

pivotnow

THE PIVOT MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

Pivot Celebrates Five Years of Graduations with Sixth Class

Thankfulness and Praise to God were the themes for Pivot Ministry's 6th Graduation Ceremony and 5th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, June 10. Seven excited graduates, eight mentors, proud family members and friends, Pivot staff, volunteers, alumnae, and board members, along with the guest speaker all assembled at Ardmore Baptist Church on this beautiful sunny afternoon to praise God for his goodness and recognize the achievements of this class of Pivot participants.



Simmons

After inspiring gathering music performed by cellist Sandy Simmons, Pivot graduate Kimberly Gleason played beautifully

*Not to us, Lord,
not to us, but to
your name be the
glory because of
your love and
faithfulness.
Psalm 115:1*

March No. 1 from "Pomp and Circumstance" on her flute as the other graduates and mentors proceeded into the sanctuary, accompanied by cheers and clapping from guests. Pivot Board Chair Jill Lackey welcomed those gathered, affirmed the excitement, joy, and talent present in the room, and

opened the ceremony in prayer. She then introduced Lori Timm, Pivot Board Secretary and long-time Pivot instructor, who acknowledged the many people who have helped bring Pivot to this celebrated five-year anniversary. She recognized current and past participants, mentors, board and



Timm



Lackey

committee members, instructors, Pivot Plus leaders, donors, volunteers, and of course Executive Director Carol Polk and Michelle Minnich, Program Coordinator.

Winston-Salem native and Pivot Board Vice-Chair Rev. Kenneth Pettigrew inspired all with his solo *That's When He Steps In*, a comforting



Pettigrew

hymn that relates how God supplies our needs and can use our gifts if we're willing to give Him our all. He was followed by Keynote speaker Dr. Timogi Jackson, who is an author, educator, and preacher known as THE Empowerment Specialist. Dr. Jackson spoke *Words of Empowerment* to the



Jackson

graduates, asking them "What does it mean to pivot?" and "Who do you think you are?" Her message told each lady to center her mind, think about who she is, and make herself pivot to who she wants to be, turning away from her past. She encouraged them to appreciate their survival skills and honor their past by helping others to grow and pivot.

The program then focused on the graduates as Ms. Polk called each by name and Ms. Minnich gave them their graduation certificates. As each participant came up, her mentor met her with a hug, words of affirmation, and a scripture-based prayer. Each graduate was allowed time to share her testimony, thank her mentor and the Pivot staff. This
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Pivot's Spring Graduating Class: Front row l to r: LuAnn Collins, Kim Gleason, Latronya Williams, Ivonne Guerra-Lopez, Executive Director Carol Polk. Back row: Program Coordinator Michelle Minnich, Belinda Wiley, Victoria Hall, and Cynthia Whitaker.



Left: LuAnn and her mentor Kathy Arnett.

LuAnn Collins – “My daughter told me Pivot would be good for me... and she was right!”

Bottom left: Ann Marcum, from Pivot’s first graduating class, was proud to celebrate with her mother LuAnn.



Kim Gleason – “Pivot has given me a lot more confidence in myself and what I’m able to do. My therapist recommended Pivot – said it would help me, but I didn’t know how much it would.”

Right: Kim and her mentor Donna McEwan.



From Our Graduates: Why Pivot?

Kim shared her talents with us by playing a beautiful flute rendition of March No. 1 from “Pomp and Circumstance” for the graduation ceremony.



Ivonne Guerra – “I love to learn and I was going through a lot in my life. God was working in mysterious ways when I was introduced to Pivot. I love coming here and learning a wide variety of things like interpersonal skills, job readiness, and about God.”

Top: Ivonne and her two mentors Olivia Bayard and Marvinna Hamilton.

Bottom: Ivonne celebrates with her proud family at the reception.



Victoria Hall – “My God-mother told me that Pivot would help me. It has helped me in so many aspects of my life. I’ve grown closer to God, and also, to be in here with these other women who helped me know I’m not going through difficult things alone.”

Top: Victoria shares her gratefulness for Pivot at graduation. Inset: Her mentor Tarsha Howell, who was unable to attend graduation. Bottom: Victoria’s family joined her for the joyful occasion.



Belinda Wiley – “I thoroughly enjoy being in Pivot and enjoy my new sisters in Christ.”



Left: Belinda and her mentor JoAnn Burnette. Above: Belinda speaks from the heart about what she learned at Pivot.

Latronya Williams – “Pivot changed my life. I just love Pivot. What we talk about here is love, our life experiences – but Pivot made me a different person. I used to have a lot of anger issues but Pivot changed me.”



Cynthia Whitaker – “This is where I’m supposed to be.”

Left: Cynthia and her mentor Cynthia Collins.

Right: Cynthia enjoyed having her family attend the graduation and reception.



Top: Latronya and Mentor Coordinator Deb Pozebanchuk. Bottom: Family members pose with Latronya before the ceremony.

Graduation Celebration continued from front page

class was recognized for their extraordinary commitment, having the highest attendance rate of any Pivot class to date and a 100% graduation rate!

JoAnn Burnette gave a mentor's perspective, saying how blessed she felt by mentorship. She said that mentoring is giving and getting and ultimately just pointing someone to Jesus. Ms. Minnich then spoke about Pivot's possible future expansion plans. She noted that besides more volunteers, Pivot's greatest needs are God's provision, continued prayers, and generous donations. While the worship song *Goodness*



Burnette



Minnich

of God played, ushers collected love offerings for the ministry.

Rev. Pettigrew graced the audience with a soaring rendition of Andraé Crouch's *My Tribute*, bringing the celebration full circle as all present felt "To God be the Glory for the things He has done." Ms. Lackey concluded the ceremony with sincere thanks to all who came, an invitation to the reception, and a closing prayer.

Thank you to the many volunteers from River Oaks Community Church, Wells Fargo, Ardmore Baptist Church, and other Pivot volunteers who hosted the

reception in Ardmore's Fellowship Hall. Graduates, along with their families and guests, were treated to beautifully decorated cakes, handmade cupcakes, and tables with a balloon theme, as well as fresh fruit, cheese and vegetable trays. Each graduate received a gift bag with items from Pivot, Crismons handmade by a mentor and other Ardmore



Pivot's newest graduates gather around the congratulatory cake during the post-graduation reception.

Handcrafters, *No Whining* buttons as a class reminder, candles from *Heavenly Divine Scents* by Victoria, and personal gifts from a previous graduate. Keynote speaker Dr. Jackson gifted each graduate with her choice of a signed book. In addition, Lakisha Jordan, Executive Director of WinstonNet, presented new computers to the graduates who had a proven need.

What a wonderful beginning for these graduates as they continue to pivot on God's path for them. *To God Be the Glory for the Things He Has Done*, both for this class and in the last five years of Pivot Ministry!



Lakisha Jordan, left, hands out certificates for new computers to five of the new graduates, based on documented needs.

Pivot Has Successful Fifth Anniversary Donation Drive

What a celebration! After sharing with you that the June 2023 graduation would also be a 5th anniversary

celebration, individuals, groups, one company, and one church made generous donations in recognition of this milestone.



Goal = \$5000 Actual = \$18,359

PRE-GRADUATION: By Graduation Day, you had contributed **over \$3,300!**

GRADUATION DAY: To help us reach our goal of \$5,000 for the 5th Anniversary, Michelle Minnich made an appeal during the ceremony for additional support using the "old fashion way" as we passed the collection plates and the "new way" as she pointed out the QR code in the program and on posters in the reception area. On Graduation Day, you contributed **almost \$3,900:** just over \$600 in the collection plates and almost \$3,300 online. This included a **\$2,500 donation in honor of graduate Ivonne**

Guerra by Kim Ickes, one of Ivonne's mentors as she was growing up.

POST-GRADUATION: Since graduation on 6/10/23, Pivot has received checks in the mail totaling **\$11,150** for a ...

GRAND TOTAL OF \$18,359!

Included in the post-graduation amount is a check for \$10,000 from [Cammie Dunaway](#), who grew up in Winston-Salem, attended Ardmore Baptist Church, and was introduced to Pivot by her mother who was also a supporter. Cammie is a national award-winning marketing executive with successful companies like Yahoo! and Nintendo, and co-author of the book [Fit Matters: How to Love Your Job](#).



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Ongoing Partnership with LWS Action Learning Team

By Jonathan Allen and LWS team members

In 2022, Pivot Ministry was selected to receive an Action Learning Team from Leadership Winston-Salem (LWS). The eight members of the Action Learning Team (ALT) connected with Pivot’s Executive Director Carol Polk beginning in October 2022, and she shared the primary critical need, which would drive the team’s project. The LWS team signed non-disclosure agreements to solidify the partnership and then began their 9-month project. See related article on page 3 of the Nov/Dec 2022 issue of *pivotnow* newsletter. (Click [here](#) and then on [Vol6 No4](#))

During the course of the project, the LWS team learned everything about Pivot that they could including conducting analyses of the current structure, diving into the financial statements, and thoroughly evaluating a number of potential future partnerships. Along the way, the team was not only in constant communication with Carol, but also received coaching from inaugural board member Harold Holmes.

Each ALT receives an LWS-affiliated coach, and this team was fortunate enough to have one who has extensive knowledge of the organization they were serving. Hence, the team was very well-equipped to tackle the project in front of them.

As of June 2023, the ALT has completed their project and has shared recommendations with Pivot’s Board. Enthusiastically the team says YES! Expand Pivot Ministry to the local Latina community!

Normally the Action Learning Team presents these recommendations to the nonprofit in a very detailed manner, sharing data, documentation, and next steps in great detail. Then, in true consultant fashion, the ALT wishes the nonprofit well, and moves on with their busy lives. However, the team that has



Team members l to r (seated): Madelina Fordham, Kim Flippin, Diane Massas, (standing) Orielle Hope, Chris Ramos, Itohan Igbinigie, John Caraway, and Jonathan Allen.

partnered with Pivot did not follow this normal pattern. They concluded that the breadth of the project’s findings was such that expecting a small Pivot staff to execute all of the next steps alone was not a winning strategy. As a result, the team has decided to remain as consultants with Pivot until such a time that the recommendations can be executed.

Pivot Ministry and its allies rejoice in this outcome, as this is an unprecedented move by an Action Learning Team. Keep in mind that every member of the ALT is a working professional, a leader in the community, and already has a number of priorities in his or her life. This is an extremely generous and faithful move for the team to remain with Pivot, once again, at no monetary cost to the organization.

With the abundance of potential connections to be made in Winston-Salem, it is a blessing for LWS when a new partnership is established. This one will help change the course of how Pivot serves the women of our city.

Polk Receives Award from YWCA

Carol Polk, Executive Director of Pivot Ministry, Inc., was awarded the **Women’s Empowerment Award at the 2023 Women of Vision Awards Ceremony** held at the YWCA Wellness Center on June 1. Carol was one of five Winston-Salem area women honored this year for her achievements and work in changing women’s lives.



Click [here](#) to watch a video presentation of Carol relaying her story. Pivot Ministry expresses “Congratulations” to Carol Polk, our Founder and Executive Director, as she is honored with this award. Thank you to the YWCA for recognizing Carol’s hard work, dedication, and ability to empower women through her work with Pivot.

Pivot Ministry Inc is a 501(c)(3) public charity. Donations directly to Pivot are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Two ways to donate: Make checks payable to *Pivot Ministry* and send to:

501 Miller Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27103
or click here to donate

<https://pivotnow.org/donatenow/>

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Pivot Ministry • 501 Miller Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27103
www.pivotnow.org • Office: 336-725-8767, ext. 131
Carol Polk, Executive Director • carol@pivotnow.org • 336-971-4878

Michelle Minnich
Program Coordinator
michelle@pivotnow.org
336-207-3890

Ivonne Guerra
Administrative Coordinator
ivonne@pivotnow.org
336-497-8586