

The Mirror

Helping Others Help Themselves
For Over 120 Years

St. Louis Woman's Exchange
9214 Clayton Road
(314) 997-4411

Spring
2007

125 Years of Helping Others

The Woman's Exchange is pleased to announce the celebration of our 125th Anniversary in 2008! As we plan a year full of special events and celebrations, we are studying our past and the considerable growth and evolution of The Exchange since our founding in 1883. After 125 years of societal and organizational changes, our mission, "helping others help themselves", has remained unchanged, remarkably similar in practice and increasingly relevant in purpose. We hope you enjoy our story, and we look forward to serving our mission, consignors, and customers during the next 125 years.

In the late 19th century, there were few options for women who were truly destitute. Women who needed to work to support themselves and their families had little opportunity in a male dominated work force. In 1883, Mrs. Ariadne Lawnin, a prominent St. Louisan known for her concern for less fortunate women, mustered several of her prominent female friends and founded The Woman's Exchange of St. Louis as a support for hardworking women with little opportunity.

After months of planning, soliciting donations, and hosting fund-raising events, The Woman's Exchange of St. Louis opened its doors in September 1883 at 214 North 6th Street. The location served as a marketplace for women to earn a livelihood through the sale of their handmade goods, and The Woman's Exchange quickly became a destination for shoppers seeking high quality merchandise. In addition to the marketplace, The Exchange opened a tearoom serving inexpensive meals, a resource library housing 950 volumes, and offered instruction in cooking, sewing, needlework, chair caning, and other domestic arts.

Working women could purchase a nourishing meal for four cents, attend classes, or simply enjoy a quiet place for relaxation and companionship.

The May 20, 1883 edition of The Missouri Republic, in an article on The Woman's Exchange, told of these founding ladies: "Starting out upon the principle that there could be no greater charity than helping those who try to help themselves, the ladies are bound to succeed if the earnestness of intent and never failing attention to detail can guarantee success."

By 1884, The Woman's Exchange of St. Louis was operating with twelve women on the Board of Directors. Each Board member was required to serve a minimum number of volunteer hours in either the shop or tearoom. The Exchange had also moved to its second location, at 617 Locust Street.



The cherry dress, classic and timeless, is a signature handmade item and has long been a best seller at The Woman's Exchange of St. Louis.

Continued on inside left

Visit our website at www.woexstl.org



125 Years of Helping Others (continued)

By this time hundreds of women had officially become consignors with The Woman's Exchange by submitting a sample of their work to the Board. The Board evaluated the merchandise to ensure it was of high quality, carefully made, and attractive to customers. Once approved, consignors could either stock their items in the shop or accept special orders. Consignors were responsible for the cost of their materials, but The Exchange would purchase high quality materials wholesale and sell them to consignors at or below cost. Potential consignors whose wares did not meet the necessary standard could improve their skill through the classes taught at The Exchange.

The Exchange continued to practice the mission of helping others help themselves in this manner for over 120 years. The organization moved again in 1898 to the corner of 10th and Olive Streets, in 1899 to the North Grand area near Vandeventer Place, and in 1917 to the corner of Maryland and Euclid in the Central West End.

In 1974, The Woman's Exchange moved to its current location on Clayton Road in Ladue. Here we practice our mission in much the same manner that we always have. Today, we are still governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that dedicate over 5,000 volunteer hours annually to the operation of the organization. We still provide support, training, and materials at or below cost to our consignors. While society has become friendlier to women in the workplace, many women and men want or need to earn income from home due to physical disability or difficult family situations. The Exchange houses, displays, and sells their beautiful handiwork, paying back 70-100% of the selling price to the consignor.

Through the years, the need has not subsided for an honest exchange of talent for income. The Woman's Exchange has paid millions to dedicated men and women for their deserving work. The Exchange has provided training, a source of income, an artistic outlet, and enrichment for those in need while becoming a social and cultural tradition for both customers and volunteers within the greater St. Louis community.

Every purchase made at The Woman's Exchange provides an improved quality of life for our consignors and program participants by fostering pride, community involvement, and opportunity. Thank you for your interest, and we hope to see you soon in the shop or tearoom!



Mrs. Adriadne Lawnin, a prominent St. Louisian, founded The Woman's Exchange in 1883.

What's New in the Children's Department



The Children's Department at The Exchange is now brimming with beautiful, fun new summer items. We currently carry lovely hand-sewn dresses and sunsuits for those special summer days and nights. We also have shorts, pants and tops for boys and girls in all styles and colors. Our designers have already started to think about the upcoming holiday season, so don't forget to stop in and place your orders. Come visit Maureen or Susan in the Children's Department and see what's new! Our consignors keep The Woman's Exchange filled with beautiful hand sewn items. One consignor, Kathy, provides us

with blouses and shirts, as well as darling shorts, pants, and capris. Kathy has also created our Halloween costumes and other specialty sunsuits and bibs. Due to disabilities, Kathy must work from home. The Exchange enables her to stay at home and earn her living by sewing for us. Last year alone she produced more than 100 blouses and shirts, and we are so fortunate to have such a loyal and dedicated consignor as Kathy. Come in and see Kathy's new spring items and items from all of our other talented consignors. Please turn to the back page of this newsletter for more pictures of our handmade dolls and animals.



2005-07 Annual Giving and Other Donations

We wish to thank the following donors who generously made a donation to The Woman's Exchange as either a Memorial Donation, a Tribute Donation, an Annual Giving Donation or some other donation between June 1, 2005 and January 31, 2007. Over \$125,000 in gifts were received during this time period. The Woman's Exchange regrets any errors or the omission of any gift. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible gift to our organization that will be used in supporting our mission of helping others help themselves, please use the enclosed donation envelope or contact Jessica at (314) 997-1436.

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Employee News

Congratulations to our sales associate Maida Adilovic on becoming a United States citizen! Maida officially became an American in a naturalization ceremony on September 16, 2006. She and her family left Bosnia in 1992 and moved first to Germany and then to the U.S. in 2000. Maida is looking forward to traveling with her new US passport this summer and voting in the next presidential election.

Website



The Woman's Exchange is pleased to announce our new website, www.woexstl.org, which should be up and running this summer! Please visit our site to see the newest children's clothing designs and must-have items in our gift shop. You can also download our takeout menu and dinner special schedule, read about our history and mission, and keep up on the latest news on our 125th Anniversary celebration.

Spring Gift Guide



Spring has sprung and The Woman's Exchange Gift Shop is stocked full of fabulous Wedding, Graduation, Hostess, and Housewarming gifts. Our special order decoupage frames are the perfect graduation gift, as any pattern can be customized with personalized text. Your graduates will treasure a frame with their school name, sorority, or graduation year beneath their photo. Add a waste can and tissue box in the same pattern for a head start on dorm room décor.

The Woman's Exchange is the destination for wedding gifts this spring. Our beautiful metal tableware lines fit every style and are tarnish-free, ensuring they will be enjoyed as much for function as for aesthetics. Many brides choose our Mariposa line for their registries. We can monogram your choice for a more personal gift.

Finding unique and affordable hostess and housewarming gifts can be a challenge, but you're sure to find the



perfect gift when you shop at The Exchange. New items include beautiful tea towels, whimsical soaps, and seasonal serving pieces. Our new line, Potting Shed Creations, features ready-to-grow gardens. Add water, and they bloom in their own packaging. Starting at \$8.00, they are great party favors, thank you gifts, and fun projects for kids. Stop by to see our full selection. Remember, every purchase made at The Woman's Exchange helps others help themselves.

Immigrant Training Program

The Woman's Exchange is delighted to introduce our new Immigrant Training Program, a major expansion of our charitable services and practice of our mission. As society has changed greatly since our foundation in 1883, many men and women are seeking income opportunities in the workplace rather than in the home.



In 2006, the Exchange commenced its Immigrant Training Program, assisting the newest members of our community in finding gainful employment. Program participants receive on-site skill training and experience, assistance in improving their English language skills and, ultimately, assistance with future job opportunities, all within a friendly, supportive environment that eases the transition into American culture.

Current program participants include immigrants from Somalia and Honduras, countries where opportunity is scarce due to economic depression and political instability. Our Immigrant Training Program is a doorway to self-sufficiency and economic stability; it begins the journey to the better life immigrants seek in the United States. Please visit the store soon and witness our mission in practice.

The Latest Dish on The Woman's Exchange Tearoom

The groundwork has been laid to redecorate The Woman's Exchange Tearoom, Gift Shop, and Children's Department! The cost of this project is \$40,000. As of publication, The Exchange has raised \$27,000 in donations. We need \$13,000 to complete this project in its entirety. If you would like to contribute, please call Jessica, our General Manager, at 314-997-4411.

Mel and her team at The Woman's Exchange Tearoom have been hard at work developing delicious new menu additions! Our lunch menu now features the WE Southwest Melt, crusty french bread piled high with lean roast beef and melted cheddar cheese served with fresh lettuce, tomato, and our creamy chipotle sauce. Our three new soups, Chicken Corn Chowder, Creamy Broccoli Cheddar, and Chicken Tortilla, are receiving rave reviews from customers, as are our new dinner entrees, Baked Mostacoli with Meatballs, Baked Lasagna, Spinach Bacon Swiss Quiche with Seasonal Fruit, and Meatloaf with Macaroni and Cheese. Our two new homemade pies, Blueberry Cream and Caramel Apple are the perfect complement to any of our entrees. You can order whole pies in any of our delicious flavors for \$24. The monthly dinner and soup special calendar are available on our new website www.woexstl.org and in the store.



Mel has also been formalizing our catering menu of sandwich and dessert trays and our famous Woman's Exchange Salad. The catering menu includes preset costs for our most requested items but, as always, we can accommodate any request. Many

customers choose to bring their own dishes and the Exchange can beautifully arrange their orders directly on their own serving pieces. You can view the catering menu on our new website www.woexstl.org and place orders by calling 314-997-4411.

Planning a birthday party or shower? The Woman's Exchange Tearoom is now accepting reservations for parties of six or more guests. Call to find out more!



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