



## WE CAN News June 2020

Dear Friends,

WE CAN's work is guided by our mission to help women and their families navigate challenging transitions in their lives. Based on 20 years of service, the belief that 'We Are Each Other' remains a longstanding core value. During this COVID-19 crisis period, WE CAN is delivering services remotely, retooling our programs and mobilizing our volunteers. In the days, weeks, and months ahead, WE CAN's services will play a vital role in helping women and families recover, stabilize and rebuild their lives.

Like all non-profits, we are tackling these critical questions in response to the COVID-19 crisis:

*How do we navigate this challenging time and best position the organization for the future?*

*What must change in order to continue to provide practical and critical services to people in need?*

With the help of our community of participants, volunteers and donors, WE CAN is navigating the COVID-19 crisis, responding to critical needs and reimagining the future. The WE CAN board of directors and staff are united in ensuring that WE CAN's work will continue and will expand to assist women today, tomorrow and for years to come.

Turn the page to learn more...

Sincerely,

Lori J. Pinard, President, Board of Directors, WE CAN

Lisa Guyon, Executive Director, WE CAN

# NAVIGATING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

*Swift action, strong leadership and thoughtful planning in the face of uncertainty ensure that programs and services continue*

1 WE CAN's first quarter of 2020 started strong. From across Cape Cod, a record number of 750 participants utilized our services. Our dedicated corps of 300 volunteers helped to deliver programs that included personal development workshops, the PathMaker's mentoring program, the GROW program for women entrepreneurs, and one-to-one consultations on legal, financial management and work support issues. The first quarter financial results were ahead of last year, including a six-month cash reserve, and our comprehensive fundraising approach was producing positive results.

With the unexpected and abrupt arrival of COVID-19 in March, WE CAN activated its existing contingency plan and took these steps:

- Immediately transitioned to a virtual platform to ensure uninterrupted delivery of services and support to participants;
- Upgraded systems to enable staff working remotely to respond live to calls for assistance in English, Portuguese and Spanish;
- Communicated with volunteers, participants, supporters and nonprofit partners that WE CAN's services will continue without interruption.

*Financial discipline and collaborative relationships are the assets that allow WE CAN to navigate this challenging time*

2 The WE CAN board of directors recognized the significant budgetary impact of the cancellation of two major fundraising events. They engaged with staff in making difficult choices, including:

- Reducing administrative functions to preserve programs and services;
- Securing a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan;
- Activating aggressive expense control measures and scenario budget planning;
- Embracing changes in our methods of delivering programs and generating revenue.

The WE CAN staff reached out to donors and volunteers to reassure them that participants are served via one-on-one consultations and referrals to collaborating nonprofits such as The Family Pantry and Community Development Partnership. As the crisis unfolded, staff observed that participants initially focused on basic needs for food, household necessities and shelter. With the realities of employment disruption, health concerns, school closures and the bleak economic outlook significantly affecting families, participants now seek WE CAN's legal, employment, business support and financial counseling services.

Since the arrival of COVID-19 in March, WE CAN volunteers have provided 174 one-to-one consultations and 624 attendees participated in WE CAN programs—all done virtually.

# REIMAGINING THE FUTURE

*The COVID-19 crisis creates opportunities to refine and refocus WE CAN's programs on what is needed now and in the days ahead*

Despite the challenges of social distancing, WE CAN services remain intact without interruption. From mid-March to the end of May, volunteers provided 174 one-to-one consultations and 624 attendees participated in WE CAN programs—all done virtually.

Our effective use of technology to deliver services in new and creative ways is demonstrating to our staff and board that exciting possibilities need to be explored. During this period we learned to:

- Expand access to WE CAN services by offering multiple one-to-one appointments at the same time via Zoom or telephone;
- Reach a broader audience by scheduling virtual workshops on common legal, employment and financial issues and offering online support groups and personal development programs;
- Recruit new volunteers on and beyond Cape Cod with skills and expertise needed to help women navigate specific transitions in their lives;
- Expand outreach to community members in need, especially those who may have hesitated to ask in the past.

*WE CAN is Cape Cod's primary organization supporting women whose lives are in transition. WE CAN is a lifeline for them.*

As a semblance of the "new normal" emerges, WE CAN anticipates:

- Receiving a surge in requests for assistance in the areas of legal service, employment and small business support, financial counseling and direct referrals to basic need resources;
- Mobilizing volunteers to build our capacity to offer expanded one-to-one services and workshops to address common and critical emerging needs;
- Embracing new methods for delivering our services;
- Removing barriers to creativity and reimagining the future.

*YOU are WE CAN's lifeline as we navigate together this extraordinary period.*

Your financial support demonstrates your belief in our capacity to reassess, refine and refocus our services, capabilities and results. We are grateful for the steadfast commitment of our donors and volunteers to the women and families needing WE CAN's assistance. You have several options for supporting WE CAN:

- Use the enclosed envelope to send your contribution;
- Make an online donation by visiting our website: [www.wecancenter.org](http://www.wecancenter.org)
- Donate appreciated securities by visiting the website and using our Tax ID: EIN# 31-1777179;
- Become a monthly Champion supporter and/or discuss a planned gift by contacting WE CAN's Development Director, Siobhan Clune [siobhan@wecancenter.org](mailto:siobhan@wecancenter.org)

Thank you.

# Voices of WE CAN

## Helping women business owners GROW through COVID19

Jean Mojo is one of three WE CAN volunteers who facilitate the GROW (Get Results with Others' Wisdom) program to empower women to build their businesses as a pathway to economic self-sufficiency.



When COVID19 arrived, Jean reports, “everything changed and nothing changed, we stayed on track using Zoom.” Despite the challenges of children at home with online schooling that participants face, Jean praises the 41 women observing that, “they have supported each other and have not backed down as things got tough. They worked together on website design and shared expertise. They have thoughtful plans, including online commerce possibilities, that put them in charge.”

## A PathMaker finds support for her personal and professional journey

Stephanie, owner of SCB Photography, recently graduated from both the GROW program and PathMakers, gaining skills and confidence to balance her business goals with family responsibilities.



She credits Mim Goldberg, her Pathmaker mentor, and Virginia Auciello Sullivan, her GROW facilitator, for supporting her journey. “Before I got involved with WE CAN, I envisioned myself looking down a long path with a big fork in the road, and unsure which direction to go,” said Stephanie. “Because of the support and knowledge that I’ve gained, I now know I have chosen the right path and I am making my way.”

## A funder supports WE CAN's efforts to expand outreach and access to virtual services

The Eos Foundation is a private philanthropic foundation committed to breaking the cycle of poverty by investing in children's futures. It recently renewed its multi-year support as a Community Builder and made an additional grant of \$10,000.



Andrea Silbert, President of the Eos Foundation, states, “Our support of WE CAN is an investment in empowering women and their families on Cape Cod to navigate transitions, stabilize their lives and pursue self-sufficiency. By WE CAN offering virtual services there is an opportunity to reach women and families in a new way and address needs before circumstances reach a crisis point.”