



ABSTRACT

Under the auspices of the UN Women's Empower Women Champions for Change in 2016 -2017, Inclusive for Women Inc. launched a new initiative, HerHub.

HerHub is an online platform that provides the Northwest Ohio community with women-centered events, listings of the local women-owned businesses, women's groups and organizations.

By providing this resource, the organization aim to enhance and elevate the visibility of the existing women's groups, women owned businesses and activities in the area.

As a result, it will strengthen the local economy through marketplace and workplace by connecting our female communities to the right networking and development opportunities, as well as promote and support female-owned businesses.

HerHub: www.419herhub.org

Nina Corder

Managing Director

Email: nina@womenoftoledo.org

Phone: 419.377.5457

Last update 03.15.2021



Overview

We all agree that empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families, and communities. The organization believes a collaborative dynamic platform is a key in efforts to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment in our region.

Inclusive for Women Inc DBA Women of Toledo, a nonprofit 501c3 organization's leadership team spent almost a year organizing listening sessions, dialogues, and focus groups with leaders within women's groups and members of our community. It became apparent that almost all the groups are trying to accomplish the same thing when it comes to women's empowerment activities, social progress efforts, and economic development. In a city with a population of over 280,000 people (51.6% female), it is important that we develop more collective efforts and working together for the betterment of our community (U.S. Census Bureau, as of July 2016). Also, according to the census data, The City of Toledo has over 8,000 women-owned out of 17,000 businesses reported in 2015. Hence, such platforms could provide visibility for these 8,000 women-owned businesses and improve the sharing of evidence, resources, experiences, and good practices in support of women's economic empowerment. Current research demonstrates that diversity helps businesses perform better signals that self-interest and common interest can come together. Yet, ensuring the inclusion of women's talents, skills, and energies from executive offices to the factory floor and supply chains, requires intentional actions and visibility.

To clarify, HerHub is not a networking group or another nonprofit organization. It is an initiative that using **digital technology** especially social media platforms to get other networking groups, women's organizations, women-owned businesses, and women's groups to connect.

In early 2017, we begin to facilitate a focus group and listening session surrounding this topic with a focus on economic empowerment discussion. A group of 12 women leaders continues meeting and connecting with other individuals, including women's groups, women-owned businesses, community leaders independently in regard to this initiative. It is becoming apparent that many groups, organizations, and agencies were operating in silos, each striving to build women's empowerment and economic development. In conclusion, we all agree that there are many women organizations or women-focused events in the Greater area; however, no one is communicating around the current events or sharing the resources or information on what, and where are all this happening.

A foundational idea of a 'hub' was established. Northwest Ohio needs a platform and/or a 'hub' where other networking groups, women organizations, women-owned businesses, and women groups connecting. Our region is filled with abundant



resources, services, activities, and great groups in our community. And we believe we just need them to connect in the same space, contribute and collaborate at working towards common or share goals.

HerHub approach can help women's groups learn what others are doing; develop ways to build strength by numbers; address duplication and overlap and achieve more via collaboration and networking. Besides, it will increase effectiveness at achieving high impact for positive social progress and economic empowerment in the community. Current research indicates that collaboration helps businesses perform better, diversity within women's groups can enhance their performance as well. The collaborative effort under the HerHub initiatives will become a force multiplier by connecting individuals and groups, and enhancing the time, talent, and resources invested.

In Summer 2017, we begin the mapping research project where our team identified a total of 79 organizations in Northwest Ohio with mission, goals, and objections that focus on women and girls. A connection has been made, and we introduce the concept of the HerHub platform to many of these leaders of these organizations and for start-ups, we committed a total of 22 organizations interested to be part of this initiative. ***Please refer to the Mapping of Group and Organization document as a supporting document to this concept paper.*

Currently, our task team continues the effort for a connection with all the leaders and organizations in the mapping reporting, with an opportunity to introducing HerHub Initiative. We are also actively seeking financial support to continue building and developing this platform, starting with the website www.419herhub.org

Market Research:

We believe working together is more effective at achieving high impact for positive social progress for our community. Greater Toledo is up to a lot of potentials and together, we can make it an even better place to work, live, mentor, and raise the next generation with great economic empowerment.

More than ever, we are committed to serve and support our female community members to elevate their quality of lives not just within our organization's programs and services, but enhance our community by helping women find the right opportunities, networks, and resources for personal & professional connection and growth outside our walls. Also, by providing this resource we hope to encourage and build confidence for new women businesses and enhance & elevate the visibility of the existing women's groups, businesses, and events by building a large, diverse, inclusive, comprehensive community of women supporting women.

Our mission at HerHub is to connect women, resources, businesses, and organizations in the Toledo, Ohio area through an online HUB that will expand HER reach. Therefore,



HerHub is not another group, programs, events, or organizations but an initiative that curated a connection and collaboration, among others. We believe in supporting each other in ways that will create stronger relationships between ourselves, our communities, and ultimately, our world. In a nutshell, HerHub is a one-stop-shop connection or resources to local women's development and economic advancement opportunities in Northwest Ohio.

The strategy behind HerHub is to create a digital platform that effectively fosters a collaborative environment where we curate introductions and offer opportunities within other women's groups, mission-driven organizations, businesses, and non-profit organizations in Northwest Ohio. Through this, we can provide a platform that is effective at building upon the strength of others.

HerHub thrives on its original statements to be:

- Inclusive by connecting organizations and businesses.
- Approachable through an online platform.
- Trustworthy in our mission to share reliable resources.
- Dedicated to women's empowerment.
- Compassionate in our care for one another.

In addition to our objective to strengthen women's economic empowerment in Northwest Ohio, the UN - Women's Empowerment Principles offer practical guidance to businesses and private sectors on ways to empower women in the workplace, marketplace, and community. Developed through a partnership between UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact, the Principles are designed to support companies in reviewing existing policies and practices—or establishing new ones—to better support the empowerment of women.

Governing Structure: HerHub is fortunate enough to fall under the governance of a nonprofit Inclusive for Women Inc DBA Women of Toledo, 501c3. The leadership was empowered by the goals to create initiatives that connect women, resources, local businesses, and organizations through an online digital HUB. Through this, we strive to create opportunities, ideas, and conversations that will lead to women's economic advancement in the area.

HerHub Initiatives will offer a collaborative coworking community platform designed for women to connect, communicate, contribute, and collaborate. HerHub Component: Part of our overall mission at HerHub is to create one space where connections happen. Our directory and map will facilitate this process by providing access to:

- Non-profit events and organizations: creating a way to spread awareness for these amazing causes. We aim to be the central hub for women's non-profit events.



- Female-owned businesses: to help advertise and support female-owned businesses in Toledo through our directory and map as well as through shout-outs on social media, our Facebook group, blogs, podcasts and so much more.
 - Local authors: Any local female published author can list their book for FREE in our women authors section, which is also featured on our home page.
 - Programs/Events: any member of HerHub, business or nonprofit, can submit their events to our events calendar and we will help display and promote them.
 - Volunteer Opportunity: matching women based on their talents and needs with volunteer opportunities within the community.
- Virtual Mentorship & Mastermind: A membership to HerHub gives you access to our Facebook mastermind group where you will be able to connect with mentors and begin a journey of self-empowerment and growth 24/7.
- HerHub's Events Calendar: We want to create a space where our members can be an active part of our online community. Therefore, we want to encourage any member, business, or non-profit of HerHub to submit their events to our events calendar and we will be more than happy to display and promote them!

As part of this also, we hope to support and spread awareness for women-focused nonprofit groups and organizations. HerHub strives to provide information on an online platform with connections to other women's businesses, organizations, events, workshops, tools, and resources for self-development and visibility within the community.

Current research indicates that collaboration helps businesses perform better, and diversity within women's groups can enhance performance, bring innovations, and overall happiness. The collaborative effort under the HerHub initiatives will become a force multiplier, enhancing the time, talent, and resources invested. It is our goal to bring these options to one place, enabling everyone the opportunity to connect and empower one another.

New and Belong

HerHub aims at helping women connect and grow through professional development, volunteer, and advocacy opportunities while exploring their sense of belonging.

Case Study A: Julie is new to Toledo and does not feel part of the community yet but wants to meet new people and build connections. A colleague recommends HerHub as a starting point. After searching for the types of opportunities that fit her interest and her schedule, Julie attends a few events hosted at local women-owned businesses. She uses HerHub as a resource to find more ongoing opportunities to serve as a volunteer committee member. Julie is now on two boards and excited to be part of the Greater Toledo community. Julie also enjoying purchasing coffee from local coffee shops of women-owned businesses.



Case Study B:

A Manager, Allison at SSOE in downtown Toledo reach out to HerHub Program Manager as her company is looking to increase their support for minority-owned companies, suppliers, or vendors that is near to their office. SSOE also has been reviewing their dollars spent in the local community of their various offices and has realized that women-owned and minority-owned companies are under-represented. Our Program Manager was able to share the online directory and provide a listing of women-owned businesses under HerHub with a map option, where Allison was able to pinpoint all businesses in the downtown Toledo area.

Testimonial from Case Study B:

“Thank you! This is good information- SSOE has been reviewing our dollars spent in the local community of our various offices and has realized that women-owned and minority-owned companies are under-represented. We are hoping to engage them for various services that our company might need. Your list is very extensive, I am guessing that we will be able to sort it to companies who potential vendors to us are. Catering, marketing, printing, etc. are viable opportunities for us to pursue. I will also follow the links that you provided to your website and pass that information along to the company” – Allison.

Mastermind Group: Our Facebook Mastermind group is an extension of HerHub. It is accessible to all our members and is a way for our members to connect to more women in our community as well as find mentorship in an intimate setting. Here, at HerHub we all come from different backgrounds and industries, but we share two common goals:

- To be successful and purposeful within our professional and personal lives.
- To learn from and support other incredible women.

Our organization does believe, our community is meant to give you a place where you are fully seen, heard, valued, and understood. HerHub members will get access to the knowledge and wisdom of empowering female mentors! We strive to create a space where you will always be able to reach out for advice and resources provided by other women. HerHub is the perfect place to gain wisdom, inspiration, collaboration, and personal & professional development. Our members will be able to obtain the opportunity to join and be a part of data-driven programs and long-standing services established through our governing organization, Women of Toledo. The program and services include technical & non-technical assistance, Peer-Network Mastermind, and Mentorship Circle.

Also, HerHub members will receive support from Toledo Business Growth Collaborative (TBGC), convened by HerHub Founding Partner, JumpStart. Learn more about the program initiative here: [Economic Development](#)



New Development Fall 2020/2021: HerHub Toledo introduces a Subscription Box of products curated by local women-owned businesses presented by HerHub. “For Her by Her” is a subscription box of curated products by local, women-owned businesses, authors, and artists.

In response to Covid-19 challenges, our task team has created this opportunity to help local women-owned business members sustain and expand their customer base delivering their products to the doorsteps of potential new customers. Businesses scramble to pivot in these uncertain times to create or improve their e-commerce and find ways to still be visible with closed doors. With ‘For Her by Her’ subscription boxes, we can improve the visibility and expose our community to the amazing women-owned businesses in our community. In addition to sampling the new products quarterly, customers will be able to read about the business owners, their stories, and businesses in our box booklet. Read more here: [For Her By Her](#)

Network Gap: Because women of color remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination, and exploitation. According to Garlinghouse, Head of Social Impact at LinkedIn “Two people with equal talent should have equal access to opportunity. But some people do not have the right connections or community to help them land the job or business opportunity they want.”

LinkedIn coined the phrase 'Network Gap'.

It defines a lack of access to social capital for certain communities. The Network Gap is both a symptom and an amplifier of inequality. Just as COVID-19 has disproportionately affected communities of color, it has also exacerbated the gap in access to professional and business networking.

We know in this country, we hold on tight to the idea that meritocracy is real: that is, that advancement is based solely on performance and merit. According to robust data collected by LinkedIn and research by Forbes Women, “the locations we grow up in, the schools we go to, the places we work, and the marketplace we do business, can give us a 12x advantage in accessing the professional or business opportunities”. In simple terms, if you live in a wealthy neighborhood, you are three times more likely to have a strong professional network, whereas attending a leading university renders you twice as likely to have one. – Forbes Women.

This data begs an important question: What happens if you were not born into opportunity, or you do not have access to a professional network that can be a source of referrals? In other words, what happens when you do not have the networks needed to get economy opportunity and businesses referrals that is right for you?



“For the past few decades, economists, governments, and private-sector professionals have focused on solutions such as accessible, quality education to bridge the skills divide, among many other fixes. But an often-overlooked asset to address economic inequality in business networking” -Julie Wuench.

This problem is most prevalent for women and minorities. Compared to white men, white women are 12% less likely to receive a referral, men of color are 26% less likely, and women of color are 35% less likely, according to a recent study. According to findings from researcher Steve McDonald, those in white male networks also receive twice as many leads as people in female and minority networks.

Network Gap is not new, and certainly not in our community. The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified this gap, disproportionately impacting female communities that were already facing barriers in the workplace and marketplace. This means that networking will become even more important as people look for new jobs, and opportunities to grow their business.

How are the organization helping and planning to close the network gap?

We have been working at bridging the network gap since the establishment of our No Women Left Behind (NWLB) Fund. NWLB Fund is a scholarship that helps other women to have the same visibility and opportunity to attend any ticketed program within our organization and direct support to their basic human needs or foundation well-being.

In Fall 2019, we were able to assist our female community members to attend group or organization activities, professional development, networking, and training workshops beyond our programming and services offered. Three of our HerHub members now have access to Business Networking International (BNI).

With the HerHub initiative, we hope to encourage and build confidence for new women-owned businesses and elevate the visibility of the existing women’s groups, businesses, and events by building a large, diverse, inclusive, comprehensive community of women supporting women network. We are seeking investment and funding not only to help jumpstart our local economy but also to extend an opportunity to minority women-owned businesses to expand the way they network and help bridge the network gap. We intentionally help boost the visibility, and opportunity for minority women-owned businesses with access to the next level of social capital. Similar to the Gender Wage Gap, we must also acknowledge that the Network Gap is real. We must be intentional at exploring how we can contribute to these efforts. Those with social capital have the power to help close it. If everyone can commit to opening their network to just one person who lacks access, we will make enormous progress.



Diversity & Inclusion

Celebrating Heritage Months is a culture embedded with Women of Toledo's foundation to nurture and support the goal of learning from the past and reflecting on the present to create a more equitable future. As we acknowledge the progress we have made, it is important to recognize what we've yet to accomplish and finds the purpose to keep moving forward by empowering ourselves and others. In response to the pandemic and social injustices, more than ever we are committed to serving and supporting Toledo's diverse community through our digital resources, networking, mentoring, and social media marketing to create outreach, and awareness to sustain and maintain a connection during these uncertain times.

To support this goal in 2021, Women of Toledo will continue creating community awareness and outreach through HerHub, to continue educating, engaging, and empowering our community at large on the importance to preserve our cultural diversity and heritage because it keeps our integrity as people. Women within our communities evolve and grow, our young women need to be informed of their own culture and feel empowered to be themselves.

We want to create a space that offers our community members an opportunity to experience the heart, emotion empathy, care, concern – all the content that grabs you and reminds you what being human is all about and respects other cultural heritage, and race-ethnicity. We believe, by doing so we can create an inclusive space for our community members to connect, communicate, collaborate, and contribute towards change, be present, always with those we serve.

Celebrate
BLACK HISTORY MONTH
Art, Food & Soul
 A Showcase of local Black Women Owned Businesses
 Feb. 25th, 4pm-7:30pm @ Fowl & Fodder Downtown Toledo

Featured Artist: Cydnee Moore

FOOD
 Advocado & Cheese Charcuterie
 avocadoandcheese.com
 Island Soul
 facebook.com/islandsoul.llc
 Hot Box Bistro
 facebook.com/hotboxorder
 Be Sweet Treats
 facebook.com/besweettreats419

ART
 HerHub Black Women Owned Businesses

Ark Restoration & Construction
 Marissa Miller/Ark

Mitchell Dermatology
 Dr. Mitchell

Beautifully & Wonderfully Made
 Courtney Collins/Beautifully

Shakhan Kelly Photography

The Rainald Group
 Dr. Rainald McClean

Synergy Engagement
 Jennifer Synergy

Diana Patton Consulting
 Diana Patton

Elite Karate Fitness & Wellness
 Lisa Nelson

Toledo J'Day Junk Removal
 J'Day Junk Removal

Savvy D'Vine Boutiques
 Tasha D'Vine

Be Sweet Treats
 Candi Hunt

Janelle Massey
 Janelle Massey

Nurse Education Solutions
 Michelle

HotBox Bistro
 Robin Brown

Advocado & Cheese
 Avocado & Cheese

Five Star Quality Cleaning
 Tasha Massey

Manding Peace
 Manding Peace

Art by Cyd
 Cydnee Moore

Island Soul Cuisine
 Island Soul Cuisine

Presenting Partners: MANSOUR & ASSOCIATES

www.419herhub.org | info@blackhistoryhercreatejoy.com

Black History Month:

HerHub prides itself on the diversity of membership within our support network, and continues to find ways not only to elevate but also highlight and celebrate minority businesses, but also decrease the network gap that exists among women of color business owners through our “Art, Food and Soul: A Showcase of local Black Women-Owned Businesses” in conjunction with Black History Month, Thursday, Feb. 25th.