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Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program



**From *Surviving* to *Thriving* :
Displaced Homemakers Do Start Over**



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF

Jobs and Training

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1.

WHO ARE DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS?

Displaced Homemakers are individuals who have spent a number of years caring for their families and homes, and were dependent on the income of a spouse or partner. Now, because of death, divorce, separation, or disability of that spouse, or loss of other support, they must seek employment in order to become emotionally and economically independent.

HOW DO DISPLACED HOMEKER PROGRAMS HELP?

Displaced Homemaker Programs reach out to serve a group of Minnesotans often unserved by other programs. The programs aid clients in identifying and removing barriers, developing confidence, and learning the choices available in the move toward independence. The program is voluntary, and services are free to eligible applicants.

WHAT SERVICES DO THE DISPLACED HOMEKER PROGRAMS OFFER?

A combination of individual and group activities are available:

- Group Orientation & Intake
- Assessment & Testing
- Life Skills Development
- Pre-Employment Preparation
- Job Development/Placement
- Personal Counseling
- Career/Educational Counseling
- Skill Training Access
- Support Services Referral
- Remedial Education Access

Programs offer limited client expense reimbursement for supplies, travel, or day care as funds permit.

HOW ARE THE PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED AND OPERATED?

The ten Displaced Homemaker Programs are administered by the State Job Training Office (SJTO) of the Department of Jobs and Training. The Department has awarded grants to local organizations to operate the programs. Five are non-profit corporations, four operate under the administrative umbrella of a community action agency, and one is under the umbrella of a community college. Client eligibility is determined by income and displaced homemaker status.

ARE THEY SUCCESSFUL?

While the goals of the programs stress preparation for employment and training, in FY 1988 over 72%, upon completion of their enrollment period, were in school, working, or active with another employment and training program. The cost per participant is an extremely modest \$462. Forty-six percent (46%) of those served are welfare recipients desirous of moving off public assistance.

2.

T H E P A S T

- 1977 Support for Displaced Homemakers developed in Minnesota and two programs were authorized by the State Legislature.
- 1978-79 The first two Displaced Homemaker programs opened:
- o Life Work Planning Center, Mankato; and
 - o New Careers/Working Opportunities for Women, Twin Cities
- 1980-81 In response to successes and needs, the State Legislature authorized the third and fourth programs.
- o Soar, Duluth; and
 - o Mainstay, Marshall
- 1982-83-84 The Legislature, through an increase in line-item marriage license and dissolution filing fees, authorized funds and started six new programs --
- o Crossroads, Thief River Falls;
 - o Pathfinders, Morris;
 - o META 5, Brainerd;
 - o Wings, Sauk Rapids;
 - o Lives in Transition, Virginia; and
 - o New Directions, Detroit Lakes.
- 1984-85 The Legislature designated all funding for programs to come from increased marriage license and dissolution funds.
- 1986-87 The Legislature renewed funding from dissolution and marriage license fees.
- 1988 Programs celebrate 10-year anniversary.

3.

THE PRESENT

Since inception, more than 6,000 Displaced Homemakers have received service from Displaced Homemaker programs.

- o Five Displaced Homemaker programs are now private, non-profit entities. Five operate under administrative entities.
- o The State Advisory Council, Directors Association and Local Program Advisory Board are strong and active.
- o During this biennium, each of the 10 programs is receiving additional funding from other sources such as from grants and foundations.
- o Displaced Homemaker programs continue to develop cooperative working agreements with other programs such as PATHS, the Job Training Partnership Act, the state's technical institutes, Job Service and other work and training initiatives.
- o In 1988, more than 1,800 displaced homemakers were enrolled in the 10 programs. Of those who completed the programs:
 - o 36% were employed at an annualized wage of \$11,565;
 - o 14% were in advanced education;
 - o 12% were in skills training;
 - o 7% completed program objectives of pre-employment preparation; and
 - o 3% were active with other employment and training programs.

4.

THE FUTURE

The Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program is committed to achieving:

- o Expanded service in the ten present program service areas;
- o Continued public education to promote increased understanding of the needs of displaced homemakers;
- o Regional Displaced Homemakers conference, to be held in Minnesota in 1990;
- o Continued networking with other agencies to increase employment and training resources for displaced homemakers.
- o Sufficient programming, to be able to cover the 24 Minnesota counties not presently served.

5.

D A T A

PROGRAM FACTS AND FIGURES

Enrollees

- o Over 74% of displaced homemakers are unemployed when they enroll.
- o Over 74% are supporting children.
- o 87% have at least a high school diploma or GED at enrollment.
- o 84% are separated or divorced.
- o Over 48% are living in rural areas or towns.
- o 13% of displaced homemakers have a handicap that affects their employability.
- o 7% of Minnesota's Displaced Homemaker Program enrollees are minority.
- o 25% of Displaced Homemaker Program enrollees are age 45 or older.
- o 47.5% of Displaced Homemaker Program enrollees are receiving some welfare assistance.

Completions

Of those displaced homemakers leaving the Displaced Homemaker Programs:

- o 36% achieved employment with an annualized wage of \$11,565.
- o 14% were in advanced education leading to employment.
- o 12% were in skills training leading to employment.
- o 7% completed program objectives.
- o 3% entered other employment and training programs.

Of those 47.5 receiving AFDC when enrolling:

- o 21% achieved employment.
- o 22% were in advanced education leading to employment.
- o 15.6% were in skills training leading to employment.
- o 9% completed other program objectives.

10/19/88
Mpls. Star & Tribune

Program helps homemakers who lose their mates

By Leonard Inskip
Associate editor

The traditional family — father at work, mother at home — may be mostly a fading memory. But many thousands of dependent women still live in such families. When the women lose incoming-producing mates through death, divorce or separation, they may end up poor, without job skills, lacking self-esteem and confidence and not knowing where to get help.

A Duluth woman's situation was typical: homemaker 23 years, since age 20; four children; marriage ending; feelings of fear, frustration, inadequacy, powerlessness, hopelessness. She was referred to Project SOAR, a state-funded displaced homemaker program at Duluth. With its help, she developed job skills and self-confidence — and got on with her life in a manner she calls "a success."

A decade ago, the Duluth program didn't exist; nor did nine other similar regional programs in Minnesota. The first two — in the Twin Cities and Mankato — began in 1978 with federal help.

The Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program will celebrate its 10th anniversary with a luncheon in St. Paul on Thursday. The program, which has helped more than 6,000 women (and a few men), deserves such recognition.

The 1978 programs in Twin Cities and Mankato agencies were followed three years later by programs at Marshall and Duluth. In 1984 additional local agencies launched programs at Thief River Falls, Brainerd, Detroit Lakes (now based at New York Mills), Alexandria (now based at Elbow Lake), Virginia and Sauk Rapids.

According to Laura Turner, state coordinator for the Displaced Homemaker Program, participants get free personal counseling, referral to other organizations, support groups, vocational and career counseling, pre-employment preparation, job placement and other help.

The 10 individual programs receive funds each year from the state's marriage-license and divorce-filing fees. About \$900,000 is distributed annually by a formula that includes area population and needs. The smallest programs get a minimum of \$60,000. The recipient agencies also seek support from nongovernmental sources.

Compared to need, the money doesn't go far enough.

Women in 24 of Minnesota's 87 counties lack access, because four state regions don't have the state-funded programs. Itinerant services are limited in the 10 regions, so women at considerable distance may not be able to use the program. In some places itinerant services have had to be reduced. Agency staffs typically are small and underpaid.

The Department of Jobs and Training, which oversees the Displaced Homemaker Program, seeks a direct state appropriation of \$1 million for fiscal year 1990 and a like sum for 1991. If approved by the governor and 1989 Legislature, such an appropriation would double the funds to help displaced homemakers.

The increase would allow expanding itinerant services in existing service areas and creating new programs in unserved areas (11 southeast counties, five east-central counties, four central counties and four north-central counties). Potential sponsoring groups in the unserved areas have expressed interest.

Decisions on an increase would represent not only a spending decision but also an investment decision: an investment in human well-being and productivity, and a means to keep or get some women off welfare.

In fiscal 1987-88, the 10 agencies served 1,814 people, half of whom got some form of public assistance. Three-quarters were unemployed; the rest were underemployed or part-time. Half lived in cities; half lived in small towns or in the countryside.

Three-fifths were age 35 or older. Probably half or more of the women in that age group who separate from spouses will never remarry, a recent study indicated. Without marketable skills, many will be destined to be poor. Family breakup now is called the primary reason for poverty; once it was old age.

In fiscal 1988, 968 people left the program, nearly two-thirds of them into jobs or further education. One in 10 completed the program objective (and perhaps decided to stay home) or entered another program. About one-quarter dropped out for personal or medical problems, left the area, simply disappeared, remarried or died.

To qualify for free services, the participants must meet low-income eligibility standards, have worked in the home for at least two years, have been dependent on a spouse or partner and have lost that support, Turner says. Some of the 10 agencies also offer services for sliding-scale fees to people with incomes above the eligibility standards.

Participation in a displaced-homemaker program is voluntary. Typically, a woman has just lost "the major part of her life that showed her a success," and therefore lacks self-esteem, Turner says. The principal barrier a woman faces is "lack of knowledge about choices" and her potential — plus "a lack of believing that you have choices."

Last year, the 10 programs served 1,800 women and 14 men. Such men, Turner says, may have been homemakers while their spouses worked, may have been single parents who lost AFDC benefits or may have simply sought referrals.

Women served by the Minnesota Displaced Homemakers Program can be among its most forceful advocates. Their stories often begin this way:

"Our family had farmed for 26 years when we became victims of the farm crisis . . . I was 50 years old, married for 29 years and had a 10-year-old daughter to raise. The farm, the marriage and the family unit went down the tube . . . I believe Displaced Homemakers . . . saved my life."

Stories like that are worth celebrating as this special program marks its 10th anniversary — and worth remembering when state officials and legislators consider the next budget.

Luncheon crowd hears testimonials

3 relate personal experiences with DHP

Terry Smith was a military wife who thought she was stupid and old.

Susan Le Gare Gulden lived in fear of physical violence for four years and so did her sons.

Bonnie Burke was a high-school dropout who kept it a secret from her kids.

They've all traded in those lives for rejuvenated ones, thanks to determination, hard work and the Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Program.

Armed with courage and joy, they told their stories to those attending the 10th anniversary celebration of the Displaced Homemaker Program. The audience listened in pin-drop silence.

Terry Smith

"About two-and-a-half years ago I lost my job," Smith said. "I was really depressed. I was so down I didn't think I could do anything.

"You wouldn't have known me two-and-a-half years ago and I wouldn't have recognized myself."

She got her new identity through the help of Pathfinders, a Displaced Homemaker Program in Alexandria.

"My self-esteem shot up from zero," she said. "The Displaced Homemaker Program taught me that I *could* do things. I wasn't stupid. I was invaluable as a person."

She left her marriage of abuse and alcoholism behind her. Now, she's a student at St. Cloud State University.

"College has gone really well for me," she said. "I started winter quarter two years ago. I've got a really good grade point average.



Terry Smith

Susan Gulden

Bonnie Burke

It's not 4.0 but it's not too far away."

She's a relationships peer educator at the university and is president of the Non-traditional Students Association, the largest on-going organization on campus.

She's done two internships and is exploring various career possibilities.

She's on the advisory council of WINGS, the St. Cloud Displaced Homemaker Program.

"My children," she recalled, "could not believe the new me."

Susan Le Gare Gulden

Susan Le Gare Gulden is a public health sanitarian for the Olmsted County Health Department in Rochester. Last fall she was able to purchase her first home.

"My situation wasn't always so fortunate," she said. "There was a time in my life when the cards were stacked against me. The Displaced Homemaker Program changed all this for me. This is my story . . .

"It was Christmas, Dec. 25, 1982, 3 a.m. in the morning and my husband still was not home. He promised me that this holiday season he would not drink. He promised me. I couldn't sleep that night, not when he was out there drinking and driving.

"I couldn't seem to forget

his last drunken episode as I knelt at my 3-year-old son's bed caressing his back and comforting him back to sleep. I couldn't help but notice that his head wound had still not healed."

She said she left the marriage with a son on each arm, two changes of clothing and a one-way ticket back to her childhood home.

"I was unemployed," she said. "I was pregnant. I was on welfare, food stamps and medical assistance."

Through the Mankato Displaced Homemaker Pro-

"...it's about learning to fish instead of taking fish from the system."

gram, the Life Work Planning Center, she was able to go back to college and to land her present position.

"The Displaced Homemaker Program made the difference between getting an interview and getting a job," she said.

"It took a lot of determination and hard work to get where I am today but determination alone would not have been enough. The fact of the matter is that the Displaced Homemaker Program is about

learning to fish instead of taking fish from the system."

"Put another way," she said, "teach a woman to fish and she will fish for a lifetime."

Bonnie Burke

Bonnie Burke has a job she loves and she got it through WOW — Working Opportunities for Women — a Displaced Homemaker Program in the Twin Cities.

WOW also helped her get a high school diploma. She graduated the same month as her youngest child did.

She found out about the Displaced Homemaker Program through a tiny announcement that WOW ran in the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* last January.

That was when she was locked out of her home.

"I knew I had to do something with my life," she said. "I couldn't just sit crying. I had to start some place."

The beginning of her transformation was when WOW taught her that she had choices.

"I learned how to make a decision," she said. "I learned how to decide what was a priority in my life. I learned to say no to things I didn't want and yes to the things I wanted.

"Before I came to WOW, I didn't know how to say no," she said, reflecting, "It seems strange to me now — when I think back on how I was. I could not say no."

Looking back on how far she's come, she laughs, "All I can say is — WOW!"

**Cindy Jackson
PIE**

The Minnesota Pine
AAUW Winter '88



Women's Work Women's Worth

Women's work and women's worth has been considered a critical issue for the past ten years by the Displaced Homemakers' Program of Minnesota. On October 20, 1988, the Displaced Homemakers' Program observed its anniversary at the St. Paul Branch AAUW clubhouse.

This program has served over 6,000 women through its ten agencies since legislative support became a reality in 1977. Participation in the program is voluntary. There is a minimum income requirement to qualify; and a participant must have worked in the home for at least two years, having been dependent on a spouse or partner and having lost that support because of death, divorce, separation or disability of a spouse (14 men were among those served in 1988). Services include counseling, referral to other organizations, support groups, vocational and career counseling, and job placement.

At this writing, the Department of Jobs and Training, which administers the Displaced Homemakers Program, is requesting a direct appropriation of \$1 million in 1990 and the same amount in 1991 from the state as an item in the governor's budget. If the governor and the 1989 Legislature approve, new programs will be created in currently unserved areas and existing programs will be expanded.

Twenty-four counties do not have Displaced Homemakers' Programs though area residents and agencies have expressed interest in developing programs. Increased funding would enhance the visibility and accessibility of the available programs to eligible participants.

According to Laura Turner, state coordinator for the Displaced Homemakers Program, present funding from marriage license and dissolution filing fees does not meet the identified need. Local community activists can help by reminding state legislators of the many success stories that have resulted from the program. An increase in state funding is an investment in potential productivity and will continue to be instrumental in keeping some of the participants off welfare. In 1988, of the 1800 displaced homemakers enrolled in ten programs, 36% were employed at an average wage of \$5.56 an hour; 14% were in advanced education; 12% were in skills training; 7% completed program objectives of pre-employment preparation; and 3% were active with other employment and training programs.

For ten years, the Displaced Homemakers Program in Minnesota has empowered participating women by helping them attain a positive self-perception. While it is important to recognize the program for a successful ten years, it is equally important that these successes be repeated over and over across the state by ascertaining that legislators are aware of the needs still to be met.

Teddy Geokezas

PROGRAM LISTINGS

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>CONTRACTOR</u>	<u>COUNTIES SERVED</u>
Minnesota Displaced Homemaker Programs Coordinator State Job Training Office 690 American Center Bldg. 150 East Kellogg Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55101 612/296-5325 1-800-652-9747		
Crossroads, DHP Inc. 102 N. Main Street Thief River Falls, MN 55701 218/681-8158	Private Non-Profit Corporation	Roseau, Kittson, Marshall, Polk, Red Lake, Pennington, & Norman
Lives in Transition 702 Third Avenue S. Virginia, MN 55792 218/749-2912 1-800-662-5711	Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA)	Koochiching, Itasca, St. Louis, Aitkin, Lake, Cook, & Carlton
New Directions P.O. Box L New York Mills, MN 56567 218/385-2900	Otter Tail- Wadena Community Action Agency (CAC)	Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, Wilkin, & Mahnomen
META 5 Displaced Homemakers Program College Drive and SW Fourth St. Brainerd, MN 56401 218/828-2538	Brainerd Community College	Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd & Wadena
W.I.N.G.S. 728 S. Benton Drive Sauk Rapids, MN 56379 612/251-1612	Tri-County Action Programs, Inc.	Benton, Stearns, Sherburne, & Wright,
Pathfinders Displaced Homemakers Program 215 Atlantic Avenue Morris, MN 56267 612/589-2556 1-800-223-1239	W. Central MN Community Action Agency (CAA)	Douglas, Grant, Pope Stevens, Traverse, Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac Qui Parle, Swift, & Yellow Medicine
MAINSTAY, Inc. 308 North Third Street Marshall, MN 56258 507/537-1546	Private Non-Profit Corporation	Redwood, Lyon, Lincoln Pipestone, Murray, Cottonwood, Jackson, Nobles, & Rock

Life-Work Planning Center
Nichols Office Center
410 Jackson Street
Mankato, MN 56001
507/345-1577

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Corporation

Sibley, LeSueur, Blue
Earth, Brown, Nicollet,
Watonwan, Waseca,
Martin, & Faribault

Project SOAR of Northeastern
Minnesota
205 West Second St., Suite 101
Duluth, MN 55802
218/722-3126

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Duluth and surrounding
communities

New Careers/Working Opportunities
for Women
Colonial Office Park
2700 University Ave., Suite 120
St. Paul, MN 55114
612/647-9961

Working
Opportunities
for Women

Anoka, Carver, Scott
Dakota, Ramsey,
Hennepin, & Washington