



Janice R. Black Get Involved.



Everyone Benefits.

By Mikell Worley

The common threads of compassion, caring, and a sincere desire to improve the lives of others are interwoven throughout both the paid and volunteer work in Janice Black's life. Janice R. Black is the president and CEO of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC), formerly known as The Greater Harrisburg Foundation. Her personal mission complements that of the Foundation's, which aims to preserve and increase resources for future generations by encouraging "philanthropy and enhancing the quality of life in the community through accumulating, managing, and disbursing" financial assets.

Janice was born in Canton, Ohio, but her family moved to the Hershey area when she was two years old. "We lived in Hummelstown, but attended school in Hershey. In my senior year, Lower Dauphin High School was built on Hershey property next to my home. [However] due to the fact that my home was in the Hershey area, I was sent by bus to attend school in Hershey."

Black graduated from Hershey High School and moved to Hagerstown, Maryland, where she and her family lived for 13 years. In 1981, she moved to the Washington, D.C., area and returned to school to study for a nursing degree at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. A back injury in 1967 forced Janice to attend college while wearing a neck and back brace. She finished her degree in 18 months.

"A two-year program?" I asked. "A four-year program," she answered matter-of-factly. She was able to test out of two years of courses.

She graduated with a bachelor of science degree in nursing, and in 1987 earned a certification in psychiatric nursing from the American Nurses Association. "I became interested in psychiatry because I enjoyed talking to my patients and learning about their history. I recognized a correlation between a person's mental state and their physical health. At the time, there had been very little research on the impact between the two, but further studies have shown that I was on the right track in my thinking." Understanding the relationship between physical and mental health provides Janice with a broader vision of her patients and more avenues for solutions.

The dual attributes of focus and determination have enabled her to achieve impressive results very quickly, even in the face of physical impairment. While working at Washington County Hospital in Hagerstown, Maryland, Janice re-injured her back while helping a patient. She was told she would never practice nursing again because the injury was so severe. Janice didn't give up, and not long after, she took a job as a primary nurse at Georgetown University Hospital at a surgical, intensive step-down care unit, where patients receive pre- and post-operative care. She next worked as a nurse leader at at Philhaven Hospital in Mt. Gretna, Pennsylvania.

Then in 1987, Janice was hired as director of nursing at Edgewater Psychiatric Hospital in Harrisburg. Just two years later she was promoted to executive director. Yet another job offer came in 1992, when Northwestern Corporation, the umbrella agency overseeing Edgewater, hired her to create a development plan for community mental health and mental retardation services across Pennsylvania. Initially there were only seven counties enrolled in the community mental health and mental retardation program, but after only 18 months at the helm, Black had established accounts with 25 additional counties.

Janice Black was developing a reputation for achieving results. As a result an unexpected opportunity arose in 1994 when Conrad Siegel asked her to consider a job with the Greater Harrisburg Foundation, now called The Foundation for Enhancing Communities. Not surprisingly, Janice once again exceeded expectations. She took on the challenge, and through her efforts the foundation's assets went from 5.3 million dollars in 1994 to an excess of 54 million dollars. Also, under Black's leadership in 2010 the number of projects throughout Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, Franklin, and Lebanon Counties grew to number more than 60 and includes the AIDES Community Alliance Fund, The Bethesda Mission Fund, and The Mental Health Association Fund.

"Flexibility has been a key to my success," reflects Janice. "My goal was to be a nurse but

I was open to other opportunities, such as a career move when Conrad Siegel suggested a job at the Foundation.”

As for her volunteer work, Janice considers it a “privilege to serve the community,” and it shows. In 1997, she was one of ten delegates chosen to represent Harrisburg in the National President’s Summit for America’s Future in Philadelphia, under the leadership of General

Colin Powell and five former presidents. She has served as a member of the Rotary Club of Harrisburg #23 for more than 15 years and as the Past District Governor for Rotary District 7390 for 2006-2007. She volunteers with the local Girl Scout Council, as well as the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, and sits on several boards, including the board of Elizabethtown College Leadership Council.

One of the most significant characteristics of a strong leader is the ability to identify talents and expertise in others. When Janice hired Rosemary Browne, Janice recognized something special in the new employee. Janice brought Rosemary on board as the program officer for TFEC in 2002. Rosemary recalls, “Janice was involved with the creation of the Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness (CACH) and I was working as the director of Grants Management for the Dauphin County Board of Commissioners. She respected my work and asked me to consider the position of program officer. It’s hard to say ‘no’ to Janice!”

In 2005, Rosemary was promoted to her current position as director of Programs and Community Investment for the Foundation. She is responsible for the distribution of donor funds from the TFEC’s discretionary grant program.

This program covers six regional foundations that give monies to non-profit organizations in the Foundation’s five-county service area.

Rosemary speaks passionately about her work with the TFEC and holds two programs in particular close to her heart—the AIDS Fund of South Central Pennsylvania and the Women’s Fund. “The mission of the AIDS Fund is to raise, leverage, and collaboratively allocate funds for programs that support HIV/AIDS prevention, education, advocacy, and the direct treatment of the disease in Central Pennsylvania.” Rosemary elaborates, “We are the only dedicated funder of organizations that provide HIV/AIDS services in the region, and we have invested more than 1.5 million dollars in the last ten years.”

The mission of the Women’s Fund is to broaden the awareness and response to issues affecting women and girls through the power of collective philanthropy in South Central Pennsylvania. The Women’s Fund gives grants to programs that focus on economic self-sufficiency and health and education for women and girls. “Women are natural philanthropists,” notes Rosemary. “Through the Women’s Fund we educate donors and the community about how women of all socio-economic status can realize the value they have in the fabric of their community.”

Whether through volunteering or philanthropic giving, Janice and Rosemary encourage everyone to consider the benefits that come through helping others. “Give back to your community,” urges Janice. “We all have strengths to build on. We can all contribute. Everyone benefits by networking, volunteering, and donating. Get involved. It will give dimension to your life!”

After our interview, I stopped to buy flowers from Mike, a vendor located outside Janice’s office building. He asked if I worked there, and I explained that I had been interviewing Janice Black. “Ah,” he smiled warmly, “She helped my son get a scholarship. She is a great lady.” ❖



Mikell Worley is an artist and writer. She is the founder and president of Mikell’s Treasures. (www.mikellstreasures.com). She is the managing editor and feature interviewer for *Women-CONNECT*. Mikell has illustrated several books. She is an advocate for women and children.