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**The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women
January Newsletter – First Edition**

In 2011, the Institute’s PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS program will begin its fifth year empowering women in America, Afghanistan, and Rwanda.

It has changed the lives of hundreds of women, and in turn, they’ve had the opportunity to change the lives of even more women as well, truly embracing the pay it forward aspect of the program. In addition to helping women in their own countries, the students have also greatly impacted the lives of their American mentors.

With that thought in mind, and in celebration of **National Mentoring Month**, we’d like to share some stories with you from past mentors who were kind enough to tell their experiences to us.

What prompted you to be a part of the PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS mentorship program?

I wanted to have the opportunity to share my victories and failures with other women across the globe. I also wanted to learn how women across from other parts of the world do the same things I do, like balancing work and family lives. It really is a win/win situation for both sides. I can see where people might think it is one-sided. However, it’s a shared commonality, which I think is great.

– Cathi Coan, Techway Services, Inc., Texas

The PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS program is an ideal fit for the mission of Enterprising Women. Our focus for the last 11 years has been on providing women entrepreneurs with the resources and inspiration to grow their businesses to the next level. When I first learned about the program through Terry, I was excited about it and eager to get involved. I am looking forward to being a mentor again this summer.

– Monica Smiley, Enterprising Women Magazine, North Carolina

What did you learn from being a mentor?

What I came away with was a new sense of how connected



From left, Darcie Harris with her mentee, Catherine Bitwayiki.



Marion Marshall with her mentee, Bonita Mwunvaneza (far right).

female business owners are no matter where they live. They can be in a different part of the world and speak a different language, yet we all have the same things in common.

– Darcie Harris, EWF International, Oklahoma

Being a mentor made me realize just how much I really did know about establishing, managing and growing a business. Being a mentor meant I had to break down all aspects of what I do, and chunk it into experiences and learning activities for the mentee.

– Lori Blaker, TTI Global, Michigan

A lot of these women are educated, but they can't get a job simply because they are women. The best thing for them to do is start their own business.

– Heather Hearndon-Wright, Energy Future Holdings, Texas

I learned not to take things for granted. Both years as a mentor, each woman was just so grateful for even the smallest thing, and it really brings you back into perspective for what you should be thankful for in spite of what you have.

– Andrea Graves, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma

We have never been kicked out of our cities in total displacement, then have to come back and start all over again. To be able to help women who can go back and help others goes a long way.

– Marion Marshall, Absolutely Blooming!, Texas

How did your mentee inspire you?

Marcelline is a true inspiration. She was so happy, encouraging, and positive, despite her challenges. She blended into our family so naturally and truly loves our children. She is just a real genuine, loving person who wanted to help me equally as much as I wanted to help her.

– Cathi Coan, Techway Services, Inc., Texas

She inspired our entire team and all of the people I introduced her to. She was a real delight, and the real inspiration comes from what these women have to accomplish on their own. She just radiates from the heart, and everyone gravitated to her and wanted to spend as much time with her as possible. So it truly goes down to their desire to make a better life for themselves, their community, and their family members. The obstacles and challenges we face here are really nothing compared to what they go through.

– Jena Gardner, JG Black Book of Travel, New York

How would you describe your overall experience?

I consider my mentorships with the Rwanda women



2009 Rwandan students Françoise Uwamwezi and Annette Karenzi with mentors Sheila Ogle (second from left) and Monica Smiley (far right).



From left, Manizha Wafeq, Afghan facilitator, with mentor Lori Blaker.

in 2009 and the Afghan women in 2010 to be among the best experiences of my life. Understanding how much we have in common and seeing the world through their eyes is a priceless opportunity that has made my life richer in all the ways that really matter. I have long believed that business is all about relationships and we have grown our business by forming real and lasting relationships. Expanding that network to include these wonderful, intelligent and eager-to-learn friends from both Rwanda and Afghanistan makes what I do every day more meaningful.

– Monica Smiley, Enterprising Women Magazine, North Carolina

I truly feel like my experience with my mentee and the PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS program makes a difference in our world, and I can't say that about a lot of things. I hope the program continues to grow, and I hope to be even more involved in the future. And I'd like to see the program expand because there are opportunities everywhere, all around the world.

– Paula Yoder, Texas Christian University, Texas

Mentorship is a life-changing experience, so don't forget – you still have time to apply [online](#) to be a mentor for the next program. By mentoring, you can be an integral part of the incredible experience of paying forward your blessings to a woman entrepreneur from Afghanistan or Rwanda. Students will be chosen for Leadership Development in April, so the matchmaking process will begin soon!

It is our wish that each student and mentor will benefit from this relationship and that it will continue long after the commitment to PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS is completed, and we hope that the stories we've included in this newsletter are a testament to our mission and goal.

Later this month, we'll be honoring our students with a **second edition** of our newsletter dedicated to telling their stories and sharing the progress they've made since graduating from the program.

Be a mentor. Click on this [link](#) today.

Warmest regards,

Terry Neese



As always, a special thank you goes out to our wonderful sponsors and partners!