



# Mission Alabama

## CWJC of Madison County

### Christian Women's Job Corps

### Women Helping Women

By Janet Erwin

Stop in at First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Hillsboro Heights Baptist Church, and Union Hill Primitive Baptist Church in Madison County during the week and you will find a Christian Women's Job Corps® (CWJC®) group meeting.

CWJC, a ministry of WMU, exists to give women in need hope for their future by equipping them for life and employment doing so in a Christian context. It is an attempt to move them from dependency to self-sufficiency by giving them a hand up rather than a handout. Many programs exist to help women prepare for the job market but what sets CWJC apart are Bible study and its mentoring program.

Elaine Dickson, current Executive Director for Christian Women's Job Corps of Madison County, describes the planning for the ministry as beginning in 1997 when Anne Stone and several other women heard about the national CWJC training and attended. Not consulting previously with one another about CWJC, the women discovered each other's interest after they got to the training. By the fall of 1998 Madison County CWJC was birthed with nine students at the first site.

This CWJC is now home to three sites with 35 students enrolled in classes with approximately 45 more students currently going through the mentoring phase. Participants spend a total of nine months going through the program. This includes classroom instruction and the mentoring phase that continues after the instruction.

Linda Henry, CWJC/CMJC Coordinator for Alabama WMU says, "I have watched CWJC of Madison County grow from one site to three sites each unique because of the women it serves. I have attended events hosted by the sites and sat with tears in my eyes listening to the stories of restored lives! I am blessed to be a part of CWJC in Alabama."

Alabama has ten active CWJC sites. Linda prays for a site in every Association in the state. Find a site in your area at [www.alabamawmu.org/cwjc](http://www.alabamawmu.org/cwjc).

### Job Training

A woman coming to a CWJC site will find free job readiness core courses at all three of the sites: Bible study, basic computer skills in Microsoft Office, communication skills, money management, and a career class. GED tutoring is offered to those who need it. For students already possessing a GED or high school diploma a volunteer internship program exists.



A variety of companies from doctor's offices to county tax offices and day care businesses join in the internship program. When CWJC participants express an interest in learning a skill, they are paired with a business to obtain experience in this field as an unpaid intern. For some this may be their first job experience to put on a resume.

### Jessie's Story

When Jessie\*, a domestic violence victim, walked through the doors of the CWJC of Madison County she was at her wit's end. Emotionally beaten to a pulp and homeless, Jessie entered as both an intern and as a student. This was a far cry from the average American life she and her children knew before her decision to escape her violent marriage.

Jessie found the CWJC ministry to be phenomenal. There she received daily affirmation and her self esteem improved. Being a Christ follower she struggled with the fact that she had walked away from her abusive marriage. However, she found women who offered gentle comfort, prayer support, and pertinent Scriptures that helped her begin the process of healing. She was paired with a mentor who, too, had been a domestic violence victim. Slowly Jessie began to start her life over.

Jessie has traded a bed at the local shelter for an apartment she shares with her children. She furnished it partially with the donations of the CWJC workers. She has re-entered the work force and now finds herself in a position of helping others. God provided just what she needed—CWJC—at just the right time.

### **Help Wanted**

Mentors head the list of volunteers Dickson is seeking for her CWJC sites. Many CWJC coordinators often find it hard to discover women willing to invest themselves as mentors to CWJC participants. Some women just don't look on themselves as wise enough to be a mentor. However, her Madison County CWJC has a mentor coordinator who takes mentors through mentor training, conducts mid-quarter meetings, and provides ongoing support. She is looking for committed Christian women willing to invest their lives to walk alongside other women who need encouragement and a stable Christian witness.

When asked what kinds of volunteers are needed, Dickson quickly lists her top three: Mentors, Bible study teachers, and computer teacher/helpers or extra assistants. You can find more detailed information about CWJC/CMJC needs at [www.alabamawmu.org/cwjc](http://www.alabamawmu.org/cwjc).

Anyone wanting to volunteer with this CWJC site can communicate with Kristin Wilkerson at [kwilderson@cwjc.net](mailto:kwilderson@cwjc.net).

### **Prayer Partnership**

Dickson invites us to join her in praying for:

- Participants who don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ to have open hearts to learn more about Him through the CWJC program.
- Participants to have the ability to further their education.
- God to send the mentors the students need.
- Companies to partner with participants by offering volunteer internship programs.

Dickson dreams big for Madison County CWJC. She would love to see her students' transition seamlessly into the job market. She longs to partner with companies willing to employ her graduates upon their completion of the CWJC program. She wants to see women with a reason for living walk out of CWJC.

Do you see yourself, or a group from your church, as a dream come true for Dickson or a CWJC near you?

\*Name changed

Janet Erwin has led the Bible study once at a CWJC site and found it an absolute joy.

***CWJC of Madison  
County celebrates  
their 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary***

CWJC of Madison County celebrates their 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Their Circles Fundraiser will be Monday, November 8, 2011 at the North Hall of the Von Braun Center at noon. Sherri Burgess, a local women's speaker and wife of Rick Burgess, of the Rick and Bubba Radio Morning Show is the featured speaker. Reservations are \$40.00. To inquire about reservations, please call Elaine Dickson at 256-428-9435.