

The Women's Center of Fayetteville

Empowering * Counseling * Educating * Promoting Self-Sufficiency

230 Hay Street * Fayetteville, NC 28301 * 910-323-3377 * www.wcof.org

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I am one of those people you read about that was laid off right before retirement. Although my wife and I

worked hard for everything we have, we still lost health insurance, retirement and to make matters worse, our house was going into foreclosure. Then, within one day, our lives completely turned when we met Chris Gonzalez from The Women's Center of Fayetteville. In the beginning I found it difficult to share my story with others. However, after establishing a relationship with Chris, I realized that the answer to my prayers had just walked through my door. The Women's Center was able to purchase my house and allowed us to remain in the place we had known and loved. They gave me the hope of knowing that some day, we will be able to own the house that we once called our "home".

By a devoted Lease-to-Home Program member.

The Women's Center Stories of Success

My family moved to North Carolina in 2003 and struggled financially. My husband was unemployed for two and a half years and we exhausted all savings. In November of 2006 he worked as a contractor in Iraq to help pay taxes due on the life savings. We were forced to cash in our savings to survive since we did not qualify for any social programs. I picked up the phone book to find someone to talk to. For 17 years I was a stay-at-home mom and was dependent on my husband. My career choices seemed limited. This was a challenge for me because I lacked employable skills. When I met Jessica Strong, I met a person with unbelievable regard for people. She helped me to organize and develop a resume within a week. While working on this resume, she pointed out the diverse people skills that I had from my previous activities. I enrolled in college and my graduation date will be May 2008 with an Associate in Applied Science degree in Human Services. I hope to begin my Bachelors to further my education while working full-time. As I begin my journey in the Human Service field, I hope to be as good as those that have helped me at New Choices.

Name Withheld

All About Kids, owned & operated by Ms. Brenda Dillman, is an educational toy store located in downtown Elizabethtown. It was started in December 2006 but Brenda came to the Women's Center in January 2007 for help in understanding the business basics and for additional funding to buy more inventories.

"If not for Meena Ahuja and her crew, I would not be in business today."

Brenda Dillman

The Business Center helped her with the business plan, cash flow projections, and loan application. She got Community Express loan in May 2007 and the business achieved breakeven in July.



Dillman at her store

The business has now become so famous that people are asking her to set up franchises in other parts of the state. She is the only retailer in North Carolina for Osborne brand of books. She can be reached at: 910-862-8137 or www.allaboutkidseducational.com.

Lynne Benton's first experience in a flower shop was in March of 1994 in Wilmington, NC. After acquiring business relationships with funeral homes in Wilmington, she moved to Fayetteville to go to mortuary school.



Lynne Benton

Lynne soon realized that the market was flooded with students in this field, and served as a local bridal consultant.

In June of this year, she felt a calling to establish her own florist shop and produce "flowers with a signature". While researching locations for her business, she met the women at The Women's Center of Fayetteville.

"These open minded and helpful women believed in my idea of my own flower shop, taught me how to write a business and financial plan, how to improve my credit score and filled me with encouraging words and advice even after I began to feel discouraged," said Benton.

The Red Geranium Florist offers military discounts for local orders and free deliveries to local hospitals and funeral homes. Lynne prides herself in that her talents are not limited to traditional floral design, but a fountain of information from fashion to bone china that would make "Martha" proud. Lynne can be contacted at 910-864-LOVE or at www.redgeraniumflst.com.

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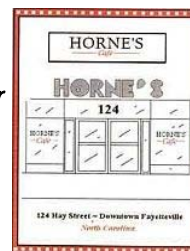
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We house businesses selling jewelry, jewelry repair, designer handbags and dog clothing and accessories. Don't miss our vintage resale of clothing from retro to metro and everything in between!

*formerly Optown Girlz**