

Global Women's Leadership Network

February Newsletter

Reminder: Application deadline for Women Leaders for the World 2007 is March 1st!!!

Applications are now being accepted for the 2007 Women Leaders for the World program taking place from Sunday, July 22 through Sunday, July 29, 2007. The application deadline is March 1, 2007. Please see www.gwln.org for information and the application. We encourage you to personally apply or nominate others.

The following two short articles are about graduates of the Women Leaders for the World program.

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Meg Taylor, WLW 2005 – Lending Promise

Meg Taylor works for Cisco Systems as a Field Communications Manager. She takes press articles, industry analyst reports, and financial analyst notes and re-purposes them into tools that sales people can use to more effectively sell Cisco technology. Some people think that this job is nothing like her “night job” as the founder and executive director of Lending Promise www.lendingpromise.com. The truth is that in both roles, she has the opportunity to create and to make an impact.



Meg came to Women Leaders for the World 2005 with a vision. She wanted to provide micro-financing for the women of Nepal – a country halfway around the world. Since August 2005, Meg not only worked full time for Cisco, but also started her 501c3 corporation, traveled to Nepal, and extended funding to 20 women entrepreneurs at the top of the world. Some of these women are training to become trekking guides or becoming farmers and merchants of handicrafts.

It takes such a little bit of money to make a big impact in some parts of the world. Meg's slogan is “Tiny Loans, Big Dreams”. She says, “To think that for between \$50 and

\$100, I can change the lives of an entire family, I don't even have to agonize about sending the money. I just do it." In fact, Lending Promise has been financed to a large degree by Meg and her family's generosity.

A major reason Meg is passionate about micro-credit is because of her daughter, Victoria, age 6. Victoria, despite her young age, expects to help children who are less fortunate than she. Victoria traveled with her mother to Nepal last year -- her picture is at the top of the article with Prasad, a goat herder. Victoria insisted on bringing one of her toys to a poor child in Nepal. As Meg says, "I love being around my daughter, feeling her energy, seeing the world as limitless through her eyes, and hearing her frequent giggles.

It probably comes as no surprise that the person Meg most admires in the world is Muhammad Yunus, the "Banker for the Poor." He is the man who started Grameen Bank in 1976 and developed the concept of micro-credit. This is a process by which very small (hence, the term, "micro") loans are given to groups of people -- usually women -- who are too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans. Yunus knew that if given the chance, the poor would be a good credit risk, repay their loans and become financially successful. And he's proven that millions of times over. The repayment rate, at about 97 percent, is significantly higher than the typical 30 percent rate for typical Bangladeshi business loans and even the 85 percent rate for U.S. Small Business Administration loans. He has founded an entire global industry and has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.

So, what would Meg say is the underpinning of her life's philosophy? She believes that every child on this earth has a right to dream -- really, really big! She says, "Every child should have the opportunity to dream the way that my daughter Victoria does. When she was three, she said that she wanted to be a ballerina, a doctor and the queen of Asia (a whole continent, not just a country). More than half of the children in this world don't know how to dream like that. They just don't know what their options are. By helping their mothers, I believe they can learn about the opportunities that they can pursue -- and create. Otherwise, the rest of us will never be able to tap into their gifts and they will not realize their full potential."

GWLN recognizes and applauds the efforts of Meg Taylor and Lending Promise. You can email Meg at margtayl@cisco.com.

Alma Cota de Yanez, WLW 2005

Alma is the Executive Director of an organization called FESAC in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. While it is just across the border from Nogales, Arizona, it is a world apart. Her organization works towards improving life on both sides of the border.

A recent project that FESAC became involved in is helping youths to become more aware of philanthropy and to help curb underage drinking problems. Alma recruited six girls and two boys from her local Catholic high school to attend a series of Saturday workshops in the U.S. (You can imagine how enthusiastic they were about giving up their precious weekend time!) However, after the first session, they were absolutely

impressed about how you can work towards a goal of improving the quality of life, and really glad they had entered the program!

This is just one small example of the work Alma is doing to enroll individuals and groups in worthwhile projects. She has a never ending passion for involving **both** men and women (boys and girls) in philanthropic and community ventures. Alma says, "I truly believe things can get better if we work hard enough in partnership to make it happen." You can email Alma at acyanez_fesacnog@hotmail.com.

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