



## A Tribute to Iowa Women and Girls



The Iowa Women's Foundation (IWF) held two surprise unveiling receptions to honor the 114 remarkable Iowa women featured in their second annual tribute book, **OVATION: A Tribute to Iowa Women and Girls**.

IWF's publication of **OVATION: A Tribute to Iowa Women and Girls** provides a simple, unique and lasting way for anyone to pay tribute to a remarkable woman that has touched your life. Each honoree's testimony is sponsored and dictated by someone whose life has been touched by their dedication. "Our sponsors are bosses, employees, husbands, friends, sisters, daughters, caregivers, and patients. Anyone can honor an Iowa woman or girl with a tribute in our book," said Dawn Oliver Wiand, Executive Director of the Iowa Women's Foundation.

"We are thrilled that many people took the opportunity to recognize so many deserving women across Iowa," continued Wiand. "Ovation's honorees are from all walks of life. From board executives to small business owners and stay-at-home moms, from gardeners to political activists and many volunteers – these women have dedicated themselves to making a difference and are so deserving of recognition."

"This year is just the second year for **OVATION: A Tribute to Iowa Women and Girls**. We know there are many more women worthy of recognition across Iowa and we look forward to getting to know their stories through next year's publication," said Dr. Elizabeth Swanson, President of IWF. For more information visit the IWF web site or call 319-774-3813.



IOWA WOMEN'S  
FOUNDATION

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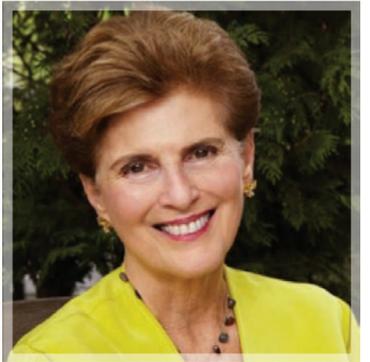
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## Marie C. Wilson Life-Long Advocate for Women and Girls

As women and girls, we have all come across barriers that keep us from succeeding. Marie C. Wilson has spent much of her life reminding women and girls of the opportunities available to them.



The Iowa Women's Foundation (IWF) announces that Wilson will be the keynote speaker at the 2015 annual Iowa Women's Foundation luncheon held on October 14th, 2015 at the Coralville Marriott Hotel and Convention Center.

Wilson is the founder of The White House Project, creator of Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work® Day, former president of the Ms. Foundation for Women, and author of *Closing the Leadership Gap: Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World* (Viking 2004) and *Getting Big: Reimagining the Women's Movement*.

Wilson, after graduating from Drake University with a master's in higher education, served as the director of women's programs at Drake for three years, creating one of the largest and most respected women's studies organizations in the nation. Recognizing her outstanding career accomplishments, she was awarded the Drake University Alumni Achievement award. Wilson also served as the vice president of human resources for the Iowa Banker's Association.

Marie C. Wilson's has impacted thousands through life-long advocacy for women and girls as she served to advance women's leadership across their personal, professional and political lives. We at the IWF are thrilled to learn from her firsthand about how she continues to inspire generations of women and girls. Her commitment and energy are contagious. She is an excellent representation of the Iowa Women's Foundation mission to help Iowa's women and girls.

IWF's mission is to help Iowa's women and girls become economically self-sufficient. By empowering them, we drastically improve the status of our families, our communities and the Iowa economy as a whole. The IWF funds statewide programs that seek to permanently improve those lives.

The Iowa Women's Foundation invites you to join us for the Annual Luncheon on October 14. Hear Marie talk about we need to teach young girls that they can look up, dream big, reach high and see what's out there and explore. That together we're creating conditions where women and girls in Iowa can thrive.

### The more we raise, the more we can give back to Iowa's women and girls!

#### Become part of the change by joining one of our Circles of Giving.

To learn more about Leadership Circle and our other Circles of Giving, visit our website at [www.iawf.org](http://www.iawf.org).

#### Interested in Supporting the Iowa Women's Foundation?

Want to do more? Looking for volunteer opportunities? Contact Dawn Oliver Wiand at (319) 774-3814.

"Like" us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/IowaWomensFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/IowaWomensFoundation)

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#### More about the Iowa Women's Foundation:

Visit our website at [www.iawf.org](http://www.iawf.org)

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## From the Executive Director

Seventy-percent of Iowa's female headed households are struggling economically. Forty-percent are living in poverty and an additional 30% do not earn enough to support their basic living expenses. This according to the *SHE MATTERS: 2015 Issues and Actions* report. In an effort to help Iowa's women and girls create economic self-sufficiency, the Iowa Women's Foundation recently completed community meetings in 18 Iowa towns. Meetings were held May through August as the Iowa Women's Foundation hit the state highways and byways for their *SHE MATTERS: We Listen and Iowa Wins Tour*. The Iowa Women's Foundation leadership traveled

over 4,800 miles with 18 stops, including: Cedar Rapids, Chariton, Council Bluffs, Creston, Decorah, Des Moines, Dubuque, Fort Dodge, Fort Madison, Iowa City, Jefferson, Marshalltown, Mason City, Ottumwa, Davenport, Sioux City, Storm Lake and Waterloo.

Thirty-seven local partners from community nonprofits, educational institutions and businesses collaborated with the Iowa Women's Foundation bringing to the discussion 266 community leaders recognized for their work with women and girls. We learned firsthand the most pressing challenges affecting economic self-sufficiency for women (and children) in each community. We also heard what initiatives are in place to advance success for women and girls and about the gaps that exist. Community leaders also made recommendations for specific areas or issues where the Iowa Women's Foundation could invest to help women and girls achieve economic success. The tour exceeded our expectations. Each community meeting was enthusiastically attended and the discussions thoughtful and informative.

The data will culminate in a report, developed by the Iowa Women's Foundation, to be released in early 2016. The Foundation will use the report to guide its priorities and strategies moving forward. The report will also be shared with community, business and government leaders around the state to inform and drive action towards statewide gender equality.

Economically self-sufficient women can lead Iowa's next chapter of economic growth. Investing in women means investing in our economy. Iowa's more than 1 million women and girls deserve nothing less.

### IOWA

1. Cedar Rapids
2. Chariton
3. Council Bluffs
4. Creston
5. Davenport
6. Decorah
7. Des Moines
8. Dubuque
9. Fort Dodge
10. Fort Madison
11. Iowa City
12. Jefferson
13. Marshalltown
14. Mason City
15. Ottumwa
16. Sioux City
17. Storm Lake
18. Waterloo



## 2015 Grantee Spotlight

### Women, Food and Agriculture Network

#### Women Caring for the Land<sup>SM</sup>: Nurturing New Careers in Ecological Restoration

Article by JoEllen Zmolek Nyquist

Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) was founded in Iowa in 1997, to link and empower women to build food systems and communities that are healthy, just, sustainable, and that promote environmental integrity. Since its founding, WFAN has grown to include over 5,000 women and men across the US who are committed to gender equity in agriculture and to creating localized healthy food systems.

The Iowa Women's Foundation has funded the WFAN project "Women Caring for the Land<sup>SM</sup>: Nurturing New Careers in Ecological Restoration" in 2014 and 2015. Bridget Holcomb, Executive Director of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network describes how the "Women Caring for the Land" project came about. "Sometimes conservation work means using chainsaws and fire, and landowners want to hire ecological restorationists to do that work. Looking around, we didn't find a single woman who worked as an ecological restorationist. So we decided to train them ourselves."

This year's grant allows WFAN to build upon a pilot project started in 2014. The individuals trained last year are four female ecological restoration entrepreneurs, and WFAN is continuing work with these women in 2015. Training has included in-the-field education, business plan development training and cash flow analysis, and individualized support to address issues such as equipment needs and building businesses over time. Avenues for building a client base have also been explored. Many clients are women landowners who are interested in hiring female contractors to work on their land. In fact, nearly half of Iowa landowners are women, which give these entrepreneurs a solid potential client base.

This continuing project fills a niche both for aspiring female entrepreneurs in the growing field of ecological restoration and for the rising number of women inheriting farmland in Iowa.

Jessica Abernathy, a 2014 trainee, said, "This internship has provided me with the materials that I need, and given me an idea of what I need to be doing to start getting my own business together. It has given me the push to go from an idea in my head to an actual business."

"These women are breaking into a male-dominated career, showing that women can use chainsaws and do prescribed fires. They are an inspiration to me, and they are perfect examples to girls that women can take on anything," said Holcomb.



Sarah Nizzi, WFAN intern and participant in Women Caring for the Land training

## Iowa Center for Economic Success: Women's Business Center

### How can women in Iowa actualize their dream of starting and running a successful business?

Article by Nicki Maurus

The Iowa Center for Economic Success exists with the mission to empower Iowans with the potential to succeed as they pursue opportunities to improve their financial futures. Within this Des Moines-based Center is the Women's Business Center, Iowa's only organization one hundred percent dedicated to the education and mentoring of women entrepreneurs.

Iowa needs more women-owned businesses. American Express OPEN published The State of Women-owned Business in 2014, indicating Iowa trails behind the nation in women who own their business. Report findings also showed women-owned companies in Iowa experienced downswings in revenues and number of employees from 1997 to 2014. The Women's Business Center looks to reverse that trend.

The WBC offers financial services, business education and resources, and leadership development to entrepreneurs. Michelle Bartusek, Director of Business Education and Resources, explains, "The WBC's mission is to launch and grow successful women-owned businesses, transforming our clients' lives, their families, their local community, and our state."

The WBC applied for a grant from the Iowa Women's Foundation to help subsidize courses and materials to prepare women for business ownership.

WBC graduated twenty-five students from a program last April. Coursework focused on business plan creation. Their semi-formal celebration included the chance for each graduate to present their business's elevator speech.

The next course session will pilot DreamBuilder, an online curriculum combined with traditional classroom instruction. Due to traditional barriers students have experienced with technology, the inaugural DreamBuilder module consists of a smaller group of ten students. Funds from IWF will provide classroom materials and every participant is expected to make some contribution. Bartusek says, "We never want financial barriers to be a reason someone doesn't take a class."

Students enrolled in DreamBuilder will meet twice weekly for six weeks. Local business people support the Center's mission and are eager to come share their success stories to instruct and motivate students. Bartusek reports Center graduates return to instruct future business owners.

DreamBuilder software is new to the Center. Since not all participants have online access, the software will be available for students who wish to drop by the lab. According to Bartusek, "If they put the work into the course, they will come out with a workable business plan. Our clients need business plans for funding."

Ultimately, Bartusek sees the Center and WBC becoming a "one stop shop" for Iowa women entrepreneurs, from creation to growth to continued success.

