



3201 Curtis Street
Denver, CO 80205

Direct: 303.292.1919
Toll free: 888.292.3001
Fax: 303.292.1221
Email: info@womensbeanproject.com
www.womensbeanproject.com

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SAVE-THE-DATE!

Ready, Set, Grow!
Annual Graduation Celebration & Fundraising Luncheon
Wednesday, April 27, 2016
11:30 am - 12:00 pm Reception
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Luncheon
Donald R. Seawell Grand Ballroom at
The Denver Center for Performing Arts Complex

RSVP by April 6th online:
<https://readysetgrow2016.eventbrite.com> or call
Luanne Hill at 303.292.1919 ext. 113 or email
luanneh@womensbeanproject.com for more info.

Columbine Classic
Benefits Women's Bean Project
run. connect. empower.
Sunday, May 1, 2016
4 mile / 8 mile race
Aurora Reservoir

Register online:
www.columbineclassic.org

table captains make the difference

Women's Bean Project is seeking Table Captains to host tables at our annual fundraising luncheon and graduation celebration, *Ready, Set, Grow!* The success of this event hinges on the participation of friends like you. Family, friends, neighbors and work colleagues make excellent potential guests at your table. The luncheon is free for you and your guests to attend, although everyone will be asked to consider a financial contribution. Table Captains do not have to ask for money, and there is no minimum or maximum gift level. We help table captains by providing stories, tours and other resources to connect prospective guests to our mission.

If you are currently a Table Captain or interested in being one, please attend one of the following informational meetings on Wednesday, February 10th from 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm or Tuesday, February 16th from 11:00 am - Noon at the Bean Project. For more information or to RSVP (required), please contact Luanne Hill by calling 303.292.1919 ext. 113 or email luanneh@womensbeanproject.com.

You can truly make a difference!



call for corporate sponsors: CREATE CHANGE

After approximately nine-months in the program, the women at the Bean Project are ready to graduate and move to career entry-level jobs in our community.

Moving into mainstream employment brings the graduates great pride and optimism about their futures, and aids our community by creating new taxpayers and decreasing their need for public services. On April 27th, *Ready, Set, Grow!* brings Seawell Ballroom to life. We are currently seeking corporate sponsors to help support the event attended by almost 800 affluent, influential community and business leaders. Our 7 different sponsorship levels - ranging from \$1,000 - \$15,000 - offer an ideal opportunity to promote your brand to this engaged audience. An added bonus, Women's Bean Project is a participant in the Enterprise Zone tax credit program, offering a 25% Colorado state income tax credit on cash contributions of \$250 or more. For more information on getting involved as a corporate sponsor in this empowering event, contact Luanne Hill at 303.292.1919 ext. 113 or luanneh@womensbeanproject.com.

inside next issue:

Preparing for new program participants
Happenings at the Bean Project
A word from our CEO
Program outlook
From the kitchen
Bean profile

I am Women's Bean Project



My name is Aminah and I am Women's Bean Project. I was blessed to start my life surrounded by both parents and awesome grandparents. I had what most would describe as a normal childhood. I grew up in a nice house, had professional parents, material things, and everything else a kid likes. I was educated by private schools up until middle school which laid a solid foundation of education and learning for me.

I went on to graduate high school at 17 and it was around that time that I started to make destructive choices.

I began to hang out with people who lived a life totally different from mine and for me that was exciting. I was attracted to the "bad boy" type and started dating a gang member. I found myself in situations that were dangerous and would often leave the state without telling my family - leave with people I hadn't known for any length of time and put myself in harm's way.

From that point on I started to go down a path that led to me dropping out of college, frequent unemployment, and ultimately a few run-in's with law enforcement. My last arrest took place in 2009 and it resulted in a felony charge. Because of that felony, it made it virtually impossible to obtain employment. There were days that I would spend just drinking or smoking marijuana because there wasn't much else to do. I had a feeling of hopelessness and started to believe that I would be defined by my mistakes.

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After graduating high school, Aminah made destructive choices which ultimately landed her a felony charge.
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SAVE-THE-DATE
Ready, Set, Grow!
Graduation Celebration & Luncheon. Wednesday, April 27th.
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Every \$1 social enterprises like Women's Bean Project spend, provides a return of \$2.23 to the economy.
PAGE 3

where a woman earns her future

Beanstalk

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WOMEN'S BEAN PROJECT

FEBRUARY 2016 ISSUE

PAYING IT FORWARD

Thank you for your generosity!

You donated over \$235,000 over the holidays, allowing us to continue changing more women's lives!

We owe the success of our end-of-year campaign to your generosity.

The funds raised equates to over **27,000 hours** of job readiness, life skills classes and interpersonal development. These skills ensure each program participant meets the essential requirements to create a better future for herself and her family. Each program component provides a crucial skill needed to get and keep employment upon graduation from our program. This wouldn't be possible without your investment in our program. Your contributions allow us to provide a variety of life and job readiness skills training, support the women while they work to meet their basic needs, and pay them a wage while they are working on these important skills. Whether she is working on her basic computer skills, studying to get her GED, learning how to present herself in Dress for Success classes, or working one-on-one with her mentor, your support allows us to pay each woman a wage to earn while she learns.

It truly makes a difference!

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It felt like no matter how many steps I took forward, it was never enough. One can only fill out so many job applications and get so many rejections before you start to give up. After a few years of job jumping, I came to the realization that something needed to change. The life I was living wasn't working and I needed to stop making excuses for myself. I came to the conclusion that my life could be better and it was up to me to make it better. That is when I applied to Women's Bean Project and thankfully they hired me and took a chance on me.

"The program gave me the tools to discipline myself and finally learn to follow through."

~Aminah, 2014-15 Graduate



Since graduating the program, I was able to find an awesome job with a great company. As of the first of the year (2016), I received my third raise at the same company I have been employed with since graduating Women's Bean Project a year and a half ago. I would have never imagined I could be in my current position at this time of my life with stability and financial security. I have a 401K retirement savings account and continue to thrive and grow. Having this job has allowed me to be self-sufficient, obtain a car and housing, but most of all – to be proud of myself. I'm going to continue to make positive things happen!

a word from our CEO thank you for your support

Happy New Year! As we close out another holiday season I am grateful for the support and generosity we received from our friends.

And, as I look forward to this upcoming year, I'm excited about the possibilities of what 2016 may bring. We are currently updating our strategic plan to serve as a roadmap for the next several years.

Strategic planning is exhilarating. It provides us the opportunity to dream, to imagine a brighter future for Women's Bean Project and the women we serve. It allows us to choose a vision for our success that leads to:

1. Never turning away a woman who comes to us asking for help in creating a new life for herself and her family.
2. Ensuring that every woman who participates in our program receives services that are so effective and far-reaching that she is the last in her family to need us.

As part of this process, we are asking ourselves:

- How might we modify our program services to adjust to the current needs of the women in our community?
- How might we update our product line to meet the needs and desires of our customers?
- How might we better use the assets of our organization, such as our beloved firehouse, to help us grow and serve more women?

Interesting and exciting questions, to be sure. In the next few months, watch for new products coming your way, for stories of women whose lives are being transformed and for improvements in our operations overall. We're so glad to share this journey with you.

Thank you for your support!

Warmly,

Ready, Set, Grow! Graduation Celebration and Fundraising Luncheon celebrating our graduates

SAVE-THE-DATE

Ready, Set, Grow!, our annual graduation celebration and fundraising luncheon, is an opportunity for our community to celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of our recent graduates and their efforts to improve their lives. Ready Set Grow! is more than the Bean Project's primary annual fundraiser, it is a time for community members to celebrate the successful journey our graduates have made toward personal and economic self-sufficiency. The event is free to the public and includes a sit-down lunch. RSVP is required. Your financial support will "pay-it-forward" for the next group of women we hire with multiple and significant barriers to employment who are looking to learn the necessary skills to move into the economic mainstream by attaining a career entry-level job.

The event will be held on April 27th at the Seawell Grand Ballroom in the Denver Performing Arts Center. 11:30 am - Noon (reception); Noon - 1:00 pm (luncheon). **RSVP online at <https://readyssetgrow2016.eventbrite.com> or call Luanne Hill at 303.292.1919 ext. 113.**

join us for tea and scones

We can't thank you enough in words, so we will say it with tea for you!

You're invited Friday, March 18th from 2:00-4:00 pm

We are planning our First Volunteer Tea Appreciation Party and you're invited. Volunteerism is essential to the success of Women's Bean Project. Our volunteers continue to be our frontline in promoting and educating the public about Women's Bean Project. Many individuals and volunteer groups offer extra hands and high spirits on the production floor alongside our women; help us out at community events, and support our administrative staff. And now it's our time to thank you for all you do!

Join us at the Bean Project as our "soon-to-be" graduates host a tea for you! Chat with our women as they embark on a new chapter of their lives and see the work your volunteerism has made possible, which is so instrumental to our organization and to the success of each and every woman in our program. Please RSVP to Luanne Hill at 303.292.1919 ext. 113 or luanneh@womensbeanproject.com.

OUR IMPACT

Women's Bean Project offers a viable way to address chronic unemployment, recidivism, welfare dependency, and a host of other challenges. Our social enterprise model gives Women's Bean Project a sustainable way to achieve our mission. As a result - it ushers women with significant barriers to employment into the economic mainstream.

According to a 2015 Mathematica Jobs Study, researchers found that every \$1 social enterprises like Women's Bean Project spend provides a return of \$2.23 to the economy, including benefits of \$1.31 to taxpayers from reductions in government transfer payments and increases in revenues, in addition to benefits to the SE business. This study strongly makes the case for the impact of Women's Bean Project's transitional employment program.

- Program graduation rate has improved 75-85%
- Job placement rate has consistently reached 100%
- Job retention at 6 months is just under 90% and at 12 months retention has been as high as 100%



Infographic provided by: REDF

engage with us socially



5 our guiding principles

OPPORTUNITY.

We help women help themselves. We provide opportunities for our participants to discover their talents and develop skills to join the workforce and build a better life.

SERVICE.

We strive to "do well by doing good." We are a social enterprise that believes it is a basic human right to live a stable, healthy life. We serve our supporters, partners, participants and communities by delivering quality products with innovation and efficiency.

TRANSFORMATION.

Our efforts transform more than the individual woman. The seeds of hope in one woman weave threads of success that expand to families and communities with a reach that touches individuals worldwide. From program participants and vendors to customers, donors and volunteers, their transformations make a difference.

EMPOWERMENT.

Using the tools we provide, women are empowered to change their lives. Our supporters are empowered with the knowledge that they have contributed, not only to the self-worth and self-sufficiency of disadvantaged women, but also to the broad-reaching benefits our communities reap.

SUSTAINABILITY.

Instead of a one-time handout, women acquire the tools needed to sustain themselves and their families for a lifetime. We believe in nurturing economic sustainability for our program participants and partners, being ever-mindful of our impact on the environment.