

*Compassionate
Academic Success
Respect
Empathy*

W Women Walking West

Advancing education for women from across the globe

Mission

W3's mission is to remove language, social, cultural, academic, and financial barriers that foreign-born adult women experience in the U.S. This mission helps instill an environment of connections that creates a base of support to provide opportunities for women to overcome difficulties and therefore achieve their lifelong professional and personal goals.

Values

To create a culture that includes our core values: Compassion, Academic Success, Respect and Empathy (CARE).

A Message from the Board Chair & Founder

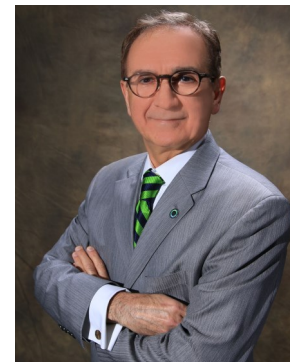
Dear Friends and Dedicated Supporters,

It is again with my deepest gratitude that I am writing to you to thank you for your ongoing support of Women Walking West (W3).

In these times of national division, our unity in supporting foreign-born women to help them to obtain equal educational opportunities in the United States must remain steadfast.

Since our founding, we have achieved remarkable milestones, and your commitment has been the driving force behind all our accomplishments. I am immensely grateful for every one of you. It is critical for us to continue to raise funds to provide invaluable services to our mentees, demonstrated by the impactful events hosted by W3 over the past six months. These events have empowered our mentees, offering them the tools and confidence needed to succeed. Our shared mission unites us, ensuring we can continue to provide these essential services.

Please save the date for our 5th RISE Gala on November 14th. I ask that we continue to work together to expand our organization, spread the word about our mission, continue to support and empower foreign-born women, and make our communities stronger, **one woman at a time.**



Dr. George Sehi, Founder & Board Chair



Workshop participants with Abby Melampy of Duke Energy

immersion painting by dipping laser cut guitars in a water bath. They enjoyed lunch together and finished their guitars by the afternoon – each one a unique masterpiece. This workshop was an opportunity to learn real life application of STEM, make new friends and have fun making music!

3rd Annual Guitar Building Workshop

On Saturday April 20th, nine mentees gathered at Sinclair College for a day filled with creativity, learning, and fun as they each built their own electric guitar to take home with them.

Sponsored by Duke Energy, and instructed by Mr. Tom Singer, participants chose a color for their guitar, then learned about stringing the guitar using a specific formula that brought algebra to life. Participants learned about acoustics and the physics behind it that makes music sound so magical, and tried



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W3 Newsletter

JULY | VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2



Camp Joy Leadership Training



Otis Williams Camp Joy facilitator and W3 Mentees with their certificates

Blindfolded walk Workshop

Four W3 mentees, Olga Klochkov, Manirambona Ernestine, Prekshya Nepal, and Priyanshi Shah, attended Camp Joy for a full day of activities led by facilitator Otis Williams.

Our mentees engaged in public speaking by sharing about themselves, and being creative by thinking outside the box. Working together they were tasked with moving a marble from the corner of the room all the way up some stairs, and into a bucket! It took a few tries, but their teamwork prevailed. Following lunch, they engaged in confidence and trust building skills by moving from one side of the Camp to the other in blind folds. The mentees gained self-awareness, built confidence, learned to trust and support each other, and developed leadership skills for their future careers. **It was a fun day of experiential learning!**



Participants at Melting Pot Series Film Screening of Happy at Sinclair College

Melting Pot Series: Community Discussion The Movie "Happy"

On April 11th, in collaboration with Sinclair Community College, W3 hosted a screening of the award-winning movie "Happy" for mentees, mentors, students, and community members. "Happy" explores the meaning of happiness from a cross-cultural perspective. The director visited 15 different countries and interviewed people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

After the movie, a Q&A session allowed the 40 attendees to share their own definitions of happiness and personal stories of resilience. The discussion highlighted the importance of family, community, and finding joy in life's small moments. It was a heartwarming event that fostered a sense of community and collective happiness.



Sarah Legesse, Dr. Fatemeh Hajhosseini, Beth Brigger (JWC), Michelle Colpean (JWC) Dr. Cathy Bishop-Clark, Sheryl Rajbhandari

Empowering Women Through Education Panel Discussion

On March 27th, the Empowering Women Through Education Panel Discussion took place at the Wyoming Civic Center. Sponsored by the City of Wyoming and hosted by Women Walking West and the JWC of Wyoming, the event featured inspiring stories from four remarkable women.

Dr. Cathy Bishop-Clark, former Dean at Miami University, shared her experience as the only female student in her computer science class and emphasized the importance of finding a supportive community for success.

Ms. Shabana Shakir Ahmed, co-founder of Cincinnati Muslim Women, spoke about using her MBA from Xavier University to creatively support her community and family.

Ms. Sarah Legesse, admissions counselor at Cincinnati State College, discussed how her education in the US from Ethiopia opened many career doors.

Ms. Sheryl Rajbhandari, founder and CEO of Heartfelt Tidbits, recounted her journey from being bullied to becoming an executive and the first in her family to earn a bachelor's degree.

The evening was filled with powerful stories of resilience, community support, and the importance of dreaming big. Attendees left feeling inspired, empowered, and grateful for the shared experiences and wisdom.



Dr. Fatemeh Hajhosseini, Dr. Cathy Bishop-Clark, Shabana Shakir-Ahmed, Dr. George Sehi, Sarah Legesse, Sheryl Rajbhandari, Michelle Colpean

Caring Community Member

Rhonda Whitaker Hurtt,
Vice President, Community Relations, Duke Energy Ohio & Kentucky.

As Vice President of Community Relations, Rhonda Whitaker Hurtt mostly enjoys the many diverse relationships she has built in the SW OH/NKY region with local government officials, and a wide range of business, community and civic leaders. While her “day job” is tied to the many gas and electric operational projects that impact the communities served by Duke Energy, she and her team also work on identifying how they can link Duke Energy’s company resources to support a variety of community efforts. She says: “I am fortunate to work for a company who not only provides financial support for many great local efforts, but who also encourages a culture of community leadership.”



Rhonda Whitaker Hurtt



Rhonda Whitaker Hurtt and
her husband Dave

“I am fortunate to work for a company who not only provides financial support for many great local efforts, but who also encourages a culture of community leadership.”

While Rhonda comes from modest beginnings, she notes that her upbringing and educational attainment have shaped who she is today. She is a humble, yet passionate leader who says she learned early on “if you work hard and put in effort you can achieve success.”

As a local leader Rhonda is heavily engaged with community development and workforce advancement. She notes, “Duke Energy is proactive in seeking a diverse workforce. With our recruitment efforts we have a long-standing commitment to create a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve. As we hit our goals to increase the females and minorities in our workforce, we set new, higher goals!”

Duke Energy has been a long-time supporter of Women Walking West. They not only sponsor the annual STEM Guitar Building Workshop, but they also provide funding for financial assistance to our mentees. Rhonda presented Dr. Sehi, founder and Chair of the Board a \$10,000 check at the 4th Annual RISE Gala in 2023. In addition, one of Duke’s local leaders from the electric transmission organization has recently joined the board of Women Walking West! Rhonda hopes to connect future mentors to WWW, especially through Duke Energy’s employee resource groups (ERGs).

It is important to note the role of individual leaders who champion diversity and inclusion and seek creative and inclusive leadership. Rhonda Whitaker Hurtt is a compassionate leader who understands the changing needs of her community and champions the cause of the minority. We are grateful for Rhonda’s personal support and the financial and moral support of Duke Energy and their dedicated staff to the mission and vision of Women Walking West. We look forward to our continued collaboration as we help foreign-born women in the community become the future leaders of tomorrow.

GOOD NEWS!

We are overjoyed to announce that the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Middletown Community Foundation have awarded our grant requests for our Mentor & Laptop program!

Their generous support will allow us to help foreign-born women in the cities of Hamilton and Middletown by providing qualified applicants with a dedicated mentor and a laptop ensuring she has the resources and guidance needed to support her educational journey and professional dreams.

Our ultimate mission is to profoundly impact the educational and professional journeys as many foreign-born women as possible. We are deeply grateful to the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Middletown Community Foundation for their generous support that has helped us to make our mission a reality for women in the cities of Hamilton and Middletown.

Thank You!



W3 Board

George H. Sehi, Ph.D. Chair
Former Executive Dean and Professor,
Sinclair College

DeAnn Hurtado, Ph.D. Vice Chair
Professor, Sinclair Community College

Judy Lightner-Noll, Ph.D. Secretary
JLN Coaching

Carey Curtis, Treasurer
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North Side Bank & Trust

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Vice President, Institutional Diversity
& Inclusion, Xavier University

Cathy Bishop-Clark, Ed.D.
Former Associate Provost and Dean,
College of Liberal Arts & Applied
Sciences, Miami University

Yanthi Boutwell
General Manager, Duke Energy
Transmission Resource & Project
Management

Dr. Jonathan Cooper
Superintendent/CEO
Mason City Schools

Tom Daskalakis
CEO
Clinton Memorial Hospital

Dan Kommeth
Director of Business Development
Dealermade Photo Studios

Marian C. Glancy, Ph.D.
Former Provost/CEO
Antioch University Midwest

Dwight Packard, JD Advisor
Attorney at Law, Bricker Graydon LLP

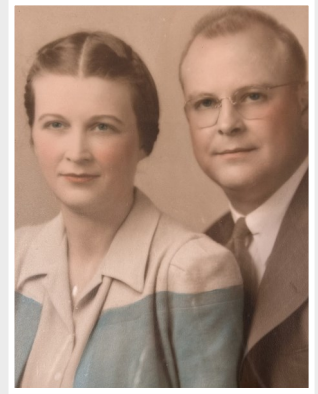
Sherry Taylor
President & CEO
Mason Deerfield Chamber

Su Chang
Ex-Officio Board Member
Senior Director, Research & Development
Procter & Gamble

Dr. & Mrs. Bill Faulkner Endowment

Since the inception of Women Walking West, Dr. William J. Faulkner has been an unwavering supporter and a cornerstone of our growth. His generous financial contribution and the vital connections he has facilitated within the community have played an instrumental role in our success. Dr. Faulkner's endowment, and the motivation behind it that he shares below, stands as a testament to his deep commitment to our mission.

"This endowment is to honor my parents who inspired me and my two brothers to follow in my father's footsteps as we all became physicians. My dad believed education was the key as he overcame his humble beginnings in southeastern Kentucky and was a family doctor in Bellevue, Ky., for over 50 years. Helping others, giving back, and improving lives are all shared goals of Women Walking West which Carol and I wholeheartedly endorse. Also, this is to support Dr. Sehi, who has been my patient and friend for nearly 40 years."



Women Walking West is profoundly grateful for Dr. and Mrs. Faulkner's enduring commitment. As we celebrate his support, we look forward to a future where, together, we can make even greater strides in empowering women and fostering community growth.

Thank you, Dr. and Mrs. Faulkner, for your compassion and generosity.

Upcoming Events!

August 15th
Launch of 4th Essay Writing Contest entitled "Inspired to Rise"

August 18th
Community Potluck Picnic
12:00-2:00pm, Mason Municipal Aquatic Center

SAVE THE DATE!
November 14th
The 5th Annual RISE Gala at the Manor House

HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2024

Celebrating Our Unique Heritage Together

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

DOWNTOWN MASON

Celebrate your unique culture by participating in the Parade and Festival!

Scan to Support Our Mission →



Please consider donating to Women Walking West.

Your generosity will help continue to make our mission a reality.

 **Women Walking West**

Advancing education for women from across the globe