

The Red Shoes Circle

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The Red Shoes
A CENTER FOR PERSONAL & SPIRITUAL GROWTH

FALL 2011 NEWSLETTER

The Butterfly Project

Collage artist Sheila Kelly learned about the **Houston Holocaust Museum** project collecting 1.5 million handmade butterflies to represent the children who perished in the Holocaust. With Sheila's help, 115 butterflies were collaged at The Red Shoes and will be added to the museum display. Thank you for helping us provide the setting for this collaboration.



We are a non-profit center offering opportunities for spiritual enrichment and personal growth. Our warm, open community broadens understanding and encourages self-discovery.

Our unique offerings include:

- Inspiring speakers from around the world
- In-depth studies of spirituality and faith
- Thought provoking book and film studies
- Weekly meditation and daily yoga

Our programs open hearts and minds that transform the world.

Woman to Woman

Spirit: The Power of the Circle

Anne Scott, founder of Dreamweather Foundation in California, had been to The Red Shoes before. But this year, we added a new dimension to her February workshop, *Women, Wisdom and Dreams*.

On Friday morning, The Red Shoes welcomed women who are homeless from **The Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter** to a women's circle based on Anne's dream work. That morning, we saw miracles take place. Women who arrived with their emotional armor fully in place become open to their own feelings and their feminine energy in a new way. As trust built through our time of sharing, spiritual strength came up from the depths of life's challenges and carried us to a place of hope and compassion. The supportive circle and the power of meditation and story helped each woman listen to the guidance of the heart.

Finding inner wisdom was the pearl, the treasure discovered under all of life's difficulties and brought forth in this group.

Your dollars make it possible for us to offer this powerful experience to women who rarely have the support to value their own insights or the time to sense their potential.

The Red Shoes: Stepping Out in the Community

The Red Shoes is a valuable resource to these diverse groups in Baton Rouge. Your donation enables us to provide information and services in a variety of ways.

Cancer Services of Greater Baton Rouge

Baton Rouge Earth Day

Pennington Wellness Day for Women

Woman's Hospital: Women Living with Cancer

Louisiana Women's Summit-LSU

Kenikor Foundation: A Place for Change

The GBR Food Bank

Just Click Your Heels Together 3 Times....

Many discover the magic of The Red Shoes during Women! A Week-Long Celebration

Supporting the vision of the **Women's Council**, we wondered how, in one week, we could reach a large number of women seeking community and personal support on their life journeys. With our gifted teacher, Amina Rae, we experienced the Dances of Universal Peace, a lyrical mix of chants and movement from many traditions, nourishing our sense of oneness. Featured speaker Michael Conforti added a rich spiritual dimension to the images in our lives. Partnering with **Habitat for Humanity**, we hosted "Top 10 Tools for Women," empowering women to walk confidently into Home Depot. Seventeen varied activities invited self-discovery.

We are able to introduce women to powerful opportunities for growth at very low fees because of your donations.



Poet Ava Haymon teaching creative writing with a twist!

Open House

On Sunday we welcomed women to experience a taste of The Red Shoes community. We came together, young and not so young, from many backgrounds and faith traditions and focused on the unique gifts we each bring into the world. As we named our gift, we created a circle of stones, realizing how together we become whole.



Celia Strickler

Did you know?

- ≈ In 2011, we offered over 145 programs.
- ≈ Over 5800 people benefitted from our programs in 2011.
- ≈ Our low fees keep our programs inclusive, but do not cover our operating expenses and facilitator fees.
- ≈ Your gifts help us provide uplifting and affordable programming.



Louisiana Community Marketplace

**Support
The Red Shoes when
you shop online &
help women
in Baton Rouge.**

Visit:

www.LouisianaCommunityMarketplace.com
and click on The Red Shoes.

Under our logo, click on "Stores" and locate the store you want to order from.

When you make purchases, The Red Shoes will receive a percentage of your purchase price providing us with extra income for scholarships and programs.

Thank You!

Women's Leadership Connection

AARP, LANO and The Red Shoes Make Baton Rouge Feel Like Home

You might know the challenge of moving to a new city with a new job, knowing nothing about the culture and feeling alone. Women's Leadership Connection (WLC) launched one year ago and our alums say it helped them develop a network and understand their new community. In just seven months, we hope Baton Rouge will feel more like home to women who have accepted jobs or are seeking employment in Baton Rouge.

Second Cohort

In October, we began orientation for our new WLC class of exciting and diverse women. Each is eager to understand the politics, culture and challenges here. Our 7 monthly meetings feature interviews with panelists chosen for their unique insights and knowledge on specific topics. What is different about this leadership group? It is the sense of community we create, a circle where women speak honestly to each other.

*"This program didn't meet my expectation. Instead it exceeded my expectation and broadened my world."
Cindy Pals*

WLC participants are relieved to discover they are not alone in being puzzled by local customs and attitudes or being scared to say they still support their home football team. WLC is able to build a bridge for women to walk confidently into their new community.

***When you support
The Red Shoes, you
support women,
employment and growth
for local businesses.***

Lifting Loans: Supporting Women's Dreams

In December of 2007, Sharon Duncan, owner of D&D Boutique for children, was the first recipient of a micro-loan through our women's **Lifting Loans** program. Since that time, Sharon has repaid her first loan and received a second to take her from "non-store retailing" to a "brick-and-mortar" location. However, with the dream of a storefront came the harsh reality that the economy and customer traffic were not what she hoped for. Her passion for outfitting children was challenged. When Sharon came to us with the news that she was going back to a more mobile means of retail, we

brainstormed the idea of a fashion show for children... at The Red Shoes.

"The show will make parents aware of the beautiful clothes that I sell. Fourteen children will be modeling and we have 60 tickets sold for the show."

Putting her best foot forward, Sharon hopes The Red Shoes show will step up her sales.



Your annual gift enables us to offer Sharon space at a reduced price for the fashion show and support her entrepreneurial spirit.

YWCA's Dialogue on Race Hosted at The Red Shoes

In January, thanks to our donors, The Red Shoes was able to provide space at no cost to host the six-week Dialogue on Race. The Dialogue provides a unique opportunity for women and men of diverse cultures to speak frankly about racial issues while learning about the repercussions of prejudice and institutional racism.

The facilitators and participants work with ground rules of honesty, respect, attentive listening and voicing of feelings grounded in personal experience. The YWCA's program originated in 1968 and all dialogues are conducted by trained volunteer facilitators.

Check our spring program brochure, because with your generous support we plan to offer space to host a new Dialogue in early 2012. Please consider participating in this eye-opening discussion. You will never look at race the same way again.

Women, Children and Peace: Offer Your Support for Resolution 1325

Sign our online petition (www.theredshoes.org) asking President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Louisiana lawmakers to support American efforts to eliminate gender-based violence around the world, as well as at home.

Our weekend with Sister Joan Chittister left many of us inspired to do something to promote peace and the wellbeing of women. The statistics that she cited in her Friday evening talk were sobering:

* In World War I, 15% of war death tolls were civilians.

* In World War II, the figure leaped to a 65% civilian death toll.

* Today, 90% of the human war toll are civilians; the majority are women and children.

In October 2000, the United Nations' Security Council adopted Resolution 1325. The main goals of resolution 1325 are to increase participation of women in conflict resolution and to protect female non-combatants from gender-based violence.

The United States is currently taking steps to create a National Action Plan to realize the resolution's goals.

**Your Name Counts!
Sign the Petition Today.**

www.theredshoes.org

A Partnership Heard 'Round the Community

The Red Shoes helped forge a new and unique partnership that has enhanced the spiritual landscape of our community. The D.L. Dykes Foundation (Jackson, MS) partnered with four congregations, The Interfaith Federation and two spirituality centers to bring the non-traditional voices of Richard Rohr and Joan Chittister to Baton Rouge. Both of these inspiring speakers challenged their audiences to see the world in a new way, challenging us to think beyond beliefs we have been taught—to see the Divine as an all-inclusive, embracing force for compassion and healing. Our broad partnership brought diverse groups together to work for change.



Baton Rouge partners front to back, L to R: Diana Dorroh, Roberta Guillory, Sister Joan Chittister, Rev Robin McCullough Bade, Rev Patti Snyder, Wendy Herschman, Sister Cynthia Sabatier, Marsha Wade and Cherri Johnson.

You-niversal Healthcare

The Mind/Body/Spirit Connection

Have you been frustrated by the health care debate? Are you concerned by the assumption that expensive tests and prescription drugs are the path to good health? At The Red Shoes we are promoting life-long health practices through affordable yoga classes that help the body work more efficiently and a weekly meditation group to reduce stress. Knowing the importance of diet, we offer classes that teach what foods, herbs and supplements promote good health and how to create habits for healthier eating. We are raising awareness, empowering you to stay healthy and presenting achievable steps for change: Please support our healthcare.

Men's Group Emerging

What's new for 2012? A meeting for men! It will offer a supportive community for sharing ideas and the opportunity to awaken the essence of the individual. This spiritual community, using Richard Rohr's men's groups as a model, will provide a time to explore concepts about work, relationships, the earth and the self. At a time when our world feels so out of balance, we need full wisdom, both male and female, to heal our wounded world. Thank you for your gift that will facilitate the creation of this new group to support men's spiritual inquiry.

Centering Meditation during Sister Joan Chittister's Seminar

Offered by Roberta Guillory, founder of The Red Shoes

Our minds and hearts are full as Sr. Joan has challenged us and enlarged our vision of this great global community in which we live. It is time now to go within and connect directly to the heart of the Divine presence. The cross cultural meaning of prayer is to set sacred intention. I ask you now to focus on the innermost part of your being—to rest in a gentle open attentiveness to Divine reality—consenting to the presence of the Divine.

We traditionally see our heart as the center within, where Spirit dwells. As you focus on this center, perhaps you can imagine the sparkling white light of that presence, filling your heart and your being. And as we set our intentions:

Let us ask for wisdom to know what we are born to do to reflect the presence of the Divine.

Let us ask for courage to walk in the world with understanding and compassion.

Let us ask for greater consciousness to sense our universal human oneness.

Let us be open to the innermost yearning for spiritual wholeness and community, receiving the heart of love that touches and affirms all spiritual traditions.

And finally, we ask for direction as to how we can move forward as a community to enable the healing of the earth. We ask all these intentions in the name of the One who has no name, but who comes by whatever name He is called.

The Red Shoes Circle: Your Vision will Create the Change

We share a vision of a more compassionate world, a world that treasures its resources and respects each living being. Together we can foster the transformation that will help make that vision a reality. Founded as a women's spirituality center, we embrace the "divine feminine," the gentle nature of the Divine that cultivates compassion, communication and collaboration to create a more just world. The Red Shoes is a container for spiritual growth and personal awareness that promotes an understanding of the unity of life, an understanding that brings all of us into the same circle. This vision depends on you for support.

In the past year, we have partnered with many outstanding agencies in the community to broaden the work of our unique non-profit organization. Each partnership allows us to address a different need and become a resource for a broader circle of people embracing all faiths, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic groups.

Our programs—inspiring speakers, book studies, film studies and spiritual circles—are all offered to wrest us from our complacency to feel the urgency of working towards a more peaceful, sustainable and loving world. We change inwardly and this change manifests in our world, a continuous circle of transformation.

There is more work to be done. Join our **Circle of Giving** and join us in this work that will transform individual lives, the community and the world.

Becky Simmons, Board President

Wendy Herschman, Executive Director

Roberta Guillory, Founder

Commemorating 9/11 Collaboration Creates Inspiration

Violence struck our homeland, taking more than 3000 lives. But out of the ashes of devastation and fear, compassion rose like a phoenix.

Volunteer! United and the Cultural Diversity Committee of Forum 35 joined hands with The Red Shoes to create a meaningful way to commemorate America's tragedy. In an effort to re-capture the spirit of volunteerism that arose in the wake of terror, the partnership arranged a screening of the uplifting film, *New York Says Thank You*. The documentary was followed by a powerful panel discussion led by Rabbi Barry Weinstein (Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation B'nai Israel) and Elizabeth "Boo" Thomas (President and CEO, CPEX) inviting each of us to find a way to support those who are facing traumatic circumstances. When you give to The Red Shoes, your gift plants seeds that inspire others to work for those in need.

*Will we be able
to create this
vision for our
world?
Not without
you!*

The Red Shoes Circle of Giving Taking steps to assure a better tomorrow

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____ Phone _____

___ \$25-\$50 Circle of Understanding

___ \$51-\$100 Circle of Caring

___ \$101-\$200 Circle of Compassion

___ \$201-\$300 Circle of Change

___ \$301 - \$500 Sustaining Circle

___ () Open Hearted Circle

Gift () in Memory of, () in honor of _____

Also acknowledge to this name and address:

() Check enclosed () My pledge: I have set up an automatic monthly transfer from my bank for \$_____.

() I prefer to put this on my credit card.

Make your donation right now at www.theredshoes.org - click "Support" on the left

Or, provide your credit card information and we will process the charge for you:

Amount _____ Is this a *one time* or *monthly* credit card auto charge? (circle one)

CC# _____ Expiration date _____ Security Code _____

Billing address if different than above: _____

Thank You! May we print your name as a member of our Circle? Yes No Thanks