice Johnson
Whitney Johnson
Mary Lou Kinney
Dana Kirkham
Charlotte Lanier
Amy Layton
Sonia Martinez
Beverly Miller
Barbara Morgan
Maria Rebollozo
Rotchelle Smith
Keziah Sullivan

2008 Honorees
Amy Herzfeld
April Hoy
Aurda Green
Dr. Cynthia Sanders
Dalyann Kuster
Dr. Denise Wingett
Gail Hartnett

2009 Honorees
Bobby Ball
Mo Kelly &
Nicole Blaze
Jodi Brawley
Dr. Janet Callahan
Dr. Kris Campbell
Annie Clayville
Cynthia Cook
Arlene Davidson
Amy Drep
kt farley
Sue Fellon
Mary Gardiner
Hiwot Kassayebe
Charlotte Lash
Jewel Mallet
Lindsey Matson
Dr. Lisa McClain
Dr. Vera McCrink
Dr. Sondra Miller
Dr. Mary Perrier
Dr. Jen Pierce
Connie Puente
Andrea Shipley
Jayne Sorrels
Mary Storh
Pam Baldwin is the executive director of the Interfaith Alliance of Idaho, a nonprofit organization where people of all faiths work together for the betterment of society.

I love meeting people and hearing their stories,” she says. “It’s my favorite piece of this position.”

While growing up in west Texas, Pam learned that some people’s worldviews differed from hers. “A worldview is the lens through which you see everything, mine is that of a ‘nurturing parent,’” she says.

Taught by her parents and grandparents that she could do anything her heart desired, she knew she could make a difference. Her mother told her that she could get along with anyone as long as she never talked about religion or politics. “Oh, I’m in trouble now,” she laughs. “That’s pretty much all I do!”

Education was important to Pam, and she earned a bachelor’s degree in early childhood development from Texas Tech in 1969. After which, she joined the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children. Here, she grew professionally, developed leadership skills, and became aware of educational and social issues facing children and their families.

In 1973, Pam’s first husband acquired a manager position at the Karcher Mall in Nampa, and they, with their two small children, moved to Idaho. Although a stranger here, Pam did not falter in her momentum. 

For security and familiarity, she joined the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children. When her first marriage ended, Pam married a dairy farmer. “It was the ‘80s and farms were failing all over the Valley.” One day, a television announcement caught her eye; coalition meetings were being organized in support of farmers. Not one to waste time, Pam contacted the organizers and wanted the meetings localized. Two things were necessary: people to attend and a place to meet. Pam united with community members in coffee shops and used television and radio to advertise the meetings.

Held in the Grange Hall in Nampa, Pam listened to Phil Lansing, then director of the Citizen’s Alliance for Progressive Action. “About fifty people showed up, and I watched Phil present a slide show about farm policy. He asked what the problems were; then he asked what the solutions were. All of the answers were right there in that room; their own voices came out to solve the problems. I saw Phil doing that and I thought, ‘That’s magic, and I can do that.’”

As a result, she became director of the Idaho Rural Council, served on the board of the National Farm Coalition and as an organizer for United Vision of Idaho, and is currently the executive director of the Interfaith Alliance of Idaho. “I learned that there are wonderful people in every corner of the state.”

Pam glows as she talks about Interfaith Alliance. She and the organization labor for legislation change, uphold strong values, work toward poverty eradication, and support families. A remarkable witness of this occurred in Boise shortly after 9/11. Many Muslims were afraid to pray in the courtyard of the Islamic Center, so members of the Interfaith Alliance and other human rights groups gathered around in a circle for protection during prayer. “I think people should want to make change to lift people up and change for good,” she says.

Several important programs have been implemented under Pam’s watch. For instance, Overcoming Hate Workshops were developed for human rights education in schools and communities at the beginning of her directorship. Taught in thirteen locations statewide, over 600 people participated and, as a direct result, community response networks formed to continue hate crime control and human rights education. “People go through stages, just like children do. There are stages of racism awareness. When I provide training for dismantling racism, it still unpeels things in me and helps with my self-understanding.”

Additionally, Pam formed Interfaith Alliance Democracy Circles. “These are group meetings after the model of kitchen-table activism,” she says. Relevant and in-depth information is presented and discussed for the whole group to investigate. “People are intelligent and want to take civic action, they just don’t know how. Democracy Circles give people that safe place to discover and grow.”

The Interfaith Sanctuary is another example. Because of urgent housing needs for the homeless, Interfaith Alliance facilitated the coming together of many faiths in the region to create the Sanctuary. Housed at first in Boise’s First Congregational Church, the Hare Krishna’s cooked every meal. Until its current location was secured, the Interfaith Alliance nurtured and supported it. Today, Interfaith Sanctuary has its own director and board. Pam beams, “It’s like our ‘baby.’”

Pam is also an advocate for folks who are homeless. “They are people just like you and me,” she says. “Everyone has had a hand up by someone. Everyone who is successful has had help from somewhere. There are as many stories about
Adriane Bang serves as both the interim director and the violence awareness and response coordinator (VARC) of the Boise State University Women's Center.

Often, upon entering the Women's Center, students and community members are greeted by her kind and gentle smile. Adriane was born in Billings, Montana. She moved to Boise, Idaho, when she was five years old with her mother, Brenda, her father, Ron, her bother, Kyle, and her twin sister, Amber.

Family has always been important to Adriane and she describes her mother and sister as her best friends. She says, "Their loyalty, love, and compassion are unparalleled in my life. I feel like my mom's attention to serving others and her value of volunteering, especially while I was growing up, influenced my interest in social work. My mom has long been involved in charitable causes in the community. She has served food at several local shelters, organized community holiday donations, and every year she works on a charitable fundraiser for young mothers. My twin sister and husband were my study partners as I was going through six years of college. It was important to have them to cheer me on and keep me focused, not to mention willing to consider studying as spending time together. Sometimes I think their indefatigable support was the only way I was able to go on to complete my masters."

After graduating from Centennial High School in 2001, Adriane enrolled at Boise State University and applied to the social work program. Her coursework included gender studies, the social psychology of gender, and the concepts of privilege and oppression. She says, "The class was a gift to look at the world through different eyes."

She sees Melissa Wintrow, the facilitator of the course, as a mentor and role model in both her professional and personal life. Adriane says Melissa "is one of the most amazing women I have ever met. She continually challenges me."

Melissa says, "Adriane is a very thoughtful, pensive person. She is intelligent and insightful. She is able to provide analysis of situations that is creative, accurate, and intelligent. She shows a genuine concern for others and equity."

In 2007, Adriane graduated with a master's in social work. In passionate pursuit for her "dream job," she applied the same motivational drive to finding a career as she did to getting her education. Just days after graduating, and two days before marrying her fiancé, Rusty Bang, she interviewed for the VARC position at the Women's Center. She has been there ever since and loves it. "This is the most amazing job.... Working with people helps me to better know how to create programs, and creating programs helps me to better help people to stop cycles of violence within the community."

Her programs help raise awareness and create change by focusing on healthy relationships, consent, bystander intervention, violence, and abuse. Adriane's role as the VARC also includes providing direct care and support to students who are victims of violence, specifically stalking, sexual assault, or relationship violence.

As the Women's Center interim director, Adriane also works closely with Francisco Salinas, director of Student Inclusion and Diversity, and Leslie Webb, assistant vice president for Student Affairs. Together, they create policy, develop programs, and represent the center, on and off campus, through events such as "The Vagina Monologues," "Take Back the Night," and "The Bra Project."

Adriane draws inspiration from everyone who works with her. She says the staff "really cares about justice, and that's why we are here. The work of the Women's Center matters to us to the nth degree because it's personal, and it keeps me going...when I come here, its home to me, and when I am not at the Women's Center I realize how grateful I am to work here.

"I am continuously challenged by my position. Social work is one of the most rewarding and challenging things a person can do. You see some horrific things happening in society but meet people who have the most amazing strength and resiliency to move through some of the most challenging things anyone could ever have to face. It's powerful to see people move through that process and I am honored to walk with them or behind them in any way to offer support. Seeing such strength in people gives Adriane "hope for humanity."

Adriane's concept of feminism affects the way she views and interacts with the world, professionally and personally. She is active in and devoted to the feminist movement by promoting awareness of the "isms" in our culture that create violence and oppression in people's relationships and communities: sexism, racism, ageism, etc. She says her devotion is "not something I can take off when I leave at work...we need to change personally and that begins to change our culture around us."

* Mahatma Gandhi's quote "Be the change you wish to see in the world" is a personal mantra that inspires Adriane to do the work she does. She says, "It's about ownership and accountability, we can't just complain about the things that are wrong around us, we have to take up the tools and do the work ourselves. It starts with us to inspire others and ourselves."
In 2007, Mel Borg and Krista Perry were nominated as co-chairs of the Idaho Safe Schools Coalition, a growing partnership of community organizations, youth, parents, and educators dedicated to ensuring that each child feels safe attending school.

Their mission is “to help Idaho schools become safer places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.” The Idaho chapter started in 2004 as part of the national chapter of Safe Schools Coalitions.

The Coalition's goal is to help schools and the broader community better meet the needs of all students, including those who are perceived and/or identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer (LGBTQ), as well as children of LGBTQ families. The Coalition provides advocacy for all students, free resources, and skill-based training for educators, including those who are preparing to teach. Along with the Idaho Human Rights Education Center, the Coalition's nonprofit fiscal sponsor, they also collaborate with school board members, administrators, and legislators.

Krista works a full-time job, from home, as a consultant for Boston-based life sciences consulting company, Trinity Partners.

Mel is working on her master’s degree in public administration at Boise State. Yet, they find time to address the stigmas and the feelings of isolation that LGBTQ youth experience. Their advocacy touches the community in a supportive and empathetic way and empowers youth.

Recently, the Coalition held their third annual Youth Night, an event that is planned, organized, and led by the students involved in various schools’ diversity clubs, the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), and other student supporters. The event is an opportunity for young people to feel like they belong, if even for one night, and to talk about areas that need improvement and to celebrate accomplishments made.

This event draws between 70-80 youth from the valley. Regardless of such an open forum, the majority of LGBTQ youth still face immense pressure to be silent about gay-lesbian issues.

According to Mel and Krista, too many members of high school’s administration, teachers, parents, and students choose not to talk about LGBTQ issues and the effects suffered by young people struggling with their identity. Consequently, the possibility for dialogue is swept under the proverbial rug. The progress that has been made over the years is largely due to student pressure within schools to have a venue to discuss discrimination, including the internal struggle of going against “tradition.”

When Mel and Krista were in high school, there were no school-based clubs for LGBTQ youth—no support systems whatsoever. To come out as gay meant facing other people’s hate and intolerance. Growing up, Krista was (and still is) involved in sports, while Mel was raised in a traditionally religious family. They both were surrounded with insecurity trying to accept themselves, as well as attempting to help family and groups of influence understand their personal journeys. “Ideally, this shouldn’t have to happen to anyone,” says Krista of the discrimination and lack of support LGBTQ youth face.

Courage in facing their fears did not take shape while in high school. With adulthood, they were able to fully articulate their realities to family and friends.

The empowerment that comes from having a safe environment to publicly identify oneself and we all have a gender identity. It is not just those outside of the norm. Part of our educational mission is helping people understand differences between those terms and the experience of youth around these issues.”

Currently, Mel and Krista are the only people in the Idaho Safe Schools Coalition whose sole focus is on offering workshops and training for organizations that work directly with youth who are struggling with gender identity and sexual orientation.

“Not talking about this is not being supportive,” says Mel. “When you say the words ‘gender identity’ and ‘sexual orientation’, some people have this obsession and think ‘Oh, come on, we don’t need to talk about sex.’ But we’re not talking about sex. We’re talking about identity and feeling comfortable with who you are and being able to express that in a safe environment, and that translates into a lot of other things in a young adult life.”

After the workshops, participants are relieved to have the language and confidence they need to articulate and talk about issues faced by folks who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. A major concern facing LGBTQ youth, aside from lack of support, is suicide. Lisa McClain, who nominated Mel and Krista, says, “This is Idaho where conservative attitudes often limit discussion and community building on LGBTQ issues. Mel and Krista offer hope, community, and support for individuals and families facing discrimination. Depression and suicide rates are higher among LGBTQ youth than heterosexual youth.”

Mel and Krista focus on building self-acceptance and teaching understanding and the importance of accepting others, no matter who they are. Their dedication and hard work promise to leave a lasting legacy.

While they remain humble in their pursuit of making Idaho a better, safer place, their impact speaks volumes: paving a pathway to human rights and giving voice to a largely silenced population.
Hannah Brass Saona is a woman who works to create change in the state of Idaho. She is a woman who has many roles in her daily life as a mother, partner, friend, daughter, advocate, lobbyist, and lawyer.


In her junior year, Hannah studied abroad in Ecuador while working at a legal nonprofit that focused on mediation programs in the prison and school systems. "I became aware of many human rights issues that ultimately got me into what I do now."

One of Hannah’s greatest accomplishments occurred in Peru, where she had the opportunity to hike the Inca trail to Machu Picchu. During this adventure, she kept asking herself in disbelief, "What am I doing?" However, now it is something she often reflects back on as a significant experience in her life.

Hannah attended law school at the University of Washington, earning both a law and master’s degree in international studies in 2005. She chose the dual degrees because “I didn’t love law school and wanted to work in an area in which I had more interest.” Currently, Hannah works as the legislative director for the ACLU of Idaho, where her primary focus is on policy and legislative work. It is a position that allows her to affect change. Many of these changes are challenging. “They are real uphill battles and the changes we make are often at the local level but they are huge successes when we have them.” In addition to her legislative work, Hannah attends public policy summits where she speaks or trains people on the many issues the ACLU challenges. Hannah is also the only Spanish-speaking employee in the office, “I am on the front line when working with Spanish-speaking individuals.” She often translates Spanish intakes for their legal department. Hannah’s job changes day-to-day when the legislature is not in session.

Many of the legislative bills Hannah works on regard reproductive rights, specifically to preserve a woman’s right to choose. Hannah says that these rights “are constantly under attack in Idaho.” This motivates Hannah, “I fight bills that chip away at a woman’s choice and her right to make decisions for herself and her body.” Hannah works within the community, talking with school leaders about teaching comprehensive sex education in the classroom.

Hannah also focuses on LGBTQ equality in her work. At the state level, many changes are needed. She says, “I would most like to see the Idaho Human Rights Act amended to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.” This amendment includes protections against discrimination in areas of employment, education, housing, and public accommodation. Hannah says that amending the Idaho Human Rights Act would mean “you couldn’t get fired simply because you are gay, lesbian or transgender. Or someone couldn’t refuse to rent you a home because of who you are.” However, she explains that it is the small changes that are happening at local levels that will effect change to be seen at the state level.

The work that Hannah does is fueled by a strong sense of caring. Close friend, Taryn Magrini says, “Hannah’s greatest quality is her compassion.” Taryn explains that at the center of Hannah’s work is her sympathy, “She’s a lawyer. She could have done anything. She chose to do this work because she actually cares and I think that is what sets people in this movement apart. She cares about people and about what happens to them. Whatever they look like or believe in, whatever language they speak. There is a certain level of compassion for her fellow human beings that Hannah has and I think this drives her in her work.”

Hannah’s compassion is the source of her activism. She says, “If we can all start from a place where we respect one another and treat people with dignity, then we don’t have to fight against inequality. Equality would be our starting point.” This is something Hannah believes should be taught at a young age, and is something she is teaching during the new adventure of raising her 16-month-old son, Luca.

“I hope it will be second nature to him and how he will see the world and see other people, by virtue of the fact that this is how I live my life, I won’t have to teach away bigotry.”

Motherhood has been challenging, rewarding, and has changed Hannah’s life. The things that were important to Hannah before Luca came into her life are that much more important now. “Luca’s presence affects everything I do.”

Hannah is motivated to raise Luca to be an aware human being. “I want to raise my son to be informed, engaged, and think that these issues are important.” Hannah feels that all women make and create history by simply living their lives. “It might not be that they are changing the world, and neither am I, but they are doing their part by what they do.”

Hannah is honored to be recognized as a Woman Making Herstory. “It is unexpected, I never thought of myself making history.” However, Hannah has a few words of wisdom to future Women Making Herstory: “Choose a path and make it your goal to find what is most meaningful to you, whatever it is.”
Christina

BRUCE-BENNION

By Amra Durmic

Since 1996, The Agency for New Americans (ANA) has been providing opportunities for new beginnings to hundreds of refugees and their families in the Treasure Valley.

A private nonprofit organization, ANA welcomes over 200 refugees annually and operates with the generosity of grants, sponsors, volunteers, donors, local businesses, and organizations. As director of ANA, Christina Bruce-Bennion works closely with her staff to provide an array of services for refugees who arrive from places like Burma, Somalia, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Uzbekistan, and Iraq. She also spends a lot of time and effort participating in large collaborative meetings with politicians, health care providers, educators, and the community around issues of housing, transportation, employment, and health care.

Christina was born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in political science from Willamette University in 1991, she lived in various cities in the Northwest and married in 1994. She moved to Idaho in 1995 where she worked as a volunteer with refugees and discovered her passion for interaction with them. That same year, Christina and her husband went overseas to Japan where they taught English until 1996. Between 1996 and 1998, she attended Boston University from which she received her master's degree in international educational development. While in Boston, Christina volunteered for the International Refugee Committee (IRC) and soon landed a job with them. She spent the majority of her time with the IRC working with women, youth programs, case management, and employment.

During the summer of 1998, Christina returned to Idaho and began her career with ANA. In 2004, with the Department of State, Christina was able to go to Ghana, which is the main processing center for West Africa. Through this program, called Secondment, she spent three weeks going to refugee camps and helping teach cultural classes. She also spent time observing interviews, organizations, and health screenings. Upon returning, Christina continued working for ANA part time.

Christina says, "Many of the refugees that are coming in now are women and children from 'hot spots' around the world such as Iraq and Afghanistan." Often they arrive without their husband, father, brother, son, neighbor, or best friend at their side, which can make the transition harder. "I am amazed by the ability and trust that these people possess to simply get on a plane and move to a place they have never heard of." The only things they have are the small picture boxes that hold the key to the once peaceful and jubilant past, the memories that linger somewhere distantly in the mind, the certain smell that one tries to take in and remember forever, the last embrace, and the continuous tears that are shed over every lost moment of happiness. Christina is there to support refugees, provide them with essential resources, share in their successes, and offer a shoulder to cry on during tough times. Terri MacDonald, an employee at ANA, says, "Christina is the most non-judgmental person, and she is so accepting. Our clients receive comprehensive, high-quality support due to her ability to foresee needs and to pursue the resources to make

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Kris

COLLINS

By Jamie Lange and Mike Kirkpatrick

At a young age, Kris Collins' mom drilled into her head that she had to get an education. So, when other little girls dreamed of being ballerinas, she dreamed of college.

Her journey began with the Idaho Army National Guard, which took her to Fort Rucker, Alabama. While stationed there, she earned a bachelor's degree in business management at Troy State University in 1994. She thought it was a flexible degree that could be applied to several careers. She says, "Everyday lives are changed because of higher education." Eventually, she moved back to Boise with her husband at the time and started working for Boise State University.

Kris has been at Boise State since 1996. In the beginning, her role was entering applications for admissions, but she did not stay there long. As 2000 approached, so did problems with Y2K, and the university needed to implement a new-software system. Because of her hard work, they chose Kris for the project. After a year and a half, she, along with many others, initiated BroncoWeb, the software that makes life more convenient for students and faculty. Instead of waiting for hours in a line running from the Registrar's Office to the library, students could now register for classes at home via the convenience of their own computers.
Then, after a few years, the registrar took
out her master's degree. With a steadfast mind, in May of 2009,
her that degree in public administration and became the official new regis-
Kris when she first took on the position. Balancing a new career, being a single
mother of two daughters, and attending graduate school all at the same time meant
few free moments. Between work and school, she often pulled fifteen to sixteen
hours days on campus, doing homework at night to make time for family. She credits
her kids for putting up with a busy and, at times, grumpy mom. She also credits her
staff for the great support during such hard times, as they would take her daughters to
soccer practice when she could not. Her children let her practice speeches on them
and helped proofread her papers. She says
the whole experience "was intense, but
very rewarding."

In her role as registrar, Kris sits on a
number of committees and attends others
ex officio. She meets with the enrollment
management committee, academic cal-
dendar committee, faculty senate, advising
council, academic standards committee,
and the curriculum committee. Kris offers
opinions regarding everything from policy
decisions to discussions on the history of a
policy and its enforcement and impact on
students. She also helped bring about on-
line grading, a quick and easy way for fac-
ulty to post grades that students can access
immediately. Before online grading, staff
at the Registrar's Office had to data enter
every grade submitted by faculty.

Kris also gives input on what kind of
system advisors should use to better guide
their students. She helps with planning
deadlines, and thanks to her staff, stu-
dents can now get on waiting lists to help
them get the courses they need. On top
of all this, she answers over a hundred
emails and phone calls every day to help
solve problems around campus. Meeting
challenges and overcoming hardships is
nothing new.

When her office took a 10% budget cut,
Kris and her staff maintained their effi-
ciency and progressivity. Not one service
was lost and students were not impacted
negatively. Kris is quick to praise her co-
workers for their dedication and profes-
sionalism. It has been a pleasure for her to
see them grow, and rewarding for her to be
the one who gets to promote them.

But the greatest challenge for Kris was
not in the office. It was battling breast can-
cer. It happened during the BroncoWeb
implementation. While working 50 to 60
hours a week, she was forced to undergo
both chemotherapy and radiation therapy.
Even though it was a lot, work became a
healthy distraction. When she arrived at
her Friday treatment, she joked with her
doctors "I only have cancer on Fridays." She
helped beat the cancer by staying posi-
tive, always thinking about how to make
the situation better.

Because Kris was doing so well, the
administration decided they needed her
quality efforts in the Registrar's Office, thus promoting her to assistant registrar.

One of her professors challenged the
class to read a book that was not part of
the assigned readings. Stacy chose "The
Audacity of Hope" by Barack Obama. Fin-
ishing the book was a defining moment for
a woman raised in a well-informed fam-
ily of Republicans. Obama's message of
hope and change resonated with Stacy and
chose her own optimism and desire for a
better world.

Even more significant was Obama's ap-
proach to decision making. "He had me at
common sense," says Stacy. His descrip-
tion of past politics, when congressional
members saw each other as worthy adver-
saries and challenged one another to clear
thinking and creative solutions, struck a
chord with Stacy. She took this message
and focused her own approach to creating
the world that she imagined. "The pursuit
of better policy doesn't have to be conten-
tious," she says, "it can be collaborative."

When Obama announced his candidacy
for the presidential election, Stacy knew
she had to act. She designed an internship
through Boise State, which allowed her to
combine working for democratic change
with completing her degree. The intern-
ship with the national Obama campaign
challenged Stacy to establish chapters of
Students for Barack Obama at every col-
lege and university in Idaho. This meant
locating students who wanted to work for
a Democratic underdog in their historically
conservative state. Stacy's first grassroots
organizing experience was a success. By
the end of her internship, chapters existed
at each of the nine schools in Idaho and
students were campaigning for Obama.

Embarking on a second Boise State in-
ternship, Stacy took a closer look at policy
creation at the state level. She served as an
aide to Idaho State Senator (then represen-
tative) Nicole LeFavour. This allowed her
to see the valuable role that personal rela-
tionships, often crossing party lines, can
play in lawmaking. She says, "Individuals
can disagree productively when they re-
spect each other and recognize that each

Stacy FALKNER

Stacy Falkner starts each day with gratitude. She is
grateful for the love and encouragement of her amazing
husband, for her "two hysterical kids, close-knit family,
and wildly wonderful friends."

ather than paying back her
many blessings, Stacy feels an
obligation to "pay it forward."
In 2006, Stacy had a fulfilling
life as a wife and mother. How-
ever, she had the feeling she could be doing
more for others. "I wanted to do more to
make the world a better place for everyone," she
says, "and I saw political science as a
path to doing that." Stacy enrolled at Boise
State University to complete the bachelor's
degree that she had started several years
earlier at the University of Idaho.

One of her professors challenged the
class to read a book that was not part of
the assigned readings. Stacy chose "The
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Bonnie Glick graduated in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in social work from Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. Her first professional job was with the Elkhart County Welfare Department, where she worked over five years in child protection, case management, and adoptions.

In 1978, Bonnie and her husband Jon moved to eastern Idaho in order to be near the mountains in Wyoming and Idaho. Their love of camping, hiking, and rock climbing resulted in many weekends in the wilderness areas and culminated with climbing the Grand Teton. Bonnie worked as a travel agent for the next eleven years, which allowed her to indulge her love of foreign travel. In 1981, Bonnie and Jon, who is a private practice counselor, moved to Boise. When their first child was born, she made the decision to stay home and, for the next decade, she focused her energies on raising two great kids.

During those initial years, Bonnie taught parenting classes for parents of pre-school aged children. Her interest in families, child development, and parenting grew and, as she thought about re-entering the work force, she began to look into victim witness work. Bonnie began as a volunteer in the Victim Witness Units of the Ada County Prosecutor's and Ada County Sheriff’s Offices. Immediately, she realized this was a fit. Eventually, the Ada County Sheriff’s Office hired Bonnie as a full-time employee.

She has worked as a victim witness coordinator for the past twelve years. Two years ago, she became the supervisor of the Victim Services Unit. In this role, Bonnie works with victims of all crimes against persons (domestic battery, sexual assault, homicide, suicide, aggravated DUI/fatalities, child abuse and child sexual assault, and other crimes).

Bonnie's strong character and effectiveness in her work is best observed in her interactions with victims. When people are victimized by a family member, Bonnie intervenes to alleviate some of the overwhelming amounts of emotion, trauma, and conflict.

Tammy Parker, a fellow victim witness coordinator, says, "Families often struggle in making difficult choices about a family member's accountability when they are trying to understand the unthinkable, grieve their own losses, and put individual security before their attachments to the offender... Bonnie provides safety, support, accountability, and access to resources to help these parents heal so they can be there for their child."

Beyond making sense of trauma, victims may find navigating through officers, prosecutors, and judges to be an arduous task; Bonnie is committed to ensuring victims are validated and respected while moving through these systems.

At times, victims of violence may experience anger or frustration with law enforcement or the judicial system. Tammy notes, "She provides a safe place for them to process those emotions, and, in the appropriate time, she begins to assist the individual to envision how they can use their experiences and passions to better their own lives and lives of others."

The Ada County Sheriff's Office dedicates itself to excellence and Bonnie strives to complement the amazing work they do. Her job requires healthy boundaries and maintaining physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Bonnie attends trainings regularly, and works consciously to maintain balance in both her professional and personal life. Her colleague, Adriane Bang, says, "She is almost an icon for self-care, singing in the community, keeping healthy boundaries, and she is often seen eating a baggie of vegetables. Her incredible self-care is what keeps her as a positive force in this field, working with victims, officers, families, and fellow advocates." Bonnie works in emotionally charged situations which require true empathy and compassion, balanced with a detachment only possible through self-knowledge and understanding. She challenges the three other victim witness coordinators in her unit to find this balance and mentors their personal and professional growth. Bonnie is cognizant of their need for flexibility and safety in de-briefing. She tries to model self-esteem on a daily basis and is honest in her observations and genuine with her praise.

Education and development of services for victims in our community and across Idaho are passions of Bonnie's. She sits on the executive committee for the Idaho Victim Assistance Academy, which developed an interdisciplinary, academically based setting for crime victim service providers, advocates, criminal justice personnel and allied professionals to gain a foundation in the principle of victims' rights and resources. Bonnie is also a member of the Director's Board of the Idaho Coordinated Response to Domestic and Sexual Violence, and she is credentialed as a victim advocate by the National Organization for Victim Assistance.

In her passion for education, she assisted in developing a statewide sexual assault curriculum as part of the Idaho Sexual Assault Network. Bonnie is a past president of the Idaho Victim Witness Association, committed to dating violence training, and she regularly offers presentations about Victims' Rights and the Victim Witness Program.

Her commitment to protecting citizens in our community is endless, and her compassion is a gift in a world where too much violence exists.

Who or what inspires you to continue making herstory?

Life consistently offers insight, tools, and community for addressing injustice and oppression at the root, globally. I think we must remain committed each day, in conversation, at work, in school and beyond and that creativity, knowledge, compassion must move beyond theory into practical action.  

Jennifer Edwards: 2006
Michelle Hicks is a force of nature. She is a dynamic and passionate woman who chooses the more difficult paths in life, as these are the paths where purpose and talent are cultivated.

Michelle hails from Caldwell, Idaho, where her mother and father owned a beauty and barber school. Michelle's mother's family, originally from Seattle, Washington, and who are of Japanese descent, literally established roots as farmers in Idaho during World War II after they left the Tule Lake Internment Camp in California.

“They were able to get out of the camp to go to the Fruitland and Ontario area to farm because during World War II all of the men were off at war and there was no one to bring in the crops. After the war, some of my family decided to stay in the Treasure Valley because they had lost everything, their business, their home, and other possessions when they were placed in the camps. They didn't have the financial resources to get back to Seattle, and they had also made friends in the community of Ontario.”

While attending Boise State University, Michelle volunteered for a “Fund Drive” at KBSU, which led to a job as a student reporter for several years. When she was ready to transition into television, she began working at Channel 2 as an associate producer. She graduated in 1993 with a bachelor's degree in social science, with an emphasis in communications and political science. After graduation, Michelle continued to work for Channel 2, until she decided to take a one-year position with Boise State Radio as the station manager at the College of Southern Idaho. Once the assignment was completed, Michelle returned to Boise and spent the next three years working as a news reporter and anchor for KTVB News Groups. Michelle's work in broadcasting gave her an appreciation for community service, as many of the news stories she reported were focused on volunteer events.

Choices made in the pursuit of success are not always easy. Michelle was mindful of this when she made a complete career change from television to corporate communications. She went to work for Micron Technology as its first-ever HR communications manager.

Michelle's leadership qualities helped to empower her team to transform how Micron communicated information about benefits, compensation and performance management at sites around the world. A unique aspect of Michelle's management was her dedication to being compassionate to the members of her team by being flexible around family issues. She believes it is essential for a healthy work environment and society in general. "I think that there is a great importance in raising healthy human beings," she says.

Micron opened up a new world for Michelle to be more involved in the community, something she greatly desired to do but never had the opportunity. One of the many organizations Michelle was involved in was the Meals On Wheels program that provides home-delivered meal services for senior citizens in need. For five years Michelle maintained a delivery route. With help from colleague Christine Campbell, they were able to incorporate giving birthday cards to the seniors on their routes. This great gesture made a difference to the seniors who did not receive birthday wishes from anyone else in their family or the community. “What I learned from participating in this was how uncomfortable volunteer work can be, and you have to make a commitment within yourself. One of the results of this was that I ended up making powerful friendships with the people we met on the route.”

After eight years of working for Micron, it was time for Michelle to continue on her path. This was a difficult decision for Michelle to make. “Joy is available everywhere” is a personal mantra that she meditates on during times of uncertainty and finds empowering during difficult transitions. “It helps me get through those times when I question my competence or my professional path or personal decisions, anytime that I may experience self doubt. One of the things I think young women need to remember is you don’t make mistakes. You need to own and have faith in choices you make.”

Michelle is currently a senior consultant for BUCK Consultants, a global HR services firm. Here she supports many companies with their HR communication efforts, such as Northrop Grumman Corporation, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and the J.R. Simplot Company. Michelle works on campaigns to attract a new generation of people entering the work force.

She realizes that people beginning their career today are interested in the integrity companies possess, such as social and environmental awareness. Some of the recruiting campaigns that Michelle works on appeal to an individuals' emotional connection, desires, and dreams in relation to the quality of their work. Michelle now works from a home office and this new dynamic has created an opportunity to learn the fine art of balancing family life, professional life, and taking care of herself.

One woman who Michelle attributes as a woman making herstory is her former boss at Micron, Jean McDaniel. Michelle describes Jean as “the model of what the 21st century woman can be,” because of her ability to draw boundaries that facilitate a healthy balance in her life. It is remarkable to Michelle that Jean can go for a three-mile run at 5 o'clock in the morning and still be a supportive boss, wife, and mother. As a highly respected woman in human resources, Michelle has learned to be successful in both her professional and personal life by trying to model Jean's example, but she says she does NOT run at 5 a.m.

For Michelle and so many other women, it is difficult to articulate how they make herstory. Her nomination as a Woman Making Herstory is "overwhelming, humbling, and touching." Her message to future Women Making Herstory is to, "Strive to do everything, but realize that you cannot always have it all at the same time. Remain mindful that you are not entitled to anything, as success comes from hard work and power is earned and not given. Be confident in your abilities, but humble about always needing to learn. Be curious. And invest time in yourself, understanding your gifts and your passion, which will lead you to knowing your purpose. Once you find this, passionately apply it to everything you do. Remember to invest in yourself, believe in yourself, and be mindful that in everything there is a learning opportunity to build your war chest of knowledge.” These words of wisdom reflect the insights that truly make Michelle a woman making herstory.
When meeting Emilie Jackson-Edney, one gets the impression of someone who has lived a double life, an assessment not too far off the mark. Born biologically male, Emilie lived her life as a man—that is until she decided at age 55 to live her life as a woman, to live her life being who she really is.

She says, "My last conscious thought my whole life before I fell asleep was to wake up and be a woman...because that's how I identified, and it was just cruel not to be able to be that person."

To mask her real identity as a woman, Emilie did not deviate from the status quo: she married, had two children, served as a church deacon, and worked in the male dominated fields of civil engineering and construction management. But after working for the Ada County Highway District for 36 years, she started having suicidal tendencies and experiencing major clinical depression. She decided to seek professional help. A psychologist diagnosed her with gender identity dysphoria (GID), a diagnosis that describes a person who feels a strong identification with the opposite sex and experiences considerable distress because of their actual sex.

Some family members accepted the news of her plan to transition genders and live as a woman, but some did not. "To live authentically, I ended up sacrificing everything I ever held dear, I mean everything," she says. Her 36-year marriage, for example, dissolved after she told her wife. "When I came out to her and told her who I was, she had some problems with it, and it got to the point that she didn't want to know anything about it."

"The news of a person like me transitioning genders hits them like a death in the family. For a trans person like me, that's what you want for yourself, you want the old self to be dead because that's not who you are, but it takes a long time to understand that in other people's perspective."

Although Emilie's retirement was only one year away, physical and emotional changes demanded that she begin living life full time as a woman while still working.

The timing also made sense from a practical standpoint: transgender people have to pass a "real-life" test that requires them to live full time for one year in their true identity before they can undergo the more permanent physical procedures of hormone-replacement therapy and sex-reassignment surgery.

Fortunately, Emilie found her workplace supportive in her decision to make the changeover. She notes, however, that had she not received support, no safeguards were in place to protect her had she been let go. So, although she found peace in her new identity, she also found a new sense of purpose.

Her transformation propelled her into the role of an activist, something that had not crossed her mind before. "I didn't feel...that I was ever affected by [discrimination] in the past, but when you live it, you see it, and it's just not a good thing," she says.

Emilie now educates city councils around the state and helps in their decisions to add gender identity and sexual orientation to their employment non-discrimination policies. She also lobbies state legislators to get gender identity and sexual orientation included in Idaho's Human Rights Act.

Idaho State Representative Nicole LeFaw says that Emilie's presence at the statehouse is especially powerful. "I think she's changed a lot of minds and helped people understand what gender identity means and why people shouldn't be fired from their jobs for being who they really are. She's probably one of the most important LGBTQ activists in Idaho right now."

"To me lobbying is just being present, showing yourself, and to try to dispel the fears and talking to people. That's the only way you're going to facilitate change," Emilie says. She also fosters understanding by sharing her story at universities around the state. "I try to humanize myself, and you've got to put yourself out there because not very many people know a person like me because people are closeted.

Emilie does much more than lobby. She also serves on the board of Idaho Equality; is on the education outreach committee for Susan G. Komen for the Cure; plays a leadership role in Tri-States Transgender; is on the LGBTQ advisory board for the Department of Health and Welfare's Project Filter program; is a coalition member for Idahoans for Fairness; and is on the advisory board for the 2010 Census' Voices United Taskforce.

United Vision for Idaho presented Emilie with the 2008 Progressive Grassroots Leader of the Year award, and The Community Center gave her the Elm Award for Outstanding Community Leader of the Year at its Le Bois Awards presentation last summer.

"In my entire life, my true identity was my secret and it was a deep dark secret that I kept in the recesses of my soul, but when I came out, it's not my secret anymore. And it's not my problem...it's their problem, whoever I tell, and how they accept it...I can only live true and if they accept that, fine. If they don't, [there's] nothing I can do about it," she says.

Emilie Jackson-Edney's courage to live an authentic life is an example to all of us to be who we really are.
"The Arc, Inc. is committed...to securing for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, in partnership with their families, the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they learn, live, work and play."

-Mission of the Idaho Chapter of The Arc, Inc.

In 1957, Barbara Lowry became a founding member of the Idaho Chapter of The Arc, Inc., an organization that develops educational and occupational programs, provides family support, and promotes awareness in the community for people with mental or developmental disabilities. Since getting involved with the organization, Barbara has touched many lives. And it all started with someone very close to her heart.

When Barbara was busy with three small children and her husband, Don, was in his third year of college, she noticed that her daughter, Diane, was not developing like other children. Diane, a baby with big sparkling eyes, a sweet smile, and a loving personality, was eventually diagnosed as mentally retarded. This was before children with disabilities were guaranteed an education, before family support services were available, and they were told to prepare for the worst. Barbara and Don were warned that Diane may not be allowed to attend school, that she would someday need to be institutionalized and that she would never really be independent. But that was unacceptable. Barbara was determined to provide Diane with an education, with support, and to do everything possible to help her reach her full potential. She became her daughter’s advocate.

At the same time, Frank and Mary Miller, who also had a disabled child, started the Association for Retarded Citizens. They wanted to build an organization which would serve disabled children and their families. The Miller’s brought together Don and Barbara Lowry, Dr. William Bronson and his wife Francis, Fred and Marjorie Koch, and Clarence and Ann Hettinger. Like the Lowry’s, the Koch’s and the Hettinger’s had children with special needs and Dr. Bronson worked with disabled children. Their first project together was founding the Gem Haven School for Retarded Children. Their goal was to prepare their students for admission into public school.

Over the years, Barbara took on different roles. Initially, Barbara, Don, and the other founders were focused on education. They believed it was vital that children with disabilities or developmental delays had access to an education. “In the beginning all I did was teach,” she says. “I took over a class my daughter attended when the position opened up. To tell you the truth, we were having a hard time putting together the twenty dollars a week to send Diane to class. So when Mrs. Koch asked me to take over I was thrilled.”

By 1973, the children from Gem Haven had been admitted to public schools and the association began launching new programs. “Day care,” for example, became an option for their older students who did not have anywhere to go during summer break. In addition, with the help of the Junior League, they bought a plot of land on Albion Street and built their main offices. At this time, they changed Gem Haven to the Activity Training Center for Retarded Citizens. Ten years later the name was changed again to PRIDE Enterprises.

“We were creative and we reached out to the community,” says Barbara. “I remember the Lions Club, the Kiwanis, and a group of teens that called themselves TORCH all helping out. It takes the right people with the right hearts.” The community responded by contributing funds, volunteering hours, and anything else they thought would help.

Eventually, Barbara went on to become the executive director of the association which had become known under the umbrella term The Arc, Inc., which covered the many programs the association had launched and funded. Barbara served from 1970 to 1989. "What I did was dream up ideas for the programs," she says. "Then we worked together with the community to build them."

One of Barbara’s ideas was to build sheltered workshops, where adults with disabilities could live and work more independently. She had been inspired by a video she saw at a national conference and she envisioned a series of homes, which would help students progress to the point of independence. However, these houses were not easy to build. They needed funding and the cooperation of the community. Many people in the neighborhoods where the association wanted to build sheltered workshops were worried about their property values dropping, worried about living near group homes and so Barbara became a diplomat and fundraiser as well as advocate. She attended meetings, raised funds, and helped organize awareness campaigns. Every house, just like every program, had its own unique set of challenges and circumstances. Raising funds for the Franklin and Miller Home on Ruby Street was particularly difficult because the economy was down and they needed $800,000. “They told me it couldn’t be done,” she says. “But we raised $680,000 and we built it.”

In 1989, Barbara was responsible for bringing the Savers Thrift Store into the Donation Center Solicitation Program. This program helps to fund The Arc, Inc., through donations of household items and clothing. Even though the Savers project was Barbara’s last project with The Arc, Inc. she continues to work with disabled children as a volunteer at the Elks Rehabilitation Center.

Diane Boothe, the dean of education at Boise State University, summed up Barbara’s contributions to the community by saying, “Barbara Lowry is a unique combination of expert educator, fundraiser, and advocate for people with special needs. Her impressive character and tenacity coupled with compassion for those who cannot always speak on their own behalf positively impacts the lives of the many people she influences.”
Jerri Mizrahi does not think she is anything extraordinary, but those within her sphere know differently. She directs the Shared Leadership Program at Boise State University, and has done so successfully for six years.

She seeks creative improvements in the program, thus facilitating effective change and developing people. "The first year you go through the program and receive a mentor, the second year you're responsible for the program and development, and mentoring for the next generation," she explains. "We reach out to create change."

Change is something Jerri knows a lot about because she has seen it crisscross her life, weaving an elegant tapestry. "It's an honor to be human," she says. "I look for the gift, and I operate from integrity." She sees everything as an opportunity and she loves life.

For instance, as a teen living in North Miami, she was shot at. Later, after she was married, her father was murdered. Because she longed for the change of safety and security, she pointed to a town on the map and landed in Hagerman, Idaho.

She and her husband seized the opportunity and relocated with the idea that Jerri could operate her own business; an arts and crafts store. "Little did I know," she laughs, "everyone had a little arts and crafts store in their own home!" Even when her husband passed away, she intentionally allowed herself to heal through community hospitality. "People tipped their hat to me," she remembers.

As a single woman, Jerri realized that she needed the security and networking offered in a larger city, so she moved to Pocatello. As a customer service representative for Idaho Power, she felt concern for residents who were unable to pay their electricity bills. Because of this, she implemented a training program for the customer service representatives aimed at identifying resources for those in need.

Following her work with the power company, she secured employment with the housing office at Idaho State University. "Whatever I wanted to do, I'd offer up those services and eventually move into different positions." For example, she asked to design a brochure for the housing office, which eventually led to writing procedures as the procedure specialist. "Even though I'm not one to follow procedure," she laughs. After three years in Pocatello, career changes helped develop her character more. "I've been in Boise for 30 years now," she says. "And I just wouldn't live anywhere else."

After moving to Boise, Jerri worked for Idaho Power and then transferred to public service, working for the State of Idaho as a procedure specialist, training specialist, training and organizational development manager, and then moved to the private sector as the training manager at Direct TV. She started a training buddy system there which is similar to the Shared Leadership Program she directs today.

During these years, she had a beautiful daughter, Sage. Eventually, Jerri also remarried. "I worked with the young people at my daughter's school," she recalls. She saw a need for parent-youth relationship enhancement, so she developed a training program designed toward boosting self-esteem and increasing communication.

Jerri returned to the public sector as the learning and development manager at Boise State University. As part of this role, she was the advisor/coordinator for the Shared Leadership Program in 2004. With sixteen to thirty-five participants annually, and a budget of about $3,000, Jerri delights in collaborative brainstorming sessions. For instance, journaling is a huge part of the program, but buying each participant a journal was not in the budget. In one of the planning meetings everyone started throwing out ideas. Collaboration and networking solved the problem with each participant receiving, at no cost, a thumb drive from an outside source. "I don't let barriers or boundaries keep me from starting something," she says.

Since Jerri embraces change so readily and openly, she became a life coach. According to her Web site, www.livinglightcoach.com, "Life coaching provides opportunities for people to grow, achieve self empowerment, continually learn, and celebrate their successes." Change does not have to be difficult, and Jerri knows this firsthand. As a result, she successfully helps others travel effortlessly through tough transitions. "You're not broken," she says. "You just need space created so you can see yourself."

Because she intends to listen and be of service, Jerri is able to abide in positive thoughts and let go of fear. Not long ago, her sister, Roberta, passed away. Beside herself with grief, she sought out support through medical professionals, family and friends. "My light went out," she says, "but I got it back...by looking for the gift in whatever happens."

Jerri shares her experiences—her tapestry of life—in everything she does. She continues to pursue involvement through the leadership program, life coaching, as well as mentoring, motivational speaking, and customized retreats for BSU staff. She is authentic and hardworking.

"I am no better than and no less than," she says. "You can't leave your bad self in the car with the window rolled down say-
Joann Muneta is the chairperson of the Latah County Human Rights Task Force, and she is not afraid to be assertive and persistent.

Because of this strong and outspoken woman, Moscow, Idaho, has a voice for human rights that is tireless and determined. As a child in New York City, Joann was surrounded by neighborhoods and people but did not really experience a sense of community until she moved to Idaho. “As I lived here, I came to realize the benefit and joys of belonging to a community, and the responsibility to keep it open and accepting,” she points out. “What you do here really makes a difference.”

Human rights are not Joann’s only passion. In addition to being chairperson of the Task Force, she also works as education coordinator of Festival Dance and Performing Arts, and is a member of the Moscow Arts Commission and the Farmer’s Market Advisory Board. Because of the many different aspects of diversity, Joann sees these roles as complementary. “Through seeing the arts from many different cultures, and artists of many different backgrounds, we learn the beauty of being united and true to ourselves.”

Joann is true to herself in all walks of life. She sets and achieves goals one step at a time. She makes changes happen with thought, education, and good old-fashioned tenacity. She helped establish the Moscow Arts Commission and Rendezvous in the Park, a summer arts festival. She is involved in Festival Dance and helped start Festival Dance Youtheach, Rendezvous for Kids, and the Young People’s Arts Festival. “I write the grants for Festival Dance Youtheach so we have funds to keep this going,” she explains.

Festival Dance is the largest, private, nonprofit arts organization in the Palouse/Valley region in terms of budget, number of people reached, and extent of programs. National, state and local grants allow it to provide free educational arts programs for 5,000 students a year including those from rural communities. Likewise, Festival Dance Youtheach offers free performances for local schools by professional artists. Rendezvous for Kids, and the Young People’s Arts Festival, offer workshops exposing children to several art forms including dance, drama, painting, woodworking, and music.

Fighting for equality, the Task Force began with just ten charter members. A growing, afflicting wave of hate activities in North Idaho, such as swastikas painted on cars and houses, and the establishment of the Neo Nazi Aryan Nations Brotherhood, called for action. “There had to be a response to hate propaganda,” Joann says. Although many obstacles stood in the way, the Task Force was successfully formed and is a vibrant force for anti-discrimination legislation and education. Joann willingly performs in the position of leadership as chairperson. She offers no reason to be excused from this crucial life work. When problems arise regarding human rights violations, she finds the community looking to her and the Task Force more and more for direction and guidance.

Furthermore, the Task Force sponsors several noteworthy events for community education including the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Rights Breakfast, MLK Jr. Arts and Essay contest, Rosa Parks Achievement Award, and school programs such as Living Voices (which is an interactive historical performance). By encouraging youth involvement in these programs, new activists are trained and encouraged to rise up and take their place within the community.

Because she understands the need for openness and acceptance within her community, Joann faithfully strives to keep it that way. As a Jewish woman, she has seen discrimination and human rights violations first-hand. Additionally, her husband, Paul, is Japanese-American and rememberances of persecution during World War II keep justice and equality firmly in place. “But I also think there is a part of me that rebels against hatred and unfairness,” she says.

When hate and violence erupt, activism and motivation mobilize the community to respond in a positive manner. “We set forth our principles in a positive way and we have a very receptive community,” Joann says.

Involvement with other organizations including the City of Moscow Human Rights Commission, the Interfaith Association, the University of Idaho, and LGBTQ organizations, keeps hate crimes monitored and controlled. “The more groups that work together, the more effective you are,” she says. For example, in 2003 a local church hosted a history conference on the University of Idaho campus. One of the chief organizers had written and published a monograph entitled “Southern Slavery as it Was.” Although not a historian, the author offered a philosophical and historical view that slavery was a “harmonious” example of racial relations. The community was outraged. Joann calmly lifted her voice of reason and assisted in organizing educational and productive activities to balance and soothe the community. Joann’s approach and leadership sufficiently and eloquently met this serious challenge with dignity and endurance.

By filling her life with supportive people who work just as hard as she does, Joann’s work as the chairperson is still by no means considered easy. At the heart of the organization, she is determined in her dedication and preservation of human rights. “We are all human beings deserving an equal chance and needing respect and understanding.”

Issues of particular interest to Joann include women’s rights regarding reproductive choice, equality of pay, and equality in hiring and promotion. “One group still struggling for basic rights is the LGTBQ [lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer], especially in Idaho.”

For thirty years, Joann Muneta has continuously advocated for human rights and artistic expression. With persistence and dignity, she seeks to recognize the contributions of others in the struggle for human rights.
Tina Perkins, daughter of a government contract worker, was born in Berlin, Germany. For the first eight years of her life, she traveled across the border from West Berlin to East Berlin during several summer vacations, smuggling goods to her family trapped by the Soviet regime.

Because Tina was born in an American military hospital, she carried a blue passport, which prevented East German soldiers from searching her. Her mother and grandmother made her the “mule,” hiding coffee, chocolates, cash, and cigarettes—things her extended family could not get on the other side. “They put them in my clothes, coats... luggage,” she laughs. “I wonder what would have happened to me had they searched me.”

From Germany, Tina and her family traveled to Madrid, Spain, where they lived for three years. When she was 12, her father was stationed in Bellevue, Nebraska. “It was quite a shock for us. I mean compared to Europe, there was not much diversity...you only know what you know. I truly developed an appreciation for all different cultures,” she says. Three years later, her family went to the Philippines, where Tina graduated from high school at the age of 17.

In 1985, still in the Philippines, and one week after turning 18, Tina married an American C130 Air Force pilot. After a brief tour in Hawaii, she made it full circle back to Germany in 1987. Tina and her husband were still stationed at Rhein Main Air Base just as the Berlin Wall fell in late 1989. Tina says, “It made such a huge impact on me when the wall started to fall. It had been a permanent fixture and sign of oppression my whole life. I realized what liberation meant to oppressed people.”

Tina’s husband separated from the Air Force in 1990 and took a position with United Airlines. After a short stint in Chicago, where Tina gave birth to a baby boy, Jayce, the family moved to Colorado. She enrolled at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and graduated with a degree in criminal justice in 1996. On the fourth of July, that same year, they relocated to Boise. The next working day, Tina walked into the Boise City Attorney’s Office and said, “I want to be a full-time volunteer and do whatever you need me to do.” She began volunteering as a victim witness coordinator (VWC), providing services to victims, primarily of domestic violence. Victim witness coordinators act as a liaison between victims and law enforcement and prosecutors, as many times, the process itself is so intimidating it can be re-traumatizing all by itself.

A year later, Tina was hired full time. In 2002, the city found that the Victim Witness Units in the attorney’s office and in the police department were overloaded, due in part to each agency working separately. When those units were combined, Tina transferred in as the unit supervisor. Tina became one of few female supervisors in the police department. “Being a woman in a man’s world takes a certain amount of finesse. That finesse and that requirement of me came at the worst time because in August of that same year of the transfer, I was going through a divorce.” Tina made the decision to take her “grief and put it on the shelf” and learn everything there was to know about police work. She was determined to “get to know” everyone.

Laytreda Schultz goes to work surrounded by what she fears most. She is a marine law enforcement officer who cannot swim. She is also a visionary who sweats the small stuff and a sheriff’s sergeant with enough financial smarts for street credit at a CPA convention.

“Marine work got me out of the office,” she says, “and it was also a way to make extra money.” But her biggest motivation was overcoming her fear of water. “A lot of kids learn to swim when they’re young, but I didn’t. I grew up afraid of water. Although I’ve conquered that fear, I still have a healthy respect for it.”

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We're not lost, we just don't know where we are right now. Nevertheless, her skills as an accountant, she honed her skills and became a sworn law enforcement officer. This gave her the authority to arrest suspects.

Five years later, Laytreda was promoted from deputy to sergeant. "It's hard to explain what I do," she says. "My job didn't exist when I started and it's different every day." She supervises deputys in Pine and Featherville, who are responsible for back-country law enforcement in the mountains of Elmore County. When the primary marine deputy left, she began supervising the marine program as well. Over the years her job has expanded to include recreation, search, and rescue. Laytreda was responsible for the special event the Three Island Crossing reenactment. This commemorated the Oregon Trail pioneers who crossed the Snake River near Glenns Ferry. The journey was a perilous one for the pioneers, but fortunately, for modern-day river crossers, Laytreda was standing by to help ensure everyone's safety. She especially remembers one year—seeing a close friend swept off his horse in the chaos of an overturned wagon and the struggle to unhitch the horses. Although her friend was not injured, Laytreda's helpfulness, as her jet ski stalled in the moss-choked water, haunts her. "It's still hard to think about. I can still see him in the water and remember trying to get to him but not being able to," Laytreda watched over her last crossing in August, 2009, when the event officially ended after 24 years.

Laytreda is also involved in safer events like Shop with a Cop. This program helps children from disadvantaged families buy Christmas gifts for their siblings and parents. Each December, over one hundred law enforcement officers convoy through Mountain Home, lights flashing, for a shopping spree with young deputies-for-the-day. Even with a heavy schedule in law enforcement, Laytreda still helps manage the department's finances—nearly a full-time job by itself. "If I had it to do over again, I would be an accountant," she says. "You have to live on a budget at home. It's the same thing here at the sheriff's department. Knowing your limitations and working within them is the key to a successful program." Although she understands the limitations of the sheriff's budget, Laytreda shows limitless creativity in locating sources of funding. She knows where to look for money and how to secure it through warm personal relationships and persistence. She says, "When I walk into the county commissioner's meetings they sigh and ask me what I want."

Once the sheriff's department has purchased new equipment, Laytreda shows the same persistence and attention to detail when maintaining it. Her fleet includes boats and jet skis for marine work, snowmobiles and four wheelers for search and rescue work. She is currently planning a new county building that will provide safe equipment storage, plus offices and classrooms. Even in these difficult times, she has located enough sources of funding to reach her goal. Laytreda's coworker, Deputy Sheriff Nancy Hawley, says, "Laytreda stays on top of the little stuff, so that the big stuff all works." Laytreda sees herself simply as a problem solver, "I solve the community's problems through my law enforcement work, and I solve funding problems at the sheriff's office."

Dr. Gwen Smith has always wanted to help and growing up amongst five brothers in rural eastern Oregon she had plenty of opportunities. To this day she says "I'm here to help others; I don't know what the others are for."

Although her "helping" might not always have been appreciated—at age four she helped her mother by "canning" the bull snake her father had killed in the garden; at 10 her fourth grade teacher told her father not to funnel her energy away from "helping" other members of the class with their assignments—Gwen continued to help all who would stand for it. "How do you know you can't if you haven't tried" or "We're not lost, we just don't know where we are right now," she would admonish brothers Ben and Henry as she led them over the ridge out of sight of "civilization." These formative years taught her that nothing is impossible—but some things might be harder.

In 1957, at the height of the Cold War, the Russians launched Sputnik taking the lead in the space race. Students were encouraged to study math and science to help their country and Gwen signed on. She was surprised, however, at an underlying assumption that this would be boys'/men's work and girls/women, although needed, would be taking support roles.

In senior high school just two girls signed up for physics. Following a study session with a half dozen of her classmates, talk turned to the upcoming Senior Ball. "You sure don't want to take someone who gets better grades in physics than you do," remarked one of the guys. Gwen was still determined to help. The first in her family to go to college, she took the Greyhound bus from Pendleton to Salt Lake City, a place she had never been, to study physics. Shifting majors, she graduated with degrees in English and mathematics, ready to teach. Fast forward some 20 years. Public schools were not a fit for Gwen, but teaching was. Whether administering a teacher credentialing process, selling real estate, or solving titling/registration issues as a motor vehicle investigator, she found opportunities to teach. She was also aware that she had to overcome gender-biases underlying comments such as: "I see you are wearing an engagement ring. I suppose you'll soon be quitting to have babies." or "I can see that you are expecting. How do you plan to do this job and take care of a baby?" or "I'm sure you aren't interested in this job. The rest of the crew is male and there is travel involved."

As a state employee, Gwen discovered training and development. In the '80s many Idaho state departments had robust employee training programs and she signed up for every workshop her schedule would allow. When a position in the training section opened, she applied. She
Sheila Weaver volunteers for NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI is dedicated to supporting, educating, and advocating on behalf of people with mental illness and their families.

In addition to being a full-time student at Boise State University, Sheila is in her fifth year with NAMI and a key contributor to the organization. She is a former member of the board of directors, sits on multiple committees, and leads support groups in the Boise area to promote education and raise awareness about mental health issues. Her support groups and work as an advocate aim at addressing concerns regarding the stigmas surrounding these issues.

At the age of 22, Sheila fell into an opportunity to manage a home for women transitioning from prison or mental hospitals into a sober living environment in Hailey, Idaho. At New Life Fellowship, Sheila saw first-hand that the road to recovery takes a community, support groups, and networking to keep resources available. Her job was to make sure these women understood that recovery can be a long and arduous process, and to inspire them not to give up. "I got to see how these women's lives changed profoundly and it really impacted my life. I wanted to continue to be part of this lifestyle of creating wellness." Sheila saw how the community responded to the women at New Life Outreach for their past troubles and committed herself to destroying pejorative conceptions about folks who struggle in life.

Sheila and her family know the effects of ignorance surrounding mental health. In 2002, schizophrenia came into their lives when one of their own was diagnosed. Scared of their new reality, they did not know how to move forward. They felt paralyzed, as if life would never be normal for them again. Initially, the illness was inadequately treated: "It was like, 'here, take this medicine, everything will be fine,'" Sheila says. "Medication is not a silver bullet, people need more than medication." Sheila and her family reached out to NAMI. They learned they could find the tools to normalize the illness by seeking out support groups, educational classes, and focusing on the result, not the diagnosis. "It's like, if you have a cut on your leg, you don't just stare at how grotesque it is, you nurse it back to health, confident it will heal." In 2004, Sheila began her volunteering legacy at NAMI.

"There is a stigma that recovery is not possible for those affected by mental illness," Sheila says. "People don't have to be stranded on their own island; it does not mean people will be on disability for the rest of their lives."

According to Sheila, one in four people deal with these issues at least once in their life. "Some may not be as profound as schizophrenia or bipolar disease but mental health issues are much more common than people think. It does not have to be a trap." Through the educational work she does with NAMI, the community is better able to understand the process to becoming healthy is something we all do. Sheila's advocacy serves to remind the public that people struggling are not separate from society. "We're all survivors in one way or another. People need to stop for a minute and remember that those dealing with mental illness and other difficult bouts are survivors as well."

Abounding social stigmas about folks dealing with these issues is just one problem. There is also little financial support or resources available. "The support, if any, is all too often reactive instead of proactive. We need to be proactive if we intend for mental health to be adequately approached," Sheila says. Recovery is not a destination but a journey that NAMI seeks to make safe with education.

Through her various efforts, Sheila is very valuable to NAMI's mission to help people live full, productive lives. She focuses on providing resources for families who do not have insurance, folks who speak different languages, and those whose cultural competence may be lacking. "Families don't receive good tools to effectively address and deal with these issues. There is no map for what to do if you're in a family dealing with mental illness," she says.

Sheila's volunteer work with NAMI, including her academic studies, and full time position in the Office of the Provost can, at times, be tiresome, but the effort is more than worth it for her. Sheila says it is her outlook on life, and the people around her that inspire her to help others.

"I don't take myself too seriously. I strive to remember and recognize I am not the center of my own world. I also embrace the idea of 'humor as healthy.' Laughter can indeed show recovery," she explains. Paula Campbell, who volunteers with Sheila, says, "Sheila is amazing in terms of getting information out to the community. She does everything with commitment and a smile on her face." Last October, with Sheila's help, NAMI hosted their annual fundraiser walk, which attracted more than 600 people and raised close to $55,000. Sheila also created NAMI's Facebook page and their local Web site.

Sheila intends to stay involved with NAMI in the future and does not give herself any particular credit for the help she provides the community—she remains humble. "I'm just a person," she says. "Every person has the ability to impact and help another person...you don't have to change the whole world in order to make a difference. Differences are made with the seemingly smallest of actions."
**Christina (continued from page 7)**

it happen."

Hartzell Cobbs, Christina's supervisor, says, "Christina, by definition, is kind and has a big heart. She has a way of sharing commonality in ways that stimulate people to participate in the community. She is brilliant and has a wealth of experience working with refugees." To put the idea of commonality into perspective, the ANA organizes events such as the annual International Women's Day Fundraiser (March 10th, 2010 will be this year's event) and assists in organizing an annual one week soccer camp for kids ages six to 18. During the International Women's Day, entertainment and food is provided by the different refugee groups, and a silent auction and raffle are held. The soccer camp is an opportunity for children from all cultures and backgrounds to have fun, and experience an environment where common language does not matter much. At the end of the soccer camp, the kids get to keep the uniforms and the ball. Both of these events are possible through countless donations and volunteers.

Christina would like to find ways of integrating refugees into the community rather than assimilating them. It is important to acknowledge their experiences, struggles, survival, and ability to move forward. The biggest lesson Christina has learned is to value the little things, because you never know when you might lose them. As she continues to influence this community with open arms and an open heart, she reminds us, "Don't lose sight of what is important and be grateful for what you have around you."

**Stacy (continued from page 8)**

person's beliefs are as valid and as deeply held as their own. Good debate fosters growth."

After graduation, in May 2008, the Idaho Field Director of Obama for America hired Stacy. She "found islands of bold and eager Democrats in a sea of red" as she shared Obama's vision for America. She credits her listening and leadership skills as big parts of her success on the Obama campaign. "The most important skill for grassroots organizing," Stacy says, "is the ability to recognize what is most important to people. This means listening closely to find the one thing that each person feels passionate about and then turning that energy into action."

In January 2009, Stacy traveled to Washington D.C. for Obama's inauguration. The following day, when President and Mrs. Obama visited the Staff Ball, the Idaho for Obama team was thrilled to hear their state singled out. The new president said, "You didn't listen to the naysayers. You said, 'I'm Idaho for Obama. Yes we can!'" The crowd erupted into chants of, "Way to go Idaho!" that provided a celebratory end to months of campaigning.

Unfortunately, Election Day meant unemployment for Stacy. Nevertheless, her organizing skills and experience with the legislature paved the way for her current position. She now serves in the Public Affairs Department of Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest (formerly Planned Parenthood of Idaho). Her job focuses on health policy and lobbying during legislative session and shifts to outreach, education, and volunteer recruitment during the rest of the year.

When women have access to quality, affordable health care, they are more likely to avoid a sexually transmitted infection or unplanned pregnancy. The key is prevention through comprehensive health education. Stacy points out, "We teach our children about the danger of not wearing a seatbelt even though we don't anticipate a car accident, but we avoid telling them the risks of unprotected sex because we're uncomfortable talking about it."

Stacy is determined that her children will grow up in a more compassionate world. She sees her rewarding family life as the fulcrum on which the rest of her life balances. The happiness she finds with her family and friends gives her the energy to champion progressive causes and dedicate hours to volunteering for organizations close to her heart. President Obama said, "Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." Josie Evans-Graham, education coordinator at Planned Parenthood, adds, "This epitomizes Stacy's attitude and inspiration. She has, and will, play a role in the positive change we seek in our state."
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.