



BETTIE BRAND MOTHERS' EMPOWERMENT FUND NEWSLETTER

Resilience, Courage, and Transformation: Jessica Reed Embodies It All

Meet Jessica Reed. If you know her, you know that nothing keeps her down. If you've met her only once, you'd still walk away with the same impression.

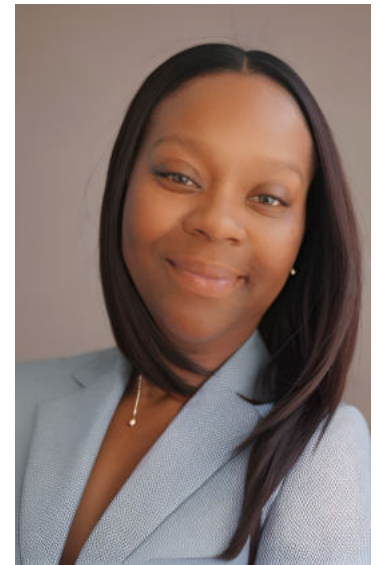
A Journey of Courage

Jessica's dedication and focus gave her the courage to leave an abusive marriage and build a better life for herself and her son. In her own words: "I am working diligently to break every mold that says I will not find success due to lack of education, that I will earn less, and that I will live a life riddled with poverty. No matter how overwhelming life's challenges become, I plan to persevere."

As a single mom, Jessica earned a bachelor's degree in business administration over six years while holding down a full-time job, raising her son, and starting her own business as a virtual secretary. Receiving her degree was a great accomplishment, but despite her hard work, the job prospects were still low-paying.

A Hand Up, Not a Handout

Jessica learned about the Bettie Brand Mothers' Empowerment Fund through her volunteer work with the Fulton Atlanta Community Action Authority, who nominated her for the Joyce Shlesinger Spirit Award. That award changed everything. With a hand up from the Bettie Brand Fund, Jessica was able to pursue her master's degree in business administration (MBA). The support allowed her to stay the course, avoid accumulating student debt, and realize the fruits of her hard work. She reflects that the fund empowered her to live a life "that is productive, positive, and



inspiring."

A Bright Future

In 2021, Jessica completed her MBA, which catapulted her career in human resources from a low-paying coordinator position to a high-level director role. Her new competitive salary brought her financial security and more time to enjoy life with her son.

In 2024, Jessica accepted a new remote HR position that allows her to homeschool her son while working for a company that genuinely cares for her professionally and personally. "This is the happiest I have ever been. I am in a place of peace and so thankful and humble. I am truly enjoying life. I am a bright light from the inside and out." Her transformation hasn't gone unnoticed by friends and colleagues, who have seen her growth. She's now a mentor and role model, using her experience to inspire others.

Jessica Reed's story is a testament to what can be achieved with determination and a little help. Her journey proves that it's never too late to turn a new page and make a meaningful difference—not just in your own life, but in the lives of others.

Please consider pledging your support to the Bettie Brand Mothers' Empowerment Fund to help more women like Jessica break through barriers and build brighter futures for themselves and their families.

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Board of Directors Spotlight - Christina Gulas, Esq.



Christina is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania but Atlanta has been her home for nearly 20 years. Christina is an attorney and partner at Bovis, Kyle, Burch & Medlin, LLC where she defends individuals and companies in personal injury lawsuits. Christina is married to a native Atlantan, Neil Wadhvani. Their son, Noah is currently in pre-school at Suzuki and is 4 years old. On August 13, 2024, they welcomed a second son, Weston Neil Wadhvani. Noah is thrilled to be a big brother, and Christina and Neil are soaking up all the baby snuggles.

Christina joined Bettie Brand, as she is passionate about the charity's mission to "provide women in need with a hand up, not a hand out."

"I believe that empowering women is key to creating a more equitable society. I have a tremendous amount of respect for my own mother and for the work of all women before me which has allowed me to live the life I always dreamed. I know that many women are not so fortunate. I am at a point in my legal career and personal life that I would like to spend more time giving back."

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Nominate a 2025 Spirit Awardee Nominations Open Until November 15

The Bettie Brand Mothers' Empowerment Fund is accepting 2025 Spirit Award nominations until **November 15, 2024**. The nomination application period is from **August 15 to November 15, 2024**. The Spirit Award winners will be announced in January 2025.

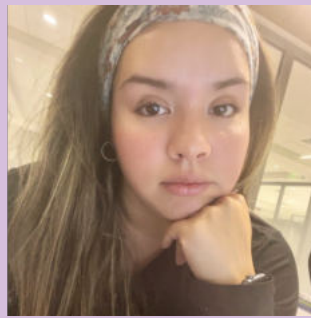
In order to nominate candidates, there are two forms that must be

completed for a woman to be considered for an award. One is a Partner Organization Recommendation form, to be completed by the nominating organization, and the other is a Candidate Application form, to be completed by the candidate herself.

Both forms will be available at <https://www.bettiebrand.org/application> during the open application period from August 15 to November 15, 2024.

If you have any questions, contact BBMEF at Spirit.Award@bettiebrand.org or our administrative assistant David Haag at 404-285-8790.

Explore the stories of our 2024 Spirit Awardees below by clicking on each photo.



Automatic monthly and/or annual donation giving is now available!

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Bettie Brand Mothers' Empowerment Fund Mission:

The Bettie Brand fund gives stipends to “provide women in need with a hand up, not a hand out, so they may live with dignity and independence.”

Women chosen to receive stipends from the Bettie Brand Fund must agree to “pay it forward” in whatever way they can.



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