

# The Red Shoes Circle

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The Red Shoes  
A CENTER FOR PERSONAL & SPIRITUAL GROWTH

2012 NEWSLETTER



Founded in 1999, The Red Shoes is an important source of healing and harmony in our community.

We are a non-profit center offering opportunities for spiritual enrichment and personal growth. Our warm, open community broadens understanding and encourages self-discovery.

Our unique offerings include:

- Inspiring speakers from around the world
- In-depth studies of spirituality and faith
- Thought-provoking book and film studies
- Weekly meditation and daily yoga

Our programs open hearts and minds that transform the world.



## Help Us Make Miracles *Terry Griffey's Story*

*"Through the voices in this wonderful chorus of women, I've recaptured the best of me and I'm creating an even better me. My personal thanks to all who support The Red Shoes and make miracles like mine possible."*

Homelessness and hopelessness, I've known both. My faith had been strong, but after 16 years of "the dark night" and struggling with crippling depression, I abandoned God and hope. Little did I know, I was bound for a spiritual journey and a head-on collision with a miracle.

A little over a year ago, divine grace landed me in a group home across the street from The Red Shoes, ending my homelessness. When I walked through the door of The Red Shoes for the first time, I walked through a door that would change my life.

The sincere, warm and loving welcome made me feel I was the most important part of The Red Shoes. It was love at first sight. As I read the summer program brochure filled with inspirational and therapeutic activities, I felt a true spark of interest ignite in me. When I was told "not to let money stop me from attending programs I felt were beneficial -- that I was always welcome," I was overwhelmed. It was obvious that The Red Shoes was a much needed safe haven filled with positive energy and healing light.

**Cherie donates a portion of the sale of each labyrinth pillow to The Red Shoes.**



## The Circle of Healing Grows *One Stitch at a Time*

As she carefully makes each stitch, Cherie Schofeld continues her own healing journey.

"It has been eighteen years since I first walked a labyrinth. I walked alone, not even knowing what it was, just seeing the path inside Grace Cathedral. I was three years into my battle with breast cancer. I had two small children, a mother losing her own battle with ovarian cancer and a husband whose job was in jeopardy. But while walking the labyrinth that day, I felt a sense of peace, a sense that everything was going to be as it should.

After that profound walk, I began to embroider finger-labyrinth designs onto pillows to give to others facing difficult challenges.

I hope the pillows provide a way for others to experience the peace of the labyrinth and receive my prayers for their renewal and healing." **Cherie asked The Red Shoes to sell her pillows and help spread the healing.** "The process of creation gives me that same sense of peace I experienced in Grace Cathedral; with every stitch, I am taking another step towards wholeness. Now, my mother is gone, my children are grown and I am a twenty-one year survivor. I still have a job to do: My pillows enable me to continue sharing the healing journey with others. To The Red Shoes and all who have purchased a pillow, you have helped me to continue passing it forward.

**We need your support to help Cherie further her own recovery and her mission to help others experience a sense of peace.**



## The Red Shoes: Stepping Out in the Community

The Red Shoes is a valuable resource to these diverse groups in Baton Rouge. Your donation enables us to provide information and services in a variety of ways.

Cancer Services of GBR

Baton Rouge Earth Day

Pennington Wellness Day for Women

Woman's Hospital: Women Living with Cancer

Bishop Ott Sweet Dreams Shelter

Sexual Trauma & Response Center

The GBR Food Bank

Southern University

The Poverty Forum -  
Interfaith Federation of GBR

Baton Rouge Pride Fest



### Did you know?

- ☞ In 2012, we offered over 140 programs.
- ☞ Over 5,100 people benefitted from our programs in 2012.
- ☞ Our low fees keep our programs inclusive, but do not cover our operating expenses and facilitator fees.
- ☞ Your gifts help us provide uplifting and affordable programming.
- ☞ Thanks to your donations, program scholarships are always available.

## Woman to Woman: Lifting Loans - Steps to Success

*We always hear the same story: It is hard for a woman to feel comfortable in the typically male-dominated world of entrepreneur training and financial assistance.*

In 2008, Nichelle Bell was looking for a way to make a change in her career and open her own insurance company, but she had serious challenges to contend with. She did not have sufficient startup funds and she is the mother of a child with sickle-cell anemia. Medical needs often interrupted her work. When she applied for a **micro-loan through our Lifting Loans program**, we believed in her ability and commitment. With a Lifting Loan, Nichelle established Bell Insurance. At times she was unable to work due to her son's illness, but her business grew steadily. In 2011, she successfully paid off her loan and added in a donation for Lifting Loans.

Four years later, Nichelle came to us ready to grow again with a new partner, Dwanda Gage. They received a second Lifting Loan for a larger endeavor: People's Choice Insurance Agency. Nichelle and Dwanda realize that a business partnership provides a strong support system and their complementary skills will make the business more successful.

***When you support The Red Shoes,  
you support financial empowerment  
for women like Nichelle and Dwanda.***

People's Choice Insurance Agency is growing and Nichelle and Dwanda love having the opportunity to help others: "Many people don't understand insurance, and overpay or are underinsured." The second micro-loan provided the cash to transition into a larger, more convenient office space on North Foster Drive with the resources they need to be a #1 insurance agency.



## Inspiring Women to Do It Right Entrepreneurial Education

Joyce James, program director for Urban Restoration Enhancement Corporation, is passionate about women in business.



With both feet planted firmly on the ground, Joyce loves the challenge of turning a dream of a business into a business plan rooted in the reality of a financial structure that can lead to success.

***You make a difference.  
Your dollars help us provide  
education that is the  
foundation to business success.***

In collaboration with The Red Shoes and as part of her MBA program studies, Joyce has developed an ongoing curriculum for The Red Shoes' Lifting Loans program that will help women understand personal and business finances in order to make smart choices and prepare for meeting with a lender.

***We are able to offer these classes at  
affordable costs due to your support.***

Would you like to be a mentor for a Lifting Loans recipient?

Mentors are an important part of our program, attending interviews and offering in-person and phone support to a woman who has received a loan. If you would like to help a woman achieve financial independence, contact us: 338-1170 or [wendy@theredshoes.org](mailto:wendy@theredshoes.org).

**A Venue for Visionary Programs  
Your support at work!**

**Eye-opening Drama**

This year we hosted two powerful script readings of plays by provocative, award winning playwright, Caridad Svich. Both, carrying important social messages, *The Way of Water* focused on the **BP oil spill** and *Spark*, poignantly exposed the **plight of women veterans**. The play readings were presented by Off the Hyphen Theatre Productions in conjunction with NoPassport Theatre.



**Women's Wisdom Shared**  
MorningDove Verret, (above) an elder of the Houma nation, came to share her deep connection with indigenous spirituality. Her presence was facilitated by Under The Willow Tree, (above, founder, Tanya Wyandon) a new non-profit created to **support Native Medicinal Women**.



**Welcoming Newcomers**  
In 2012, the **Women's Leadership Connection** brought together 10 amazing women new to Baton Rouge for a series of informative networking dinners. We will host the 3rd annual **WLC**, in partnership with **AARP** and **LANO**, beginning January 16. To register: 338-1170 or [info@theredshoes.org](mailto:info@theredshoes.org).

**Express Yourself:  
Programs that Transform - Experiences You Won't Find Anywhere Else!**

“Open Mic Poetry Night provides a tranquil environment, a fellowship of new friends, and a networking opportunity for growth and empowerment. Giving voice to my poetry, I feel welcomed by a warm room of listeners. I value the spirit of The Red Shoes so highly because of the 'women's empowerment' aspect. You feel it from the moment you visit - And you look forward, eagerly, to your return. It is a place where *'you receive, the moment you give.'*”  
*Diamond Ryan, Open Mic poet*

“I was at a point in my healing when I needed to learn more about myself and Sandee taught about the Enneagram and personality types with such a compassionate presence that my mind and heart opened without judgment. Late in the session I inquired if she could confirm the personality type I had seen in myself; she quietly said, 'I think you are on to something.' Her personal comment touched me deeply. Thank you so much, for bringing Sandee to The Red Shoes.”  
*Carolyn Masters, recalls the Enneagram retreat facilitated by Sandee Yarlott*

*Right:* Ronita Johnson, leading our **Rededication Ceremony**, celebrating our 13th year. Breathing new life into our mission, Roberta Guillory, our founder, and others shared personal stories about The Red Shoes. The ceremony concluded with a water ritual symbolizing our souls and spirits joining together, becoming One, as a powerful circle of women.



“Participating in the book study of Sue Monk Kidd’s *Dance of the Dissident Daughter* was a very personal journey for me. In particular, when Sue saw that her grandmother had taken the Matryoshka dolls (the Russian nesting dolls) that Sue had given her, set them out and NAMED each of them, I realized I did not even know my maternal grandmother’s name – nor her mother’s – nor her mother’s. I had a conscious awareness of MY feminine line and suddenly *had* to discover the names of these women from whom I had descended. *These women were people with their own lives and unique names – whose names I could not call.* I can now name seven women in my feminine line – from my granddaughter up through my great-great-grandmother – this discovery was life-changing for me. The experience of calling these women by name in the presence of this group was quite powerful.”

*Mary Jacob, reflecting on a book study led by Roberta Guillory and Joan McCaskill*

**Generous donations make these transformational experiences possible.**



L to R—Maida Owens, Ronita Johnson, a friend, Gerry Stark, Roberta Guillory, Elizabeth “Boo” Thomas.

## The Red Shoes Circle - Your Gift Makes a Difference

Why is your gift so important this year? We want to make sure that we can continue to change the lives of real people like the women mentioned throughout this newsletter. We have shared a few of the many miracles that grow from seeds planted at The Red Shoes. You can see how your gifts have changed lives. Each life we touch - each person who heals a wound, who grows in self acceptance, who is economically empowered, who finds her inner wisdom - brings us one step closer to a world of justice and peace. Each step depends on your support.

Founded as a women's spirituality center, we embrace the "divine feminine," the gentle nature of the Divine that cultivates communication, compassion and collaboration to create a circle of understanding embracing our differences. If you believe *this* vision is an antidote to the violence and polarization affecting our culture, please help us continue to offer programs and invite speakers that foster these ideas. Your dollars create our budget.

In the past year, we have partnered with many outstanding agencies in the community to continue to broaden the work of our unique non-profit organization. Each partnership allows us to address a different need and become a resource for a growing circle of people inclusive of all faiths, cultures, ages and socio-economic groups.

There is more work to be done. Join our **Circle of Giving** and join us in work that will transform individual lives, the community and the world.

*Sandy Patrick, Board President      Wendy Herschman, Executive Director*  
*Roberta Guillory, Founder*

*"I am one of many women, standing with our arms linked together forming a long line that stretches so far in either direction I can see the line gently curving, like the curve of the Earth. We stand at the absolute edge of the Earth as we know it and we are each stepping forward into the void, one step at a time supported by our sisters on either side. With each step, the new Earth appears under our feet."*

Kathe Schaaf, visionary, author, co-founder of Women of Spirit and Faith and delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, shared her wisdom during **Women's Week**. This transformative retreat weekend focused on re-defining leadership guided by a spiritual and feminine perspective.

*We need your help to bring inspiring speakers to Baton Rouge who call us to discover our unique purpose and power.*



## The Red Shoes Circle of Giving

### Taking steps to assure a better tomorrow

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\$25-\$50 Circle of Understanding       \$51-\$100 Circle of Caring  
 \$101-\$200 Circle of Compassion       \$201-\$300 Circle of Change  
 \$301 - \$500 Sustaining Circle       (    ) Open Hearted Circle

Gift ( ) in Memory of, ( ) in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Also acknowledge to this name and address:

( ) Check enclosed    ( ) My pledge: I have set up an automatic monthly transfer from my bank for \$\_\_\_\_\_.

( ) I prefer to put this on my credit card.

Make your donation right now at [www.theredshoes.org](http://www.theredshoes.org) - click "Support" on the left

Or, provide your credit card information and we will process the charge for you:

Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Is this a *one time* or *monthly* credit card auto charge? (circle one)

CC# \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Billing address if different than above: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank You!** May we print your name as a member of our Circle?    Yes    No Thanks