

Gwendolyn L. Young, M.A.

Executive Director of Seed of Hope Foundation

A Passionate, Dedicated, and Wisdom Seeking Woman Who Is Destined To Leave A Positive Impact on the World



Gwendolyn L. Young, is a certified professional coach. She received her Masters of Art Degree in Organizational Leadership from Lewis University and graduated Cum Laude in undergrad from DeVry University. She is also a member of Sigma Beta Delta Business Honor Society.

Gwendolyn currently serves as Executive Director for Seed of Hope Foundation, a community non-profit in the western suburbs of the Chicagoland area. She has over 15 years of business experience in operations and administrative management and serves as curriculum designer and workshop facilitator for Hope Center workshops.

Gwendolyn is also increasingly in-demand as a published author, workshop facilitator and mentor. In addition to designing and facilitating the organization's workshop curriculum, she also co-authored, with her daughter, Jacquelynne, a book entitled "**20 Tips to Building a Strong Mother/Daughter Bond.**" Gwendolyn is a regular presenter at Proviso West High School's Beyond Beautiful Conference, which services nearly 100 young women each year. In 2012 she received the **Elizabeth Tipton Girls Mentoring Award** for her work in the community by Passages Alternative Living, Inc. and was one of twenty emerging leaders in the United States selected as the recipient of the **2012 Judith O'Connor Scholar Award for Emerging Nonprofit Leaders** by BoardSource. Most recently, Gwendolyn was selected as a Stevie Awards preliminary round judge for Women in Business and honored as one of 2013's "Influential Women in Business," by the Daily Herald Business Ledger in partnership with the National Association of Women Business Owners — Chicago Chapter and the Women's Innovation Network.

Gwendolyn further serves her community as she joined the Executive Alumni Board of Directors for Lewis University, serves as chair of Jacqueline Barnes Ministries, and serves as advisory board member to several smaller nonprofits to share her expertise and assist these organizations with their growth strategy and governance challenges.

Despite the economic challenges, lack of government funding, and managing an all volunteer base organization, Gwendolyn has leveraged her more than 15 years of business experience in operations and administrative management to help grow Seed of Hope into one of the most effective female mentoring organizations in the area. During her seven year tenure as the Executive Director of Seed of Hope Foundation, Gwendolyn has generated over a half-million in individual and in-kind donations and landed numerous corporate and institutional sponsorships, which range the gamut—from Macy's and Wendy's to Lewis University's Service Learning Division and United Insurance.

She has increased both the donor and volunteer base 100% since 2009 and has effectively developed a strong board of directors. She has also led Seed of Hope Foundation in achieving the Top Rated Non-Profit Designation for several years in a row from GreatNonProfits.Org and a Gold Level Designation from GuideStar.

In the midst of these endeavors, Gwendolyn found herself physically challenged and was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus and Fibromyalgia. Despite these hurdles, she found time to provide more than 1,500 hours of hope and mentoring service to young women in her community (two of whom have went on to found their own online fashion boutique).

Her most important accomplishment to date includes being married to her love James A. Young of 20 years and a devoted mom of three young adult children. She is committed to excellence and has a strong passion for professionally developing young women. In her pastime, Gwendolyn enjoys reading and the company of good friends.