



Stoking the Fire of Your Dreams

Wow! MSK began its 5th Leadership and Life Coaching Focus Group on Monday, September 26, 2011 with another exciting group of women! On Tuesday, September 27, 2011, we began monthly support group meetings for single mothers through our Single Mother Resource Exchange Program. When I started this organization, the idea of empowering women was just a tiny dream in a small corner of my heart. It wasn't until I had the courage to let it out of my mouth that this dream began to grow into an organization that has coached over 40 women and inspired single mothers to dream again. Through the MSK programming women have been coached into a greater awareness of themselves and the power each of them have to change their world and create new realities. It is with this fervor that I write today, in hopes of stoking the Fire of Your Dreams and to encourage you to go after your dreams with every resource that is in and around you.

If it is true that every one of us has a dream placed in our hearts, why do so many allow the fire and passion of their dreams to go out? Some even carry a small flicker of a dream, but never allow others to come alongside them to ignite their dream into a flame of fire that fulfills their destiny and inspires those around them to dream as well.

If allowed, life experiences such as bad decisions, disappointments and frustrations can snuff out our dreams. Sometimes our dreams are overshadowed by someone else's dream. Others have allowed "dreambusters" such as fear, doubt, anger, bitterness and self-defeating thoughts to set up residence in their hearts never allowing a dream to enter the realm of their thinking.

Many people mistakenly invest the best years of their lives pursuing the dream that others have created for their lives. When in fact, God created each of us with an eternal dream that has an eternal purpose which gives our life true identity and our dreams real significance.

And here's a particular question that is often asked by women of all ages, ethnicities and economic backgrounds, "How do I support the people in my life and be there to help fulfill their dreams, without sacrificing my own dreams and living an unfulfilled life?" How do we carve out and give expression to our own unique design while assisting, helping and giving great ideas to others? - Continued on page 7



Dr. Toni G. Alvarado
CEO/Lead Coach
MSK Foundation for Women

MSK Congratulates 2011 MGB Second Chance Award Recipients!

The Margaret Griffin Baker Second Chance Award provides financial scholarships to enhance the educational opportunities of the women in the MSK community desiring to further their secondary, graduate and post-graduate education, or seeking to advance their career options, change careers or re-tool and re-enter the work force. This year MSK would like to recognize Joyce Gilmer and Donita Munn for their continued pursuit of excellence in their educational and professional journey.



MGB Second Chance Award Honoree and Recipients-
From Left to Right

Margaret G. Baker, RN, Joyce Gilmer and Donita Munn
(not pictured)

Partnering With MSK

Since its inception, My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women has been changing the community and the world one woman at a time. With today's event, MSK has directly impacted 39 women via the Leadership and Life Coaching Program. In two years, MSK has relieved the financial burden of 8 single mother homes via our summer camp scholarship awards, contributed to the educational and professional and leadership advancement of 6 MSK alumni, fed 20+ families visiting sick children at Children's Health Care of Atlanta and recently, trained six leadership and life coaches. We believe that as we have impacted women, we have changed communities, thus changing the world.

All this has been accomplished with a small, but dedicated volunteer pool, a quaint group of donors and consistent demonstration of financial integrity and responsibility. MSK certified audits convey our intentionality toward our mission. We direct ~98% of our donations to our programs and the other 2% to administrative fees. Please note that none of the donations support salaries, allowances or perks of the MSK CEO, Board of Directors or volunteer staff.

How can you help?

Spread the word about MSK...Facebook, LinkedIn, Tweet about us now! Tell a neighbor, friend or relative about what you how we can move them from average to excellence.

Volunteer at least 2hrs a week....Write for us (help with grant applications)...Research for us.(help us find more funding, partners, and program participants)

Donate: Annually, quarterly, monthly...just do not make it a one time thing

If you are a Federal Employee, you can donate via the Combined Federal Campaign, we have additional information at the table

Create an endowment

Host a fundraising event for MSK

Please consider partnering with MSK by making a donation toward the **MGB Second Chance Award** or the **Single Mother's Resource Exchange**. With your generous gift you will assist women in their educational goals and pursuits and offer assistance to single mothers with summer educational enrichment tuition and fees toward extracurricular activities and school supplies for the upcoming school year. Please make your tax-deductable donation payable to: My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women *** 2890 GA Highway 212 Suite A 124 Conyers, Georgia 30094 or online at www.mskfoundation.org

Combined Federal Campaign of Metropolitan Atlanta

MSK is a listed charitable organization in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of Metropolitan Atlanta, which provides support to non-profit organizations that provide health and human services. CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign. Pledges are made by Federal civilian, postal and military donors during the campaign season (September 1st to December 15th). If your company is a participant in CFC, this is an opportunity to donate to MSK. Please refer to **CFC #18619**. We are appreciative of your continued encouragement, donations, and support.





MSK Transformation Award
presented to

Heidi Michelle Adams

in recognition of your *transparency, self discovery and willingness to expand your horizons through* the MSK Leadership and Life Coaching Program

My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women
Sunday May 22, 2011



MSK Excellence Award
presented to

Jaynelle Hendrickson (pictured right)

in recognition of perseverance and outstanding commitment of service to family and others while pursuing and completing your graduate studies has earned you this high distinction as a woman of excellence.

My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women
Sunday May 22, 2011



MSK Going The Distance Award
presented to

Marlene Pope

in recognition of your commitment, progression, and dedication to the Leadership and Life Coaching Program.

You are commended for the distance you traveled in completing this part of your journey.

My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women
Sunday May 22, 2011



MSK Community Empowerment Award
presented to

Lynita M. Mitchell-Blackwell

for your commitment and service to enriching the lives of women through leadership opportunities, personal and professional learning, and cultural experiences through the establishment of the Jewell Jackson McCabe Emerging Leaders Institute.

My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women
Sunday May 22, 2011



Leadership and Life Coaching Program

As I looked back on our nine month journey, I find myself becoming full of emotion as I think about the transformational experiences we shared. Nine months is most synonymous with pregnancy. A pregnant woman is considered ready to deliver a full term baby in her 9th month of pregnancy. If I were to equate that to the Leadership and Life Coaching Program, I would say that on May 22, 2011, we gave birth to 10 phenomenal women. But more importantly, you all gave birth, gave life to your dreams and life purpose.

There are many memories that flooded my mind but I remember one session in the beginning of the program (October) where we experienced our first real breakthrough. We changed the room set up to bring you ladies closer and almost instantly you began to bond in a new way. The barrier of two many tables or the positioning of the tables in the conference room was no longer an obstacle and the walls came down and you all began to open up. That was an amazing night as many of you began to realize that you shared some common past experiences. The beauty of that moment was not in reliving the past experience but in releasing it to strangers and allowing yourselves to be unashamedly transparent, open and exposed. The focus group bonding went to another level overnight.

Another memory that comes to mind is the first night of our Spring Retreat, the Pajama Party . As you all stood on the stairs outside the Partridge Inn with candles in hand, to release your balloons as a sign of release from worries/concerns, the look of joy and relief on your faces brings tears to my eyes and a smile to my face as I reminisce.

But nothing takes the place of Graduation Day. I was so impressed with all of you. Your beauty, your confidence, your leadership, your transparency was the greatest witness that the MSK organization could ever give to others who wonder what this organization and our coaching program is really about. You all really showed everyone the value and far reaching impact of the Leadership and Life Coaching Program. We have not seen your best which makes me even more excited about your future. I thank you again on behalf of the coaching staff for the opportunity to have played a small role in helping you discover your life purpose.

MSK Coaches, having this opportunity to work with all of you really opened me up to more of what God has in store for my life. You all were a sign and in a more significant way you were the green light! You are a great group of phenomenal women who are unstoppable. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to empowering women by helping them to explore, dream, and become as they discover their life purpose.

Dr. Toni, thank you will never be enough, but I truly thank you. Thank you for your unselfish leadership in allowing me to lead this 2011 Focus Group. Your leadership, wisdom and mentorship will always be remembered and treasured, never forgotten. Thank you for sharing your BIG Dream with me and for choosing me to be a part of your team. I am excited about the future of MSK and with your vision and leadership, I know that the BEST is yet to come!

Quote: "Remember to look up when you feel down, reach out when you want to withdraw within and to lift up another when you feel like life has let you down.....for in these moments are where we find ourselves committing selfless acts, for the gifts that we have been given are not for us, but for others. "



Errin Baugh, MA, PMP,
Leadership Coach

(Left to Right) Keontay Vaughn, Jaynelle Hendrickson, Lashandia Bracy, Marlene Pope, Heidi Adams, Gloria McKenny, Jennifer Gardner, Shantavia Frazier, Joyce Gilmer, Akilah Taylor

Women and Community Volunteerism

By: Sonya O. Hunte, MSW

When most of us think of women global community champions we envision figures like Mother Teresa, Coretta Scott King and Dorothy Heights. Somehow we over look every day people like ourselves that donate our talent, time and treasure to those in need. The people that volunteer in our schools, local nursing homes, youth leagues and a host of church based volunteers. The needs are great in our communities and every volunteer action counts. Mother Teresa left us with a word of wisdom regarding service, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one." The point of this brief article is to get each of you to consider how you would like to lend a helping hand to your immediate and greater communities.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, since 2000, the Metro Atlanta area makes its home in top ten cities with the largest growth in population. Growth in the midst of a world-wide economic downturn comes with many socio economic implications. In recessions, incidents such as child abuse, homelessness and domestic violence increase. The Corporation for National and Community Service released a 2006 study that indicates women are more likely to volunteer than men. Essentially, the demand for us as women to be active citizens dramatically increases as our neighbors and communities face more.

Each of us comes into contact with an issue or a population that causes us to think about our own existence and those around us. Typically that encounter with an issue or population of people ignites passion or a call to action. I hope that even this article will serve as a call to action. I encourage you to take inventory of the issues that are surfacing in your community and take action. Band together with neighbors, pre existing organizations and associations who are working to address the issues and the populations that you care about.

In summation, take a solid look at your community, its growth, and needs. Figure out what community solutions you are willing and capable of working towards. Be empowered to start a volunteer group to work with populations like teen mothers, young married couples, youth, seniors or the homeless. Perhaps call the local Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Junior League and My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women to ask how you can be of service. I leave you with a quote from Anne Frank, "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."



Sonya Hunte is the CEO of Hunte Community Development Consulting LLC, a company specializing in non profit strategic program development, training and community partnership planning. Sonya is a member of the Kennesaw State University's, Master of Social Work Program, Advisory Board. She serves on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Social Workers, Georgia Chapter and the Premier Academy, Child Development Centers. She is a past board member of the My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women. Sonya's organizational memberships include the Junior League of Atlanta, Atlanta Women's Foundation, Destiny Fund and United Way, VIP.



2010 - 2011 Leadership and Life Coaching Program Graduation & Awards Ceremony

May 22, 2011

DeKalb Technical College Conference Center
Clarkston Campus



2011 SMAP Summer Camp Awardees & Program Directors Allison Hornbuckle (far left) and Tracy Carson (far right)



2010-2011 MSK Coaching Staff (left to right) Sharma Scott, Jamyee Pleasant Slater, Dr. Toni Alvarado, Patricia Neal, Errin Baugh and Christy Lee (not pictured)

MSK Salutes the 2011 Leadership and Life Coaching Graduation and Award Ceremony Speaker - Justine Boyd

JUSTINE BOYD



**Chief Executive Officer
YWCA of Greater Atlanta**

For the past six years, Justine Boyd has served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) of Greater Atlanta. In this role she has successfully created and implemented programs that empower women and girls. Founded in 1902 on the campus of Spelman College, the YWCA renders service to the community via various programs: Women in Transition (WIT) housing for homeless women and their children; Early Learning Academy; After-school Learning Academy; EncorePlus (breast/cervical cancer awareness); Teen Girls In Technology (TGI Tech); and Empowered Youth Entertainment (EYE) diversity education.

Justine prominently serves on the boards of several Atlanta-area organizations, including the Atlanta Housing Authority (Vice Chair); Boy Scouts of America Atlanta Area Council; the Georgia 4-H Foundation; and Kiwanis.

She chaired the Fulton County Board of Registration and Elections; a former board member of the UGA College of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences Advisor Board (Chair); Women Looking Ahead Magazine; Atlanta Women's Network; the Coalition of 100 Black Women Advisory Board (Chair); Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau; the DeKalb Convention and Visitors Bureau; and was appointed by Secretary of State Cathy Cox to the Georgia Voting Commission in 2002. She is a lifetime member of the NAACP, the APEX Museum, the Atlanta Business League, and a Junior League sustainer.

Justine is past president of the Atlanta Fulton County League of Women's Voters. Among her achievements as president, she created and co-sponsored the renowned Fireside Chats with WSB-TV and in 2002 formatted one of her innovations: Atlanta Women Speaks, an exciting book that encompasses a collection of speeches by some of Atlanta's most prominent women.

Justine has received numerous leadership accolades: 2010 High Heels in High Places from The Trumpet Awards Foundation, 2009 Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA) Foundation Zenith Award for Distinction in the Profession (Individual), and 2008 Chayil, Inc. Butterflies and Allies honoree. In 2007, *Atlanta Woman Magazine* named her Woman of the Year applauding her commitment to the empowerment of women and girls. *Who's Who In Black Atlanta* identified Justine as one of the Female Atlanta Powerhouses. Described by the *Atlanta Tribune Magazine* as a "bold, dynamic, and powerful woman in corporate America", Justine has been named as one of the 10 Most Outstanding Young People in Atlanta (1999) and one of *Georgia Trend Magazine's Top 40 Under 40* (2001). The *Atlanta Business League* has recognized her as a tenured member of 100 Most Influential African American Women. *Women Looking Ahead Magazine* named her one of Georgia's Most Powerful Women and *Rolling Out Magazine's* 25 Most Influential Women.

In 2003, Justine was selected in a nationwide search to be one of the 63 emerging U.S. Leaders to participate in the German Marshall Memorial Fellowship in Europe, studying transatlantic economic, political, and social issues. Justine is a graduate of Leadership Georgia, Leadership Atlanta, and the Regional Leadership Institute.

Justine formerly served as Assistant General Manager for External Affairs for the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) and County Clerk for the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. She received a bachelor degree in English from Georgia State University, and is a member of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Atlanta.



Continued from page 1.

When I reflect over my life, I am always amazed at how I have arrived to this place in my own journey, where I'm willing to put myself out here with MSK. Growing up as a young, insecure girl on the South Side of Chicago, I could never have imagined life, as I know it today. My early childhood years were spent growing up in a low-income area of Chicago where few people came out on top. My entire life is a testimony of the sovereign power of God and the courage to follow my dreams.

Today I am married to a wonderful man who is a Bishop, Pastor of a thriving church. He is a well educated man, well traveled and very well rounded in his approach to life and ministry. When we married I had no college degrees. I had a desire to go back to school and finish my education and I knew at that time that although I was called to walk alongside him in building a life, family and ministry, I also had a special assignment and a unique call that I alone had to fulfill.

As I grew to overcome my low self-esteem and began to celebrate my own unique design something began to happen to me, I started liking me! I would get in the mirror and celebrate me! I started tapping into what I wanted. I started asking questions of myself like, "What Do I want to do?" I started answering questions like "Where do you see yourself in 3-5 Years?" I started tapping into and igniting my own passions and desires. Once having discovered my passion and desires, the challenge remained for me to focus and refocus continually on the path that God has divinely set for me.

In addition to lighting my own fire, I began spending time around people and more specifically women who ignited something in me. These were no ordinary women! They were women who had to overcome insurmountable odds yet they dared to dream beyond their present reality. I began to notice that whenever I got in their presence, I started dreaming bigger and better.

Stoking the fire of your dreams require that you surround yourself with people who believe in themselves and subsequently believe in you. You can't spend your intimate time with men and women who are jealous and self-centered, always trying to out do you. You need to spend quality time with men and women who will allow their passion and zest for life to stir up something in you!

You will know that you are surrounded by the right people when after you leave them you start believing and thinking you can accomplish anything. Here's some advice, when you're around people who ignite something in you, start thinking of the possibilities and begin putting a plan in action. Ask them questions that explore the range of your possibilities. Take the necessary nuggets from their experiences to accomplish your goals and make your dreams a reality.

Whenever your dreams are about others they will lead to your legacy. Legacy simply put is "What Do I Want To Be Remembered For?" or "When I Die Will It Matter That I Ever Lived?" Legacy speaks of the next generation and some type of institution or a word, or a song, a book or a poem that somebody can come along years after you're gone and know that you ever lived.

That's what MSK is all about. It's about fulfilling a dream and leaving a legacy of empowered women. MSK exists to assist women in awakening their wildest dreams, passions and desires. Our desire is to see women leave their mark on society and deposit something into this rich resource that we call "earth."

Our role as coaches is not to tell you what your dream is or should be. We are here to help you and give you the tools to articulate your dream. Your Dream is there, you just need to hear yourself reciting what is already in you.

Have you ever wondered how people like Oprah Winfrey, Bishop T. D. Jakes, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs or Denzel Washington got where they are in their life, business and careers? I'm sure if we had an audience with either one of them they would list people that have been strategically placed in their path to mentor or coach them along their journey.

So where can you begin stoking the fire of your dreams? You can begin today by becoming a partner with My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women. MSK is 501 (c) 3 organization with three program targets aimed at the advancement of women in their educational, personal and professional goals. As you partner with us through your generous donations you will assist countless women in realizing their dreams. You might consider partnering with us through volunteerism and helping us as we serve the needs of women and children in the community.

Finally, you might need someone to come alongside you in reaching your dreams. Alex Haley, the renowned author of the book *Roots*, once said, "If you ever see a turtle on fence post, you gotta know he didn't get there by himself." The truth is, it takes the helping hands of mentors and coaches to grow into all that God has destined for you. As a coaching organization, MSK stands ready to support, encourage and hold you accountable to your dreams by pairing you with Certified Growth Coaches and Peer Mentors who will aid you in setting specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely goals toward accomplishing your dreams.

Thank you in advance for joining my dream.

Dr. Toni G. Alvarado, CEO/Lead Coach
MSK Foundation for Women
"Moving Women from Average to Excellence"

My Sister's Keeper Foundation for Women
"Moving Women From Average to Excellence"

Single Mother's Resource Exchange

The Single Mother's Assistance Program invites you to attend our monthly fellowship and informational meeting. You will connect with other single mothers as we share the joys and challenges of single parenting and identify helpful resources to aid in successful parenting.

Monthly Meetings Held At:

DeKalb County Library - Clarkston Campus
STE: "Meeting Room"
951 N. Indian Creek Drive, Clarkston, GA 30021

Contact:

Tracy Carson at 678-427-9885 or Allison Hornbuckle at 404-316-1820

Supervision provided for children under age 9 in the library.
Light refreshments provided.



Dr. Toni G. Alvarado,
Founder/CEO

My Sisters Keeper Foundation for Women

Come Join Us. We're Waiting for You!

Contact: www.mskfoundation.org Email: singlemothers@mskfoundation.org

Log on to our Website to View Calendar of Events



It's that time of year again, the season where Raven's Project gives back to aide sick children and their families. As always, we invite you to join us in our fun, exciting, endeavors.

On November 5th, for the third year, Raven's Project is participating in the **26th Annual Strong Legs Walk/Run**, sponsored by Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (www.choa.org). Our team has committed to support with 20 runners and \$1,000 raised/donated for CHOA. Each of you know how I love Children's and the amazing staff that took care of us during our tenure there.

I am grateful, as I hope you are that this beacon of light helps families like mine in metro Atlanta, and the Southeast Region. Visit the link below to sign-up for our team and/or donate to CHOA. Ultimately, every gift goes to support sick children and their families.

In December, also for the third year, we are sponsoring our Journals for Children's Drive! Raven's Project, along with our friends, and sponsors has donated more than 300 journals to Children's for the Holiday Season! Journals are a great gift to help kids chronicle their journey through a difficult and scary experience. It is amazing how something as small and inexpensive as journal can comfort and inspire. Stay tuned for more information on how to donate or email me at Yolonda@Ravensproject.com.

Thank you for your support and continuing to remember my precious Rae!

Let's go!
Yolanda

