



NEWSLETTER  
Summer 2023

NEW OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL FOR WOMEN  
**NOSW**



## The Sisterhood

### Nine graduate from residential session—largest class since pandemic

The pandemic brought some good changes to NOSW, including the introduction of robust online programming that continues today.

But we missed our residential sessions and couldn't wait to get back to in-person programming. We have gradually been building our recruitment efforts by traveling in the region and connecting with other organizations.

Our June 2023 class was our largest since we resumed residential programs last year. Nine women from several counties spent two weeks together in Berea doing deep personal work around self-esteem, healthy boundaries, leadership, vulnerability, spirituality, creative expression and more. They also learned professional skills, brushed up on math and punctuation, took a field trip to the capital, and watched a play under the stars at Pioneer Playhouse in Danville. 🌸



Our women spent a day at Berea College learning about communication and digital literacy, eating in the dining hall and posing for photos in their business attire. From left are Andrea Wiesen (London), Zoe Collett (Barbourville), Lillie Burton (Morehead), Linda Bradley (Morehead), Kimberly Longstreet (Winchester), Stephanie Justice (Mt. Sterling), Rebekah Deichman (Berea) and Arnedra Carmickle (Lexington). Not pictured is Cyndi Slagle (Richmond). See page 3 for more photos of the June residential session.



Clockwise from left: Arnedra Carmickle, Zoe Collett, Linda Bradley and Kimberly Longstreet after haircuts



From left: Cyndi Slagle, Stephanie Justice and Arnedra Carmickle at Pioneer Playhouse in Danville



## From the Executive Director

At NOSW, we have always believed that women hold families and communities together—and that, as they meet the needs of so many others, women can lose sight of their own needs. Our program provides a place for women to turn their attention toward themselves for a few weeks and explore what they need and what they want.

We also believe in the power of women in community with other women. When they come together in our program, women encourage and fortify each other. Their conversations can be difficult, as they face challenges and revisit traumas. But when they are willing to trust themselves, trust the women around them and trust the process, change begins to bloom.

As you read this newsletter, we are still celebrating (and resting up from) our June residential session, when nine amazing women spent two weeks with us. We're excited to

share photos that show their energy, growth and connection to each other.

When these women graduated on June 17, our program coordinator Jennifer Walden compared each woman to a particular flower, highlighting her special gifts and strengths. We often use the imagery of seeds and flowers because our women do seem to bloom before us.

When a seed is planted and given a little water, then tended over time, it will bear fruit. This is our investment in women: to see the promise within them and provide a garden space where they can begin to grow it.

This blossoming is always remarkable—we are inspired each time we watch it.

A two-week residential session is not without challenges. Deep personal work can bring frustration and even tears. We ask the women to be honest and vulnerable, at a time

when they are away from home and spending long hours with people they only just met.

But in these two weeks, we see them grow beyond the limits they or the world have set for them. We see them start to take steps toward the future they want, a future in which they are the agents of their own lives. We see them build a community with their new sisters. And when they give their speeches on graduation day, we watch them bloom triumphantly into their own promise and power.

These graduation days are our favorite days of the year. We are grateful to do this work—and grateful to do it alongside you, our NOSW community.



*Sister Robbie Pentecost*

## CALENDAR

### 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

## 100 Women supports groups that empower women

100 Women Lexington was formed 10 years ago with the goal of recruiting 100 women donors to support organizations in Central Kentucky that serve women and families. NOSW is fortunate to be one of these groups, along with nine other organizations.

Each year, through donations from its members, 100 Women provides a gift to NOSW to use wherever it is most needed. This partnership helps us provide powerful programs for women and connects us with other organizations. We are grateful! 🙏



From left, Joanna Rodes of 100 Women with Sister Robbie Pentecost, NOSW executive director, and Latona Gamble, a 2014 NOSW graduate, at a 100 Women event on June 28.



## More scenes from June residential session ...

Continued from page 1.

Rebekah Deichman  
(left) and Zoe Collett



Andrea Wiesen



Cyndi Slagle



Angie and Carl Weaver (forefront) spent a day with our women exploring leadership, vulnerability and self-care. Angie is a member of the NOSW Board of Directors.



### 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](https://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](mailto:rpentecost@nosw.org) for details.

### Facebook

To keep up with NOSW between newsletters, follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/noswberea](https://facebook.com/noswberea)

### E-news

Want to receive our e-news in your email inbox? Email [ahogg@nosw.org](mailto: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

### Kim Cox finally got to see the program she'd been supporting for years

Kim Cox first learned about NOSW when she saw a small article about the program in a magazine about 20 years ago.



Kim Cox

"I had been supporting a number of global missions, and the article made me realize the huge need in my own country," Kim explained.

"I asked for, and was provided, NOSW financial and mission statements that I reviewed and was impressed with. NOSW seemed honest and well run. Although I didn't have a lot of money to give at that time, I decided that what I could give would be well used by NOSW."

Even though she lives in the

Washington, D.C. area, Kim has continued to support NOSW over the years.

"With every single gift I made through the past 20 years, without exception, I received a personal, handwritten note of thanks from someone at NOSW. I also, from time to time, received notes from some of the students. It made me feel that my gifts were appreciated and thus made me want to give more."

After all these years of supporting the program, Kim finally got a chance to see it first-hand when she flew down for a visit during the June residential session. She shared dinner and conversation with the women and sat in one of their classes the next morning. Coincidentally, the class focused on financial planning, which had been

Kim's career before her retirement last year.

"When I visited NOSW in June, my impressions were wide ranging," she said. "I saw the overwhelming need to help so many women in the Appalachian area and the depth and breadth of the problems and obstacles they face. I was so very impressed by the commitment and dedication of the NOSW staff and volunteers who walked me through the complexities and challenges they face in providing help.

"I was lucky as well that the students honored me by graciously and generously sharing their stories and struggles and more importantly the strategies that NOSW was helping them develop to overcome these issues and reach for future successes." 📖