

GRETCHEN VARKONYI

When Gretchen separated from her husband and was left alone to provide for their children, she didn't immediately panic. She still had her jobs as a real estate agent and as an insurance adjuster. But after multiple closings fell through and her insurance company relocated elsewhere, Gretchen was left unemployed. With few places to turn for support, she struggled with feelings of despair.

“There is such a feeling of helplessness when you want to support your kids but simply don't have the resources.”

Unable to find opportunity in a difficult job market, Gretchen turned to entrepreneurship as a way out. Gretchen had always loved to cook and entertain and, when she enrolled in CGF's Exploring Business Basics workshop, it was with the hope of one day starting her own catering business. Through the workshop, Gretchen developed a strong business plan and an optimism about her future. CGF's staff, she found, provided "unqualified enthusiasm and support" for her business dreams.

When Gretchen graduated from the workshop, she was awarded a Small Business Loan by the Capital Good Fund. Now, with the opportunity to turn her dreams into reality, she launched Dinner Dame, a gourmet, environmentally-friendly catering business. After difficult times, Gretchen's future now looks bright. With a growing client base, she is looking to rent a larger kitchen and expand her business even further. As with many of CGF's borrowers, Gretchen also wants to give back to her community, in her case, by offering community workshops that teach others how to cook healthy meals.



Gretchen's life is now back on track. With a thriving business and a renewed ability to provide for her family, Gretchen has become a strong believer in people's capacity to take charge of their own futures. Affirming the philosophy of the Capital Good Fund, Gretchen says: "We need to evaluate people not just on their credit rating but on the value of their contributions."