March 2022 Newsletter

At our Executive Committee meeting this month, Bunny Webb spoke to us about an important initiative that Impact 100 Global has been focusing on: "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion." There are many layers to this initiative, the most obvious being race and ethnicity. From the beginning, Impact 100 St. Lucie has been proud of its ability to attract women of all races, but the question becomes do we make them feel welcome and included. Do they feel that they belong and can speak openly? Diversity of race and ethnicity is fairly apparent but there is so much more to diversity than that. Diversity includes race and ethnicity as well as gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values, national origin, political beliefs and cultures. These are all very personal traits and not something that we can or should ask when members join. Nonetheless, the diverse viewpoints that our members have developed because of these characteristics make our organization stronger and more reflective of our community. It is crucial that we make every member of Impact 100 St. Lucie believe that they are respected and heard. You will be hearing more about this in the coming months as we learn more about this topic and develop ways to have this conversation openly with our members. If you have any insights into these issues and would like to help us develop some resources, please reach out to any of the Executive Committee members. Hopefully, every one of our members will be comfortable becoming a part of whatever path this will lead us on.

Give Back Saturday
This month's volunteer effort will take place on Saturday, March 12th, at Moore’s Creek in Fort Pierce. We will be fielding a team to work with the Marine Cleanup Initiative. We will be working from 9:00 AM until noon. This is very different from our usual volunteer work and should be a lot of fun. An email will be sent to everyone when more specific information is available. Please email Janet Maffucci at mrsjfooch@gmail.com to volunteer.
Member Highlight

Evett Simmons
by Vicki Hoyos

"What you are is God's gift to you and what you make of yourself is your gift to God" is the message Evett Simmons wants her audience, colleagues and benefactors of her legal firm to know. Evett is not by any standards your typical attorney who's been practicing law for 40 years. By all statistics, she shouldn't be where she is and yet she is.

When listening to her, one can't help but feel captivated by her story...a story of how she is the youngest of six children, how she lost her mother at age 10 and lived with her aunt who worked multiple jobs to make ends meet, how she is the first person in her family to have a professional career, how she traversed the civil rights movement and now shares her passion for this country and its struggles by writing poetry. Yes, that's Evett: daughter, sister, aunt, lawyer, motivational speaker, poet, children’s book author, civil rights activist—all of which she credits to her strong faith in God.

Law is where she landed, now the managing partner at Simmons, Finney & Winfield in Port St. Lucie, practicing estate planning, probate, personal injury, business and white collar crime law with her five fellow colleagues. She sits on the board of the American Heart Association, is a member of Impact 100 St. Lucie, has been a voice in the civil rights journey, and has been an advocate for the political campaigns of Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, and President Barack Obama.

Law and politics aside, English was Evett’s original major in college. She loves to write and has published two poetry books on Black History. She’s written two children’s books as well and enjoys the opportunity to bring her insight, inspiration and historical relevancy to audiences large and small.

Having never married did not stop Evett from spending time and indulging her four godchildren, now young adults. She also has a bucket list that includes visiting all fifty states. To date, she has been to forty-six states with just four more to go—Idaho targeted for later this year followed by South Dakota, North Dakota and Wisconsin. Mission accomplished!

What remains to be accomplished for Evett is to continue to remind our community that movement is not necessarily progress and what’s important to her is, "There is more to us than that which we can see and getting beyond that notion is very important." Agreed!

Thank you, Evett, for reminding us of the struggle many have had to overcome and those still fighting to be overcomers. We appreciate your heart and your passion and your prompting us to love one another.

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Update on our 2021 Grant Recipient

Project LIFT Fort Pierce officially launched services on February 21st with 10 young men. Five of those young men are in our daytime Career Rising Program and are on-site from approximately 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Then, those young men are transported home and the next group of five are picked up at school for our afterschool program from 2:30-5:30.

The boys are learning welding and construction, and we will be adding boat building/marine trades very soon. The young men are doing great and enjoying learning carpentry skills while repairing/upgrading the program site. This allows them to take pride in the work they are doing, and to truly see the fruits of their labor and the potential for career opportunities in the trades! Every young man is also receiving individual and group therapy and substance abuse treatment, as well as life skills instruction.

There is a current waiting list of 26 from community partners and a Fort Pierce juvenile police officer. We are brainstorming ways to serve more youth as quickly as possible. The young men in this inaugural group have a great deal of trauma, violence, and adjudication in their past. However, they are excited to learn a trade and are showing up daily, eager to learn and work! Project LIFT is incredibly grateful to Impact 100 St. Lucie for giving us this opportunity to reach a population that is in tremendous need of innovative solutions to violence and intergenerational poverty.

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Be sure to visit our website (www.impact100sl.org) and our Facebook page.

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