

One Person Can Make a Difference

By Jane Godshalk

"As an ardent admirer of NWEE for many years, I am convinced that this outstanding program is vitally important, not just to the lives and livelihoods of so many women, but to the greater well-being of our country. Wherever I go, I sing the praises of Lupe Anguiano and NWEE with pride and admiration."

Barbara Bush

"I used to be afraid of tomorrow." To Rosemary Campos, the world was her enemy. Now it is a place to live out her dreams.

A sixth grade dropout, and with no hope for a future, Rosemary heard about Lupe Anguiano's project from a community newspaper. After her husband had abandoned her and their children, Rosemary was at her wit's end, with no place to turn. The Women's Employment and Education Model Program helped her target her professional skills and with Lupe's help, she was trained to work with construction equipment.

Rosemary passed her GED, and was the first woman to be hired by a San Antonio-based construction company. She is now a certified heavy equipment operator and part owner of her own company. She makes more money in one week than

she used to have in one month to support her five children through welfare.

"I am very proud of my work, and my kids are too."

Lupe Anguiano took a dream and turned it into a reality. She wants to reform the welfare system so that it may benefit the many women who dream of escaping it. Her main focus is to help these women find new dignity and success in their lives.

Lupe found that the women receiving Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) did in fact want to work, but were unable to if they collected AFDC. The women generally hated welfare, were eager for jobs, and wanted to be free of the system. Lupe also found that these women lacked information, skills training, and were in need of child care and transportation. They wanted to be self-sufficient and self-supporting. To obtain this wish, they needed to get off welfare and into the work force.

Terri Martinez was one of those women. Alone with three children after her husband abandoned her, Terri wanted to get off welfare and pursue a secretarial career. Through Lupe's program she was sent to adult education classes at a high school in her area and was later hired as a secretary for Southwestern Bell. Terri is currently a manager for the company.



Fran Tonachella
Rosemary Campos
Patricia Lawrence

In November of 1973, the "Let's Get Off Welfare Campaign" was the starting point for the Women's Employment and Education Model Program. It was later renamed National Women's Employment and Education, (NWEE). Lupe made AFDC welfare reform her priority issue; she dedicated her future, her savings, and her time to a cause she knew was worthwhile. How was she to convince a doubtful nation of her genuine convictions?

Lupe went to San Antonio, Texas, moved into the housing projects with women, and introduced her program to them. The women greeted her warmly and chose to follow her training, freeing themselves from welfare. Relentlessly following her heart, Lupe put all her money into the project. She had nothing left but her drive to help these women who were desperate to gain their independence from welfare. With help from the private sector, Lupe got in touch with companies which would be hiring within a month. She then trained the women in the job that would be opening, and they were interviewed with other applicants.

NWEE includes a three week readiness program, with a one year follow-up. The women are taught everything from writing resumes and interviewing to good grooming habits. Transportation and child care are also provided. The program stresses counseling for the woman not only before a job, but also during the stressful times while she gets accustomed to working. When NWEE proved successful in San Antonio, reform in other states was also attempted.

Los Angeles is now the new target for the project. It is the model demonstration site, where Lupe is implementing everything she has learned since 1973. NWEE wants to make Los Angeles the "perfected model." The goal is eventually to invite the public, private sector and other social services in to see how well the program is working. NWEE could also show the community that jobs are available, and if program staff can work with the women, their budgets,

and their experience, successful job placement is possible.

In Los Angeles, the program has received support from many corporate sponsors such as the Southern California Gas Company, The United Way, Xerox and Prudential Insurance. First Lady Barbara Bush, very active in the organization, has given much time and assistance to NWEE, and is on the Honorary Board of Governors. The Board of Directors

"The program's goal is to improve the quality of life of women and their children through economic self-sufficiency. It represents a realistic and effective way out of poverty and the dehumanizing welfare cycle."

includes representatives from companies such as Hughes Aircraft, Southern California Gas Company, and McDonnell Douglas-West and is being supported entirely by private funding.

According to Lupe: "The key is that you need to start with jobs first, and use existing personnel hiring systems . . . subsidizing employers doesn't work."

Lupe is very pleased with the program's progress. In Los Angeles

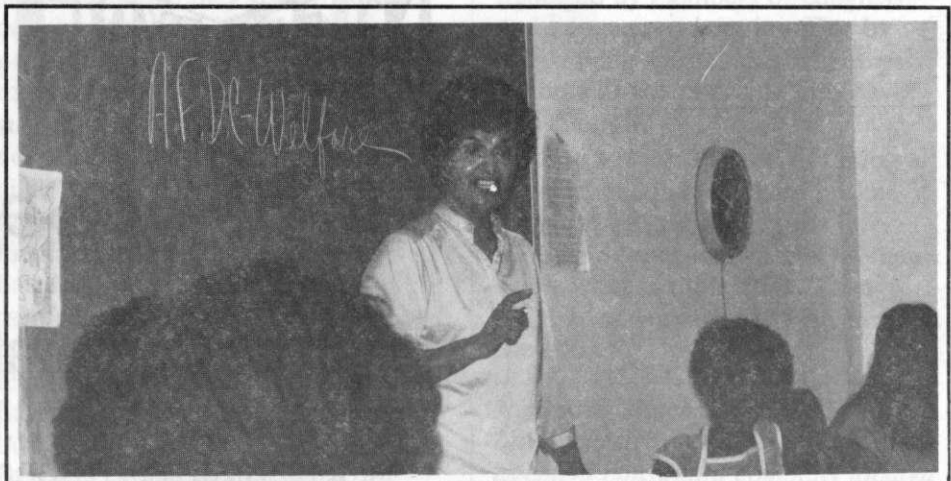
it has obtained good relations with the Welfare Department, which shows that the department feels NWEE is effective. NWEE has benefited over 3,500 women, and 88 percent are still working today. That equals a promising future.

Thanks to Lupe's program, Anna is now enjoying a position specially developed for her at Lincoln Hospital in New York City. Anna heard about NWEE from a friend in a local housing project. A mother of two children, Anna traded in her welfare check for the salary of a file clerk at J.C. Penney's. She later landed the job at Lincoln Hospital where she had volunteered as a child and was well remembered as a hard worker.

Lupe's dream is to take the program to Congress, and illustrate the need for welfare restructuring. The best outcome for all involved would be to change welfare from income maintenance to education and training with one year follow-up. Lupe projects that eighty-five percent of welfare recipients could be moved into employment under the program. While it would help a woman maintain pride and dignity, it would also mean a \$20 billion savings to the welfare program. The money saved in income maintenance would be used to support job training.

Today, the majority of public assistance programs provide subsistence support with no effective plan

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Lupe, teaching a class of women who are determined get out of the welfare system.

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to train recipients to end their dependence. This damages individual pride and dignity. Lupe Anguiano recognized that women did not want a charity program, instead they wanted job training, along with emergency assistance until they were secure in a job. She has selflessly dedicated her life to helping these women get into the job-force.

Lupe Anguiano, born in La Junta, Colorado, was the fourth daughter of migrant workers who fled Mexico after its Revolution. Her parents gave her the determination to succeed; her mother taught her that everyone is capable of love, happiness, and success, but one needs the desire to attain these traits.

Education was very important to her parents, as she and her sister were the first in their family to graduate from high school. Her family always stressed the importance of God in their lives, and Lupe later realized she wanted to be a nun. After graduating from junior college in Ventura,

California, Lupe entered the Victory Noll Convent in Indiana. Her convent assignment was teaching elementary and secondary education.

She found the most satisfaction from teaching, for she felt she could help by motivating and challenging children. As Lupe grew more concerned with the community and its problems, she felt the Church hindered her abilities to express her personal beliefs. Lupe felt she had to follow her calling to help others. On July 8, 1964, within one month of her request, Rome granted her secularization. This relinquished her duties in the church after fifteen years of service. She began working immediately with the community, and has not stopped since.

Lupe received the Wonder Woman Award in New York for dedication to her work. She received President Reagan's Volunteer Action Award for helping make America "a better and more generous land." And, in San Antonio, Texas, Barbara Bush and

Governor William P. Clements honored Lupe for her efforts in the advancement of women.

Because of Lupe's sincere involvement with people, she has come a long way. But the road has not been easy. She has been discouraged many times, but her firm beliefs, and the joyous rewards of seeing grateful women, have kept her going. She will not give up, no matter how hard it may seem to convince local and national governments that her cause is operable and reliable. Lupe Anguiano is unquestionably a Renaissance Woman in the heart of a challenging nation. For more information on the National Women's Employment and Education (NWEE) write to:

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Who Can Make a
Difference...

Lupe Anguiano

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