



THE SCOOP



WORK OPTIONS' QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Work Options for Everyone

by Julie Stone
Executive Director

Dear Friends:

In the fall of 2019, we began a process that included looking at what Work Options for Women is, who we serve and how we do this work. We were led through this process by Rocky Mountain Center for Positive Change through a grant from Gary Community Investments.

This was a valuable process, and we discussed many important topics. One of the primary discussions was regarding how we present our program to our community partners and our perspective students to ensure individuals feel welcome and included. This led many of our staff to ask why our organization's name excludes men especially when we have always included some men in our training programs. The question became "why not modify our name to simply Work Options to create a more inclusive environment".

This question continued to surface especially during the development of a new messaging platform. At that time the best answer to the persistent question was that our original name was well known in the community, and it would be detrimental to change. We also thought that women might feel safer in a female centered program. We surveyed students and found that most students preferred multi-gendered classes. This discovery process was interrupted by the pandemic and brought back up this spring.

WORK OPTIONS





After a lively discussion with the Board of Directors, we decided it was time to get some community data to help make the best decision on how to proceed. An industrious board member reached out to half of our community partners and most of the foundations who have supported us over the years. She asked each group specific questions created to judge the reaction to Work Options for Women rebranding as Work Options. We were surprised that of the over 70 people surveyed only 3% considered the modification negatively. Most people were extremely supportive and surprised that we had not made the change sooner. In May our Board of Directors voted to modify our name.

And so, we would like to announce to you our long-term supporters and friends that we are now doing business as Work Options. We will continue to use Work Options for Women as our legal name.

We thank you for your support of this decision and will continue to serve those in our community with the greatest need.

Julie Stone

Struggle of Love

Work Options' Mobile Culinary Classroom has partnered with several great organizations in order to bring our culinary job training program to more people. We asked our newest community partner, Struggle of Love Foundation, to tell you a little about themselves in their own words. The Mobile Culinary Classroom will be training students at Struggle of Love's headquarters for the rest of the summer. Here is what CEO & Executive Director, LaKeshia Hodge, wanted to share with friends and supporters of Work Options:



During normal times, the “Sacks Of Love” food pantry serves about 60 people a week who need a little extra help to get by.

Now multiply that steady stream of kindness by an astounding 40 times.

In the last eighteen months since the pandemic, the pantry continues to provide food boxes for more than 2,500 people a week and it has not slowed down. As a result, the Struggle of Love Foundation created employment opportunities for youth and young adults to keep the pantry operating and to keep up with the growing demand.

The pantry operates five days a week for two hours each day and serves the greater area of Denver. Although we focus on Far North East/Montbello and Green Valley Ranch communities, everyone is welcome and we see our neighbors from all areas, all walks of life line up to receive food for the week. The “Sacks of Love” operation has become one of the foundations main priorities however, Struggle of Love still manages to continue facilitating youth programs including camps, learning labs, year-round sports and mentor program, secondary prevention, violence interruption and community service obligations.

We also pivoted to continue to offer our annual community outreach events which includes the Father’s Day “Reach 4 Peace Picnic”, Back 2 School Backpack and Supply Giveaway, “Need to Feed” Thanksgiving Basket Giveaway and our “Time to Give” holiday gift giving event.

Through these community outreach events; Struggle of Love Foundation has assisted more than 116,000 families over the years. We have distributed over 3,500 Thanksgiving baskets, more than 30,000 toys for the holidays, over 5,600 backpacks with school supplies and have seen 160 + youth participate in our sports and mentor program. In addition, we have recognized 30 + fathers with the Father of the Year award during our “Reach 4 Peace Picnic” Father Day event.

Since launching our drive-thru “Sacks of Love” food pantry we have distributed over 1m lbs of food which helped feed over 250,000 individuals including 110,000 children, 54,000 seniors and disable residence and 88,000 adults. We have also made over 2,200 deliveries to seniors, disable residence and families without adequate transportation.

***To see our work in the community and/or to get involved please visit our website:
struggleoflovefoundation.org***



Work Options' students and Chefs at Struggle of Love

We've Saved You a Seat

by Bailey Denmark
Development Director

Work Options is looking to expand our Board of Directors and we would love you to join. Serving on the Board of Directors of an organization you support and admire may be one of the most rewarding and valuable decisions you've made. Here's why:

1. You get a valuable seat behind the wheel of a major organization, and you play a key role in strategizing. From financials to operations to board governance to philanthropy to mission work to marketing to programming – nothing screams, “Everything is connected in a successful organization” like serving on the board! When you serve on the board, you have the honor, challenge, and responsibility of understanding how everything needs to work together for an organization to accomplish its goals.

2. Becoming an engaged donor through board participation feels good and will probably teach you more about fundraising than any course in nonprofit management could. Listen, I understand that it would be excellent if we could all dictate the decisions of nonprofit organizations without putting anything of our own on the line... but many organizations need financial support from the board to keep running. Not only that, who sits on a board and how much they give is a big determining factor for whether someone will make a major gift... And perhaps it should be! If an organization's own board members don't care enough to support it meaningfully, then why the heck should anyone else? Consider what you can and are willing to give and ask current members of the board about expected contributions.

3. Your voice will be heard – and it has impact. You'll hear the impactful voices of others, and you'll get to stretch all your intellectual and emotional muscles, too! Board service at its best allows you to bring your full self to the organization – your emotional connection to the work, your commitment to the overall nonprofit sector, your life experience, your skills, and the good head you have on your shoulders. This position is all about diplomacy and making sure your colleagues get their say, too.



4. You'll care more than you thought you could! The closer you are to the mission and work of Work Options, the more that work comes to life for you, the more passionate you will become. Many people say they serve on a Board of Directors to “contribute to something meaningful.” I think though, that a more accurate reason so serve on a board is to allow something meaningful to contribute to you.

The very best board members are teams, and we can't wait for you to join ours! If you're interested in learning more about Board membership and/or joining a committee, please contact me at bdenmark@workoptions.org, or at 937 903 6711.