Speaker 1:

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Nicki Donnelson:

As women leave an abusive situation, they seek emergency shelter. Then, as they imagine a new, safer, better life, they can move to transitional, independent living. There, they gain skills and access community resources to get back on their feet. That's where organizations like the Rebound Foundation come in. I'm Nicki Donaldson. Today as my guests, I have Christina Ford, President and CEO of the Rebound Foundation, as well as two Missouri State University faculty in the College of Education, Annice McLean and Dr. Ching-Wen Chang. They are here to discuss how a class assignment in Management 440, Leadership and Development Skills has spurred on a partnership and a shared passion for serving these ladies. Ford tells us about the women served.

Christina Ford:

So the women that we help out with Rebound Foundation is really women who are in shelter and it's due to domestic violence. They are typical women that just don't have a next step and they actually need one. They need that time to either work on goals or just get some more skill sets or save some money, before they become independent. And so we're kind of have that transition between shelter and then independent living. We have two homes here in Springfield, that we house our women in and we just walk alongside them to support them. And so we kind of meet their needs, which is how this partnership came about because we kind of listened to what they need. We treat everyone as an individual. And so they live in our, what we call our hardest house homes.

Nicki Donnelson:

Students in a business management class had been assigned to assess a community organizations' gaps or needs. McLean shares about how her involvement began.

Annice McLean:

They worked with Christina and found out that the need for technology, help with technology and more experience with technology was one of the gaps that could be keeping them from moving to the next step or making it more difficult to move to the next step. So we were contacted in the College of Education to see if we could participate and provide that training. We jumped at the chance to be involved, to offer our support for different areas of technology that were tailored to each individual in the house.

Nicki Donnelson:

Since Ford relocated to Springfield in 2018, she has appreciated how students in the greater community really value volunteerism and giving back.

Christina Ford:

For this, it was a class assignment that they had to come up with this research and this project for marketing and help nonprofit organizations in our community. But however, they were very passionate about it as well. And so they really did want to fulfill that need for us, which was providing tech courses to our women residents. So they found us the right professors, that really joined in and were passionate as well, just about giving back their time and what they're good at. So we found it's really matching it together, they really cared and they were really involved in that initial partnership, making sure that we were comfortable going forward without them. And so that meant a lot because they really could have just turned the work in, said we've done our part, but they really wanted to walk alongside us and make sure that we were good to go in our partnership.

Nicki Donnelson:

The three met to develop a plan and developed an initial list of basic information they thought would be relevant to anyone new to computers. Chang elaborates.

Dr. Ching-Wen Chang:

Because we never met those ladies yet and so we want to know what kind of skills or lessons they'll be interested in. And mostly, help them to be able to move on with their situation. They're at different age groups and different background, different skill sets, then they have different needs. Annice and I came out with very basic thinking, this probably most people would need to know, kind of basic lesson and thinking once we met with them, we probably will get a better sense and we can adjust our lesson to tailor to what the individual would need.

Annice McLean:

They guided us into what information they needed. If they were taking a class, a college class, then we help them navigate through creating a video for a college class. There are very specific tasks that they needed to know about and how to do that, maybe they weren't comfortable with.

Nicki Donnelson:

While this is one example of using your talents to improve someone else's experience, Ford says everyone has something they could give.

Christina Ford:

We really rely heavily on volunteers, financial donations, and really people... How this partnership came about that have a profession or trade or that's their career, and they're good at what they do is to say, "Hey, I might not be able to do this or provide financially, but I can provide my time and service to help the organization." And that's really what it takes is just everybody coming in with their expertise and kind of helping our ladies along the way, and also helping our organization.

Nicki Donnelson:

That was Christina Ford, Annice McLean and Dr. Ching-Wen Chang. For more information, visit thereboundfound.org.

Speaker 6:

For more information, contact the Office of University Communications at 417-836-6397.