

# Christian Women's Job Corps alumni serve with Hagar's Heart

August 22, 2024

Christian Women's Job Corps of Greater Arlington Executive Director Brandi Dalton met [Hagar's Heart](#) founder, Jennifer Jones, at a networking event some time ago.

CWJC—a ministry of Woman's Missionary Union—teaches job skills and life skills to low-income women. Hagar's Heart is an Arlington-based organization dedicated to supporting, educating and empowering domestic violence survivors through self-care initiatives.

The complementary nature of the organizations in providing services for women led to Jones becoming a speaker at CWJC events for the last couple of years.



Hagar's Heart Founder and Executive Director Jennifer Jones with CWJC of Greater Arlington Executive Director Brandi Dalton. (Courtesy Photo)

At one such event, Dalton learned Hagar's Heart held a standing volunteer service day the third Saturday of every month.

"I immediately thought, hmm," Dalton said, "Our alumni meet the third Saturday of every month."

Since CWJC alumni have received such an investment in their lives through Christian Women's Job Corps, they are encouraged to "pay it forward" by investing in others, she explained.

So, Morgan Farr, CWJC of Greater Arlington alumni coordinator, organized an alumni service project with Hagar's Heart for Aug. 17.

Hagar's Heart aims to give back to domestic abuse survivors what was taken from them by their abusers—their self-worth and trust.

## **Personal understanding**

Jones said she started Hagar's Heart because she is a survivor of domestic abuse, herself.

She was an educator more than 20 years, but about six years ago, life circumstances brought her life in education to a close.

Jones sensed even then there was something else God was calling her to: "You know God always provides the way."

She was no longer in an abusive relationship when the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the country, but it occurred to her that just because she was able to escape didn't mean every woman experiencing abuse could.

In fact, the lockdowns of COVID meant exactly the opposite, Jones said. Women were trapped with their abusers and couldn't get away.

This realization led her to find a fiscal sponsor and found Hagar's Heart "right then and there," she said.

Domestic violence is an isolating experience, Jones stated. She explained she was out of her abusive relation for 13 years before she could admit, even to herself, she'd been abused.

“I didn’t think it happened to people like me,” she said.



Handmade message  
bracelet for an “I See You”  
box. (Courtesy Photo)

She had a job and could anticipate abusive behavior and side-step it, because she had a place to go. So, she believed it was “just a bad marriage,” not abuse. But in working through the trauma she’d experienced, a counselor helped her understand, “even once is too many times.”

Even one time being called names or experiencing physical abuse, even one time being locked out of one’s home or made to leave is too many, she continued.

Statistics show domestic violence happens to 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men. That illustrates it’s not only happening in a certain ZIP code or to people of a certain ethnicity, Jones said.

Society is ignorant about who can be affected by domestic violence, she said. “I was ignorant that it could happen to me.”

Jones saw a need to transform how society—especially the women who are affected by it—understands domestic violence. Hagar’s Heart seeks to do that by educating and empowering survivors, rebuilding self-worth.

## **Seen, worthy, loved**

Taking its name from the [Genesis 16 story of Hagar](#)—where God meets her in her escape from the abuse she’d suffered, and she names God, El-roi, the God who sees—Hagar’s Heart emphasizes three statements: “You are seen.

You are worthy. You are loved."

The CJWC alumni who served Aug. 17 joined in the mission of rebuilding self-worth by helping to pack "I See You" boxes. They will be distributed to women at eight women's shelters in the area.

These boxes are filled with personal care products, including fragranced lotions and soaps, ethnic hair products (if needed), chocolate, handwritten notes, journals, and a handmade bracelet—items that don't just meet a physical need but an emotional need to feel worthy, as well.

The shelters provide for physical, counseling and legal needs, while "I See You" boxes and the other services Hagar's Heart provides help to reach the intangibles—reminding the women they are worth more than what standard, utilitarian items alone might communicate, Jones explained.

These special boxes gently speak to women's hearts.



Earlene Moore (standing on left) and other CWJC alumni pack "I See You" boxes at Hagar's Heart. (Courtesy Photo)

## **Giving back**

Earlene Moore, a CWJC alumna, participated in the project. She came to CWJC in 2015 when she decided to close her baking business.

Moore said she appreciated the job skills, particularly computer skills, she learned there to help her get back into the workforce after being self-employed for several years.

"It's a beautiful thing to be able to give back to others," Moore said. Yet, she still was having second thoughts about going to Hagar's Heart to help,

because she had so many other things going on that week.

“So, anyway, I went on, and I’m so glad,” she continued. When she learned what they were doing and how meaningful it was and began going down the checklist packing boxes, she decided this project will not be a one-time thing.

“Our group was making sure the boxes had everything they needed,” she said, “nail clippers, lotions, handwritten notes, … everything you and I take for granted.”

But as she packed, she thought about the joy the boxes will bring the ladies who will receive them—from knowing someone was thinking about them and they care—and she started praying over the boxes.

“Then the lady next to me said, ‘Are you praying?’ And I said ‘yes.’” So, the other lady started praying, too, Moore explained.



“I See You” box contents. (Courtesy Photo)

Moore already has spoken with group leaders at her church and will call her friends and family to make plans to help fill more “I See You” boxes.

“Once I find something that’s really wonderful and that’s really helping someone, I go all in. So, that’s kind of where I am,” Moore stated.

[CWJC of Arlington](#) utilizes 60 to 65 volunteers every semester to teach classes, serve on information technology teams to keep computers up to date and running, serve on mentor teams as journey partners, serve on teams that process donations for professional clothing boutiques and help with no-cost shopping, and assist in other areas.

Each semester they serve 14 daytime and 14 evening students, because

that's how many computers they have in their computer lab, Dalton stated.

Moore said she wished more people would get involved with giving back.

Another alumna, Barbara Jones, said, "I can tell you that CWJC is more than just free training classes. It is a life change.

"... I know it was God that led me to CWJC. I not only improved my office skills, but most importantly grew in my Christian walk.

"We are always looking for ways to help our community, and there have been many lasting relationships in our sisterhood."