



THE SCOOP



WORK OPTIONS FOR WOMEN'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

October 2020

Vol. 1

A Note from our Executive Director

by Julie Stone
Executive Director



Chef Tina teaches Knife Skills at the MCC

Hello Friends,

I hope you are all healthy and safe. This has been the most challenging and the most amazing year. Facing the pandemic has given us the opportunity to be creative and think carefully about how we train our students, why we train our students, and how we serve the community. I am so proud of our staff for their commitment to our students and all the creative ways they have revised our program to meet this challenging time. So instead of telling you all the creative ways they have risen to this moment, I will just let them tell you themselves. As always, thank you for supporting WOW and your commitment to investing in our students.

Julie Stone

WORK
options
for
women



A WOW student shows off freshly baked cookies at the WOW Training Center

Board Perspective

by Sarah Bleau
Chair, Board of Directors

I cry when I attend Work Option graduation ceremonies and see the pride in our students; it's the beauty of every beaming face. It is our mission to help people overcome barriers by building confidence, teaching culinary skills, and encouraging hope. I dream of hope. It is what encourages me to do my best. It is what motivates me when there's a pandemic. It's why I joined Work Options: in my heart, I feel we should all have the luxury to hope. Work Options is an organization that makes my dream come true. You, as donors, make my dream come true. It is because of you that we all have hope and prevail, especially now, when faced with so much unknown- can we open the café? how many students in a cohort? how do we recruit students while social distancing? So many questions, but it comes down to this: one, it's tough for us, but terrifying for our students. While we stew about running an organization, our students worry about providing shelter for their loved ones. And two, we know you are committed to us. You, our donors, are the wind beneath our wings. Thank-you, from the bottom of my heart, for believing in our mission and being committed to our students.

Creative Recruiting

by Kristi Hornick

Director of Recruiting & Community Engagement

As we continue to navigate the changing COVID-19 landscape, WOW Recruitment is finding new ways to increase our visibility with prospective students and community partners in the midst of increasingly limited avenues for face-to-face recruitment efforts. The following are just some of the ways we are shifting, striving to create awareness of, and enrollment in, our culinary job training program:

- Offering Information Sessions via group Zoom and 1-on-1
- Monthly communication updates with community partners and marketing material distribution
- Appreciation gifts to top 20 collaborators
- Coordination with Employment First and Food Bank of the Rockies to distribute our WOW flyers at food distribution points throughout Denver
- Outside tabling with various partners, including at The Helping Hen soft launches
- Recruitment sticker added to Emergency Meals



Kristi speaks with prospective students during The Helping Hen's soft openings



Programming During a Pandemic

by Angela O'Leary

Director of Operations



WOW students make emergency meals at the WOW Training Center

Since the Shelter in Place in March, Work Options for Women has found a way to continue our mission of training students for culinary jobs and added a way to feed our neighbors in need. Currently, our WOW training center at the Denver Human Services Building and our mobile culinary classroom are open and training students to become essential workers. Students now get the full culinary training as well as three special certifications for handling food during the Covid-19

pandemic. The new twist is that now instead of teaching the student by producing food that is sold in the cafes they are now practicing their newly acquired culinary skills in the making of over 800 emergency meals each week. (Cont'd)

As always we continue to provide individualized case management support, job readiness and the popular Mind Over Matter cognitive behavioral class. This support is more important than ever for our students, who are on the frontlines of this pandemic. So far this year we have enrolled 118 students and 60 are employed already!

We have also launched our food truck the Helping Hen. The Helping Hen will provide 4-6 week paid internships for up to 4 students at a time who have completed our training and would benefit the most from an internship. The Helping Hen features the tender, juicy rotisserie roasted chicken you see pictured. Follow @HelpingHenTruck on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter to get the latest updates and find out when The Helping Hen will be in your area! Stay tuned for information on the Second Helping program - a program created so that you can pay it forward and provide a family in need with a delicious rotisserie chicken dinner.



Chef Bryan shows off The Helping Hen rotisserie chicken (above) and a Superfood Salad (below)

Funding WOW's Future

by **Bailey Denmark**
Development Director

This is an unprecedented time in the nonprofit development world. Funding, while numerous emergency programs have been established, remains tight. WOW has been successful in securing several emergency grants like the Payroll Protection Plan, CARES ACT, and the Denver Emergency Relief Fund, as well as receiving interim-grant cycle funding from Rose Community Foundation and The Telluray Foundation. This funding has been imperative in keeping our doors open, especially with the indefinite closure of both WOW Café at the Denver Human Services Building and Café United at Mile High United Way. Despite these uncertain times, WOW is excited to launch our newest social enterprise and transitional employment opportunity - The Helping Hen, a rotisserie chicken truck with a mission! While we anticipate great success with The Helping Hen, we are in need of immediate funding to ensure the future of WOW. This is where you come in! Without donors like you we wouldn't be able to provide job skills training and case management to our students, nor would we be able to employ our incredible staff, or provide healthy, free hot meals to our neighbors who are the most at-risk and underserved in the Denver Metro area. Donating \$100 today will ensure delicious, healthy rotisserie chicken meals for four families of four!



**To make a donation please go to
workoptions.org or send a check to:
Work Options for Women, c/o Bailey Denmark,
1200 Federal Blvd. Denver, CO 80204.**

All donations are 100% tax deductible and any donation over \$250 makes you eligible for an additional tax credit from the State of Colorado through the Denver Enterprise Zone Tax Credit.

***Colorado Gives Day is Tuesday,
December 8. It's never too early to start
planning your year-end giving.***

Please contact Development Director Bailey Denmark at bdenmark@workoptions.org if you have any questions.