

## Hope Changes Everything

Syvoskia Pope

NBA Incubate SENT Seminar Participant

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*In September 2017, the NBA Incubate Initiative hosted the 2017 SENT Seminar: Equipping Social ENTrepreneurs for Leadership and Change, in Leavenworth, Kansas. Designed for Disciples and their leadership teams who are starting new health and social services ministries, the SENT Seminar covers the basics of nonprofit ministry startups, as well as skills for leadership and change in our global and faith communities. Syvoskia Pope, Empower Hope Center, attended as a 2017 SENT Seminar Participant and shares this reflection.*



Before attending the SENT Seminar, I had no idea what impact it would have on turning my dream into a living project. I was so impressed at how the whole structure, from arrival to departure, was a joy leaping inside of me that said, “they care about what you have envisioned.” The workshops were well thought out and planned. I really enjoyed the hands-on exercise of setting up my social media page before I left. I am such a taskmaster, and checking that one off the list felt good.

The seminar’s location was the most beautiful place that I have had the opportunity to visit and sleep. It was a peaceful experience for me. The NBA staff were so incredible and professional in how they met with all the attendees. I felt that my dream was shared in a safe place, and it gave me time to reflect on what it could become. After the determination of where the “Empower Hope Centre” would fit in the model discussed, I gained insight of how our model for mission was today.

We currently have three projects/ministry that will currently operate out of the “NCF Empower Hope Center:”

1. Leadership Institute
2. Half-way House/Kristy Love Foundation
3. Young Adult Microbusiness Training

The “NCF Empower Hope Center” was designed to be the social service arm of the church. We had been helping women in the Kristy Love Foundation house transform as individuals and families through education, and spiritual formation through a weekly “1-hour of power.” Through this partnership, these women have been adopted into our faith community and they are receiving life skill training, mentorship, and transformation into a loving relationship with Christ. Every week I saw the work of the Holy Spirit moving in the lives of many women. I encountered what only God had planned, not me.

We can see the vision and dreams of what can happen in the future. Through life skills classes, financial education, and entrepreneurship training, these women can be better prepared to meet the demands of life. The story of our project came as a need for our faith community. We empower hope, because “We believe Hope changes everything.”

As we continue to move towards educating others in mission in EHC, we sought the need to offer a Leadership Institute track, which is a nine-month training program that teaches not only our core group, but other leaders in the community, to provide education and that helps them be better men and women prepared for ministry.

We plan to reach young African-American men and women by exploring entrepreneurship and teaching them how to start their own businesses. I believe the EHC has an opportunity to build sustainable programs to assist families in low/moderate income communities. We believe that we can become a resilient community where families can be educated to become sustainable, enriched, and empowered to achieve their hopes and dreams. Why? Because “We believe Hope Changes Everything.”

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*The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at **[nbacares.org/incubate](https://nbacares.org/incubate)** or by contacting Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, at **[awatkins@nbacares.org](mailto:awatkins@nbacares.org)**.*