New Executive Director Introduced

In November, 2011, The Women’s Initiative hired its second-ever Executive Director, Susan Hess. Sue describes her first six months at TWI as “rich and rewarding … full of wonderful opportunities and important accomplishments.”

She finds the depth of commitment of the board, staff, supporters and volunteers particularly rewarding. While Sue has been busy familiarizing herself with the agency, she also has honed her considerable mental health, organizational and management skills to lead the agency during a period of rapid and dynamic growth. The number of women TWI served during the first quarter of this year is 50 percent greater than in 2011. Additionally, the agency is making plans to share a satellite clinic with Martha Jefferson Hospital at the new Jefferson School City Center and is working closely with the Charlottesville Free Clinic to provide patients with integrated health care. A significant backdrop to these exciting initiatives is the agency’s preparation to move our main office into a new home at 1101 East High Street, Suite A, the last week of May and first week of June.

Before coming to TWI Sue served as manager of two inpatient psychiatric units and one clinic at the University of Virginia Health System from 2006 – 2011. In this capacity she developed and managed budgets and staff for three cost centers, networked with community providers and participated in mental health research projects both locally and internationally, among many other duties.

Sue is also an experienced mediator for family, multiparty and workplace disputes. She has been a facilitator and a trainer for conflict management as well as authored training manuals and education articles for mediation. She served as director of Community Mediation Center in Harrisburg before starting her own mediation business, and prior to that was both an assistant professor of psychology and an assistant professor of nursing at Eastern Mennonite University.

For two years Sue served as a community development nurse in Bolivia. She holds a MSN/Psych Mental Health from UVA and a BSN from Eastern Mennonite University.

Says TWI Founder and Board Chair, Bebe Heiner, “Sue is a skilled and supportive manager, a leader by example and inclusion, and a person of the highest ethical standards. I find her to be a wonderful communicator, a talented builder of relationships and networks and a genuinely caring person. Her passion for our mission, her deep understanding of our clients’ needs, and her calm, yet engaging presence have permeated our agency and our work.”

Please join us in welcoming Sue to our TWI family.

Words from the Executive Director


These phrases describe my current observations of the workings of The Women’s Initiative. I am thrilled to be here as the agency’s new Executive Director. Kerry Day completed four years of service with The Women’s Initiative this past November, and is certainly missed by all. She helped lay the very strong foundation on which our programs are built. I am pleased about my opportunity to provide leadership for our next phase of development; refining and expanding our offerings to low-income women, many of whom are caretakers of their families and all of whom are vital to the strength of our community.

Thank you for your warm welcome and many offerings of support and suggestions. I welcome each opportunity to interact with our friends. I look forward to meeting you!
4 Year Strategic Plan

The beginning of this year presented us with the opportunity to examine our vision, mission and goals as a five-year-old organization. The Women’s initiative has experienced fantastic growth over these years; our programs and staff size are rapidly expanding. In January and February a number of visioning sessions were held for the staff, volunteers, donors and board members. Aided by the leadership of our skilled facilitator, Jane Dittmar, the efforts resulted in a very productive Board Retreat on February 29 – Leap Year day. And we did leap ahead in a manner that both validated the direction we charted five years ago, and pointed the way to a growing program with strong community partnerships and much local support.

Vision
The Women’s Initiative is a leader in providing innovative, effective research-based mental health care to women, regardless of their financial means.

Mission
The mission of The Women’s Initiative is to provide women with effective counseling, social support and education so they can transform life challenges into positive change and growth.

Welcome to New Board Members

The Women’s Initiative recently added two new members to our Board of Directors, Dorothy Batten and Marge Connelly. Their experiences and skills have already enriched our organization and we are thrilled to welcome them. Both are passionate about serving the mental health needs of the deserving women in our community.

Dorothy Batten has lived in our community for 18 years. She is the mother of two teenage boys and a student herself, working on a graduate degree in Positive Psychology. Dorothy has served on many boards in our community and nationally. Currently she works with the Peabody School, Focused Ultrasound Surgery Foundation and the Amazon Conservation Association. Her interests center on healthy living and the health of our planet and she embraces the mission of The Women’s Initiative.

Marge Connelly moved to our community a few months ago after living the past three years in London, and before that, Richmond, VA. She brings with her a multitude of skills in fiscal management, team-building and communications. She has served on numerous nonprofit and government boards, and has learned from both good and bad examples what effective board leadership looks like. Marge googled “best women’s groups in Charlottesville” to find us. She believes that “helping women who need mental healthcare services is a very leveraged activity because it doesn’t just help one person—it has a profound effect on children and the entire family.”

Quotes from our Clients

I have more confidence and stand up for my feelings more.

Thank you, Women’s Initiative, for making this possible for me financially.

This therapy changed my life.

I am extremely grateful! Just having someone listen and not judge, offer positive feedback and suggestions to improve my situation. It was just what I needed.

It (therapy at TWI) has greatly enhanced my joy and ability to function.
2012 Jefferson Sprint Triathlon/Duathlon!

TWI thanks Kate Lucas, owner of Charlottesville Multisports, for once again selecting our agency as the beneficiary of the 2012 Jefferson Sprint Triathlon. This year’s event will be held at Fry’s Spring Beach Club July 7. Please join us for the event. Register now! www.charlottesvilemultisports.com

Enter to Win a Trek Madone Bike!

This 3.1 Carbon Fiber Trek Madone road bike retails for $2,063. Raffle tickets are $10, and all proceeds benefit The Women’s Initiative. The raffle winner will be announced at the Jefferson Sprint Triathlon/Duathlon.

Please support TWI by purchasing a raffle ticket: www.raceit.com/shop/?event=6419
Thanks to Blue Ridge Cyclery as a major contributor: blueridgecyclery.com

Save the Date—Sunday, September 30!

Please plan to join us at our FIFTH YEAR anniversary celebration event. This will be a time to bring the whole family for a Bluegrass Barn Party at Bellair Farm. Hosted by Cynnie Davis, our Committee is busy planning a good time for all. Invite your whole family – young ones and grandchildren, too. More information to follow.

Bluegrass Benefit Concert

On February 24, C’ville Coffee hosted a special treat for bluegrass lovers. The concert featured the talents of local musicians Richard Will, Christian Gromoll and Gabe Robey. Many thanks to these fine musicians and to C’ville Coffee owner, Toan Nguyen, for their generosity and support. We hope to schedule another such fun event in the fall.

Girls’ Night Out—New Tradition

On May 15, we celebrated a fun-filled evening of friend-raising and fund-raising at the lovely home of our Board Member, Dorothy Batten. Our 17 member planning committee of fabulous females invited their friends to an evening of cocktails and entertainment to help fund our counseling program for women in our community. Special thanks to all of you for the good energy and time you gave to make this evening a memorable time for all. The evening’s tally: $23,000 to sponsor over 460 counseling sessions!
We have looked long and hard, well over one year, to find a new location for our central office home. We are pleased to announce that location – 1101 E. HIGH STREET, SUITE A – just two offices east of our current location. We will begin services to our clients the week of June 4. Although losing our homey, small house feeling, we intend to create the same welcoming, safe and comfortable environment we have enjoyed at our first home. We are grateful for the years we have had at 1007 E. High Street and to Martha Jefferson Hospital who generously partnered with us in making it happen. We did outgrow that space and are now filling up all 9 offices in our new home. Do come visit us. Our open house will be announced soon!