



# the women's initiative

empowering women in times of challenge and change

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## WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: IMPERMANENCE

*"That nothing is static or fixed, that all is fleeting and impermanent, is the first mark of existence." ~ Pema Chodron*

When I lived in Seattle, I walked through Pike Place Market daily. It was always alive with movement: a toothless musician with a possum resting upon his shoulder, a fish flying through the air, a vendor hanging colorful ristras made of onions, garlic and bright red peppers. Of all these things, I must confess, it was the ever changing bouquets of flowers that inevitably captured my full attention. Vibrant and intense, they were a reminder of life's inherent transience. I often think of the market's endless sea of flowers as I witness the passing of time in my own life. I find change, even its most subtle form, immensely inspiring. In the work that we do



at The Women's Initiative, this awareness and acceptance of change, brings me great hope, for I know that the women we serve who are suffering have opportunities for immeasurable transformation. May the dahlias pictured here be a stirring reminder of the impermanence of the present moment—that we might know it and embrace it fully.

## Agency Impact Exceeds Expectations

Our agency is pleased to report we have exceeded our mid-year program impact goals. From January—June, we served 854 women. In our individual counseling and support group program:

- The majority are uninsured and unemployed.
- Depression, adjustment disorders and post traumatic stress are primary diagnoses. Addressing these mental health issues often brings tremendous healing to women and their loved ones.
- Nearly 50% of the women served were minorities; 70% of women are ages 18—45.
- Women are frequently traveling from great distances to access services. In addition to serving women from Charlottesville & Albemarle, our geographic reach currently extends to Amherst, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Culpeper, Rappahannock and Orange.



*Please donate today! Return the enclosed envelope and know that your contribution is changing lives.*

### Quotes:

*When I finally called for help, I felt like my world was falling apart. My anxiety was so unbearable, that I could hardly find the courage to leave my house. Counseling helped me find the strength to live.*

~ Counseling Client

*I just wanted you to know how much your services are needed, and how much I appreciate what you do. I never thought I would need help like this, and now I do. Thank you for being there.*

~ Support Group Client

*Many thanks for your enjoyable and helpful presentation. Nurses, let alone women, can never hear too much about taking care of ourselves. You do a wonderful job of making it implementable on a practical level, and I think that's where we usually fall down. ...Thanks for your encouragement.*

~ Workshop Participant,  
Martha Jefferson Hospital

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The Women's Initiative is dedicated to breaking down barriers to service and increasing community awareness. If you know of a group or agency that might benefit from a workshop on mental health & wellness for women, please contact us today. Elizabeth Irvin, *Program Director*, or Ingrid Ramos, *Community Outreach Coordinator*, await your call. Examples of outreach efforts in the first half of 2011 follow. Enjoy!

- ◆ Presentation on post traumatic stress disorder for women visiting from Afghanistan through *Global Perspectives on Democracy*. This program is a coordinated effort between UVA Center for Politics, Relief International and the US Department of State.
- ◆ Stress management workshop for English as a Second Language students served by Charlottesville's Adult Learning Center.
- ◆ Monthly presentations for Mom's Group in Southwood and Parks Edge through a collaborative partnership with Children Youth & Family Services.
- ◆ Participation in community fairs such as Festival of Cultures, UVA Community Health Fair and Women's Wellness Fair.
- ◆ Wellness workshops for staff at local entities such as MACAA, Charlottesville Free Clinic and Jefferson Area CHIP.
- ◆ Participation in Southwood community's Back-to-School Festival.



## CHALLENGE INTO CHANGE ESSAY CONTEST ON THE HORIZON: SUBMIT TODAY!

Please help us celebrate the many amazing women in our community who have transformed difficult life situations into personal growth and renewed well-being.

### THE CONTEST

- ◆ Essays should be 500 words or less.
- ◆ Women may enter an essay about their own challenge into change.
- ◆ Anyone may enter an essay about a woman they want to honor.
- ◆ Focus is truly on celebrating each woman's story. Perfect grammar is not required!
- ◆ Judges will focus on: Does the story inspire? And does the essay reflect transformation?

### THE TIMELINE

- ◆ Essay deadline September 30th.
- ◆ Submit essay to [essaycontest@thewomensinitiative.org](mailto:essaycontest@thewomensinitiative.org)
- ◆ Winners announced October 16 at our celebration event held at Play On!

### THE SPONSORS

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## CHARLOTTESVILLE MULTISORTS SELECTS TWI AS BENEFICIARY OF ANNUAL JEFFERSON SPRINT TRIATHLON

TWI thanks Kate Lucas, owner of Charlottesville Multisorts, for selecting our agency as the beneficiary of the 2011 Jefferson Sprint Triathlon. Held at Fry's Spring Beach Club on August 27, this triathlon featured over 100 seasoned and beginner triathletes. Participants competed in a 350 meter pool swim, a 12 mile bike and a 3.1 mile run. TWI staff volunteered on race day and joined community friends and neighbors in cheering on the racers. Shares Kate, "I'm so proud of everyone who competed

and came together to make the inaugural Jefferson Sprint Triathlon happen. Despite the huge thunderstorm early in the week, the earthquake midweek, and then Hurricane Irene threatening Virginia the eve before race day, not only did the triathlon take place, but thanks to the amazing volunteers, sponsors, participants, police, and Fry's Spring Beach Club, it went really well. Several racers have since e-mailed me that they felt it was one of the best events they had

ever attended. I am humbled and can only hope that future Jefferson Sprint Tri races grow to be bigger and better and help to raise more money for The Women's Initiative. It's about people." Check out [www.charlottesvilleMULTISORTS.com](http://www.charlottesvilleMULTISORTS.com) for race results and upcoming races and other events.



## SONJIA SMITH, LOCAL PHILANTHROPIST, HONORS TWI WITH GIFT

The Women's Initiative recently received a generous \$25,000 contribution from Sonjia Smith. Shared founder Bebe Heiner, "As an active and engaged philanthropist, Ms. Smith is truly lead-

ing by example. We are so honored to have her support, and so pleased that she recognizes the importance of high quality, affordable mental health care for women."

Thank you, Sonjia, and all who help us bring critical mental health services to women in need, especially in these trying times with calls to our agency at an all-time high.

## MARTHA JEFFERSON HOSPITAL: ALWAYS GIVING FROM THE HEART

Even in the midst of its monumental move, Martha Jefferson Hospital acts with grace, poise & commitment to community! In mid-August, we received word that the hospital has elected to grant The Women's Initiative \$30,000, each year for 3-years, in support of our mental health counseling



for underserved women. Thank you, Martha Jefferson Hospital, for your dedication and continuing belief in our programs.

### MARTHA'S MARKET

Mark your calendars! Martha's Market takes place on October 21—23 at the John Paul Jones Arena. Proceeds from this highly anticipated annual event benefits Breast Health Programs and Women's Health Care in Central Virginia. We hope to see you there!

### Our agency thanks the following donors for their generosity in 2011:

- ♥ Elyse & John Ashley
- ♥ Sheila Balian
- ♥ Jean Baum
- ♥ Kathleen Ford Bonnie & Richard Bonnie
- ♥ Katherine Brooks & Dr. George Beller
- ♥ Patty & Raymond Cormier
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## The Women's Initiative

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### ¡BIENVENIDA INGRID!

TWI welcomes Ingrid Ramos as the newest addition to its clinical team. As therapist and Clinical Outreach Coordinator, Ingrid will bring valuable support and guidance to the women we serve. Ingrid has a master's degree in professional counseling from Liberty University and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from the Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago. Her past work includes experience as a Latino Services Program Coordinator at the Charlottesville League of Therapists, and counselor at the ABBA Pregnancy Center and Crisis Intervention Companion in the Shelter for Abused Women.  
¡Bienvenida Ingrid!



*I am very pleased to have the opportunity to join TWI as bilingual counselor and Clinical Outreach Coordinator. It makes my heart feel at home for the opportunity to serve women of different backgrounds, and at the same time makes me feel blessed to be part of the tapestry that builds this agency. -Ingrid*

*"Everyone has the power for greatness, not for fame, but greatness, because greatness is determined by service." ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## Support Groups Bring Women Together

The Women's Initiative is offering a growing number of support groups. TWI counselors facilitate these free offerings, which provide a therapeutic alternative for women who are on our waitlist or who might benefit from connecting with others struggling with similar issues. Current and upcoming groups include:

- Grupo de Apoyo
- Postpartum Support
- Healthy Relationships
- Stress Management
- Journaling

## COMMUNITY NEED REFLECTED IN INCREASING CALLS FOR SERVICES

The Women's Initiative is currently experiencing an unprecedented number of calls for services. More than 50 women are currently awaiting counseling, with new inquiries every day. Our agency is doing everything possible to increase capacity, so women who find the courage to reach out for help can receive prompt care. In addition to increasing support group efforts, we are also in the process of recruiting a second-tier of professional volunteer therapists from throughout Charlottesville and Albemarle to help us respond to the escalating community need. You can help too. Donate today. Return the enclosed envelope with a contribution and know that your support will bring critical mental health services to underserved women.