



BETTIE BRAND MOTHERS' EMPOWERMENT FUND NEWSLETTER

Current Board Member and Former Spirit Awardee Recognized

Congratulations to April Ross, Esq., MBA, for receiving:

- Induction into the YWCA Greater Atlanta Academy of Women Achievers. Since its inception in 1984, the YWCA Academy of Women Achievers includes 300 women who are making a difference in the lives of many.
- The Bensonetta Tipton Lane Award for "Commitment to the Family" by the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys.



April currently serves as the Executive Director for the Georgia Commission on Family Violence. A graduate of Emory University School of Law and a member of the Georgia Bar since 2011, she began her professional career in marketing before pursuing a law degree. Ross obtained her MBA and Bachelor of Science in Business degrees from Florida A & M University.

Ross began her legal career as an Assistant District Attorney at the Fulton County District Attorney's Office. As a young prosecutor, Ross worked on various cases before being assigned to the investigation and trial team for the Atlanta Public Schools cheating scandal, where she made notable contributions. On April 25, 2014, Ross's life was tragically altered when her estranged husband shot her multiple times after she filed for divorce. The attack left her paralyzed from the chest down.

Since the shooting, Ross has advocated for implementing policies and systemic responses to domestic violence in Georgia that enhance safety for victims, enforce accountability for abusers, and help survivors of abusive relationships reclaim their lives. She is also a strong believer in awareness and prevention. Ross works to educate the public about recognizing early signs and safely

escaping abusive relationships. She facilitates training and speaks to survivors, students, the law enforcement community, victim advocacy organizations, and the public and private sectors to foster understanding, allyship, and energy for change against the epidemic of abuse and violence in both family and intimate partner relationships. Ross volunteers as a peer support mentor for patients at the Shepherd Center with recent spinal cord injuries, particularly those whose injury was the result of domestic abuse and/or gun violence.

DONATE TODAY



A Taste of Love - Dishes to Honor a Mother's Legacy

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Thank you for coming together for our virtual culinary cooking class, "A Taste of Love - Dishes to Honor a Mother's Legacy," just before Mother's Day. Held on May 9th, this event wasn't just about delightful dishes—it was a celebration of the profound strength and nurturing spirit of mothers everywhere, echoed in every bite prepared by our incredible chef. Thanks to you we raised over \$48,534. This support will help us change even more women's lives, and you are a vital part of that transformation.

Culinary Magic with Chef Daryl Shular

We were fortunate again to have Certified Master Chef Daryl Shular leading our kitchen, guiding us through a menu that celebrated both culinary art and the spirit of motherhood. Each dish he crafted was more than just a meal—it was a memory, woven with stories of love and dedication. Chef Shular's passion for cooking brought a special warmth to the evening, making it truly memorable for all who attended.

When a Master Chef Meets a Master Sergeant

Imagine the magic that unfolds when a Master Chef like Daryl Shular teams up with a hero like Master Sergeant Pat Baisden. Pat, who served our country for over 30 years, brought her own kind of bravery to the table. Despite retiring with challenges like PTSD and personal health issues, her spirit remains unbroken. She's on a mission to regain her strength and help others along the way. Thanks to your support, we've provided Pat with a multi-year gym membership, personal workout equipment, and a

scholarship for her personal training certification. It's her turn to be her best self again, inspired by the same community spirit that our event celebrated. Pat now contributes to her community by helping fellow veterans in need and fighting childhood obesity.

Missed the Culinary Cooking Class Launch? Want to Contribute?

Whether you missed the virtual cooking class launch on May 9th or simply wish to experience the magic again, we've got you covered. For those who have already contributed but haven't watched the video yet, remember that it can be accessed at any time—your link to view is always active.

For those who want to experience the enchantment for the first time, a donation of \$50 or more not only supports our ongoing mission but also grants you access to this year's culinary cooking class, along with past classes. Your support is crucial as we continue to uplift and empower those women in need, weaving more stories of transformation and hope.

Click below to donate and we will provide you with access to our virtual culinary cooking classes.

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Congratulations to the lucky winners of the prize drawings for the May 9th event and our thanks to those who so generously donated the prizes!

- **Mary Pryles** won the In-Home Dinner for 6, provided by Chef Daryl Shular of [Daryl Shular Hospitality Group](#)
 - **Gina Vino** won the Dinner for 10 in the Ted's Room at [Ted's Montana Grill](#), provided by George McKerrow
 - **Jennifer Rose** won the Dessert for 20 from [CheeseCaked](#), provided by Shawn Brown
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Host a Circle of Friends Gathering*

In our quest to help more women, we are inviting our friends to invite their friends to a Circle of Friends event. Hosting a Circle of Friends gathering can be an intimate coffee discussion at your home or restaurant or something larger. The Bettie Brand Fund board and staff are happy to assist with planning and attending.

In the first half of 2024, two wonderful Circle of Friends events were hosted. The first was on January 25th in the home of Russell Clarke. The second was on March 25th at Canoe Restaurant and hosted by Deborah Schwartz Griffin and George McKerrow. Each provided an atmosphere of sharing over food and drink, with BBMEF Founder Candy Kaspers providing an overview of the organization and stories of our courageous Spirit Awardees. Spirit Awardee April Ross gave a powerful presentation at the Canoe event.

*If you are interested in hosting a gathering, contact our administrative assistant, David Haag, at info@bettiebrand.org

DONATE TODAY

2025 Spirit Award Nominations Open on August 15

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

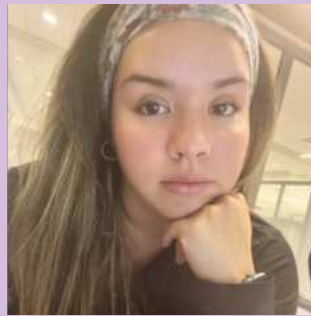
In order to nominate candidates, there are two forms that must be completed for a woman to be considered for an award. One is a Partner Organization Recommendation form, to be completed by the nominating organization, and the other is a Candidate Application form, to be completed by the candidate herself.

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!

[Give Monthly](#)

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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