

I Can Do This Thing!

Abby Catoe

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. Abby Catoe attended the 2017 SENT Seminar with her ministry Annie's Hope Center for Growth and Healing, a home that provides support and housing for women survivors of domestic violence.



I am so very grateful to have participated in this wonderful learning and inspiring gathering. Meeting all the others from various parts of North America, with totally different backgrounds and different stories, I was overwhelmed by our similar desire to make real changes in the world for the good of others. When you have a vision that seems out of reach and you're not sure how you will bring that vision to fruition, but then encounter others who have visions as well and who are struggling along with you on how to fulfill those visions, it is so assuring to know that

you are not alone after all!

Hearing the words of others, that come from the inspiration of God upon their hearts, confirmed my faith and trust that what I am doing is indeed a ministry in the work of God's kingdom here on Earth. I, along with all of those in attendance, have been gifted with a mission from God. The speakers who shared pertinent information for how to implement our tasks were all on point. From the perspectives of marketing,

legal and financial issues, as well as the leadership training by Greg Turk, I gained not only a tremendous amount of knowledge, but I also came away with a heart-felt belief that I can do this thing! I am setting goals to accomplish and am actually doing them.

I am also so fortunate to have met such great people with whom I continue to have relationships via social media. We are a special group who will work with one another to encourage and support each other's visions. The fact that we are all working hand-in-hand with God in our endeavors gives us an even greater connection through the bonds of the Spirit.

The most surprising thing that occurred with this experience is the vision of the dinner church I received while there. It was totally unexpected, but it really helped me to make sense of why God wanted me to be ordained. I never thought I would want to lead a "church" and have wondered for the last three years why I needed to be ordained. Now I know. I cannot say whether or not this would have ever happened had I not attended the seminar. I tend to believe God had a hand in all of this, as God does in my life in most everything, as I follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. This new vision will not diminish the vision for the women's center I hope to open one day, rather it will enhance the completion.

Thank you to all those who helped to make this possible for me. It forever impacted my purpose and direction in life.

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 or by contacting Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, Director of the NBA Incubate Initiative, at awatkins@nbacares.org.