

# thrive!

FALL 2011

The Newsletter of Crittenton Women's Union



Crittenton  
Women's Union

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## CWU Turns Five

This fall Crittenton Women's Union will proudly observe its fifth anniversary, and I hope you will join us at our Live! Work! Thrive! celebration on November 10th. The theme of the event is "Celebrating 5 Years of Innovation."

When we merged Crittenton, Inc. and The Women's Educational Industrial Union in July 2006, our vision was to build on their historic work to become a leading innovator of new programs and tools supporting real economic mobility for low-income women.

We also set our sights on becoming a "go-to" organization for creative solutions to public policy and delivery system problems that prevent people from getting ahead. With help from many of you, we have exceeded our expectations on both these fronts, and are well positioned to grow our future impact.

### Cutting-edge programs

In the past five years, we have launched three groundbreaking, anti-poverty programs: Career Family Opportunity (CFO), Economic Mobility Institute (EMI), and Abbot House. Each of these programs allows the families we serve to begin their path to economic self-sufficiency at the level most appropriate for them. The intensity of these programs range from drop-in EMI counseling sessions for housing guests just getting started on their mobility journey, to the two-year supported housing program at Abbot House designed to help young single moms successfully transition to permanent jobs and homes, and to our longest range effort, the CFO program, which creates a five-year partnership with families committed to making the full journey to economic independence.

### Trailblazing research

All our programs are grounded in the trailblazing work of our Research and Innovation (R&I) Department, which developed our



## President's Letter

### High-impact advocacy

CWU clients, staff, and supporters work together to move CWU's policy agenda forward through our highly regarded Voices Advocacy Network and Council. This year, our "For-profit Colleges and the CWU Client Experience" brief played a significant role in Governor Patrick's filing legislation that will improve the oversight of these schools in our state. And this is just our most recent work. Since we were founded, our Advocacy Department has filed five separate bills aimed at removing barriers to economic security for low-income families. Additionally, we participated in the Massachusetts Asset Development Commission, which adopted several of our recommendations in their 2009 final report.

It's incredibly gratifying to see all we've done in just five years, and, given our current positioning, the next five years are likely to be even more impactful. And it's a darn good thing they will be. The need for improved opportunities for poor women and families has never been greater, and we can't rest until everyone has the chance to Live, Work, and Thrive.

Elisabeth D. Babcock  
President/CEO

Bridge to Self-Sufficiency Theory of Change™ and our Mobility Mentoring™ coaching model (see story page 3). Together these tools have transformed how we help our clients by establishing a framework and a road map leading to true economic security. R&I also implemented state-of-the-art software that enables us to track outcomes, measure program performance, and refine our practices in real time.

Join us for Live! Work! Thrive! Celebrating 5 Years of Innovation. See back page.



# CFO “Pioneers” Ace 2nd Year

At the second year mark, the Career Family Opportunity (CFO) program is reporting impressive gains among its “pioneers”—13 participants who joined CFO at its launch in June 2009.

Seventy-seven percent are enrolled in an education or training program, as compared to 46% at the program’s inception. Five of the pioneers—an epithet chosen by the original CFO participants themselves—are One Family Scholars, receiving scholarship support from a CWU partner organization for maintaining a GPA of at least 3.0.

**In the past two years, the employed pioneers have increased their hourly wages by 17%, now earning about \$17 an hour. At the same time, they reduced their average monthly Temporary Assistance for Needy Families subsidy by 26%.**



*CFO participants gather for one of the program’s monthly workshops on topics such as financial literacy, self-esteem building, and supportive parenting.*

*Career Family Opportunity “pioneers” celebrate the grand opening of CFO in November 2009 on site at the West Broadway Housing Development.*

They have collectively saved about \$17,000 in Individual Development Accounts, an average of \$1,300 per person, which will grow to nearly \$42,000 when matched by CWU at their five-year graduation. One pioneer leveraged her savings and her full-time job as a dental assistant to purchase a multi-family home—the first home purchase among all program participants.

Through CFO, these 13 hard-working single moms are making steady and notable progress towards the five-year program’s dual goals for completion:

- A career path leading to a job that pays family-sustaining wages, as determined by CWU’s Massachusetts Economic Independence Index (for Boston, the annual income would be \$62,421 for a family of three)
- A savings account of \$10,000.

Based on CWU’s Bridge to Self-Sufficiency™ and its Mobility Mentoring™ coaching model (see story next page), CFO offers participants the opportunity to create personalized life transformation plans. The plans identify short- and long-term milestones and lay out a road map and timeline for reaching them. In addition to saving their own income, CFO participants earn financial incentives for reaching significant targets laid out in their personalized plans.

Currently, CFO has 42 families enrolled at its two program sites in Boston and Cambridge.

## CWU's Bridge to Self-Sufficiency™


# A Guide to Personal Success

Each person who enters a CWU program undergoes a “Bridge” assessment. A “Bridge” assessment evaluates the person’s present situation in five vital areas—**family stability, well-being, financial management, education and training, and employment and career management.**

A “Bridge” assessment is the practical application of CWU’s trailblazing Bridge to Self-Sufficiency Theory of Change™, developed and refined over the past five years and now the foundation of all its work.

CWU’s Theory of Change recognizes that attaining economic mobility is a long-term, multi-faceted process, and the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency provides the structure and the steps necessary to achieve it. The “Bridge” describes a person’s advancement from poverty to economic self-sufficiency as a journey across a bridge, supported by five critical “pillars” (areas listed above). To become economically secure, an individual must reach specific objectives in each of those areas.

Key to the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency Theory of Change is the role of the CWU Mobility Mentor™. Mobility Mentors partner with program participants in setting priorities, developing action plans, keeping commitments, connecting to resources, and achieving goals. The Mobility Mentor supports the person’s successful journey across the bridge to economic independence.

In the next several issues of “Thrive,” we will introduce you to program participants making progress in each of the pillars of the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency. Watch for this symbol  to meet CWU program participants who are making the journey across the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency.

### CWU's Bridge to Self-Sufficiency™



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Career Family Opportunity (CFO) participant Julia Rousseau has been juggling a full-time job, two children, and school for the past two years, but all that stress, hard work, and lack of sleep will soon pay off.

Julia received her associate’s degree from Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) this summer with a specialty in surgical technology. She’s now positioned to increase her current salary as a medical assistant by half. But, she’s not about to stop there. She’s entering BHCC’s medical laboratory technician program in the fall.

Julia is one of the CFO “pioneers” who joined the program at its inception in June 2009 (see story page 2). A single mom, she lives in the West Broadway Homes public housing development in South Boston with her two boys, ages 15 and eight.

“It was by luck that I discovered CFO,” Julia said. “I received a letter about it in my mailbox. CFO gives you the push you need to succeed, especially my Mobility Mentor, Kamaria Moore.”

Every month, CFO participants get together in small groups with their fellow CFOs who hold similar goals. Julia meets with her CFO education and training affinity group.

“They are like having another family,” Julia said.

“We’re all mutually supportive and help keep each other moving forward.”

CFO participant  
Julia Rousseau



Join us

**Featured Speaker**

Dr. Margaret McKenna  
President of the Walmart Foundation

**Thursday, November 10, 2011**

6 pm – 8 pm

WGBH

One Guest Street  
Brighton, Mass.

Contribution information available online at  
[www.liveworkthrive.org](http://www.liveworkthrive.org)

**Live! Work! Thrive!**  
Celebrating 5 Years of Innovation

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