

# THE ATLANTA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION



Economic Empowerment Issue

April 2011

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[The Edge Connection Launches Kitchen Incubator](#)

Georgia's first nonprofit culinary kitchen incubator for food related businesses is now open.

The kitchen will provide state-of-the-art ENERGY STAR kitchen equipment, walk-in freezer and refrigeration, six cooking and preparation stations,

## Creating Self-Sufficiency for Women

Economic security for women is at the core of AWF's community investments. Women play an important role in the workforce and often balance work with taking care of family. AWF invests in a range of programs that support women's work and economic stability. From helping women manage financial assets, to learning new employable skills, to starting a small business - AWF supports working women at every stage.

AWF is proud to have so many partners in Atlanta providing the critical and varied services women and their children need to live self-sufficient lives. Take a moment to view our [grantee partners](#).

## Investing in Empowerment: Spanx Partners with AWF

Laurie Ann Goldman, CEO, SPANX

At Spanx, we understand what is possible when you give a woman the opportunity to succeed - creative ideas are born, grow, develop and can impact the entire community, sometimes the world. It has long been a commitment of Spanx founder Sara Blakely to help women develop the skills they need to find and develop these ideas, become self-sufficient and achieve their dreams.

To do this, and to commemorate our ten year anniversary, Spanx partnered with The Atlanta Women's Foundation because they are the "go to" organization when it comes to women and girls. We worked with AWF to award ten \$10,000 grants to nonprofits working to promote women's economic empowerment. Through The Sara Blakely Foundation, Spanx is dedicated to helping women, both globally and locally, in the areas of education and entrepreneurship. We invest in future female entrepreneurs and leaders of the world to give them the "leg up" they need to succeed.

We worked with AWF to select the best organizations having a



Laurie Ann Goldman,  
CEO, Spanx

herb garden, conference room and computer lab, business development services to scale the food businesses, and access to capital to support growth.

measurable and sustainable impact on poverty and achieving outcomes in the areas of education, entrepreneurship, and women's economic empowerment. It was an obvious partnership for us from the start.

[View a list of Spanx Anniversary grantees here.](#)

## AWF Funds Microenterprise for Women

Interview with Patricia Harris  
CEO, The Edge Connection



A microenterprise is a business with fewer than five employees, start-up capital needs under \$35,000, and initial revenue less than \$100,000.

The Edge Connection Offers Microenterprise Services for Women

### Why is microenterprise development an effective strategy for creating economic stability for women?

75% of our clients are women and over two-thirds of those women are the primary earners in their households. Many women need a job to pay the bills and also one that fits within a demanding daily life. Our clients need time to care for children, take care of elderly parents and continue developing their business. Starting a microenterprise can create stability in terms of income but also flexibility to support other aspects of life.

### How does this help us in Georgia?

Microenterprises comprise 87% of Georgia's businesses. These small endeavors are more successful and create more jobs when owners have access to supportive services. Women at The Edge Connection have access to business planning and training programs, can secure start-up financing, and have access to a rich network of local entrepreneurs. At a three-year check-in, 79% of our client's businesses are still in operation with over half reporting an increase in sales and income. That's far above the national start-up success rate.

### What kind of impact has AWF's funding had on The Edge Connection?

AWF was one of our initial investors and we are proud of that long relationship. With AWF's investment - and that of other supporters - the client enterprises we've served through our services have generated more than \$13 million in revenue and created a total of 900 jobs. AWF truly invests in programs that create real, long-term change in people's lives.

[Click here](#) to learn more about The Edge Connection's work.

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## Economic Empowerment Strategies for Women

AWF has invested \$800,000 in financial literacy training & asset development programs.

Financial education programs help women take an active role in their finances and secure long-term independence. Programs address topics such as budgeting, paying off debt, saving for retirement and how to use credit. Other programs that match savings deposits help women build the assets necessary for long-term security.

**AWF has invested \$600,000 to help women start businesses.**

Georgia ranks #1 in the US for fastest growth of women-owned businesses. The greatest challenge for women-owned firms is access to capital, credit and equity. Micro-enterprise and micro-finance programs give women access to the capital and business support necessary to launch a successful venture and become financially independent.

**AWF has invested \$2.2 million to support working women.**

Flexible work place policies give women the flexibility they need to manage many responsibilities like child pick up, attending parent-teacher conferences or caring for a sick child or elderly parent. Additionally, programs that provide quality, affordable child care are essential for working women to achieve economic independence.

[Make An Online Donation to AWF by Clicking Here Now](#)

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