

Women Find Support From Business Group

BY MAUREEN TURNER
STAFF WRITER

Establishing a successful small business is difficult for any budding entrepreneur. But when the hopeful business owner is a woman, the challenges often are compounded. Excluded from traditional business networks and hampered by gender discrimination, women face additional hurdles to success.

"There are a growing number of women business owners and prospective women business owners, and a lot of them haven't had access to information on business development in the community," said Lucy Lewis, interim administrator for the Orange County Commission for Women.

So in November 1992, the Commission for Women and the county Commission for Economic Development established the Business Women Owners Roundtable to address the problem.

The product of a similar county effort of the late 1980s, the roundtable is designed to foster the development of local female owned businesses, Lewis said.

At monthly roundtable meetings, educational programs examine issues of particular importance to businesswomen.

"We try to find out from women business owners what their concerns are and then bring in speakers to address them," Lewis said.

One recent meeting featured a panel of successful local women owners discussing the obstacles faced by women seeking to get their businesses off the ground.

Lewis said other programs had addressed the difficulties women encountered

in establishing credit or obtaining loans, as well as more universal subjects such as marketing strategies or the impact of new taxes on small businesses.

"I think some of the information provided would be relevant to any small business owner," Lewis said. "But we try to give a slant that's important to a women business owner."

The monthly programs also allow participants to network or meet with established "mentors" in the local business community.

Lewis said she had been pleased with the roundtable's success, noting that attendance at functions had grown steadily—a trend she said she hoped would continue.

"We know that there are women's businesses out there that we haven't identified."

The roundtable will organize a showcase of female owned businesses at the Economic Development Commission's annual state-of-the-economy breakfast Nov. 4.

The group also is planning a spring conference that will include a broader range of issues than addressed at the monthly programs, Lewis said.

Support for the roundtable comes from a number of sources in addition to the two county commissions—including the UNC Small Business and Technology Development Center, the Durham Technical Community College Small Business Education Center, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Hillsborough chambers of commerce and the Orange County Women's Center—in the form of speakers, funding and meeting space.

Carrboro Store a Family Affair for Threesome

BY EMMA WILLIAMS
STAFF WRITER



Gloria Harris displays some of the "angel gifts" she sells at Inner Space Gifts in Carrboro. Harris owns the shop with her daughters Kathleen and Sharon.

For most people, retirement means a rest from the world of work. For Gloria Harris, retiring after 42 years as a nurse brought the chance to start a new career.

Harris and her two daughters, Kathleen and Sharon Harris, recently opened Inner Space Gifts. Located in a house at 403 W. Weaver St. in Carrboro, the shop is a quirky blend of unusual products. It is divided into three rooms, and each room is filled with merchandise that reflects one of the Harris women's interests.

Gloria Harris' room is filled with angels of all kinds, such as angels of glass and wood and angels on posters and T-shirts.

The angels are the main reason she could not bring herself to retire, Gloria Harris said. "It seems like they're right on your shoulder, and if you're listening, they'll help you do things, good things," she said.

Her fascination with angels began years ago when she started making ceramic angels. Later, she started collecting angel figurines and reading stories about them.

"I felt like the reason to sell them was to bring them to everybody," she said. "It was just something I needed to do."

Opening the shop also seemed like a natural progression for Kathleen Harris. She became a massage therapist more than a year ago and has been practicing since then. Opening Inner Space means having her own place to give massages.

Kathleen Harris' room sells the tools of trade for massage therapists, including anatomy books and aromatherapy oils. She wanted to sell the products because they were not available locally. Before Inner Space carried them, therapists and students at the Carolina School of Massage Therapy had to order them by mail.

"I thought it would be a really valuable

service to the students there," she said.

None of the women has ever managed a store before, but Kathleen Harris said their strengths and weaknesses complemented each other well. For instance, they all pitched in to accomplish the carpentry, landscaping and painting needed to refurbish the shop.

Sharon Harris boasted that she had the most eclectic resume of the three. "I've done a little bit of everything," she said, ranging from army service to waitressing.

Now she is turning her old hobby of growing and drying herbs into a job. Her room is filled with live plants, dried herbs for cooking, herbal beauty products and other natural curiosities.

Some of the products Inner Space features are not available anywhere in the area, but others are the familiar fare of craft fairs and gift shops.

It's the unusual mix of products that really makes the store stand out, Kathleen Harris said.

Considering that they have advertised only by word-of-mouth, business has been good, she added. "When people are in here, they get a real sense of peacefulness."

Because of its location and setup, the shop looks like someone's home. The Harris add to the relaxed atmosphere by avoiding heavy sales pitches, instead offering customers tea and conversation.

Originally from Myrtle Beach, S.C., Gloria Harris said she and Kathleen and Sharon thought Carrboro was the right environment for their products because many people in the area shared their interest in herbal and spiritual remedies.

"I said, not only do I need to be surrounded by angels, I need to be surrounded by people who are young, because that's what keeps you young," Gloria Harris said. "We really couldn't have found a better spot for the three of us."

County Basic-Skills Program Provides Education, Job-Training

BY JAY TAYLOR
STAFF WRITER

Fighting poverty is a battle that leaders all over the United States are fighting—in Orange County, that problem is the focus of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program.

The program, which was started in 1990, provides education and job training for residents receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children. The skills program, which is run through the Department of Social Services, helps participants earn high-school or equivalency degrees, vocational training and, sometimes, even college educations.

Gwen Price, county social work supervisor, said one of the program's strengths was that it was designed to meet the individual needs of each participant.

"It's an individual plan for each person

who comes into our program," Price said. "For instance, if a person wants to go into nursing or computer programming, they need to go to community college. We help pay for tuition and books."

In order to save money, the program's employees help participants apply for federal aid, such as Pell grants. The county assists individuals in other ways, paying for day care and for transportation.

"We try to remove all the barriers that would keep someone from participating in the program," Price said.

Program Coordinator Carol Laing said providing personal support was vital to the participants.

"When they know they don't have those worries and things to juggle, they can go into a community college program or a skills-training program and complete it, so they can go to work," Laing said.

Each individual is assigned a case worker

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CAROL LAING
Program coordinator for Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program

to help with any problems they might encounter during or after training. These problems range from falling behind in school work to conflicts in the workplace.

"When you have a parent who has been on AFDC for a while go back to work or to school, the children see that and try to copy

that," Laing said.

So far, the program has been a success—Orange County was one of 11 counties in North Carolina to receive the A.J. Fletcher Award in recognition of the program's excellence. Seventy-five counties in the state participate in the program.

Price said she thought the program's graduates had been successful in the workplace although she had little information about it. "That's one of the things we want to do more research on," she said.

Orange County did meet a state goal for the program's graduates—75 percent of those who completed the program stayed off AFDC for one year.

Last year, 43 people completed the program. Fifteen received high-school degrees and three earned post-secondary degrees. Twenty-five completed skills training in areas such as telephone repair, cosmetology and nurses' assistance.

Price attributed much of the program's success to the available resources in Orange County.

The organization works with a variety of local groups, including Planned Parenthood, Child Care Networks and Joint Or-

ange-Chatham Community Action.

EDC Director Ted Abernathy, who once served as the chairman of the basic skills advisory board, said the Department of Social Services invited the EDC in August 1991 to participate in the program to provide on-the-job training. The joint venture is funded by a state grant that runs through May 1994.

"One of the weaknesses we saw was there was no link with employers. We saw that the existing relationships through the EDC might make it easier," he said.

"We're conducting the part of the program that does the on-the-job-training component. We go to employers and develop jobs and place the participant."

This program is designed to help two-parent families in which one parent recently has become unemployed but is prepared to return immediately to work. So far, two participants have been placed in jobs—the EDC plans to place 15 individuals with the grant's funds.

Abernathy said the partnership had worked out well. "We're very pleased. The clients are pleased and so are the employers, which is nice."

FACULTY
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portant and we spend 45 minutes discussing basketball tickets," Ware said.

"It's embarrassing."

Ticket Office Manager Daren Lucas said that he was not sure how the proposed change would affect faculty but that student ticket distribution would not change.

Friday's meeting also included an address by Charles H. Carlton, chairman of the faculty at N.C. State University. Carlton congratulated UNC on its achievements over the last 200 years and proposed that NCSU and UNC work more closely together in the future.

Carlton acknowledged several differences between the two universities and said that UNC had an older, more prestigious reputation, but said "the two institutions have far more in common than we often realize."

He predicted that competition for funds between UNC-system universities would become more intense in the future, and said NCSU and UNC-CH would improve and maintain their quality of education more effectively if they worked together.

"I promise to do all I can to work cooperatively with you in a spirit of good will," Carlton said.

UNC-CH Chancellor Paul Hardin also spoke, thanking faculty for their participation in the Kenan processions and lauding the events of University Day.

Hardin emphasized the success of President Bill Clinton's visit, saying the president was pleased he had made the address.

"From the time he got here until the time he left he knew he was in the right place. I think when he sat on that platform he wondered why there was ever any doubt that he should come."



The Faculty Council congratulated Chancellor PAUL HARDIN for his work on the Bicentennial.

STUDENTS INTERESTED IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Applications for Fall 1994 Admission to the Business Major and the Minor in Business Available beginning October 18th at:

Kenan-Flagler BSBA Program Office (109 Carroll Hall)
General College (1st Floor Steele Bldg.)
minor apps – Arts & Sciences (3rd Floor Steele)

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Campus Calendar

MONDAY

2 p.m. University Career Services will present Job Hunt 101, basic information on how to use the UCS office, for seniors and graduate students in 210 Hanes Hall.

4 p.m. The Association of Business Students will sponsor fall fest in Umstead Park for all business students and proposed business majors. Register at the table in front of Carroll Hall.

University Career Services will sponsor a career panel on life after liberal arts in 210 Hanes Hall.

7 p.m. TAr Heel Recycling Program will meet in the Campus Y.

University Career Services will sponsor a presentation by Walt Disney World in 209 Hanes Hall.

The Curriculum in Peace, War and Defense will sponsor a forum on the U.S. and Somali quagmire with professors Julius Nyang'oro, Baffour Agyeman-Ouah and Richard Kohn in the Toy Lounge of Dey Hall.

8 p.m. The School of Journalism and Mass Communication will present the Reed Sarratt Distinguished Lecture featuring Kurt Luedke.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Elections Board will have petitions available for anyone interested in representing Dist. 19 on Student Congress. Applications may be picked up outside the Elections Board Office in Suite C of the Student Union and are due at 5 p.m. today.

Campus Y Volunteer Action Committee will accept applications for VAC co-chairman. Applications are available in the Campus Y office and are due at noon today.

The Campus Y Human Rights Committee would like committees interested in participating in Human Rights Week to contact Kiran Pohurit (914-5358) or come to the weekly Campus Y meetings at 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays.

University Career Services is sponsoring the Job Hunters' Network, meeting Wednesdays in 307 Hanes Hall, to talk about the job search.

The Volunteer Action Committee will meet at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Campus Y lounge.

CUAB will present Dillon Fence and Juliana Hatfield at 8 p.m. Tuesday in Memorial Hall. Tickets are available at the Union Box Office.

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