



Empowering Women Since 1997

### **WHF FOUNDATION PILOT PROGRAM WITH GOOD SHEPHERD HOUSING**

Last fall, the WHF Foundation expanded its successful Change purse program to female residents of Good Shepherd Housing in Alexandria, Virginia. The Change purse program is designed to assist individuals in creating a healthy consciousness around money that supports and expands their lives. For six Wednesday evenings in October and November a team of WHF volunteers facilitated lively discussions with a group of 8 women, each with their own challenges and determination to make positive changes in their financial lives.

For this inaugural program, WHF volunteers Jennifer Aguilar, Mary Martha Fortney, Sharon Grabner, and Bobbi Montoya rotated to facilitate Change purse sessions, so the participants saw familiar faces week-to-week. As the weeks progressed, both the participants and the volunteers learned from each other, supported each other and celebrated successes. Congratulations to the Change purse graduates of Good Shepherd Housing! Additional classes will be scheduled in Spring 2018.

Pictured below are the WHF volunteers and Good Shepherd graduates during the graduation ceremony.





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## **IMPORTANT DETAILS OF THE CHANGEPURSE PROGRAM:**

**WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS:** Approximately 6-9 residents of Good Shepherd Housing. Of this group, the typical client is an African-American woman (89%) between the ages of 32 and 53. She has at least a high school diploma and is, most likely, employed. Within this group, most, if not all, are female head households and are single parents. These women are living paycheck to paycheck having trouble making ends meet for their families. Some of them will never be able to afford market-rate rent, but are working hard to provide for their families, give their children a future, and pay back past debts. A few of the women have some government income support, but the majority has at least 1, if not two jobs.

**CHANGEPURSE PARTICIPANT CRITERIA:** Good Shepherd Housing has chosen female residents to participate in the Change purse program. This course is intended for residents who have high expenses that strain their limited incomes and who can benefit from one-on-one financial coaching and education. This course is tailored to residents who are unbanked, “living paycheck to paycheck,” and residents who do not fully understand different values of money. The goal of the Change purse program is to change our resident’s negative spending habits, encourage them to treat money as value, and help them to understand the importance of creating a “financial cushion.”

**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CHANGEPURSE:** Contact WHF Foundation President Mary Martha Fortney, [mmfortney@verizon.net](mailto:mmfortney@verizon.net) or call 703-507-4088 for more information about Change purse programs at Good Shepherd Housing, Calvary Women's Services (DC) and Interfaith Works (Maryland).