



Louise Bruderle
Editor and Publisher

just some thoughts

This Month: Ashley Brown



Ashley Brown
Photo by Evelyn England

It's a case of *déjà vu* with Ashley Brown as our WCW this month. Ashley has been the Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center of Manatee for 13 years. This past summer, the Women's Resource Centers in Sarasota and Manatee agreed to join forces and they finalized it in November. But back to that *déjà vu* for a moment.

WCW began in the late 1980s and one of the first allies we reached out to was the Women's Resource Center of Sarasota. **Karin Gustafson** was the Executive Director and they operated out of cramped

space in a strip mall on Ringling Blvd just east of where the Richard's store now sits.

WCW followed the Sarasota WRC as they were facing serious budget cuts from the state that might have shuttered their displaced homemaker program. WCW printed a petition to legislators to keep the funding in the paper and we received a hefty response (via traditional mail). We then took them over to then Sen. Bob Johnson's office.

While we can't take credit for the fact that the funding was restored, we sure did feel like empowered women in that we took action. The moment was perfect for a women's organization and a newly established women's newspaper to forge a partnership that became a relationship now at almost 30 years!

Over the years the WRC Sarasota has always been there, operating out of the beautiful Carl Abbott designed building just south of their earlier humble beginnings. Over the past near three decades I've been acquainted with many of their Executive Directors including **Margaret Boyd, Sheila Malloy, Jan Zarro** (to name the ones I can remember – apologies to the ones I forgot) and most recently, **Valerie Goddard**.



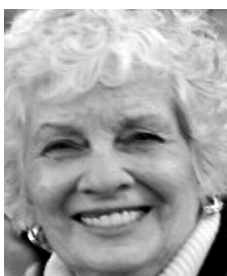
Margaret Boyd



Jan Zarro



Valerie Goddard



Jan Entwistle

As for the WRC in Manatee County, their founder, **Jan Entwistle**, passed away this past October. According to the Bradenton Herald: "Entwistle started the center in her Bradenton living room in 1990. Twenty-six years later, it had grown to where more than 250 women were coming monthly to its location at 1926 Manatee Ave. W."

Through the WRC in Manatee I met their first Executive Director **Karen Carpenter** back in 1994 when they opened their doors. Karen has since then been one of my dearest friends (she's now on the School Board in Manatee County – a true servant for kids and women for sure). I can remember how that place was always hopping with women coming in and all kinds of classes going on. Mona Upp followed Karen as ED. I may be off, but I believe after Mona that brings us full circle and back to our WCW this month, Ashley Brown.



Karen Carpenter

Women's centers will always be needed as long as there is inequity in income and job opportunities; as long as there is domestic violence; as long as there is sexual violence, homelessness, childcare issues, divorce and widowhood. In our area, 56,000 women live below the poverty line.

Women's centers offer job counseling and training (also retraining), legal services, college scholarships, support groups, educational opportunities and referrals. They serve to empower and encourage women.

I'm intrigued by this union and hope it will bring exciting new programs and services to women in our community. Perhaps like you, I need to know more and hope to see it all in action very soon.

Comings and Goings

The New Year has brought change already...

■ **Leslie Loveless**, M.Ed., LMHC, Executive Director of the **Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness**, is retiring at the end of March.

"I believe that I have greatly strengthened the organization and provided solid leadership to members of the Continuum of Care. The organization is financially sound, grant revenues to the Partnership and service providers have been maximized, and private donations have increased. As a result, people experiencing homelessness in our community have more opportunity."

■ **Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida CEO, Sue Stewart**, has announced that she will step down from her position effective March 31, 2017. Stewart has led the \$3.5-million-dollar girl leadership development organization for the past seven years and will be pursuing new projects and opportunities in the not-for-profit and healthcare sectors.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to advocate for the voice of girls and women in southwest Florida and to lead an organization that lives and breathes its mission and values every day," stated Stewart. "I can say with confidence that 100% of all Girl Scouts are making the world a better place."

Rae Dowling, Board President. "Sue has increased the visibility of Girl Scouting, helped us acquire new friends and donor support, and challenged us to move 'at the speed of girl.' She led us through critical times where a steady hand was needed. She has a great team in place to continue the vision of the council. We will miss her."

■ **Jewish Family Services The Jewish Family and Children's Service of the Suncoast, Inc.** (JFCS-Cares.org), the multi-county premier multi-function social service nonprofit, has selected **Heidi Brown** as its new CEO.

Brown, formerly the CEO of Aviva (previously Kobernick-Anchin-Benderson), has a history in the social and human services fields. Beginning on Feb. 1, 2017, Brown will lead a team of 86 full-time and 27 part-time staff members, 25 contractors and 473 volunteers at Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS). In September 2016, the organization announced former CEO Rose Chapman's transition to CEO emerita, a role specifically created for her. She will continue to work with the JFCS board to ensure the organization's fiscal sustainability and security moving forward.



Heidi Brown

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We welcome your thoughts and comments on this column and on other columns and features in this issue. You can reach us at WCWNewspaper@aol.com. We're on the web at www.WestCoastWoman.com.