

*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).



*Dr. George Sehi,
Founder & Board Chair*

A Message from the Board Chair & Founder

Dear Friends and Dedicated Supporters,

As we embark on a new year, it is with pride and heartfelt gratitude that we celebrate the 10th anniversary of Women Walking West (W3). Over the past decade, this organization has been a beacon of hope, empowering foreign-born women to access educational opportunities in the United States.

This milestone would not have been possible without you. To those who have been with us since our founding, our dedicated board members, tireless volunteers, and generous supporters—thank you for your unwavering commitment. Your contributions have been the foundation of our success. Your support has allowed us to host impactful events, raise vital funds, and provide mentees with the tools and confidence they need to succeed.

As we reflect on this journey, the work we do is far from over, and the need for our services continues to grow. Let us recommit ourselves to our mission—spreading the word, expanding our reach, and ensuring that every foreign-born woman seeking a better future has the support she deserves.

Together, we have made a difference. Together, we will continue to empower, uplift, and strengthen our communities—**one woman at a time.**

GOOD NEWS!



Saharnaz Ahmadi



Machoucourath Issoufou



Taoficath Sani

In December 2024 the Cincinnati State Foundation awarded 3 of our mentees who are studying at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College \$1500 in scholarships.

Saharnaz Ahmadi
from Iran studying Accounting

Machoucourath Issoufou from Benin studying Pre-Business Administration

Taoficath Sani from Benin studying Computer Engineering—Cybersecurity.

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W3 Newsletter

2024 Mentor of the Year

Lynn Meloy

Raised near Niagara Falls, NY, Lynn Meloy grew up in a progressive household. Her father, a Presbyterian minister, encouraged interfaith exploration, shaping her inclusive worldview. Early exposure to diverse cultures further fueled her curiosity about the world. This exposure was enriched by relatives who taught abroad and shared their global experiences.

After graduating from The College of Wooster in Ohio, Lynn began her career in publishing in Boston. She then earned a BPhil in Social Psychology from the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Later, she completed a Master of Social Work at the University of Louisville, where she studied alongside her husband, Lyle.

Lynn made a lasting impact as Chief Social Worker in Psychiatric Emergency Services at University Hospital and as an Associate Professor in Psychiatry at the University of

Cincinnati College of Medicine. Nine years ago, she discovered Women Walking West and became a devoted mentor, guiding seven mentees in their education and careers. “This has turned out to be one of the most gratifying experiences of my life,” she shares. A standout moment was when a mentee’s family prepared a heartfelt Chinese meal to express their gratitude for W3’s support.



Lynn Meloy

“This has turned out to be one of the most gratifying experiences of my life!”

Now in private practice as a licensed independent social worker, Lynn also collaborates with The Counseling Team International, supporting first responders worldwide. Ever an activist and educator, she continues to grow and strengthen her connections with others.

5TH ANNUAL **RISE** REACH. INCLUDE. SUPPORT. EDUCATE. *Gala*

Women Walking West proudly hosted its **5th Annual RISE Gala** on November 14th, 2024, at the Manor House. The event brought together 460 community members, donors, mentors, and mentees in celebration of empowerment and achievement.

The evening sparkled with inspiration as mentees courageously shared their transformative stories, essay prize winners were honored for their outstanding achievements, and the audience was captivated by the powerful keynote address from **Dr. Bi Awosika**, Assistant Dean of the UC College of Medicine. Dr. Awosika shared three transformative lessons:

- Overcome adversity to unlock your full potential.
- Cultivate a supportive “village” of mentors.
- Embrace and honor your worth.

Dr. George Sehi, founder and Chair of the Board, delivered an uplifting annual report, showcasing the year’s remarkable growth in endowments and support. **Dr. Fatemeh Hajhosseini**, Chief of Operations and Development, highlighted the organization’s impactful programs and initiatives, underscoring its dedication to helping foreign-born women achieve their educational dreams.

The RISE Gala radiated unity, celebrating the rich diversity of the community while igniting a shared passion for empowerment. From heartfelt moments to inspiring speeches, the night was a testament to the resilience, determination, and boundless potential of the women that Women Walking West supports.





Caring Community Partner

Kris Chari, Executive Director, Rooted Grounds Coffee

Rooted Grounds Coffee is a local small-batch, craft roast coffee company located in Mason, Ohio. Kris grew up in Centerville, Ohio and went to Miami University at Oxford. He studied foreign affairs where his passion for understanding different perspectives was born. Kris loves to travel, connect with people and embrace fresh experiences.

Kris has spent many years in the beverage industry and has learned how to adapt to changing environments, embrace challenges and help develop effective and affordable solutions. A lay off from a corporate position in 2015 led to an opportunity to be part of Rooted Grounds Coffee Company. Kris says from "inception I immediately saw the potential to contribute to building something meaningful and impactful." He says: "I am forever grateful for the time that I get to spend time out in the world providing solutions." At the heart of Rooted Grounds Coffee Company is the community. Their motto is: "If you are drinking a cup of our coffee, you are helping someone in need in your community."

"If you are drinking a cup of our coffee, you are helping someone in need in your community."

Kris met Dr. Sehi through the Mason Deerfield Chamber of Commerce. He was invited to bring coffee to an event hosted by Women Walking West and that's where he learned about the mission and vision of the organization. Being a first generation Indian American, Kris is keenly aware of the challenges that people face when they first immigrate. Since then, Kris has become a long-time friend and supporter of W3, providing coffee for different fundraising events and always offering to help the organization in any way that he can.



Katelyn Shahady

Welcome to W3!

We're thrilled to welcome **Katelyn Shahady** as the new Office Administrator at Women Walking West! With extensive experience in education, administration, and public policy, Katelyn brings a dynamic perspective, commitment to our mission, and passion for empowering women and serving the community.

Essay Prize Winners

This year's essay contest, titled "**Inspired to Rise**," invited participants to write about a person, event, or quote that motivates them to overcome challenges and chase their dreams. More than 35 essays were submitted, resulting in three winners and two honorary mentions.



Gagnessiry Niang

First Prize:

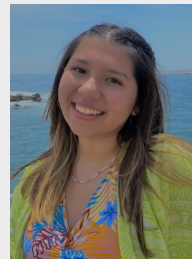
Gagnessiry Niang
from Senegal studying nursing at Clark State College.



Shadi Omranian

Second Prize:

Shadi Omranian
University of Cincinnati Alumni in Neurobiology



Mia Diaz

Third Prize:

Mia Diaz from Peru studying Criminology at Miami University in Hamilton



Katherine Whitten

Honorary Mention:

Katherine Whitten
from Colombia studying ESOL at Sinclair Community College



Chinara Alasgarova

Honorary Mention:

Chinara Alasgarova
from Azerbaijan pursuing a PhD in Higher Education at Kent State University.

W3 Board

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

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

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

Carey Curtis, Treasurer
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& Inclusion, Xavier University

Cathy Bishop-Clark, Ed.D.
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College of Liberal Arts & Applied
Sciences, Miami University

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

Jonathan Cooper, EED
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Mason City Schools

Tom Daskalakis
CEO, Clinton Memorial Hospital

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

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

Dan Kommeth
Director of Business Development
Dealermade Photo Studios

Prekshya Nepal, Data Scientist III
FedEx Ground

Sherry Taylor
President & CEO
Mason Deerfield Chamber

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

Caring Community Partner

Dr. Brian Kuhlman, Innovative Vision

Dr. Brian Kuhlman is an optometrist at Innovative Vision in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was born in Ottawa, Ohio and is the youngest of 13 children. Faith and education were important pillars to his parents. From a young age, Brian worked hard to save for college. All but one of his siblings have attended college. He credits his work ethic to growing up in a large family, where you learn how to compromise, work with others and be focused.

Ever since he could remember, Brian wanted to be a doctor. It was in his senior year of high school that he decided that optometry would be the right fit as it would allow for a healthy work/life balance. He graduated from the Ohio State College of Optometry in 2003. A 13 month residency at the Cincinnati Eye Institute (CEI), brought him and his wife Kelly to Cincinnati. Currently Dr. Kuhlman works at Innovative Vision and spends a day at CEI. What he enjoys most about his job is helping people in need. "To help give someone the gift of sight is such a blessing" he shares, "and to see the gratitude I receive is my motivation."



Dr. Brian Kuhlman

"To help give someone the gift of sight is such a blessing, and to see the gratitude I receive is my motivation."

Dr. Kuhlman first met Dr. Sehi as his patient and their friendship developed over the years. Dr. Kuhlman became a supporter of Women Walking West when he learned about the mission of the organization. "I know the value of a good education, but also understand the challenges many face to obtain this," he says. He has been a supporter and friend of Women Walking West for many years. Dr. Kuhlman believes that if he can do anything to help foreign-born women obtain their goals, it will benefit generations to follow.

Upcoming Events!

January 31st
Everyday English Academy

February 19th
JWC Panel Discussion
"Education Across Generations"

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