



*Heidi Miller, a long-time host and mentor in our Women's Mentorship Program, gave this speech on behalf of Canadian host credit unions at the 2018 Women's Mentorship Program Closing Ceremony. We're pleased to share it with you.*

As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world".

Good evening, I am Heidi Miller, Manager of Procedures and Privacy Officer for Interior Savings Credit Union based in Kelowna, BC, and a host in CDF Canada's Women's Mentorship Program. I am *delighted* to be here tonight.

While Interior Savings has been involved in this program for the past 7 years, today I would like to say a few words on behalf of ALL the host credit unions. To mark this very happy occasion, of the 12 graduates of the 2018 Women's Mentorship Program.

Ladies, from the moment you were chosen to participate in this program, your life was forever changed. You have been given a once in a lifetime opportunity to come to Canada to learn from leading credit unions in the Canadian financial sector. While the knowledge you have been imparted with will be invaluable to you in the years ahead, this program was so much more than just gaining knowledge. It was about learning about yourself and what you are capable of. To know that you can do *anything* you set your mind to. To empower you with the self-confidence to go back to your home countries to set about making changes in your SACCOS, credit unions and communities, that will impact generations to come. To use all of the knowledge and skills that you have gained, to make a real difference in the lives of others. To be a role model for the next generation of girls in your communities.

To be a host credit union is a huge commitment, and it's something that we at Interior Savings take very seriously. It's so important to us that you learn as much as you can, taking back with you the knowledge and tools to make an impact, a positive difference, in the lives of those in your own communities. We know from past participants that their time here with us has allowed them to do so.

I have had the great privilege of hosting 7 amazing women in my home over the years:

Leticia from Ghana

Alamitu from Ghana

Victoria from Ghana

Noemi from the Philippines

Violet from Kenya

Jane from Kenya

and this year, Mercy from Uganda.

All of these ladies have been incredibly special to me and have personally taught me so many life lessons. The most important one, of course, is to be grateful for all of life's blessings. In fact, we, as hosts, learn just as much from our mentees as they do from us. A true partnership, fulfilling the 6<sup>th</sup> Co-op Principle of "Co-operation among Co-operatives." I don't think it is an exaggeration to say I will be friends with these ladies for life, as we developed such a special bond. This is one of the benefits of this program – the relationships you develop – with your host credit unions, your teachers, staff at CDF Canada, and most importantly with each other. This is your new Sisterhood. Treasure it, ladies! These are the women you have experienced so many life-changing moments with. Support and empower one another, show togetherness, passion, excellence, and enthusiasm. Be each other's cheerleaders when you experience your AH-HA moments back home.

I am incredibly proud of all of the women in this program for being so brave to leave their families for a month and travel halfway around the world to stay with people they have never met, and be immersed in a culture they have never experienced before. For some of them, this is the very first time they have even left their home village. That takes enormous strength and courage.

Ladies, hold your heads up high when you sit back and reflect on all that you have accomplished this past month. We know you will make us proud, as you go back to your homes to put all of these practices you have learnt into place...to "Build a Better World"!

Thank you.

*- Heidi Miller, June 28 2018*