



Here's what's new with the Five Pearls Foundation

“It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.”

— Mother Teresa

## Happy Holidays from Five Pearls Foundation!

As the holiday festivities begin and the year winds down, please join us as we continue to celebrate our partnerships. For the remainder of the year, we are excited to showcase our supporters, donors and partners in service as we continue to encourage our communities worldwide to give.

## Support the Five Pearls Foundation with your Capital One Credit rewards!

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## Congratulations to the 2015 recipient of the Lori C. Pemberton Memorial Scholarship

The Five Foundation wishes Samantha A. Salmon from Townson University continued success with her academic achievements. Keep up the great work!

## Profiles of Service Excellence

*Volunteer Spotlight Shanton Simpson*

**For our Volunteer Spotlight Series, we will showcase the dedication and service of the extraordinary women who have been spearheading the foundation's core programs and contributing to our mission. We interviewed each of these Trailblazers, and discovered that rooted in their hearts is an unwavering commitment to service, collective wisdom and inspiration to give back and prepare our children for the future. This is part two of a three part series.**

An enthusiastic and vibrant member of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Shanton Simpson's journey with the Five Pearls Foundation began early during her undergraduate curriculum, where she embarked on several leadership roles. Shanton reflects happily on her initial reaction after meeting Board Chair, Cheryl Pemberton, as a pivotal moment in 2004, invoking a sentiment where she felt “Cheryl had this energy where you can't help but pick up on. We had the same vision.” This vision that she alludes to was cultivated very early on at the age of eight, instilling the idea that someday, her future would entail working with youth directly and making impact in the community. With these ideas planted in her head since childhood, Shanton pursued her love of community service in various capacities. Having grown up in one of the roughest housing developments in the Bronx, Ms. Simpson decided to give back to the community by tutoring in math and science. As her affiliation to the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority grew, Shanton credits her family for promoting the idea that she would play a big part in giving back. It was not until Shanton experienced the value of being engaged with the community that she fully understood how enriching it is to pay it forward and

give back.

With her current role as Chair of the Archonette Program at Five Pearls Foundation, Shanton expresses how invigorating it feels to see women coming together for a common purpose. Shanton credits her mother as instilling the notion that “We women need to stop talking about one another and start talking to each other; we need to uplift each other.”

The role of women’s organizations, such as the Five Pearls Foundation plays a special role as Shanton reflects on how important it is for young women to have an opportunity to envision what their future can be whatever their background may be. Whether she is working with her peers or with youth, she encourages everyone to go beyond their comfort zones and seek out their goals and dreams. “When chasing your dreams, treat it if it's a horizon. Your possibilities are endless. Because with the horizon, it doesn't end.” Shanton happily reflects on the support that her mother gave her since the age of 12 when she knew in her heart that she wanted to pursue a promising future as a scientist.

It is this same level of support that has led to her serving in a role of this capacity that has inspired a close meaningful relationship with these young girls on so many levels. “A lot of these young ladies come from broken homes. I try to heal, I try to mend, I try to uplift, I try to inspire. For these young ladies, I believe I am successful at that.” They call me every week if there's something happening in their life. I get invited to graduations. They call me to tell me they are taking AP classes, one girl is taking a science class in college, one is getting an internship with Bloomberg for the summer.”

Shanton proudly represents a major theme highlighted during the two workshops she leads for the Archonettes, a cohort of girls ranging from the ages of 14-16. The themes center around promoting self esteem and their image of beauty. “I think with technology, it’s more important than ever for these young girls to reconcile that the images they see in magazines, music videos, is not what their definition of beauty should be. When they pick up a magazine, these young girls cannot see an image of themselves. I stress through these workshops that real beauty comes from within. I don’t want them to be depressed and fall into the cracks.” My goal with these workshops is to teach them not to let anyone validate you. Self-esteem comes from you.”

A recurring theme for Shanton when hosting workshops is “Bring Back Our Daughters; Save Our Lost Souls”. Setting direction for these young women is to help them carve their own paths and free themselves from the limitations in their lives.

In addition to nurturing interactions and tutorials emphasizing the value of self-esteem and inner beauty, Shanton has worked feverishly to instill the importance of art, community service, math and science into the programs. As a proud advocate of STEM education, Shanton wants to ensure these young girls do not lose interest in disciplines traditionally reserved for men. Exposing these young girls to these programs will cultivate a culture where creativity and ambition can thrive. Introducing and sharing her love for the performing arts is also a highlight for Shanton, ranging from Opera, Broadway Plays and Alvin Ailey productions. Sharing her love for arts and science has been a huge part of the success for Shanton leading the program.

When asked what it takes to become an effective leader and for those looking to light new causes, Shanton happily proclaims, “in order to be a good leader, be a great follower first.”

## The Giving Corner

**Philanthropy is the gift of time, talent and treasure. If you are reading this newsletter you are a philanthropist, congratulations! "Giving can be one of the most meaningful, life-enhancing aspects of each of our lives, and what we gives matters in the world. It is not a gesture. Giving can truly save lives and has the potential to help turn around the most serious problems in our troubled world." The giving corner is a new feature in the Five Pearls Foundation newsletter where we will explore giving and answer your burning questions about giving. It is our goal to encourage the development of more thoughtful giving in communities of color. If there are topics you would like us to cover on giving feel free to send your questions to [Info@fivepearlsfoundation.org](mailto:Info@fivepearlsfoundation.org) or leave a message at (917)829-9964, and we will consider you questions as features for future newsletters. Have a great day in service to others!**

**For this holiday issue, we would like to share the insights and celebrate the joy that giving has inspired for many of our closest partners and advocates.**

One of our dearest members who has been with the foundation since inception is Luz Pemberton. A proud zeta, Luz is one of our strongest advocates of giving and promoting service in the community. With this passion in giving, Luz remains steadfast in her belief that continuously seeking out growth and positive avenues in life are key pillars to integrating the concept of giving in all aspects of your life. She encourages youth looking to give back to volunteer in areas that they are interested in. She is a huge proponent to trying different things to discover an area that gives you passion, whether that is volunteering in an office,

in a daycare center or in a nursing home.

Luz happily reflects on the inspiration and life lessons instilled by her beloved parents. Her father, in particular emphasized how everything in life is a lesson and encouraged her to learn from these lessons. Just by watching and observing her parents serving the community and the pride they took in giving back and belonging to so many societies reinforced how valuable giving was for her family and what it meant. That legacy and life lesson shared by her parents continued generations after, as Luz happily enthuses on her family's beacons of service lighting up the paths for daughters Cheryl and Lori Pemberton. Luz reflects on how her daughters have continued the family pride and legacy in giving back. Cheryl currently serves as the Board Chair of the Five Pearls Foundation while Lori took an active role in introducing young women to the foundation and exposing them to communities.

Luz insists that it is through volunteering, you get that opportunity to teach through action and behavior. Luz always made time to explain to her children and led by example taking an active role in the community and in schools. She credits these early teachings to lead by example as the key factors when inspiring collaboration. Despite losing Lori to Breast Cancer, the family continues to honor Lori's commitment to service and excellence, by creating a scholarship fund to celebrate Lori's hope and continued achievement reinforced by giving.

When reflecting on the future of Five Pearls Foundation and its impact, Luz hopes that Five Pearls Foundation will continue to grow in touching both men and women. With growth, Luz indicates there is a gradual process and that women play a pivotal role in society in shaping the cultural mindset and attitudes that young boys and girls develop in regards to how they should be treated. As mothers, women need to set the standards for their children and with organizations like the Five Pearls Foundation, she is cognizant of the opportunities to bridge that gap. As an advocate of giving and gradual change, Luz has no reservation that we should not be in the same place as we were in ten years ago. It is with this hope that she connects giving to taking us on a journey-where we can ultimately find ourselves on a path towards life, peace and joy.

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