

New ministry provides hope during tough economic times

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Rev. Larnzy Carpenter said, “You can’t change where you are going until you change what you know.”

As one of the volunteers for Christian Women’s Job Corp, Carpenter describes the ministry process as taking them by the hand and walking the participants through to the next stage of their lives.

“It is about economic development, education, building self-esteem and true independent living, all centered around Christ,” Carpenter said.

Amanda Thornton, director of the Christian Women’s Job Corp, said the program is structured to offer free job training that includes computer and life skills classes, mentoring and, most importantly, a Bible study for women with a financial need to work.

“The goal of this ministry is not to offer a temporary quick fix for women in need, but rather to help them find stability through Jesus Christ,” Thornton said. “As poverty and unemployment rates in this area continue to increase, church members are looking for ways to offer hope to a hurting community.”

Organizers describe it as a “hand up, not a hand out.”

Bro. Dan Robertson, Associational Missions director for the Golden Triangle Baptist Association, said, “It really is a hand up for those less fortunate.”

The first program for Christian Women’s Job Corp held last spring, had 45 applicants and 32 graduates of the program which provides a “Christian context in which women are equipped for life and employment; and a missions context in which women help women.”

Robertson said the associational program based in Starkville is an opportunity to provide a helping hand to women. He said the program provides computer skills, life and job skills and provides exposure to people in the Golden Triangle area who may be able to help participants find a job.

Rev. Chip Stevens of First Baptist Church of Starkville said the church feels blessed to partner with the Golden Triangle Baptist Association in this ministry.

“The reason that this ministry is so important is that it is designed to not just help women with job skills, and they do a great job with that, but in knowing that God loves them and has a wonderful plan for them,” Stevens said. “This ministry is truly life-changing and not just a quick-fix.”

Stevens said the family of FBC Starkville has been wonderfully supportive of this ministry.

“We have many people who volunteer by teaching, mentoring, providing food, praying, and many other things,” Stevens said. “We really believe that God sent Amanda Thornton here to help launch this ministry and are just glad to be a part.”

The program is offered to interested women in Clay, Lowndes and Oktibbeha counties. As with most CWJC sites, the Golden Triangle program offers classes for about eight to ten weeks, twice a year.

As part of the training, participants will receive computer training, including Word, Excel, Internet and basic office systems. Participants also learn to apply for jobs online.

Interview and resume training is also a big part of the eight- to 10-week course, as well as other life skills, including conflict resolution, investing, how to find balance in their lives, communication and parenting.

“Everything is Bible-based,” Thornton said. “We want to show participants how to be independent, but dependent on God. But this is not just a ‘Christian’ thing, it is an ‘everybody’ thing.”

Thornton said in working for Christian Women’s Job Corp for many years, she has seen this program encourage women to pursue college degrees, find new jobs, be promoted and start their own businesses.

As CWJC prepares to launch their fall program, Thornton said their greatest need currently is for mentors. Special programs for mentors will be held July 16 and Aug. 20.

Other classroom supply needs include Bibles, three-hole notebooks and paper, calculators, pens, pencils, highlighters, sharpeners, notebook dividers, pencil pockets, mealtime paper goods, printer paper, business-appropriate clothing and computers.

For more information about CWJC, contact Amanda Thornton at amandapsych81@hotmail.com or stop by the FBC-Starkville office to obtain registration forms.