



The Sisterhood

Passing it on: Two NOSW graduates share life lessons with other women in recovery

Sheila Brown and Tami Gentry are friends, fellow Clark Countians, NOSW graduates and women in recovery who are using their experiences to help other women.

Recovery from addiction is a long journey. Tami is seven years clean, and Sheila is four years clean. They understand the temptations women in recovery face and the lies they tell themselves when in the grip of addiction.

Sheila is a project coordinator with Achieving Recovery Together in Winchester. She helps women along the journey that sometimes begins in jail or the emergency room—holding them accountable to their treatment plan and helping meet basic needs like obtaining a social security card and housing.

Tami came to the NOSW residential program in 2016 because her drug court judge ordered her



Sheila Brown, left, and Tami Gentry mentor women in recovery in Clark County.

to apply. After completing the two-week program, she decided to work toward a bachelor's degree in human services while continuing to help women in her community.

"We all come full circle in one way or another," says Tami, who now lives a block from where she

made mud pies as a child. She says that though life can be difficult for everyone, "I have to learn how to live and do it responsibly." She shares the lessons of her life with others.

Tami recommended NOSW to Sheila, and both continue to recruit women to the program.

After coming through a 'dark tunnel,' Sarah Rose became a cheerleader for hope

Sarah Rose has a cheerleader costume, a clown suit and a purple sparkly cape. "When you look at me, I want to give you hope," she says.

But Sarah herself has seen dark days. In 2013 her husband died of kidney failure. Then her house became unlivable when the water pipes froze. She and her 17-year-old son had to move in with her brother in Beattyville.

Suddenly Sarah was no longer a wife, her son was almost grown and

she had no income. She describes this period as a "dark tunnel."

Her doctor suggested she see a counselor, but it was months before she could see one. In the meantime, she decided to be happy.

And it worked. By the time she heard about the New Opportunity School in 2014, she had a job at Carhartt in Irvine. She had to quit work to attend the program, which was then a three-week commitment.

See [Sarah Rose](#) on page 3.



Sarah Rose

From the Executive Director

Fall is my favorite season of the year, and it continues to remind me that in the letting go beauty exists. This message speaks even more fully for me with the recent passing of my mother, Rose.

This has been another challenging year for many of us, including NOSW. With COVID-19 still spreading, we painfully made the decision to postpone our fall residential session and Festival of Trees fundraiser. But we built on the success of our onling programming and developed a five-day virtual workshop series in October.

Another bright spot has been new partnerships that not only bring exciting new programming elements, but also financial support for our mission. Intuit, a global company specializing in financial software such as Quicken and Quickbooks, partnered with us to offer a storytelling workshop for our



NOSW women joined women from Intuit for a story circle on July 25.

graduates facilitated by a wonderful organization called Storytellers for Change (storytellersforchange.org). Intuit also made a very generous \$45,000 contribution that will create opportunities for women. What a valuable partnership! Thanks to NOSW board member Alys Smith and her husband, Brad, for making this possible.

And we're excited to host a virtual conversation December 6 between Cassie Chambers, author of *Hill Women*, and NOSW graduates.

Thanks to these partners who help us serve women!



Erin Pendergast

Updates

Grads retreat to the Gorge

NOSW graduates and staff spent a weekend in September in the Red River Gorge for a leadership retreat. Graduates discussed what they've gained and how they've seen the program impact other women. They spent time planning for a new mentorship program and envisioning NOSW's work to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in our organization.



Workshops replace session

We canceled our two-week residential session because of COVID risk. Instead we brought women online for a workshop series October 11-15. On the first day, the women met NOSW founder Jane Stephenson (pictured below). Other workshops focused on public health, entrepreneurship and career skills, the power of personal stories and creative expression through art.



Festival of Trees canceled

With COVID-19 still affecting many people, we have canceled the Festival of Trees, scheduled for November 12-13. Big thanks to these sponsors who chose to let us keep their sponsorships and use them where most needed.



CHI Saint Joseph Health – \$10,000
Anonymous – \$3,500
PNC Foundation – \$2,500

These generous gifts will create opportunities for women.



NOSW celebrates the life of Rose Pentecost, who passed away on August 31, 2021, at the age of 91. Rose was the mother of our executive director, Robbie Pentecost, and a champion of women, dogs, underdogs and many others during her long and rich life.

Janet Holloway devoted her career to uplifting women

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women entrepreneurs and the local boards contained almost no women.

“The first thing I realized was that women do not have the networks that they need in order to thrive,” she says.

“So I left the University of Kentucky without a job and with my own credit card started Women Leading Kentucky because I believed so strongly that women could benefit from networking, education, and connections with other women and men in the business world.”

Women Leading Kentucky,

now in its 21st year, is a statewide network of professional women that advances leadership excellence through partnerships and innovative programming. Janet is now retired from Women Leading Kentucky, but continues to serve as a consultant.

She has chosen to name NOSW in her will because she admires the mission to empower women through mentoring and support.

“It just makes perfect sense to support this kind of organization,” she says.

To learn more about making an estate gift, contact Robbie Pentecost at rpentecost@nosw.org. 

Sarah Rose decided to be happy, and it worked

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She came to NOSW in February 2015. In the third week, the whole group got snowed in. “It was just the most beautiful time,” she says. The snow kept falling. “It was just a party, and all of us sisters just connected.”

Sarah also grew during those three weeks. “I got all this knowledge.” She wanted to tell everybody what she’d learned when she got back home, “but they couldn’t receive it.”

Her daughter was living in London and Sarah attended church there, so she decided to apply

for public housing in London. Nine months later she got an apartment. She supported herself by babysitting and cleaning houses. When she turned 60, she was able to start drawing her late husband’s pension.

Now she helps her daughter with the grandchildren and continues to serve NOSW in a number of ways, including as its cheerleader. She referred her sister Pearl to NOSW, and Pearl attended in 2020.

To anyone considering NOSW, Sarah says, “Just say yes and come.” 



Become a Sustainer

Want to give more to NOSW but can’t afford to in a single gift? Consider becoming a Sustainer. Monthly gifts can really add up! To learn more about ways to support our women, visit nosw.org/ways-to-help

NOSW.org

Visit our website to read more about our women and our supporters, the history of our program, news and updates, and ways you can help.

E-news

Want to receive our e-news in your email inbox? Contact Amy Hogg at ahogg@nosw.org to get on the list.

Newsletter

This newsletter is published three times a year: winter/spring, summer and fall.



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The New Opportunity School for Women empowers women to live their best lives.

We serve under-resourced Appalachian women who are ready to build stable and fulfilling lives for themselves, their families and their communities. All of our programs are free.

Supporters

Janet Holloway founded Women Leading Kentucky to fill a need for women's networks

NOSW graduates might see themselves in Janet Holloway's story. Like them, Janet has achieved goals by working hard, believing in herself and uplifting other women.

"I do believe that education and mentoring in some form are the keys for women's advancement," says Janet, a former NOSW board member and the founder of Women Leading Kentucky.

Janet's parents had a rocky marriage, and she was raised in a hollow in West Virginia, in West Palm Beach and Tampa, Florida, and on her grandmother's farm in southwestern Virginia.

"So my grandmother had a big hand in raising me and was a big



Janet Holloway

influence in my life," she says. "She had a third-grade education, but was very smart and straightforward with her advice. So I realized that I could get an education and did well in school."

Janet earned a full scholarship to Marshall University in West Virginia. "That was really the beginning, and that gave me wings."

She went on to earn a master's degree in social work from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and all but dissertation (ABD) at Columbia University. She lived for 25 years in New York City.

After running the New Jersey Small Business Development Centers, she directed the Kentucky Small Business Development Center, based at the University of Kentucky, for nine years. As she visited local centers around Kentucky, she noticed she wasn't seeing many

See [Janet Holloway](#) on page 3.