



NO. 102 | 11 / 2025

## Foundations for Greater Opportunities in Learning

### Home of the ARISE™ Mentoring Program

**ACHEIVE | RENEW | INSPIRE | STRENGTHEN | EMPOWER**

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## Message from our Founder

**Dr. Susanne Foulk, Founder & Executive Director, FFGOIL**

#### The Ripple Effect:

#### Why Mentorship Matters More Than Ever

*A Leadership Reflection from Foundation For Greater Opportunities In Learning*

This holiday season, I've been reflecting on what it truly means to lead—not from a position of power, but from a place of purpose. Real leadership isn't about climbing the ladder alone; it's about reaching back to pull others up alongside you.

At Foundation For Greater Opportunities In Learning, we've built our work around a simple but profound truth: **everyone deserves someone in their corner**. Someone who believes in their potential, even when they can't see it themselves.

#### Building Bridges Through ARISE™

Our flagship **ARISE™ Mentorship Program** (Achieve, Renew, Inspire, Strengthen, and Empower) creates trauma-informed, psychologically safe spaces where women transform into the leaders they're meant to be. Through comprehensive five-level training, our certified mentors provide career-focused guidance that honors

each woman's unique journey. We're building cohorts across Northern and Southern California, connecting experienced professionals with emerging leaders who are ready to step into their power.

We've also extended this proven model to teens through **ARISE™ Teen**, because young people aren't just the future—they're making an impact right now. They deserve mentors who recognize their present potential, not just their future promise.

## **Closing Critical Gaps**

Our newest initiative addresses a gap that's been too long ignored. Through **Medi-Cal funded Youth Wellness Coaching**, we're partnering with young people ages 16-26—particularly those with foster care experience—during their most vulnerable transitions. Certified Wellness Coaches meet weekly with participants, providing the critical social capital that bridges resources, builds self-efficacy, and translates into the persistence needed to reach college graduation. For these young people, the obstacles to success often have nothing to do with ability and everything to do with access and support.

We also honor those who've served through our **Veteran Coaching Program**, helping veterans and their families navigate transitions and find renewed purpose in civilian life.

## **The Stories That Drive Us**

Behind every program is a story of transformation. The young woman who finally landed her dream job after her mentor helped her see her worth. The first-generation college graduate who had a wellness coach believing in them every step of the way. The teen who discovered their passion through consistent mentorship. The veteran who found new direction and community.

These stories exist because someone said "yes" to showing up for another person.

## **Your Leadership Invitation**

Leadership during the holidays isn't just about reflection—it's about action. Whether you're ready to become a certified ARISE™ mentor, seeking guidance as a mentee, or supporting our Giving Tuesday campaign, you're invited to be part of something larger than yourself.

When you mentor one person, you don't just change one life—you change generations. That college graduate becomes a role model for their siblings. That empowered woman leader lifts up her entire team. That supported veteran strengthens their family and community.

## **Your involvement creates ripples that extend far beyond what you can see.**

This holiday season, consider the gift that keeps giving: your time, your belief, and your commitment to creating greater opportunities for those who need a champion.

Visit our website to learn more, apply to become a mentor, reach out as a mentee, or support our Giving Tuesday campaign. Together, we rise.

*Foundation For Greater Opportunities In Learning | Creating Psychologically Safe Spaces for Growth and Transformation*

## Together, We Rise

At Foundation For Greater Opportunities In Learning, we know that no one succeeds alone. We all need champions, guides, and supporters along the way. This holiday season, let's come together to ensure that everyone—regardless of their past, their challenges, or their circumstances—has access to the mentorship and coaching that can transform their future.

Because everyone deserves greater opportunities in learning, growing, and becoming who they're meant to be.

## New Faces, New Energy



### Meet Our New Members



*Mariam Wokowicz,  
Grants/Development Intern*



*Vinuthna Hasthi,  
Data Scientist  
Development Team*



*Heather Pham, LSW  
ARISE™ Mentoring and  
Coaching Leadership*

## The Power of Believing First

Meet Eileen Andress, SHRM-TA, our newest board member, who carries a beautiful truth in her heart: *"I would not be the person I am today without someone who believed in me before I believed in myself."*

As a young mom from a challenging background, Eileen could have easily become what statistics predicted. But she had something precious – a mentor who saw past her circumstances and into her potential.



*"When I felt like I was drowning in doubt and fear, my mentor became my lifeline,"* Eileen remembers. *"She helped me see that I could rise above any situation if I believed in myself and stayed true to my heart. More than advice, she gave me something I'd never had before – someone who saw my worth."*

That belief became the foundation for everything that followed. Today, Eileen has built a meaningful career in special education, dedicating herself to recruiting the therapists, teachers, and support staff who change children's lives. Her work ethic is fierce, but her heart is even fiercer – because she knows what it means to have someone invest in your future.

The moment Eileen heard about ARISE, she knew she'd found her calling. *"Every woman deserves what I had – someone who sees her potential and helps her believe in herself. I'm here because I want to help create more of those life-changing connections. I want to be part of the beauty that happens when we support each other."*

**Eileen, your story is our story – the beautiful proof that mentorship doesn't just change lives, it transforms legacies. Welcome to our circle of champions!**

# What's New



## Growing Our Impact

### What's New: Expanding Our Reach, Deepening Our Impact

As we close out 2025, we're thrilled to share the exciting growth happening at Foundation For Greater Opportunities In Learning. What began as a vision to create psychologically safe spaces for mentorship has blossomed into a comprehensive network of support reaching across California and beyond.

### Growing Roots Across California

Our **ARISE™ Mentorship Program** continues to expand with new cohorts forming in both Northern and Southern California. Women leaders are stepping forward—not just to advance their own careers, but to create pathways for others. These regional cohorts allow us to honor the unique needs and opportunities of different communities while maintaining the trauma-informed, evidence-based approach that makes ARISE™ transformative. Whether you're in the Bay Area, Los Angeles, San Diego, or anywhere in between, there's a cohort forming near you.



Our integrated platform continues to strengthen the connections between mentors and mentees, making it easier to track progress and celebrate the meaningful relationships that are at the heart of ARISE™. As our community grows, we're seeing the power of our evidence-based, trauma-sensitive approach in action. Women are developing confidence, mentors are growing their leadership skills, and the ripple effects of these connections extend far beyond what we initially imagined.

### Investing in the Next Generation

We've launched **ARISE™ Teen**, extending our proven mentorship model to young people during those critical developmental years. This isn't a watered-down version of our adult program—it's a thoughtfully designed

initiative that recognizes teens as the leaders they already are. Our certified mentors work with young people to build confidence, explore possibilities, and develop the leadership skills that will serve them for a lifetime. Because investing in youth isn't about the future—it's about recognizing and nurturing the impact they're making right now.

## **A Groundbreaking Partnership: Medi-Cal Funded Youth Wellness Coaching**

Perhaps our most significant announcement is the preparation for the launch of our **Medi-Cal funded Youth Wellness Coaching program**—a groundbreaking initiative that addresses a critical gap in services for young people ages 16-26, particularly those with experiences in the foster care system.

This partnership represents more than just program expansion; it's a recognition that the barriers facing foster youth aren't about ability—they're about access, resources, and support. Through this program, Certified Wellness Coaches meet weekly (and as needed) with participants during the pivotal transition from late high school through college. These coaches do more than check in—they provide the critical social capital that bridges resources, build self-efficacy, and translate belief into the persistence needed to navigate toward college graduation.

For too long, talented young people have fallen through the cracks not because they lacked potential, but because they lacked someone in their corner. This program changes that narrative.

## **Honoring Those Who Served**

We've also formalized our commitment to veterans and their families through our **Veteran Coaching Program**. Recognizing that the transition from military to civilian life requires more than gratitude—it requires tangible support—we're providing educational and career coaching that honors service through action. Veterans and their families deserve champions who understand the unique challenges of transition and can help them find renewed purpose and direction.

## **What This Growth Means**

These expansions aren't just about reaching more people—they're about deepening our impact and meeting communities where they are. Each new program is built on the same foundation: trauma-informed care, psychological safety, and the belief that everyone deserves greater opportunities in learning, growing, and becoming.

As we move into the new year, we're not just growing programs—we're growing a movement of people who believe that mentorship and coaching can change lives, families, and entire communities.

**Want to be part of what's next?** Visit our website to learn more about our expanding programs and how you can get involved as a mentor, mentee, or supporter.

**Interested in transforming your organization or community group through coaching?** Contact Dr. Susanne Foulk at [foulk@ffgoil.org](mailto:foulk@ffgoil.org)

## **Together, We Rise**

*The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now. Join us in planting seeds of transformation.*

Ready to become a mentor, support our mission, or bring ARISE to your workplace? Have questions about getting involved? Email [foulk@ffgoil.org](mailto:foulk@ffgoil.org), and we'll be in touch.

# Pearls of Wisdom



by Heather Pham, LCSW



Women's career transitions often involve complex identity work shaped by societal pressures, and **coaching can play a key role in helping them reconnect with their authentic selves** (Snape, 2021). In our experience, coaching supports women in rebuilding self-trust and making choices that align with their values.

Many women enter the workforce carrying expectations, workplace pressures, and layers of self-doubt that make it difficult to trust their own judgment. These **influences can distance them from their inner voice and lead them to second-guess decisions** that they are fully capable of making.

Throughout a woman's professional journey, **experiences ranging from early workplace dynamics to major career decisions can unintentionally teach her to prioritize external approval over her own instincts**. This can make even routine choices, like negotiating a raise or pursuing a new opportunity, feel overwhelming.

**Coaching helps women return to their own wisdom.** *Our role is not to give answers but to guide them back to their inner clarity, their values, and their ambitions.* With the right support and encouragement, women reconnect with their inner voice and make decisions that feel authentic and aligned.

**As coaches, we can model self-trust.** *This week, identify one career decision or action that truly aligns with your values. Write it down and take one small step toward it. When we honor our own inner wisdom, we show the women we coach that their instincts matter too.* **Your challenge is simple: trust yourself and act with intention.**

~Heather Pham, LCSW

Snape, S. (2021). Exploring women's identity work in career choices and transitions: Implications for coaching practice. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*, 47

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