

ms. foundation for women

From Welfare to Child Care: One Woman's Journey to Success

Just three years ago, Marea Washington was a single mother struggling to make ends meet on a meager income. Her youngest son was just two weeks old when she gained a spot in the Family Child Care and Entrepreneur Training Program operated by the Acre Family DayCare Corporation (AcreFDCC).

Marea entered the program hoping to find a way to support her children without resorting to welfare—for her, a demoralizing path she had taken before.

Entering AcreFDCC's program set Marea on a new path, straight to the White House to meet Senator Hillary Clinton, where she was a guest of the Ms. Foundation as we received a Presidential Award for Excellence in Microenterprise Development. The award recognized our Collaborative Fund for Women's Economic Development (CFWED), a groundbreaking initiative that supports organizations helping women to create jobs through effective enterprise development strategies while working to change the economic, social and political systems that build barriers to low-income women's advancement. Marea was invited to represent all the women who had benefited from CFWED's work.



Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and entrepreneur Marea Washington

It was one of the most moving experiences of her life. "I cried when Hillary Clinton told me that I inspire her to fight for what she believes in," Marea says. "But the best thing about going to the White House is that my children are so proud that I was a part of such an important ceremony."

This extraordinary turn of events is due, in part, to the Ms. Foundation's decade of support to grantee organizations and their innovative programs, such as AcreFDCC's nationally recognized day care training model. One of CFWED's first grantees, AcreFDCC serves a diverse population in the economically depressed area of Lowell, Massachusetts, offering classes in Spanish, English and Khmer. Trainees like Marea receive 96 hours of child development and business administration classes and 144 hours of direct experience in various child care settings, far exceeding the 15 hours of classroom training mandated by state law.

Marea became a licensed provider in April 1998, and her business, which she operates from her home, has since taken off. In 1999, she reported \$22,000 in business revenue, which increased to \$34,000 in 2000 (on average, providers

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Photo: China Jorin

Gloria Steinem, award presenter Kristin Davis of Sex and the City, and Marie C. Wilson, President

The 13th Annual Gloria Awards: A Night to Remember

On May 23, 2001, the Ms. Foundation celebrated the 13th Annual Gloria Awards: A National Salute to Women of Vision. Supported by authors, performers and other notable individuals such as founding mother Marlo Thomas, Phil Donahue, Diane Sawyer, Anna Quindlen, Arlene and Alan Alda, Isabel Allende and Eileen Fisher, this year's Gloria Awards celebrated women working at the front lines of organizing for fair wages, working conditions, and benefits.

In a moving ceremony, awards were presented to five courageous women:

- Amy B. Dean, of Working Partnerships USA, San Jose, California;
- Peggy Haack and Marcy Whitebook, for their work with Center for the Child Care Workforce, Washington, DC; and
- Nadia Marin Molina and Lilliam Araujo, of The Workplace Project, Hempstead, New York.

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From Welfare to Childcare continued....

trained by AcreFDCC report approximately \$33,600 in revenue). Through AcreFDCC's Individual Development Accounts program, a subsidized savings plan that is the first of its kind in Massachusetts, Marea is also saving money for a down payment on a house that she plans to renovate for wheelchair accessibility. This will allow her to fulfill a long-cherished dream to care for children with disabilities, providing a much needed service to the community.

Ever professional, Marea is more than a babysitter. Thanks to her training, she organizes a structured daily routine of educational activities, ranging from reading exercises to solving puzzles, for the children in her care. She also makes an extra effort to put parents at ease. "When I put my kids in their first daycare, it was hard for me to trust someone," she says. "So I try to make it as comfortable as I can for the parents so they don't worry about their kids being here."

Now that her business is off the ground and her family secure, Marea has big plans for her future. She was recently elected vice president of AcreFDCC's board of directors, and is busy honing her leadership skills. She is also applying to schools to learn how to do more in-depth work with special needs children and their families. Through it all, Marea knows that AcreFDCC will be there to back her up, whether through scholarships or simply by believing in her. "I have such a good outlook on life now, better than I had a few years ago when I was struggling on welfare," Marea says. "Acre is out there fighting for me, and I know that I will always be able to support my kids."

To learn more about the Ms. Foundation's Presidential Award for Excellence in Microenterprise Development, or the Collaborative Fund for Women's Economic Development, visit www.ms.foundation.org.

Message from the President and Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The first 100 days of the Bush Administration are now behind us, but their devastating impact on women, and our communities, will be felt for years to come. According to the report, *Leaving Women and Children Behind: The First 100 Days of the Bush Administration*, a project the Ms. Foundation participated in (see Ms. Bits), President Bush is not living up to his promise to support women and their families.

From closing the Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach without notice or input, to cutting health programs that help children, to challenging women's reproductive rights, the Bush Administration has shown unequivocally that it has little concern for women and children. Equally as disturbing are Bush's economic proposals, such as tax cuts that will not benefit the average working woman, especially low-income single mothers, and cuts in the Small Business Administration's budget, which will have a significant impact on women-owned businesses.

This sampling of the actions and initiatives that the president took in his first 100 days clearly leave many of our country's most vulnerable citizens



Photo: Henry Letrczyk

behind. Now, more than ever, the Ms. Foundation's work to raise the voices of women, particularly poor women and women of color, is crucial. Otherwise, women such as entrepreneur Marea Washington will not have the support they need to create economic opportunities for themselves and their children (see cover story).

The policies and practices of the Bush Administration present us with a serious challenge, and we must step up our work advocating for those whose needs are being ignored. We hope that you will continue to support us as we move forward, and that you will raise your voices with ours to send a clear message to Washington policymakers that we will settle for nothing less than policies and programs that are in the best interest of all Americans.

Sincerely,

Marie C. Wilson
President

Sara K. Gould
Executive Director

Gloria Awards continued....

The White House Project, founded by leaders of the Ms. Foundation and others, also presented its first annual Leadership in Media Award to Erin Brockovich Chosen by a panel of media industry professionals, this

movie exemplifies positive portrayals of women in leadership roles.

To read full biographies of all the Gloria awardees, log on to www.ms.foundation.org

Behind the Scenes of Special Events

The Ms. Foundation for Women's special events are a time for friends, donors, and the women we support to learn more about our work and each other. Whether you are a longtime donor or new to the Ms. Foundation, attending an event is one of the best ways to meet women and girls from our grantee organizations, and connect with other donors and activists who share your interests. But what exactly is a special event, and why do we organize them?

Special events refer to any kind of gathering that the Ms. Foundation organizes. They range from small book signings, to training conferences such as our Institute for Women's Economic EmPOWERment, to galas such as the Gloria Awards: A National Salute to Women of Vision. Special events serve several purposes, including:

Financial Support

Special events are one of the Ms. Foundation's most important sources of general operating support. By raising money not yet designated for a specific program, special events provide us with a pool of funds to operate day-to-day work and to move swiftly on issues as they arise. Certain events raise money for specific programs, but the majority of events give the Ms. Foundation the capacity and flexibility to sustain and create initiatives that respond to the needs of today's women and girls.

Highlighting Grantee Organizations

The women and organizations we fund are the heart and soul of the Ms. Foundation. They are the reason so many committed individuals come together to support common goals.

However, grantee organizations often have a limited reach. A Ms. Foundation event is their opportunity to introduce their work to a broader audience, and underscore the importance of their work in local communities across the country.

Increasing Public Awareness

An event, especially one that attracts celebrities, is often a great way to draw attention to our work. Even intimate events where we are able to reach out to a small, but new, audience, help increase public awareness of the role the Ms. Foundation plays in increasing women's and girls' health and safety, economic opportunities, and leadership skills.

Networking

Because special events often draw attendees who are committed to the work of the Ms. Foundation, they are the perfect place for people with similar passions to meet and exchange ideas. New friendships form, and new ideas come to life as caring people connect to learn, celebrate and teach.

Bringing the Ms. Foundation to You

While the Ms. Foundation's large events, such as the Gloria Awards, take

place in New York City, we also organize smaller regional events. This is an opportunity for women all over the country to get a firsthand look at our work. Such events can even be a way for you to introduce your friends to the foundation.

How You Can Get Involved

The easiest way to participate in a special event is to attend! If you are not able to come, donate a ticket or a table to the Ms. Foundation so that a girl or young woman can have the opportunity to attend in your place. In addition, for events such as the Gloria Awards for which we produce a journal, you have the opportunity to buy advertisement space.

Other ways to get involved in special events include:

- Volunteering to host and help organize a small party with Ms. Foundation staff for friends who may be interested in our work.
- Donating services, such as printing invitations or photography.
- Donating goods, such as floral arrangements or refreshments.
- Donating space, from your home, to a restaurant or conference space.
- Letting us know about friends and colleagues who may be interested in our events so that we can invite them.

However you choose to participate, one thing is certain: you'll have a wonderful time while learning something new about women's organizing and the Ms. Foundation for Women! For more information about special events, please visit our website at www.ms.foundation.org, or contact Evelyn Guzman, special events manager, at 212-742-2300 ext. 412 or eguzman@ms.foundation.org.

Puerto Rico Gains Women's Representative

In a major victory for Puerto Rican women, the island's governor signed a law to create an ombudsperson for women's affairs to oversee policies and programs that relate to reproductive rights, domestic violence, and other women's concerns. A coalition of women's groups, including Ms. Foundation grantees Grupo Pro Derechos Reproductivos and Taller Salud, helped push this decades-long effort to a positive conclusion in April 2001. The new position, which will work closely with the coalition, is a vital link between women and the government, and will play a key role in protecting their health and safety.

Girls Report Out

What do girls really need to become strong leaders, community activists, and healthy women? Find the answers in a new publication coming your way from our Collaborative Fund for Healthy Girls/Healthy Women. Documenting research from the first round of this innovative collaborative fund, *The New Girls Movement: Implications for Program and Practice*, outlines the elements of successful girl-focused programs and recommends future directions for research in this field. Check out the report this summer at www.ms.foundation.org.

New Reports for a New Economy

The Collaborative Fund for Women's Economic Development (CFWED) has just published two new reports, *Accessing Lucrative Markets and Building Businesses*, *Rebuilding Lives Based on findings from CFWED's second round*, each of these papers

enhances knowledge in the field of community economic development and reinforces the work of women fighting to create jobs and support themselves and their families. To read these reports, visit www.ms.foundation.org.

EmPOWERing Women

On September 6-9, 2001, over 200 women will come to Peachtree City, Georgia to teach, learn, and have fun at the 11th Institute for Women's Economic EmPOWERment (formerly the Institute for Women's Economic Development). Since 1988, the Institute has been the only training ground in the country for grassroots activists working on women's economic issues, helping them gain skills to meet difficult challenges, and strategize and mobilize for change. For more information, visit www.ms.foundation.org/events-Institute.html; call 212-742-2300 ext. 317; or e-mail dvsingh@ms.foundation.org.



Young women in a workshop.

Bush Leaves Women and Children Behind

A new report, released in April and supported in part by the Ms. Foundation, details the detrimental effect President Bush's first 100 days in office have had on women and their families. Called *Leaving Women and Children Behind: The First 100 Days of the Bush Administration*, this report gives a failing grade to the Bush administration's current record on policies that concern women and children. Detailing legislation, executive actions,

and initiatives that affect women's economic status, women's and children's health and safety, and the environment, it is a clear call to action for local, state and national groups that advocate on behalf of women and their families. For more information and to read *Leaving Women and Children Behind* visit www.wisnotforwomen.org.

Collaborating a Third Time Around

This spring, the Ms. Foundation's Collaborative Fund for Women's Economic Development (CFWED) kicked off its third round by awarding three-year, \$150,000 grants to 16 organizations across the country working to involve low-income women in shaping their own economic futures. Each of the grantee organizations emphasizes self-employment or cooperative business ventures as a viable and realistic option for women, helping them navigate an increasingly unstable economy. In addition, this round of CFWED places special emphasis on programs that address the conditions and wages of women's work in the caregiving fields, from child and elder care to health care.

Marching for Reproductive Rights

On April 22, 2001, a group of Ms. Foundation staff, family and friends joined thousands of marchers in Washington, DC to show our support for a woman's right to choose. Activists young and old sent a clear message to the Bush Administration that the American public will not condone threats to women's reproductive rights and health. Marchers also called for an end to violence against abortion providers, to further testing of mifepristone (RU-486), and to attempts to pass the "Unborn Victims of Violence Act."

For more Ms. Bits, visit the What's New page at www.ms.foundation.org.

Celebrating With Sara!

Sara K. Gould, executive director, is celebrating two very special occasions in 2001: her 50th birthday and her 15th year at the Ms. Foundation for Women. These milestones, and Sara's accomplishments and passion for her work, were honored on both coasts at separate parties in New York and San Francisco on June 6 and June 20, respectively.

Sara came to the Ms. Foundation in 1986 as the founder and director of the Economic Development Program, working alongside president Marie C. Wilson to create initiatives that could assist the thousands of women, and their organizations, creating jobs in urban and rural communities across the country. By connecting the words "women" and "economic development" for the first time, Sara's work inspired and supported the creation of effective solutions to low-income women's economic challenges. She spearheaded the creation of our Institute on Women and Economic Development (now the Institute on Women's Economic EMPOWERment) and the Collaborative Fund for Women's Economic Development. This innovative fund, which brings together donors large and small with grantee organizations and other dedicated individuals, has since committed over \$10 million to support local program development and reshape state and national policy.

In the late 1990s, Sara served first as the Ms. Foundation's vice president for program, and then executive vice president, while continuing to enhance the field of economic security and build the foundation's reputation as a leader in philanthropy, women's



Photo: Henry Leutzkyler

This year, we honor Sara K. Gould, executive director, as she marks her 50th birthday and 15th year at the Ms. Foundation.

health and safety, and girls' leadership. In 2000, she was appointed executive director, taking on yet a new role in helping the Ms. Foundation advance its work toward equity for women and girls.

Of their 15-year working relationship, Marie C. Wilson says, "Partnerships like the one Sara and I have are rare even in the world of women's organizations. I feel so fortunate to have worked with Sara in building a foundation that is truly dedicated to women, their families, and their communities."

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The Ms. Foundation for Women has been creating opportunities for women and girls for almost thirty years. We conduct advocacy and public education campaigns, and direct resources of all kinds to cutting-edge projects across the country that nurture girls' leadership, protect the health and safety of women and girls, and provide low-income women with the tools to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Creator of the award-winning Take Our Daughters To Work® Day program, the Ms. Foundation is also a recipient of a Presidential Award for Excellence in Microenterprise Development for our longstanding commitment to improve economic prospects for low-wage women, their families and their communities.

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Raise the Floor

This summer, the Ms. Foundation will begin a campaign, called Raise the Floor, that conveys what it truly costs for American families to fulfill their basic needs. In a report co-authored by Susan Weald, Ms. Foundation director of institutional planning, we make a clear, thoughtful case for raising the federal minimum wage to \$8.00 an hour and



implementing federal policies to fill the gap between income and the expense of food, transportation, shelter, health care, clothing, and child care. In an uncertain economy, and at a time when the gap between the rich and the poor is wider than ever, Raise the Floor will change the way we look at the worth of low-wage work. To order a copy of the report, visit www.raise-the-floor.org.

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