



# From the Center

The Newsletter of  
The Center Foundation

Volume 4, Issue 3

February, 2006

## TCF Celebrates National Mentoring Month



Current Mentors and staff gather for breakfast at Brodeur's On State Street in Media on January 21.

Brodeur's on State Street opened its doors to a unique crowd on Saturday, January 21 for an event celebrating National Mentoring Month. Thirty local women and men, who volunteer their time as mentors for The Center Foundation, sat down to a breakfast in their honor.

Why celebrate mentors? "Mentors are ordinary people with extraordinary caring," explains Executive Director Susan K. Garrison. The Center Foundation trains the volunteers and matches each with a "Partner" – someone in the community who is seeking guidance through a transitional period in her or his life.

Mentors act as "life coach" to their Partners, providing friendship, advice, and support throughout their year-long commitment.

The breakfast introduced TCF's theme for 2006, Planting Seeds, and gave special recognition to two mentors who have been "planting seeds" with the organization since 1999.

Blake Campbell, a homemaker and mother of three, formerly worked as an employment specialist for people with disabilities. Formerly a WomenCare mentor, she now volunteers her time as career mentor for the M.O.S.T. program, helping her partner to

find and keep a meaningful job. On mentoring, she says, "I like to feel like I'm giving back to my community. [By] mentoring, I can see the growth and accomplishment of someone who wanted help." For more about Blake and her Partner, Pat Thomas, see their profile on page 4.

Sarah Shepherd, now retired, has been mentoring for over 15 years in the city of Chester. She currently mentors Char-nae, a teen mother from Chester High School in the YPSN program. The pair enjoys attending cultural events in the community – nearby things that Charnae might not ever know about

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otherwise and can share with her 2-year-old daughter. "There are a lot of children and families that need outside support services," Shepherd explains. "It is very rewarding for me to help provide that." ■



## In Memory



Shamira (Right; 1975-2006) and mentor Marissa Deitch at 2004's Holiday from the Heart celebration.

In the first week of 2006, we bid farewell to WomenCare graduate and M.O.S.T. partner, Shamira Crawford. Featured in The Center Foundation's very first Annual Report in August of 2005, Shamira and her mentor/soul sista Marissa were a remarkable pair that may never cease to inspire us.

Shamira came to The Center Foundation to work on her social skills, but she could—and would—talk to anyone. When her friend's bicycle was stolen from Providence House, Shamira was the one who combed the phone book, calling local businesses for donations until the bicycle was replaced. She did not complain about the problem, she simply solved it!

Shamira's life was a tribute to optimism and kind-hearted honesty. Her memory and her love for The Center Foundation encourage us not to linger in sadness for our loss, but to thoughtfully continue growing, spreading seeds of empowerment as far as they may reach.



# A Note from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

I've been thinking lately about the power of listening. Really listening, not just hearing, but being involved in a real way with the person to whom you are listening. It is active, not passive. We talk a lot about 'active listening' in mentor training and other workshops. One of the most things we repeatedly hear from partners and mentees in our programs is about how their mentors support them by listening to them. Our mentors in WomenCare, YPSN, and M.O.S.T. are good listeners. By doing so, they empower their partners to see a different future.

I know I'm not always a good listener. Sometimes I am in a hurry, impatient, wanting to do something else. But when I remind myself to really listen, I get so much out of it, because it is an act of giving to the other person and also a gift to the listener.

When we really listen to another's experience, we learn new ideas as well as about ourselves. In true active listening on all levels - seeing, hearing, feeling - we can be intuitive to what is truly happening in the present. It's more than just words. Sometimes it's most critical to hear what *isn't* being said. When we listen this way and give up trying to control outcomes or other people's perceptions, we often discover more about ourselves than the person we are trying to hear. As our mentors know and demonstrate, before we can expect someone to listen to us, we have to really listen to them, where they are.

Few of us have the experience of being received just as we are by another person, without efforts to change us or fix us, in total acceptance. People often say dogs offer unconditional love, like Sunny does to me, patient, virtually always reciprocated, and ever new. To give another person this feeling by listening to them in this way may be almost the greatest service a human being ever performs for another. To be listened to this way is an experience of being loved.

But it isn't easy! What often feels natural is to wait only until they stop talking to speak our own piece. But we were meant to try, as the Greek philosopher said, "the reason we have two ears and one mouth is to hear more and speak less." As we practice it, like with any other discipline it can have good days and bad days, sometimes 3 steps forward and 2 steps back. And like any other exercise, persistence is the only way to see results. So I am still practicing.

Thanks to all our wonderful mentors who model good listening and help make the world a better place!

In peace and gratitude,

## ⊕ THE CENTER FOUNDATION ⊕

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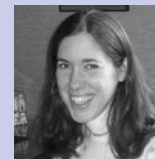
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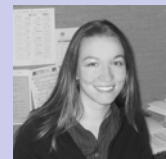
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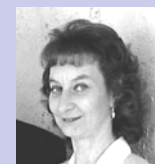
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## New Development for M.O.S.T. in Chester

With a brand new racetrack and casino set to open in Chester this coming year and a host of other local employers experiencing rapid growth, the city's community leaders are preparing its residents to fill hundreds of jobs that will soon be available. As part of this effort, The Center Foundation's M.O.S.T. (Mentoring & Occupational Strategies Training) Program has joined the **PATHWAYS TO BETTER EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP (PBEP)**, a new initiative that will enhance workforce development in Chester by fostering basic job skills and employability. The partnership, led by Chester Education Foundation, has been awarded a grant by Chester's Office of Employment and Training, with funding provided by Harrah's. It includes collaboration with established TCF partners, PathwaysPA and Widener University.

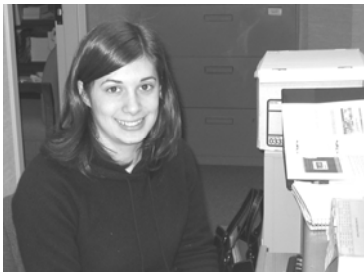
As part of PBEP, The Center Foundation will present a workshop called "Getting the Edge—Expanding Your Network and Skills Through Use of Mentors." The workshop will explore the benefits of networking and mentoring, the importance of employees' awareness of their own needs, appropriate ways to ask for help, and techniques for finding a mentor in the workplace. In addition, M.O.S.T. will be providing career mentors for Chester residents who want job-focused guidance as they attempt to get and keep jobs at places like Harrah's, Wells Fargo, Syngy, Kimberly-Clark and Crozer Keystone Health System.



### Spring 2006 Interns

Penni Repici does not classify herself as a traditional college student intern. A senior Psychology major at Widener University, she is a single mom to 12-year-old daughter Emily, and works full time as a bartender. Raising a daughter has inspired Penni to live her life in a way that she would want Emily to replicate. She learned about New Choice New Options, a career development program at Delaware County Community College, from her single mothers' support group, and has been conquering educational opportunities ever since.

Penni received her Associate's degree at DCCC before pursuing her Bachelor's at Widener, all the while being Emily's "homeroom mom" and coaching her cheerleading team. On working at The Center Foundation, Penni says, "I am excited about my internship at TCF and I hope to leave it a better, more knowledgeable and open-minded person!"



Jessica Larson joined The Center Foundation as an intern for the spring of 2006 who comes to us through the Lang Center for Civic Engagement at Swarthmore College. Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Jessica is a senior Biostatistics major and Black Studies and History minor. She also is a tutor and teaching assistant for Introductory Statistics and Biology. Her inspiration to teach and serve stems from her family and friends, who have motivated her into a life of public service.

She is especially interested in women's health and reproductive issues along with social history. Jessica hopes to help The Center Foundation with its everyday responsibilities and complete a research project dealing with female youth in Chester, Pennsylvania. After graduation in May, Jessica plans to attend graduate school in Biostatistics and eventually work in the field of public health as a full-time researcher.

## Thank You, New & Returning Volunteers!

Marcelle I. Banks-Blair  
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# Planting Seeds: New Mentor/Partner Pairs for 2006



**Partner**  
**Name:** Lynda East  
**Age:** 57  
**Occupation:** Home Health Care Nurse  
**Hometown:** Chester, PA



**Matched:**  
 November, 2005



**Mentor**  
**Name:** Peggy Flowers  
**Age:** 59  
**Occupation:** Retired School Counselor  
**Hometown:** Collingdale, PA

**What they have in common:** Both have grown children & grandchildren, both love to read. Peggy attends Lynda's book discussion.

**Lynda's goals:** Finding housing she can afford & maintain, budgeting her money. After separating from her husband, changing jobs and losing her apartment, Lynda felt she was "spiraling down."

**Peggy's role:** A coach, a cheerleader, someone to look at things a different way and help find the positive side to bad things

**Lynda, on having Peggy as a Mentor:** "Peggy has been so great at intuitively validating my feelings. I don't feel stuck anymore... I feel better about the direction my life is headed."

**Peggy, on why Lynda will succeed:** "Lynda is very intelligent, loving and caring, and has a great sense of humor. She's resilient... she's doing fantastic!"



**Matched:**  
 January, 2006

**Mentee**  
**Name:** Kezia McLemore  
**Age:** 14 **Grade:** Ninth **Hometown:** Chester, PA

**Mentor**  
**Name:** Monica Dudley  
**Occupation:** Realtor **Hometown:** Wilmington, DE

**What they have in common:** Both have daughters, both are open-minded and have similar ideas about what makes things fun.

**Kezia's goals:** finishing high school while being a mom, deciding what to do after high school.

**Monica's experience:** She knows she made some bad decisions in life, but wants to show Kezia that it's not the end of the world. "You keep going, and you can make better decisions."

**Monica's role:** A successful example, someone to have fun with and to talk to honestly.

**What they look forward to:** Talking, laughing, and seeing things Kezia would not have been exposed to.

**Kezia, on having Monica as a Mentor:** "Monica has a lot to share... it's easier to learn something when someone is going through it with you. I feel less stressed out because I have someone else to go to when I need to."



**Partner**  
**Name:** Patricia "Pat" Thomas  
**Age:** 58  
**Occupation:** 3rd-shift Plastics Assembler  
**Hometown:** Brookhaven, PA



**Matched:**  
 December, 2005



**Mentor**  
**Name:** Blake Campbell  
**Age:** 41  
**Occupation:** Homemaker  
**Hometown:** Aston, PA

**What they have in common:** Both are married & have children, both worked with people who have disabilities.

**Pat's Goals:** Finding affordable phlebotomy training, and obtaining a position as a phlebotomist. Pat had been on unemployment and was going to CareerLink for her job search. She felt like she was going in circles and the search was taking a very long time, when CareerLink referred her to M.O.S.T.

**Blake's role:** unconditional support to make the job search more comfortable.

**Pat, on having Blake as a Mentor:** "I was anxious about the job search. Having my Mentor keeps me from having to do things alone... I feel a lot more relaxed. Blake is so focused and organized it helps me think clearer—I feel so special that I have her."



## Individual Donors

You have pledged over \$90,000 in support to The Center Foundation over the next three years.

*Thank You.*

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## We are pleased to announce that we have received grant funding from the following foundations this quarter:

Garrison Family Foundation  
John William Pope Foundation  
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## Corporations and local businesses who have recently contributed to The Center Foundation:

### Mentor Appreciation Breakfast

#### Sponsors:

D-NETWORK, a division of Bruce Garrison Enterprises  
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Golden Impulse, Inc.

**Breakfast donated by:** Brodeurs on State Street

**Flowers provided by:** Kenny's Flower Shoppe

### Holiday from the Heart Celebration

#### Sponsors:

Reformation Lutheran Church  
Delaware County Chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

#### Catering provided by:

Karen MacCleary, Gene Blum,  
and BOK Vocational High School



# Our heartfelt thanks to all who helped with December's Holiday from the Heart!

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Sally and Emily were two of dozens of volunteers who came to wrap mountains of gifts.



The gifts filled two pick-up trucks and a Chevy Suburban!

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Gingerbread house building was messy, but SO MUCH FUN.



Aicha and Summayah got creative at the arts & crafts table.



Ki'Shelle had her hands full with three sacks of gifts in one and De'Ajah in the other.



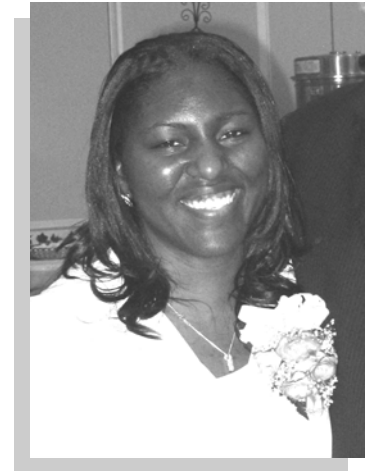
Charles took a minute to say "Hey" to Santa.



## In Her Own Words

As The Center Foundation continues to grow, it is important for us to reflect on what our programs and support have meant to our graduates and their mentors.

Tamika Smith, a graduate of the very first WomenCare class in 1998, shared her inspiring words with us at November's One Hour Wonder Breakfast. Tamika found full time employment after graduating from Pennsylvania Institute of Technology at the top of her class. She now lives with her two sons at their home in Chester.



She writes:

*I first found out about WomenCare through Pathways. I was a resident at their Women's Alternative Center. At first I had mixed feelings. I did not like that I had to go but on the other hand, the prospect of having a mentor was intriguing.*

*At the first meeting I didn't know what to expect. Everyone was very nice. I met my mentor, a young woman named Kristen. As it turned out she was too busy with school and family to continue to participate. It was no problem because shortly they found me a new mentor, Polly.*

*Polly is a retired teacher and a grandmother. At first I thought she reminds me of my grandmother, but she was so full of life and energy. She was wonderful. During this time I was going to school at P.I.T. and doing work study at the library. I was very busy but Polly would do things like pick me up at school in between classes so we could have lunch and talk.*

*Polly was wonderful. She was very kind and encouraging. I could talk to her about anything and*

*she was a great listener. Whenever I was discouraged she always helped me focus on the light at the end of the tunnel, the goal I was working toward. It helped that she made me realize all my hard work was for a reason and if I just kept working I would reach my goal. Polly never let me for one minute think that I couldn't do whatever I wanted. She made me believe.*

*I think WomenCare is a wonderful investment. You will be helping someone get help and guidance at a much needed time in their lives and also in future. Once you graduate from a WomenCare program you are always welcome. They send you letters letting you know what seminars are available. If you feel they are relevant to you, you are welcome to attend. They also provide childcare so there is nothing stopping you from attending.*

*Tamika — WomenCare graduate*

**“Whenever I was discouraged, [my mentor] always helped me focus on the light at the end of the tunnel, the goal I was working toward.... She made me believe.”**

### *I would like to join the Circle of Caring:*

<b>Partnership Circle Donation</b>	<b>\$ 500</b>
<b>Empowerment Circle Donation</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>
<b>Advocate Circle Donation</b>	<b>\$ 100</b>
<b>Encouragement Circle Donation</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>
<b>Friendship Circle Donation</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>

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- ◇ To donate, please enclose a check in the donation envelope made out to: **The Center Foundation.**
- ◇ Your donation is fully tax-deductible within IRS regulations.
- ◇ For information about how to make a donation of stock or securities contact **Susan Garrison at 610-565-6171.**

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**Make an impact:  
Be a mentor.**

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**SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW.**

**MENTORING BUILDS FRIENDSHIPS AND STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES.**

  
**WomenCare**  
A mentoring program  
for women

  
**YPSN**  
Young Parents Support Network  
A mentoring program  
for teen parents

  
**MOST**  
Mentoring & Occupational Strategies Training  
A mentoring program  
for job-seekers



# Carnival is Coming!

Save the date:

Saturday, March 18

The Center Foundation Carnival is an annual day of games, food, and prizes for program participants, their mentors, and families.

Call Pam at (610)565-6171 to volunteer!