

**“YOU ARE THE WAVE”**

**CENTERPOINT ENERGY**

**POWERTOOLS FOR NONPROFITS**

**WELCOME REMARKS**  
**BY**  
**SHARON M. OWENS**

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
**COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2006**

Thank you, Marshall.

Thank you and the University of Houston's Educational Technology and University Outreach for 13 years of partnership to co-sponsor this event.

I also want to thank and acknowledge my fellow members of the conference advisory board – if you'll please stand.

Special thanks to the Organizing Committee – Bette Range and Beverly McLendon from U of H – plus CenterPoint Energy's Mary Lynn Kallina Matthews and Veronica Guillory. They are the muscle behind Power Tools.

Thank you volunteers, vendors and presenters for sharing your time, your commitment and your expertise.

And thank all of YOU for changing lives for the better across southeast Texas.

Hello, everyone, and welcome.

### **IMAGINE A WAVE**

I ask you to close your eyes for just a moment and imagine a simple scene.

You are standing at the edge of a calm body of water – a pond or a lake. You reach out your hand. In your hand is a pebble – soft, light and unassuming.

You let the pebble go. It falls with a soft “plump” into the pond.

You look beneath the clear surface of the water and watch the pebble drop slowly to the bottom.

But it doesn't end there. Your gesture has sent waves rippling across the water in ever-widening circles to other shores you may not see.

Power Tools is a pebble. You are the wave.

## **HUMBLE BEGINNINGS**

In 1993, we dropped a pebble into a pond. At the first Power Tools, we presented four sessions to 78 nonprofit participants at the Ft. Bend Court House.

Thirteen years and four venues later, ten times that many of you will choose from 32 sessions to fill your tool box to build a better organization to serve the people of the Texas Gulf Coast.

Over the years, Power Tools has provided an educational forum for about three thousand nonprofit organizations across southeast Texas:

- Social service agencies
- Community and faith-based groups
- Business and professional associations
- Schools and educational organizations.

Power Tools has empowered around 7,000 nonprofit professionals and volunteers: executive directors, leaders, board and staff members.

Sixty percent of you today are attending Power Tools for the first time. Past surveys tell us 98.8 percent will want to return.

## **A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY**

Today is a unique opportunity for you to network and collaborate with like-minded servants of the community. To sample the wares of the vendor resource center. To receive the knowledge, wisdom and experience of dozens of experts on finance, fund development, human resource and legal issues, marketing/public relations, operations, professional development and more.

You'll get more than words. You'll get blueprints and tools to translate words into action. Ninety-nine point four (99.4) percent of attendees say they apply what they learn at Power Tools to improve their nonprofit organization.

You will improve your organization's effectiveness and efficiency. You will stimulate your membership and improve employee and volunteer morale. You will re-energize your organization to discover innovative ways to make life better in your community.

Don't take my word for it. Ask Chi-mei Lin, Executive Director of the Chinese Community Center. She said:

“The results of Power Tools ... go far beyond the ... professionals who attend the seminar. If you will multiply the information flow by at least one thousand, you will better understand [how Power Tools] reaches out to help those in need in our [community].”

Power Tools is the pebble. You are the wave.

The Public Relations Society of America has twice recognized the value of this forum with an Excalibur Award and Silver Spur Award.

### **A PROUD SPONSOR**

CenterPoint Energy is proud to be a perennial co-sponsor of this event.

We serve every member of our community – not just through the delivery of natural gas and electricity – but through a hundred thousand volunteer hours of community service and support for nonprofits like you.

Power Tools is a great way for us to maximize our impact on the community by empowering you to go out and make waves.

CenterPoint Energy is as committed to Power Tools as you are to your community. For thirteen years, we have been here for you. And we are here to stay.

I hope you have enjoyed the morning sessions.

I know a great afternoon awaits you.

### **OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Awaiting you now is our keynote speaker: Jeanette Clift George.

Ms. George is an author, playwright, lecturer, director and actress, who has been nominated for a Golden Globe Award.

She has toured with the Alley Theater and New York Shakespeare Company, appearing on stages from Houston to the East Coast. Her plays have been performed at theaters across the Southwest.

An associate member of the Dramatists' Guild, she has been awarded the Matrix Award, Delta Gamma Sorority Shield and Rotary International's Jean Harris Award.

Ms. George has authored a number of magazine articles and books including *Travel Tips from a Reluctant Traveler*, *Journaling with Joy* and *Some Run with Feet of Clay*.

Nearly 40 years ago, she founded the A.D. Players Christian Theater Company in Houston. Today they offer plays throughout the world that promote literacy and education, celebrate creativity and uphold human value. Her work seeks to entertain, inspire and enlighten.

Here to entertain, inspire and enlighten you is Jeanette Clift George.