

# Sometimes the worst of circumstances can land you in the perfect place: Judith Jenne



Where futures begin™



*Guest columnist Judith Jenne lives in Northeast Ohio and is a happy alumna of the Women in Transition Program at Cuyahoga Community College.*

Eighteen months ago my world changed abruptly and I found myself back in Cleveland after living in New York City for many years. I needed a job, sound planning and time to think clearly about the future.

A little known program at Cuyahoga Community College proved to be my refuge, and if you are longing for change or self-improvement, this could be your starting point. It's called

Women in Transition and it's probably the coolest, most rewarding classroom experience I've ever had. And though it didn't cost a dime, the payback in life lessons has been invaluable.

Created in 1978 by the Ohio General Assembly, Women in Transition (WIT) was initially titled the Displaced Homemakers Program with the purpose of providing social services to divorced and disadvantaged women. The name changed with the times, along with its intentions to serve any woman experiencing a transitional phase in her life, whether it be on a spiritual, personal or career level.

Today the Women in Transition program is offered at four Tri-C campuses throughout the year. There is no charge for the session nor is there college credit. You are considered a student however, eligible to use all the campus resources including computer labs, career and guidance counselors and special events. That perk in itself pays dividends in finding expert advice and direction.

My early spring session was held at the Tri-C Corporate College West, a spacious building filled with sunlight, friendly faces and healthy plants. I arrived with no expectations other than that someone was going to help me get back on my feet for free. Little did I know that in this particular case, something for nothing would mean everything.

Three days a week, four hours per day, my classmates and I became explorers in possibility thinking led by our very capable guide, social worker Audra Popik. We listened to faculty lectures on where the jobs were and how to get them. Took computer lessons and career aptitude tests. Got advice from financial experts and health pros. It was jam packed, life-affirming "happening" wrapped around the central theme of self-empowerment through self-awareness, motivation and responsibility.

As the weeks progressed, our tiny class bonded and became a sisterhood of support.

It didn't matter where we came from, how old we were or what we looked like. We were a team, offering a Kleenex through some tough spots and laughing our way through some others.

Time flew by in my happy sanctuary of positivity and safety, time I needed to repair my wounded soul and plan a solid future.

Looking back, I will always be grateful for the people at Tri-C who so generously helped me and for the friends I made sharing this unique opportunity.

Unfortunate circumstances might have taken me from my Brooklyn home to Cleveland, but I am certain it was grace that opened the door to Women in Transition.

Tri-C's Women in Transition program is free and open to the public with day and evening class options.

#### For more information or to enroll, call

216-987-2272 (Eastern Campus)

216-987-4187 (Metro Campus)

216-987-5091 (Western Campus)

216-987-3899 (Corporate College West)

Details also can be found at

[www.tri-c.edu/women-in-transition](http://www.tri-c.edu/women-in-transition).

This article was written by Judith Jenne, Women in Transition Program graduate and published by The Sun Newspapers, and on Cleveland.com..

