



The Sisterhood

Lacy Webb was ready to learn and grow

Hungry to learn and grow after years as a stay-at-home mom, Lacy Webb was looking for something. When a friend told her about NOSW, she agreed to enroll in an online program—but only to support her friend who was also attending.

After the three-day program in 2022, Lacy decided: “There’s no way I’m gonna miss out on the two-week course. I’m gonna do whatever it takes to get there.”

Even though it was hard to leave her family for two weeks, Lacy came to Berea for the residential session in November 2022. “And I’m so glad I did,” she says.

The program helped Lacy rebuild her confidence, manage her social anxiety and set goals.

“I feel like I am capable of hard things and I’m capable of important things, whether I have an important title, an important paycheck, I’m still important,” Lacy says.



Lacy Webb

Like many women who come to NOSW, Lacy traveled a difficult path to get here. Her dad died when Lacy was seven. Several times over the years, as a child and as an adult, Lacy moved from Ohio to West Liberty, Kentucky, and back again.

See [Lacy](#) on page 3.

Graduates add needed capacity to NOSW staff

NOSW is excited to have three graduates working with our staff on recruitment, graduate engagement and peer support.

Barbara Harvey is a 2018 NOSW graduate who has served as a house sister and art instructor during residential sessions. Barb is working 10 hours a week on recruitment and graduate engagement. She has extensive experience in peer support and is helping NOSW develop a peer support training program.

Amanda Gadd is a 2019 graduate who has served NOSW for the past few years as a house sister and chef extraordinaire during residential sessions. Amanda is also



From left, Barbara Harvey, Amanda Gadd and Crystal Burton

working 10 hours a week recruiting new participants to our program. She meets with potential partners in the region and represents NOSW at events.

Crystal Burton is a November

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CALENDAR

APRIL

20 – Graduate Support Group

29 & 30 – Non-Residential Session

MAY

18 – Graduate Support Group

JUNE

3 to 17 – Residential Session

JULY

20 – Graduate Support Group

24 to 26 – Non-Residential Session

AUGUST

17 – Graduate Support Group

26 – Graduate Reunion

SEPTEMBER

21 – Graduate Support Group

22 to 25 – Graduate Retreat

OCTOBER

2 to 4 – Non-Residential Session

15 – Graduate Support Group

NOVEMBER

4 to 18 – Residential Session

DECEMBER

21 – Graduate Support Group

From the Executive Director

As a garden enthusiast, I start collecting seed catalogs in early January and by mid-February I want to get out to the garden, but usually the weather is not cooperative.

But bulbs planted in previous years are pushing through the warming, dark earth, bringing with them sprouts of green and multi-colored buds. As you read about Lacy Webb, a fall 2022 graduate, you will notice the sprouts of green and multi-colored buds coming through in her life.

NOSW is also sprouting with new life! We welcome three new staff members, all NOSW graduates, to our team—Barbara Harvey, Amanda Gadd and Crystal Burton. Barb and Amanda are not exactly new, as they have served as house sisters for our sessions. Crystal is a November 2022 graduate whose passion for this work shone through both during her residential session and beyond such that we brought her on to assist us with graduate engagement. This brings our program

staff to four—all NOSW graduates.

Sprouting is happening in our recruitment efforts as we engage in various conferences and connect with mental health facilities, recovery centers and domestic violence shelters. We also have some new programming in development that, once funding becomes available, we will unveil in the near future.

Lastly, we are budding new partnerships that bring so many possibilities. Our recent tour of the Firestone plant in Williamsburg—which, by the way, is an amazing operation and the plant manager is a woman—promises so many new opportunities. Along with donations, our partners are opening their doors to programming, sending recruits and offering their skills.

We await the harvest!



Help us recruit

Do you know a woman who would benefit from the NOSW experience?

We have two residential sessions this year:

June 3-17
November 4-18

And many shorter programs in communities and online.

Share this link with her:
nosw.org/apply



NOSW staff and graduates attended the Appalachian Gathering for Recovery Solutions at Union College in Barbourville on March 9. The second annual event brought recovery organizations and ally groups from around the region to learn about developments in addiction recovery and explore ways to partner in the recovery ecosystem. Pictured, from left, are Amanda Gadd, Barbara Harvey, Jennifer Walden, Crystal Burton, Sister Robbie Pentecost and Brandie Lunsford.

Grads add staff capacity

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2022 graduate who is serving as our first NOSW staff apprentice. She works 40 hours per week focusing on recruitment, graduate engagement, peer support and program delivery. Crystal also recently obtained her Peer Support Specialist certificate.

“We are delighted to have these three women working with us,” said Sister Robbie Pentecost, NOSW executive director. “Their experience and insights as graduates are invaluable.”

Employing graduates furthers NOSW’s mission to serve under-resourced women, but also deepens and strengthens the work. Graduates share their experiences and wisdom with other women.

Lacy got the boost she needed at residential session

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In her first year of college, Lacy met her husband, Jeremiah. They married and soon started a family with the birth of their daughter, Jayden.

"There were some hard times, being so young and trying to raise a child on one income. But we got through it and we did it," Lacy says. "Looking back, I can see how hard that was, but I can see how it grew me as a person, too."

During those years, Lacy struggled with anxiety and depression. Some days she couldn't get out of bed.

In 2019, when her daughter was 10, she welcomed her son. Dallas was born at 29 weeks and weighed 2 pounds, 12 ounces. He spent 79 days in the neonatal intensive care unit. Because Lacy's husband was unable to get much time off, Lacy often went to the hospital alone and felt torn between her two children, who both needed her.

"When you look back on it, you think, man, how did I even function? How did I get through that?" Lacy says.

Through a program called Helping Hands that supported Lacy

and her family after they brought Dallas home, she was finally able to find the right therapist.

She went through another challenging time in 2020, when she and her husband attempted to adopt a foster child and the adoption fell through, leaving Lacy devastated.

In addition to therapy and her love for her children, Lacy's faith in God sustained her. Throughout this difficult journey, she kept getting signs that she would be OK.

"God doesn't always take the trouble away, but he always gives you a way through it," she says. "He kept showing me that."

Finding NOSW was "definitely a God thing," she says.

Since graduating from NOSW, Lacy has been busy. She completed an internship with The Seeker and continues to write for the Christian publication. She also is taking an online writing course and collecting plastic grocery bags to make sleeping mats for unhoused people. And she has a paying childcare job.

"I can really look at myself and say, I'm proud of who you are, just as you are. I'm enough for myself," she says. 📧

Partnership promises benefits for NOSW, Firestone

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good. But Firestone and other sponsors generously agreed to continue their sponsorships, which would now focus on supporting NOSW programming.

NOSW staff stayed in touch with the Firestone folks and in March 2023 took a tour of the Williamsburg plant, which manufactures air springs and other automotive parts. A plant expansion is in progress to add 250 new jobs building parts for electric vehicles.

With a plant manager who is a woman and several other women in leadership roles, Firestone is

eager to diversify its workforce and hire more women. Firestone offers competitive benefits, including assistance with college tuition and certification programs.

NOSW and Firestone discussed ways to partner, including Firestone staff meeting with NOSW women during a residential session and NOSW delivering a program for women workers at the Firestone plant.

"We're excited about this new partnership with Firestone," said Sister Robbie. "Like NOSW, Firestone is invested in creating opportunities for women." 📧



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



Leave a legacy

Did you know you can support NOSW women into the future with a planned gift? It's easy to include NOSW in your will. Contact Robbie Pentecost at rpentecost@nosw.org for details.

Facebook

To keep up with NOSW between newsletters, follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/noswberea

E-news

Want to receive our e-news in your email inbox? Email ahogg@nosw.org



35 years

NEW OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL FOR WOMEN

204 Chestnut Street
Berea, Kentucky 40403

The New Opportunity School for Women

serves 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

Partnership between NOSW and Firestone will be mutually beneficial

In the spring of 2022, NOSW received a message from Kanisha Hughey, human resources manager with Firestone Industrial Products in Williamsburg, Kentucky. The company wanted to know more about the program and how they might support it.

Sister Robbie Pentecost, NOSW executive director, and other staff took a field trip to Williamsburg to meet with Kanisha and her colleague Jane Broadwell. Firestone was interested in supporting work that empowers women and signed on as a sponsor for NOSW's Festival of Trees.

When post-COVID costs made the Festival of Trees too expensive to produce, NOSW made the difficult decision to cancel the event for

See [Partnership](#) on page 3.



NOSW visited the Firestone plant in Williamsburg on March 21. Pictured from left are Sister Robbie Pentecost (executive director) and Crystal Burton (program staff and 2022 graduate) with Kanisha Hughey, Jane Broadwell and Matt Casey of Firestone.