



Celebrating 25 Years of Mentoring

This July after 25 years of empowering teens and adults through mentoring The Center Foundation will graduate the last class in its two flagship mentoring programs, **WomenCare®** and the **Young Parents Support Network (YPSN)**. With great joy and pride we celebrate providing mentoring services over the last 25 years to over 1,500 teen mothers and women in transition, together with a few good men; but it is also with bittersweet feelings we announce that the Foundation will be closing its doors.

Final Mentoring Class of 2020

Congratulations to the last group of mentoring matches for 2019-20! Eight mentors and their partners worked together on goals throughout the year. True friendships were formed, milestones met, decisions reached and plans made for the future. Read below to learn more about this year's group of determined women and their dedicated mentors!



Fatmata Kamara & Karen Marquardt

Initially a teen parent in the Young Parents Support Network, Fatmata joined WomenCare to continue receiving support as she took care of her son Ibrahim, worked and made choices about school and career. Karen has stayed as her mentor in both programs. Fatmata is currently enrolled at the Pennsylvania Institute of Technology in the Medical Assistant Program with the ultimate goal of someday becoming a nurse. Fatmata and Karen say they will continue to meet as they "feel like family".

Anyae Smith & Rae Barnard

Anyae is the mother of three children: 7-year-old daughter, Chelsea, 2-year-old son, Jayden and a recent addition, baby son Jordan. She worked with her mentor, Rae, on improving effective parenting skills, budgeting and shopping, and securing a new ob-gyn doctor.

Pictured here Anyae is enjoying time out with her son Jayden and Mentor, Rae.



Denise Pettit & Nancy Baulis

Denise and Nancy, a long-time mentor for TCF, developed a strong friendship as they worked on personal growth and financial goals around her jewelry making business to secure a positive future for Denise and her adult son with Asperger's Syndrome.

Nakeisha Gamble & Barbara Clevenstine

A single working mom of 3 children, Nakeisha relied on her mentor, Barb, for conversation and support as she moved to an apartment that better met their needs, expanded her working hours as an LPN and pursued her online nursing degree.

Amie Nichol

Amie, mother of 3-year-old David and originally from Sierra Leon, is now a U.S. citizen. Needing to stop working last year while she received treatment for breast cancer, she received support and resources from her community and TCF. Now in a new apartment and able to take care of her son again, Amie will soon finish her treatments and plans to look for employment once it is okay for her to work again.

Jasmine Johnson & Tracey Henderson

Jasmine, mother of three young children, finished her year of mentoring in November 2018. She participated in several Center Foundation family events and worked with her mentor on getting control of her finances.

Shumaila Ali & Sandy Dell'Arciprete

These women have developed a strong friendship, based on caring and a mutual respect for each other's cultures and traditions. Shumaila, who moved here from Pakistan and was formerly a paralegal, relied on Sandy to help develop her plan for transitioning from being a stay-at-home mother of two young children back to a professional working woman, when the time is right.



Tika and Shanice

Tika Douglas & Shanice McTear

Tika, a teen mom in the YPSN program, met her mentor, Shanice, an Army recruiter in May 2019. They were able to talk about parenting and Tika's goals of finishing high school online, getting her license and finding a job. Army obligations caused Shanice to need to end their mentoring match early, as she was relocating to another state. Tika was persistent and got her driver's license, is now working full-time, being the best mom she can be for her daughter, Gia, and continues to pursue her high school diploma.

Over the last 25 years our all-volunteer mentors and mentees have had an impressive track record. Each year over 75% of the WomenCare mentee graduates reached at least one of her self-sufficiency goals like a new job or place to live;



in YPSN started later – for over 15 years 100% of our high school seniors matched with a mentor graduated on time, like these from a previous year's Summer Celebration at Linvilla.

When I founded The Center Foundation as a small charitable trust in 1994 with my late husband Dr. Michael J. J. Campbell, we had a vision based on individual empowerment and choice, and a focus on women. Our mission statement came from our heart - from the *center* - based upon standing behind the individual "*to empower people to be all they want to be*", not what you or I or anyone else want them to be. Women, and especially teen mothers, were important from the beginning. Our very first action was to provide a grant for teen mothers in Project ELECT to attend a parenting conference. But we wanted to do more.

Our mission grew as we realized that by empowering people through the vehicle of

mentoring we were also building caring communities. We called our flagship mentoring program *WomenCare*, signifying the mutuality and equality between two adult women who build a respectful partnership within a mentoring relationship.

The Center Foundation also built caring communities through partnerships and cross-referral with other agencies whose clients we served – like the Domestic Abuse Project, Project ELECT, PathwaysPA and the Women’s Resource Center, volunteer organizations like R.S.V.P. who provided mentors, and government agencies from the Delaware County Office of Employment and Training to the PA Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Labor.

We saw many changes in the nonprofit landscape which impacted The Center Foundation, which grew as we started new programs and then shrank as competition for resources and increasing costs made our small focused, almost family-like organization increasingly more difficult to sustain. Over our history we served domestic violence survivors, teen mothers, job seekers, recent immigrants, female veterans, teens in foster care, and those in the juvenile justice system, and of course men. Michael always said, “don’t forget the men” much like Abigail Adams said, “remember the ladies!”

I believe there is a need for programs like ours that match a trained volunteer mentor with a woman, or older teen or teen mother to provide that personal support different from a professional social worker or agency, and bring together women from different spheres at the same time.

WomenCare and YPSN are a tribute to how the human spirit of connection survives and thrives; how the center in one person can touch the center in another person and that touch cause ripples across generations.

I am so grateful for all the donors, individual and foundation and corporate, who believed in our mission and our ability to deliver on it to make these impacts on the lives of women and families in and around Delaware County. I am grateful to our many faithful volunteer mentors forging relationships lasting in some cases over 10 years, our professional workshop leaders, our devoted and wise trustees and advisory board members, and our talented staff and interns.

I also thank the women who came to us for support - for trusting in us when there was nothing else like The Center Foundation anywhere - to believe in the magic that could happen if matched with a mentor they took those steps towards new beginnings.

As Geneva, one teen mom, said to me years ago, the gift her mentor gave her was “just the hope that my life could be different.” She wisely knew that *hope is the power that gives you the courage to step out and try*. Many of our mentees in our tradition of building a caring community have even passed it along, becoming mentors themselves.

As we celebrate the last class of WomenCare and YPSN in 2020 coming out of a global pandemic, I congratulate them and their mentors for continuing to stay in touch and work on their goals and reach their personal and match milestones despite the challenges; and I want to thank Jane Todd, our amazing Program Director since 2007, without whom none of this could have happened.

Finally, as The Center Foundation closes its last chapter, I'll again say thanks for 25 years and thanks for the memories; as like the starfish thrower, I rejoice in being part of making a difference for the women we helped find hope to move forward in their lives.

Susan K. Garrison, Board President and Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan K. Garrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

The Center Foundation
PO Box 1378
Media, PA 19063

