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BUSINESS**

The Institute for Economic
Empowerment of Women

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The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women March Newsletter

March is always an exciting month for us, because it is a full 31 days dedicated to celebrating what we're all about – empowering women! People are celebrating women's past and continued accomplishments all over the world this month.

One major accomplishment this month that we must recognize is that our 2010 Rwandan In-Country PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS students will be graduating this Saturday on March 27.

The guest of honor will be Rwanda's Minister of Gender and Family Protection, Dr. Jeanne D'Arc Mujawamariya. And, not to worry, our Afghan students will graduate one week later on April 3.

As we celebrate our In-Country students' graduation, we are forging ahead to create even more women's success. We have received incredible feedback about our new IEEW campaign: "I Educate & Empower Women."

We are buttoning up the last-minute details in order to kick off the pilot project on April 13, when our 15 women business owners and our 15 entrepreneurial high school students will shadow 15 female legislators at the Oklahoma State Capitol!

As participants in a free-market economy and democracy, women business owners of today and tomorrow need to be actively engaged in the public policy process, and this new program will set them on the road to do so!

A big thank you to Freda Deskin for her help and support and for partnering students from her school, [ASTEC](#), The Advanced Science and Technology Education Charter Schools.

We are excited to help plant the seeds of entrepreneurship in these students and prepare them for a strong-rooted and successful business future!



Fifteen mentor teams of Oklahoma women business owners and entrepreneurial high school students will shadow lawmakers at the Capitol.



With 2010 Women of Courage Award Recipient Colonel Shafiqah Quraish and Mariam Nawabi (right) with AMDi, Inc.

We are so proud to have the support and participation of the following Oklahoma legislators:

Rep. Leslie Osborn, Rep. Skye McNeil, Rep. Lee Denney, Rep. Ann Coody, Rep. Sue Tibbs, Rep. Anastasia Pittman, Rep. Rebecca Hamilton, Rep. Jeannie McDaniel, Rep. Pam Peterson, Rep. Sally Kern, Sen. Debbie Leftwich, Sen. Mary Easley, Sen. Judy Eason McIntyre, Sen. Constance Johnson, and Sen. Susan Paddock.

Spots are filling up quickly and are quite limited, so if you're an Oklahoma woman business owner interested in participating, contact [Cathy Neill](#) now!

I was proud to be in Washington, DC, amidst all the celebrations mid-March for International Women's

Week, hopping from one event to the next. As a member of the Women's Democracy Network's Council of Advisers, I attended the WDN conference, which had the representation of 14 countries. I also attended the WDN Jeane Kirkpatrick Award Dinner and Reception.

It was a privilege to be in the presence of such great people who are making a real difference ... all in memory and honor of Jeane, an Oklahoman who left a legacy when she made history as the first woman appointed to serve as permanent representative of the United States to the United Nations.

I also had the opportunity to spend time with Melanne Vermeer, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, which was a great pleasure. It was a particularly proud moment to see one of our 2009 graduates, Andeisha Farid, receive an award from Vital Voices.

She graciously accepted the award from Brian Williams of NBC Nightly News and U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Tex.).

My interview with the lovely Lina Rozbih from Voice of America was also a fantastic opportunity – it's so rewarding to meet with people who are focused on the same mission as we!

There are too many events to name, but it was absolutely inspiring to attend the 2010 International Women of Courage Awards ceremony at the U.S. State Department, with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama at the podium.

The truly majestic feeling of being in our nation's capital during this historic week and with such powerful and inspirational women is nearly indescribable, but I'm so thankful for the opportunity! Because it's impossible to be everywhere all the time, we often recruit our board members to represent the Institute at key women's events across the nation. One of our valued board members, Valerie Shondel, has once again served the Institute well by attending two important meetings: Wal-Mart's Global Women's Initiatives and the Paley Center for Media conference on "Afghan Women in the Media." Lots of great discussions and ideas were generated at both meetings – thanks Valerie for your dedication.

On the other side of the world, our PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS classes in Afghanistan and Rwanda are coming to a close. In only a few more days, we will know who our 2010 PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS Leadership Development delegates are! We are so proud of all of our In-Country students for the hard work they have put in, and we are so grateful to our facilitators, Holly Hixson and Manizha Wafeq, for all of their time

and hard work as well. I sent our students this “half-way” [video message](#) just to give that extra push to help make it through the last half of the course.

After Washington, I attended a special U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council meeting and a conference last week on Educating and Empowering the Women and Girls of Afghanistan hosted by Mrs. Laura Bush at the George W. Bush Center on the campus of Southern Methodist University.

Once again, our ’09 graduate Andeisha Farid took the lead and spoke before the Council and at the conference – we just can’t say enough how proud we are of her!



With one of our valued sponsors, Charlene Lake of AT&T, and Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues Melanne Vermeer.

I [live tweeted](#) the whole event, where we heard from VIPs like Ambassador Paula Dobriansky, former Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, Anita McBride, former Chief of Staff to First Lady Laura Bush, as well as Afghan women leaders, such as Shamim Jawad, wife of Afghanistan’s Ambassador to the U.S. Ambassador Said Jawad, Andeisha and Sakena Yacoobi, Executive Director of an Afghan women-led NGO Afghan Institute of Learning. Yacoobi was nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

All of the discussions were lively and informative -- audience members were standing up asking how could they help. Shedding light on such an important issue as literacy is critical when moving forward in war-torn countries, because without the foundation of literacy and education, what progress can be made?

After the meeting, I participated in an exciting interview with Andeisha and Anita McBride on [Platforms: The Life-Lifting News Program for Women](#). The interview will be airing soon on the Web site, so be sure to keep on checking in!

We are thrilled about the additional media coverage we have received, including our blog post on [Women Grow Business](#), my [interview with Jim Blasingame](#) with the Small Business Advocate, our [op-ed](#) in the Journal Record, as well as our new monthly [IEEW column](#) on WomenEntrepreneur.com!

Looks like things won’t slow down any in April, as we’ll be announcing our 2010 PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS Leadership Development delegates along with the winners of our former student contest, and we’ll be kicking off our pilot project in Oklahoma City. As March comes to a close, we can’t say enough how proud we are of women around the world!

Warmest regards,

Terry Neese



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