In 1998, Gabrielle Moes was ready to launch a catering business but she was overwhelmed about where to start and how to do it when she found WEV.

Gabrielle credits her SET (now called Smart Entrepreneurial Training) class with helping her establish a strong foundation for her company. “WEV provided the map to start my business and it was my job to do the legwork, follow my gut, listen to the advice and find my own path to creating my business. WEV also provided structure with regular meetings, accountability, and the ability to surround myself with like-minded women. It was so motivating!”

Today, Seasons Catering is a full service catering company employing more than 70 people and serving Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles Counties. Gabrielle has grown the company to over $1 million dollars in annual revenue, a milestone that only 2% of woman-owned businesses achieve, earning her a spot in WEV’s Million Dollar Club.

Gabrielle has built her company around her family-focused lifestyle, a common goal of many women-owned businesses. “I graduated from WEV, found a commercial kitchen to house my business, and found out I was pregnant with my first child all in two months. So my business wasn’t initially a 100% time investment since growing our family was the priority, but I always knew that I wanted to own my schedule so I had flexibility. What better way to do that than be the boss?”

Gabrielle makes it possible for her employees to also live a family first lifestyle as part of her company philosophy. “I wanted to create a culture that promotes balance between family and career AND still being able to achieve the financial success you strive for. Our business culture is based on that, I support our team in creating that balance and those goals.”

Joining the Million Dollar Club is only the beginning for Gabrielle. “We are still growing and I love that. I want to continue to connect with like-minded people, those who want to work with integrity, love what they do, are passionate about their community, and are determined to create their own path.”

About Seasons Catering

Seasons Catering strives to provide their clients with the best food possible within their budgets. Farm-to-Table wasn’t a common phrase when Season’s was launched but it is an integral part of their philosophy with a strong focus on locally sourced ingredients.

WEV PROGRAMS 2018

- 94 Pre-business training course clients
- 126 Business planning & development course graduates
- 69 Spanish business planning & development course graduates
- 79 Long-term business growth consulting program clients
- 35 WEV Loans totaling $441,900
Business Recovery Assistance

Helping Businesses to Weather the Storm

In the wake of the Thomas Fire and Montecito Debris Flows, WEV acted quickly to determine what we could do to help affected small businesses. A Quick Response Loan was developed for those that suffered reduced sales or lost inventory in the disasters. The result was 23 business recovery loans totaling $216,000 to Santa Barbara and Ventura County businesses.

“For many small businesses, it’s going to take a long time to recover,” says WEV CEO and Founder Marsha Bailey. “Many need financial, technical and training support to evaluate their business model and rebuild operating reserves. We also want to make sure our business clients are better prepared to withstand interruptions in the business cycle going forward.”

WEV has added a Business Recovery Specialist, Nicki Parr, to directly support impacted businesses. Nicki applies her forensic accounting background to provide financial analysis and support. Originally from England, Nicki has more than 20 years of experience in business finance and specializes in forensic accounting and fraud risk management.

Examples of quick response loans include Tinkle Bell, a cloth diaper cleaning service that began experiencing losses the first week of the Thomas Fire due to evacuations. WEV quickly approved a $10,000 loan which helped keep them operating and allowed them to retain their two employees.

Make Smith, a third-generation Santa Barbara handmade leather goods manufacturer, had just opened their first retail store on East De La Guerra, when the fire turned Santa Barbara into a ghost town. A $10,000 quick response loan funded vital online and print advertising to drive traffic to both the store and the website, in order to boost sales.

But it became quickly apparent that most small business owners couldn’t qualify for loans. Thanks to a grant from Wells Fargo Bank, WEV is pioneering a program to award business recovery grants to local businesses impacted by the Thomas and Woolsey Fires and the Montecito debris flow.

Your donations to WEV have made it possible for us to help small businesses that might have been forced to close their doors rather than fight to stay in business.

Thanks to our Community Partners

WEV’s business recovery resources would not have been possible if not for the following community partners who immediately stepped up to support disaster recovery for small businesses:

- Wells Fargo Bank
- Hutton-Parker Foundation
- United Way of Santa Barbara County
- Kaiser Foundation Hospitals
- Santa Barbara Foundation
- Ann Jackson Family Foundation
- Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco
- and numerous individual donors
League Members Make Difference as Mentors

In 2018, the League of Extraordinary Women hosted Mix & Mentor events that offered League members the chance to meet and mingle while also providing an opportunity to reach out to WEV clients to explore possible mentoring relationships. It proved to be a successful combination as WEV clients left with advice and connections that helped them grow their businesses. The relationships that began at the events were built upon in the following weeks and the results were very beneficial to the clients that participated. “Thanks to the advice I received at the Mix & Mentor, I was able to send my story to the right person at a paper and was given an entire spread on my company!” said Jessica Simon, owner of Tinkle Belle Diaper Company.

“At the Mix & Mentor I met two League members that have both been incredibly helpful with PR and marketing opportunities,” said Caleigh Hernandez, owner of Roho. “I still reach out to them when I have a question or problem. These women have blown my mind!”

Since its launch in July of 2017, the League has grown to 116 members and counting. This unique group brings together an influential and collaborative group of high achieving women (and men) who combine their efforts and resources to strengthen women-owned businesses and elevate women in our community. The League provides its members a great way to lend their voice, guidance and financial support to help WEV clients achieve business success.

Find out how you can join the League, and see a full list of members at: www.wevonline.org/theleague

Donor Spotlight Melissa Sayer
The Importance of Empowering Women

What inspires you to support WEV's mission?
It’s important to me that WEV empowers women to be successful business people in a supportive and instructive environment.

Why did you choose to get involved with WEV's League of Extraordinary Women?
I wanted to provide both mentoring and financial support for other women to pursue their dreams. Women, especially those starting their own businesses, face many challenges, and often face them alone. Having women to help you navigate the challenges of starting and owning a business is invaluable and making connections is an important part of growing and sustaining your business. There are not enough role models, mentors, and champions for women. WEV has always done a great job of addressing that need, and I saw League of Extraordinary Women as a way to take things even further.

What was your favorite WEV moment in 2018?
I really enjoyed the Empowerment Is Priceless Breakfast in October. It was a great opportunity to meet others involved with WEV, learn more about some of the WEV participants and strategize on ways to further assist women business owners.

Melissa Sayer, is Principal at Matilija Law Inc. based in Ventura County. When not in the office providing practical and thoughtful counsel to her business clients, she can be found at her citrus and avocado ranch near Santa Paula. Melissa also serves on WEV’s Community Advisory Council.
WEV is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating an equitable and just society through the economic empowerment of women. WEV provides a continuum of comprehensive services – training, loans and consulting – to support entrepreneurs in starting, growing, and thriving in business.

Each year, WEV serves over 300 clients in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties through our core programs. Since our inception in 1991, we’ve made over $5 million in microloans and helped start or expand an estimated 4,400 businesses which support more than 9,400 local jobs. Interviews with over 700 WEV clients 18 months post service indicate the following outcomes:

**Business Performance**
- 44% business start rate
- 92% business survival rate
- 103% increase in sales and 72% increase in owner’s draw

**Community Economic Impact**
- WEV-assisted businesses employ 3 workers on average
- 3,579 jobs have been created or retained since 2012
- In the past 5 years, WEV-assisted businesses have generated an estimated $11.6 million in state and local tax revenues.

**Personal Economic Impact**
- 56% of all clients have increased their household income
- WEV clients are saving over $8,000 annually on average
- 86% of WEV clients in poverty at intake had moved out of poverty

**2017 Revenues**
- Individual 28%
- Government 26%
- Corporations 23%
- Earned Revenue 18%

**2017 Expenditures**
- Programs 79%
- Fundraising 11%
- Management & General 10%

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*Defined as earning less than 80% of HUD’s Median Family Income (MFI) for a given region. In 2015, the MFI for a household of 4 was $27,050 in Santa Barbara County and $27,900 in Ventura County.*

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