

# New Bellevue Business and Professional Women's Group Makes a Difference in the Lives of Working Women

By day, Christine Addison works on the Eastside as a security consultant for Sonitrol Pacific, but in her spare time, she's on a mission to rebuild the Bellevue chapter of the Business and Professional Women's organization (BPW). Addison's first step was to recruit board members passionate about making a difference in the lives. Next on her list? Pull her board together in a conference room donated by the Village Bellevue to map out their 2009 objectives. The result? The group's first meeting is set for February 18, 2009, at The Crab Pot Restaurant in Bellevue, WA. Jennifer Malocha, founder of Wuhoo Fitness in Bellevue, WA, will keynote the event and explain how to "improve your bottom line" in work and life. Up to 100 professional men and women are expected and the meeting runs from 11:15a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Pre-purchased tickets are \$15.00 for members and \$25.00 for non-members or \$25.00/\$35.00 at the door.

"From seasoned executives looking to mentor others, to new professionals looking for the support and encouragement of a strong network, there's no limit to who would benefit from a membership in this organization," said Christine Addison, President of the Bellevue Business and Professional Women's chapter. "We're a dynamic group to network with because we're all about empowering women to grow personally, professionally and politically."

**A Trailblazing History:** Although the Eastside group is new, BPW was founded over 90 years ago and is grounded by a deep history of political advocacy and social change. In an effort to prepare for World War I, the U.S. Government recognized the need to identify American women's available skills and experience. A Women's War Council was established by the War Department to organize the resources of professional women. Financed through a federal grant, The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs was founded on July 15, 1919. Over the years, three major issues shaped the BPW's legislative agenda: elimination of sex discrimination in employment, the principle of equal pay, and the need for a comprehensive equal rights amendment.

Members making a difference: Today, the group is a multi-generational, nonpartisan membership organization working to achieve equity for all women in the workplace through advocacy, education, and information. As a national, grassroots organization, BPW has 20,000 members, spread out through 1,300 local organizations across 54 states and U.S. territories. Here's a closer look at the group's membership demographics:

- 89 percent are women working in business
- 45 percent are professionals in the fields of law, medicine, government, finance, education, and engineering
- 25 percent are CEOs, executives and managers
- 45 percent are small business owners
- 30 percent have a graduate or post graduate degree

Signature conferences, events and programs: BPW's commitment to America's working women is reflected in the organization's broad range of issue driven programming, conferences and communication tools. Here are some of them:

- Working for Workplace Equity and Work-life Effectiveness: one of the first women's organizations to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment in 1937, BPW continues to be a successful leader in promoting and supporting legislation affecting working women.
- National Conference: held annually, bringing together over 800 women, BPW leaders and supporters representing 54 state federations.
- National Business Women's Week: for more than 75 years, this annual event has highlighted the accomplishments of women and their importance to American business.
- Individual Development Program: helps women build the skills that will enable them to take the next important step in their career.
- Women Joining Forces: Closing Ranks, Opening Doors: helps women veterans' transition from the military into civilian careers and lifestyles.
- BusinessWoman Magazine: this vital resource for working women and those who support them is published three times a year.
- Legislative Hotline: a weekly e-action alert with information and reports concerning the organization's legislative priorities.
- Advocacy Classroom: a dynamic, online tool designed to educate individuals about government issues and how to communicate priorities to state and federal legislators.
- The BPW Foundation: established in 1956, this foundation is the first national research and education institution solely dedicated to issues impacting working women.

#### **The Bellevue BPW 2009 Board Members:**

- *President:* Christine Addison of Sonitrol Pacific
- *President Elect:* Pamela Whitfield, President/CEO of Whitfield Benefit Solutions
- *Vice President:* Pam Blanton of Calliope's Garden
- *Treasurer:* Heather Rane of Bay Bank
- *Secretary:* Debbie Whitlock of Sound Financial Strategies
- *Membership:* Fran Fuller of Univera
- *Web/Marketing:* Anna Hardy of WebProdigy.com
- *Program Chair:* Shelly Holbrook of Plein de Vie
- *Young Careerist:* Stephanie Ko of Law Offices of Stephanie Ko
- *Pay Equity Gala Event Chair:* TBD
- *Past Presidents:* Sarah Ingersoll of Dreams from Heaven and Irene Roberts, President of Renton BPW

*Bellevue Business and Professional Women's organization meetings are held **the third Wednesday of each month fro 11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.** In March, Women's History Month, the group will meet on the fourth Wednesday to accommodate guest speaker Dr. Vivien Rose, who holds a PhD in Women's History, chief of cultural resources for the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, NY. A national BPW/USA annual membership is \$125.00. To learn more about membership options and benefits, as well as policies impacting women and families, please visit [www.bpwusa.org](http://www.bpwusa.org).*

*For more information about getting involved in the Bellevue Business and Professional Women's chapter, please contact Christine Addison at (206) 455-5879. Also visit our website at [www.bpwbellevue.org](http://www.bpwbellevue.org)*