

August 2015



NEW OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL FOR WOMEN FOUNDATION

The mission of the New Opportunity School for Women Foundation, Inc., is to establish and enable sites for the New Opportunity School for Women by providing central support services that ensure consistent and high quality programs.

Welcome to the inaugural newsletter of the Foundation for the New Opportunity School for Women. This newsletter highlights the current happenings with the NOSW Foundation and four NOSW Program Sites—collectively, we are the NOSW Family!

In this issue, you will learn about the NOSW family—how the NOSW Foundation works to support the mission of the NOSW Program Sites, and the inspiring stories of the courageous women who attend the NOSW programs. The mission of the NOSW programs is to improve the education-

al, financial, and personal circumstances of low-income women from the Appalachian region areas of Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

We are excited to share with you how the Foundation is continuing the successful fulfillment of its mission! So far in 2015, the Foundation has received money to assist the NOSW programs with medical and dental care for their participants, help with programming needs, establish an educational scholarship fund, and redesign a graduate survey to collect data that will enable us to continuously improve the NOSW programs.

But this is truly just the beginning as the Foundation is dedicated to raising more financial support and awareness of the NOSW family of programs—free to each participant—in order to sustain and grow the undeniable impact on Appalachian women and their families.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- NOSW PROGRAM GRADUATION UPDATES
- NEWS & NOTES FROM THE FOUNDATION
- NOSW AT LEES-MCRAE 10TH ANNIVERSARY
- IN HER WORDS—LETTER FROM A GRADUATE
- NOSW FOUNDATION APRIL BUNCH

LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER

What an exciting summer this has been. With successful sessions at our four sites in Berea, Kentucky, Lees-McRae College in North Carolina, Bluefield College on the Virginia/West Virginia border and most recently we celebrated with graduates at Maryville, Tennessee. Over eight hundred women have now graduated from the New Opportunity School since its inception 28 years ago. This is nothing short of a miracle! Imagine, if you will, the lives of these Appalachian women that have been changed along with their children, other family members, and friends. Meeting the women is always a special occasion for me and I am constantly amazed at the large number of supporters who attend graduations.

We are all touched by the stories the women tell but most of all we are challenged by their determination and motivation as we see the results of the NOSW. We are all engaged in important work and our mission stands loud and clear! All of us involved with the NOSW Foundation and the NOSW Program Sites appreciate our many friends and donors who stand with us! Thank you!

Jane B Stephenson, Founder



Founder, Jane B. Stephenson (third from left) with 2015 Lees-McRae NOSW Class

NOSW Program Sites Graduate 46 Courageous Women

2015 marks the year that over 800 brave women have benefited from the NOSW experience. With five sessions among the four program sites, 46 women graduated this year.

During the NOSW experience, each woman finds the courage to leave home for three weeks to participate in intensive coursework in self-esteem, job search skills, creative writing, math and Appalachian literature, among others. As friendships and bonds of sisterhood form, self confidence is nurtured. As the poem on page 6 from the 2015 NOSW class at Bluefield reflects, many women truly find their “Inner Voice of Beauty.”

The flagship program at Berea holds two sessions each year: one in February and one in June. A total of 17 women participated this year. According to director Lori Sliwa, “The NOSW’s graduates all realize during those three weeks that they already have the power of change within themselves and the NOSW is

simply their navigator until they are ready to take the wheel in their own hands.”

Marking its 10th anniversary, the NOSW at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina held this year’s session in June with 12 women graduating. The day also had special meaning as a 10th year anniversary celebration was held with graduates, supporters, volunteers and friends in attendance to share stories and celebrate this milestone (see box on next page.)

The NOSW at Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee completed its second session on August 1st with 6 graduates. Each year the NOSW classes give themselves a name, and this year it was the punctuation mark “;” as they are “not done”. In addition to their coursework, some highlights of this year’s program included internships at

businesses in Maryville and a chance to see a concert by country music artist Phil Vassar . “I am so thankful for these women I call my sisters. I’m excited to see where we go from here,” one graduate remarked of the experience.

The NOSW at Bluefield College in Bluefield, Virginia saw 11 women graduate from its third session. In addition to their coursework and internships, women were treated to an etiquette dinner and makeovers, volunteered in a “give back” day where they worked at a local food pantry, attended a play at a local dinner theater and participated in mock interviews.

Congratulations to all the courageous NOSW 2015 graduates! The NOSW Foundation thanks all the staff, volunteers, friends and donors who make these sessions possible and help change lives!



The NOSW Family of Programs—L-R—Maryville, Berea, Bluefield
Upper right—Lees-McRae



NOSW at Lees-McRae Celebrates 10 years

The NOSW at Lees-McRae College celebrates its 10th year as the first expansion program of the NOSW. Explaining the significance of the program, director Jennie Harpold states, "The women who graduate from New Opportunity School for Women at the end of their three weeks with us leave with renewed self confidence and hope for the future."

On June 20th in conjunction with the Summer NOSW graduation, the NOSW hosted a celebration with over 150 in attendance. Past graduates spoke passionately about the impact the program has had on their lives. Volunteers, advisory board members and staff were recognized. The audience was treated to a commemorative video with reflections from Founder Jane Stephenson and NOSW Foundation Board member Frank Taylor about the start of the program in 2005.

The NOSW at Lees-McRae College has also committed to incorporate the 10th year anniversary theme into all NOSW events throughout 2015. Beginning with an Open House in April, off campus events in June and July and concluding with a holiday Open House in December. For more information about the program and 10th anniversary celebration, visit the Lees-McRae NOSW homepage on the LMC website -<http://www.lmc.edu/academics/stephenson/nosw/index.htm>

To My NOSW Sisters Upon Graduation

By *Sandi Keaton-Wilson*
(Berea NOSW 1995 graduate)

Congratulations!

Today, take pride in your accomplishment: you are leaving here far advanced from the women you were when you first came three weeks ago.

You are even wiser, even stronger as you've succeeded in reaching this goal. Now, you have plans in place for continued improvement in your future with new confidence and sharpened skills.

Savor this moment, wrap it carefully, lovingly in your treasured memories, for you will, as years come and pass, recall this experience as truly enlightening, truly life changing.

Reach forward, without fear, to what you wish to attain.

Gain it, retain it, and pause to reach backward to give hand up and hope to some deserving woman behind you.

Share your story!

Know that you are blessed, that you have hundreds of new sisters, most whom you've never met, but who still accept you, applaud you, acclaim you for the woman you are, the sister you've become.

Celebrate!

Sandi is a 1995 NOSW Berea graduate and has become a noted Kentucky poet and author with many published works including recently a flash fiction piece, "His Mysterious Ways," published in the Bluefield College's 2015 Bluestone Review.



From Top Right—NOSW at Maryville College graduate gives director Linda Ueland a hug at graduation; graduates of the Berea NOSW sing an inspirational song; Quilt Square from the Berea NOSW, each program creates a quilt every year and each square tells the stories of the individual woman; graduates of the NOSW at Bluefield College

IN HER WORDS NOSW GRADUATE MEG QUINN



When I arrived at the New Opportunity School for Women in July 2010, I had little self-esteem and had no idea what was going to happen in the following three weeks. I remember the first day and how scared I was.

When I arrived there were many people there to greet me. I received a bag of goodies and my room key. When I got to my room I was shocked to see a big bag with tissue paper and a card from the church women saying welcome. I will never forget how blessed I felt. Total strangers reaching out to me and other women saying they cared.

The next three weeks were probably the most intense weeks I had up to that point. The program was hard, intense, and wonderful all at the same time. I learned so many things. The two big ones were how to get along with other women and my self-esteem grew by leaps and bounds. When Jane Stephenson spoke to us and told us how the program started, I was amazed. How could one women, with help from others, start and succeed with such a wonderful program? I knew then that I could also make a difference, and from

that point on I have been working on doing that.

During the program we had internships at different work environments. Mine happened to be at the box office of the Summer Theatre at Lees-McRae College. Little did I know how the program and that internship would change my life. I was offered a summer job the next summer with the box office. I also had the privilege of helping with NOSW. That was the beginning of a four year home for me at Lees-McRae College.

One of the participants Jess Stone, of the 2011 session, decided she wanted to go to college, and she was accepted into Lees-McRae College. I then mentioned I might want to go. Well, the next thing I know, God swung that door wide open. Jess and I started college in the fall of 2011 and we both graduated in the fall of 2015. I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and also one in Psychology.

Never would I have dreamed going to a three week program would enrich and bless my life so much. When I say it was life changing, that is an understatement. I needed people who cared about me and believed in me to

give me a push and say yes you can do things that seem impossible and yes you can make a difference. The students on campus called me "Mama Meg" and I had some wonderful relationships with many of them and even helped a few realize they could do the same thing and believe in themselves. I am now looking for a job where I can help people and be the best that God wants me to be. I would never be where I am today

"I would never be where I am today without the New Opportunity School for Women helping me realize I am worthy and important, and that I can make a difference."

without the New Opportunity School for Women helping me realize I am worthy and important, and that I can make a difference. I will forever be changed by the program and all the people involved with it. Thank you, New Opportunity School for Women, thank you!

Meg Quinn is a 2010 Graduate of the Lees-McRae NOSW & 2015 Graduate of Lees-McRae College. She currently serves as an at-large member on the NOSW Foundation Board of Directors.

SAVE THE DATE—NOVEMBER 8TH
FIRST ANNUAL NOSWF OPPORTUNITEA
LYRIC THEATRE, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY
3-5 P.M.

The NOSW Foundation is pleased to announce the first annual OpportuniTEA Afternoon Tea and Fashion Show will all proceeds benefiting the Foundation. Bring your friends and enjoy delicious treats including hot and cold teas, scones and desserts all while enjoying a fashion show featuring designs by local fashion boutiques, door prizes and a silent auction.

Individual tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door or \$350 to reserve a table. To order tickets or for more information contact Amy Potts, Executive Director, director@noswfoundation.org or 859-612-1932.

Thank you to event organizer Marisa Aull, the volunteer planning committee and all sponsors for making this event possible.



Berea NOSW summer session participants toured the capitol city of Frankfort, KY on June 25. In addition to touring the Governor's Mansion and State Capitol, they met with State Representative, Leslie Combs from the 94th District.

NOSW Foundation News & Notes

Keeping true to the NOSW Foundation's mission of enabling NOSW program sites with central services, we have been able to offer several funding opportunities to our programs this year.

Through the very generous support of the Gertrude E. Skelly Charitable Trust, the NOSW Foundation was able to re-grant \$20,000 to the four program sites for medical and dental screenings for their 2015 participants. Because of this grant, women from each of the programs were given access to vital medical and dental care.

At the NOSW at Bluefield College, in addition to health screenings provided by the Clinch Valley Medical Center, two graduates received dental care. According to director April Breimann, "We were able to give the gift of a smile just in time for graduation to a lady that was lacking in self-confidence all of her life due to her dental needs. We hope this gives her the boost in self-confidence she desperately needs."

The Foundation also received a grant from the Harry and Elsie Baumker Foundation to assist the sites with programming needs. To date these funds have

been used to pay for counseling services for participants, new equipment, educational opportunities and to establish scholarship funds at the Bluefield and Maryville programs.

We have also been working with funding from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation to re-develop a new comprehensive survey for graduates of the NOSW from all sites. Every two years graduates are sent a survey and now consultants are working with directors from each site to improve this survey and ensure a



Participant from the NOSW at Bluefield College received dental care

good rate of return.

Also, with the generous support of Janie Polk we have established an educational scholarship fund. Janie taught the self-esteem course at the Berea NOSW for over 15 years and

continues to support the program. This scholarship fund was established initially at the Berea NOSW by friends and family of Janie, and she has generously agreed to make the funds available for participants from all program sites to help pay for expenses that arise while they are attending college or vocational training. Scholarship applications and guidelines are available by contacting Amy Potts, director@noswfoundation.org. The NOSW Foundation will continue to raise money for this scholarship fund (see box below).

On August 28, the NOSW Foundation will be the Community Organization of the Night at the Lexington Legends Baseball Game. Representatives will give radio interviews about the positive impact of the NOSW programs and one of our graduates will even throw out the first pitch. All proceeds raised through tickets sales will benefit the scholarship fund.

And finally, mark your calendars for November 8th 3-5p.m, when we will host our first OpportuniTEA Afternoon Tea and Fashion Show at the Lyric Theater in Lexington Kentucky. Bring your friends and enjoy delicious treats including hot and cold teas, scones and desserts all while enjoying a fashion show featuring designs by local fashion boutiques, a silent auction and door prizes. More information on pg. 5

SUPPORT THE NOSW SCHOLARSHIP FUND AND HAVE A FUN EVENING AT THE LEXINGTON LEGENDS BASEBALL GAME -AUGUST 28

On August 28th, come out to the ballpark while supporting a wonderful cause- the Foundation Scholarship Fund, which provides educational scholarships for all NOSW programs

Tickets are only **\$8** and proceeds will go to an educational scholarship fund for participants from all four NOSW program sites. Discounts of \$1 per ticket are available to groups of 6 or more.

If you want to purchase tickets and are unable to attend, we will donate your tickets to a local charity so that children can attend at no cost to them.

For more information about Lexington Legends Baseball and Whitaker Ball Park (207 Legends Lane, Lexington KY)- visit www.lexingtonlegends.com

To order tickets contact Amy Potts, Executive Director, director@noswfoundation.org or 859-612-1932.

**2015-16
Board of Directors**

Officers

Chair: Virginia Underwood
Vice-Chair and Founder: Jane Stephenson
Treasurer: Barbara Power
Secretary: Tim Marema
Immediate Past Chair: Janet Tronc

**NOSW Program Site
Representatives**

Ben Poage, Berea NOSW Representative
Carla Baumann, Berea NOSW
Representative
Crystal Kieloch, Bluefield NOSW
Representative
Annette Tabor, Bluefield NOSW
Representative
Leslie Carter, Lees-McRae NOSW
Representative
Carolyn West, Lees-McRae NOSW
Representative
Lori Hunter, Maryville NOSW
Representative

Members At Large

Gretchen Bolton,
Mike Nichols
Meg Quinn
Frank Taylor
Tom Triplett
Sue Weant
Colmon Elridge

Executive Director

Amy Potts

Contact Information

New Opportunity School for Women
Foundation, Inc.

221 Saint Clair Street #200

Frankfort, KY 40601

Phone: (859) 612-1932

Email: director@noswfoundation.org

Website: www.noswfoundation.org

NOSW Program Sites

Berea NOSW—Lori Sliwa, Director
Bluefield NOSW—April Breimann, Interim
Director
Lees-McRae NOSW—Jennie Harpold,
Director
Maryville NOSW—Linda Ueland, Director

**THE INNER VOICE OF
BEAUTY**

"The Inner Voice of Beauty" is a poem of the collective voices of the 2015 Class of the New Opportunity School for Women Bluefield College arranged by Rob Merritt, Bluefield College Professor and Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, who taught the women during the 2015 three-week session. Professor Merritt read the poem during the 2015 graduation.



*I hide behind closed doors
and walk through the journey of my life alone*

Love is tears.

*I have a voice,
but cannot speak;
I guess I am speaking my inner voice.*

*I lost my life,
but then there was a
brief moment
I felt a breeze
and woke up;
my life was
a dream*

*I got tired of being broken;
my heart heals up each day.*

*Some poems
make me think of my mom;
I would love to be able to talk to her now.*

I would love to know what my child is doing.

I have met some beautiful women.

*This one person like me
made me happy as can be.*

*I see myself in all of these women;
they make me laugh and cry and be sad
with their stories;
maybe one day they will see themselves in me.*

*I feel more beautiful at 35
than I did at 25,
even with the lines and wrinkles of time.*

*Change excites me
but paralyzes me.
I must get brave and face my fears.
My future is a surprise.
It's a new beginning.*

Wow for the blessing that has been given to me

*Change has to be done
in order to evolve
into something beautiful.*

APRIL NOSW FOUNDATION BRUNCH

On April 18, friends and supporters of the NOSW Foundation were treated to a brunch hosted by and at the home of NOSW Foundation friends Zella and Bill Daugherty, Lexington, Kentucky.

Over 40 friends and donors gathered to hear the inspirational stories of graduates of the 4 NOSW Program Sites. Gurney Norman, former Kentucky Poet Laureate and creative writing teacher reflected on his many years with the Berea NOSW, and everyone enjoyed a beautiful Bluegrass Spring morning with a delicious brunch prepared by Zella Daugherty.



Hosts Zella and Bill Daugherty



L-R: Jeri Allison ,Zella Daugherty and Tamara Cox



Stephanie Hong, Colmon Elridge and Meg Quinn



L to R—Charles Haywood , Virginia Underwood and Judy Haywood



George Ann Lakes and Natey Pineda, NOSW Graduates