

Women Entrepreneurs Rebuilding the *Civil Society*

Ann Marie Almeida, President and CEO

It's now well known in the halls of the Council of Foreign Relations, the United Nations, international foundations and corporations that economic development, particularly efforts to support sustainable enterprise development for women, is a solution to our national and international economic challenges.¹ Economic stability and vibrancy is a long-term investment in and a contribution to the democratic institutions that ultimately allow us to reach our individual and collective potential.

In a recent MS Foundation study commissioned by the AWBC and Women's Funding Network, four strategies were highlighted that will begin to alleviate poverty in the United States and abroad. The strategies include: **building**

women's entrepreneurship through training, education and support services; **developing** long-term financial security through asset building and literacy; **creating** opportunities for women through better jobs for all; and **investing** in children to insure that girls and boys have the knowledge and skills to work productively. **Of the four strategies named, the AWBC directly provides three of the four solutions.**²

At the invitation of the World Bank and women business centers throughout the United States and the world, the AWBC continues to echo the meaning and merits of entrepreneurial development training. We will continue to do our part in rebuilding our world—won't you join us? ■

¹ Isobel Coleman, Star Ledger, January 2005 and Council of Foreign Relations, January 2005

² AWBC and Women's Funding Network, Programmatic Strategies for Women's Economic Development, 2006

A Seat At Another Table

Barbara Wrigley, Chair, Training and Capacity Building Committee

The AWBC is proud to have a seat at the leadership table and in an advisory role as the Center for Women's Business Research (CWBR) begins its new multi-year project on "Women of Color." The Leadership Council, sponsored by UPS Capital, will "help develop a multi-year initiative on women business owners of color that will include research, seminars and publications that translate the research findings into practical guidance for individual women business owners, corporate diversity staff, and women business owner advocates."

As you may know, the CWBR released groundbreaking research in 1998 entitled, "Women Business Owners of Color: Challenges and Accomplishments." Since then, the CWBR has published a series of reports on this growing segment of women business owners, including "New Accomplishments, New Challenges" in 2002, and biennial updates on the trends and growth of U.S. businesses owned by women of color. For more information and to read these reports, go to <http://www.womensbusinessresearch.org>. ■

AWBC Celebrates Its Entrepreneurial Star

Congratulations are in order! In collaboration with the Business Women's Network, the Association of Women Business Centers honored Tearsa Coates, President of Teruko Productions, with its Entrepreneurial Star Award in Washington, D.C. The Entrepreneurial Star Award is presented to an individual who has blazed the trail on behalf of women as well as minority entrepreneurs.

After Tearsa Coates graduated from the University of Virginia with an MBA, she still felt something was missing. While her education was extensive, she said she needed more information about starting a business from the ground up. As Coates started her business, Teruko Productions, she worked with the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) in Philadelphia to hone her business plan.

Coates has become a leader in the fight against the childhood obesity epidemic and the youth health crisis in America. Geri Swift, President of the WBDC in Philadelphia, says "Tearsa is a role model for thousands of girls across North America." Coates has shared her message nationally through the Girl Scouts of America, the YWCA, and on her MissFit Ten City Tour, a wellness tour sponsored by Nike, Playtex and ELLEgirl Magazine. Coates' multi media company teaches kids about fitness, nutrition, and self-esteem through creative interactive fitness. Her goal is to help teens develop healthy habits that will follow them into adulthood.

Bravo, Tearsa! ■



AWBC Welcomes its newest Corporate Partners:
Best Buy Stores and PNC Bank.
We look forward to these winning alliances.

Get-Togethers *Membership*

Tara Holt, Membership Chair

In April, and in receipt of Microsoft's Live Meeting to each WBC's and the Association of Women's Business Centers, the AWBC will begin regional membership meetings via Live Meeting. These meetings will serve members as an opportunity to: mentor or to be mentored; troubleshoot or brainstorm; discuss best practices and participate together in regional program opportunities.

Within the next two weeks, you will be notified regarding meeting times and dates. AWBC members who wish to participate in these Member Get-Togethers should email Tara Holt at holt@trainingnd.com with your name, state, time zone, and email address.

Live Meeting allows members to do business with one another and with clients online.

Call to Action

Catherine Simpson, Public Policy Chair

Grassroots activity works because it depends on relationships and real time contact. Women entrepreneurs and economic development organizations know that all politics are local politics. The following time tested steps work:

- **Meet/speak** with your congressional delegation personally, utilizing board members, friends and contacts.
- **Request** your congressional delegation's full support.
- **Put a human face** on your story when you meet with your legislators.
- **Provide** them with success stories.
- **Relate** the specific impact of your request.
- **Bring** a women entrepreneur with you and let her tell her story.
- **Submit** success stories, impact information.
- **Attend any public meeting** to tell your story and publicly receive support.
- **Speak** with your legislators and ask for their support and consent.
- **Follow up with the AWBC** by dropping us an email and letting us know of activity. It's important to keep a current log of progress. Send updates to: ama@awbc.biz
- **Stay nearby your email and telephone** because all days can be critical days when making the case for your work and your dreams.
- **Express your gratitude** to everyone who helped you.

The AWBC has been invited and submitted testimony to the Senate and House Committees on Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development requesting Women's Business Center program re-authorization and funding of \$16.5 million. - *Ed Note*

AWBC Events, Conferences and Invitations:

2006 Office Depot Success Strategies for Businesswomen Conference March 26-28, Fort Lauderdale.

Connecting for Growth, Innovation and Inspiration. Conference highlights include: Enhanced Matchmaking with Corporate America; breakout tracks for corporate and business owners; business solution sessions. Exciting speakers are Lily Tomlin, actress and comedienne; Christine Todd Whitman; B Smith, COB & CCO, B. SMITH ENTERPRISE and more. For more information: <http://www.officedepotsuccess.com/default.html>

Women's Funding Network's 22nd Annual Conference May 4-6, 2006.

The Women's Funding Network invites all AWBC members and friends to it's 22nd Annual Conference. Join forces with AWBC's philanthropic partner to learn about how opportunities for women are supported in communities and regions throughout the world. Find out new ways to make a difference with your dollars through "consumer

philanthropy." This is a great opportunity to network with women's funds and it's a great opportunity for women's funds to connect and learn from businesswomen. Featured Speakers include Theresa Heinz-Kerry, Philanthropist; Mallika Dutt, Breakthrough Television; Farai Chideya, National Public Radio. For more information: call Anita Daly at 415-441-0706 or adaley@wfnet.org or log on <http://www.wfnet.org/events/conference/2006/>

AWBC is at AEO May 16-19, 2006 in Atlanta, Georgia. Watch for details for the AWBC Member event!

AWBC Leads the Way to Economic Growth Washington, DC; September 11, 2006.

In collaboration with the Direct Selling Education Foundation and George Washington University's Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence. Internationally recognized speakers, panel and roundtable discussions.

You will not want to miss this event!

Your AWBC membership is working for you!