Marsha Froelich interview for a Wright State University History Course

Ashley Whitaker

Marsha Froelich

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The parking lot at the Job Center was very small. I went into the main doors and followed the signs to the donation drop off. She met me there and led me through a dark room full of clothes and then into her office. Her office was very organized and had a nice round table to sit at with me.

Marsha Froelich is the Executive Director at the Job Center for the Clothes that Work organization. She has been there since 2007. She was a Vice President of Development at YWCA
of Dayton from January 2000 to December 2006 (Montgomery County's only domestic violence shelter for women and their children), Vice President for Development at YWCA from January 2001-January 2006 (the United Way of the Greater Dayton Area, Manager, Major Gifts and Planned giving) a manager for the Fund Distribution at the YWCA from July 2000-July 2001 (diet workshop, Director of Workplace Development), President at Custom Threads from January 1995-January 1996, Director of Youth Programming at Dayton Jewish Community Center from January 1990-January 1995, Youth group advisor at Temple Israel Youth Group from January 1988-January 1992, and a Speech Pathologist at Mad River Public Schools from January 1970-January 1973. She received her education from the University of Michigan from 1968-1970 (B.S. Speech and Hearing Pathology and Bachelor of Science in 1970), Indiana University School of Philanthropy in 2006 (Capital Campaign and Leading for Results in 2008), and Wright State University. She is 62 years old and is still married to her husband. She has 2 daughters that both live in Columbus.

Clothes that Work is a non-profit organization with locations in Montgomery and Greene County, which has been going on since 1998. They have helped over 16,000 people. Their mission is to provide interview appropriate clothing and build personalized confidence for each client. Customers are referred to their organization through a network of Referral Partners including other non-profit agencies, educational institutions, job training programs and governmental organizations. Their services are provided at no cost to job seekers who need help in dressing properly for job interviews or the workplace. Clothes that Work relies greatly upon the generous support of the people and organizations within the Dayton region who
donate work appropriate clothing, their time and financial resources. Clothes that Work is managed by a volunteer Board of Trustees.

They have events such as the Hunks in Heels charity event, the Fashioning Future Luncheon and the Fairy Godmother charity event. Hunks in Heels involve guys wearing high heel shoes racing around the Greene trying to help raise money that goes to the Clothes that Work. The Luncheon is their signature fundraising event. Each year more than 600 supporters attend the occasion and watch the clients wear the donated clothes on a runway as their stories are told. The Fairy Godmother involves accepting donations of dresses for prom and having them given to the girls at a certain date who are in need of prom dresses. Inside the Job Center there is a Boutique that is created by Clothes that Work. This Boutique sells professional, after 5, and summer clothing to anyone who wants them. That money also goes into the Clothes that Work fund.

I find Froelich to be very interesting because she was one of those special people that knew wrong when she saw it and even though she was brought up in a racist era she stood up for what she believed in. She got under the wing of her future mother in law at the age of 13 and been volunteering ever since. Most girls at that age today wouldn’t do something like that. She helps all she can and no matter what story you have for becoming an underserved person she still lifts out her hand to you in hopes that you reach back.
Oral History Interview
Name of the Project: Dressing to Impress
Name of the project director: Marjorie McLellan, Department of Urban Affairs and Geography, Wright State University
Archives or repository

Interviewee/narrator name: Marsha Froelich
Interviewer name: Ashley Whitaker
Others present
Place: 1133 S Edwin C Moses Blvd #392
Dayton, OH 45417:4078 (Office room)

Date: February 18, 2011
Length of recording: 59:07s
Original format: H4 recorder with SD card

Notes: I received brochures and Froelich’s business card. It was not referenced in the interview. The recording cut off after 59 minutes and I did not realize it. I switched out the cards but when I checked the interview on the second card later that day there was no recorded info. The parking lot at the Job Center was very small. I went into the main doors and followed the signs to the donation drop off. She met me there and led me through a dark room full of clothes and then into her office. Her office was very organized and had a nice round table to sit at with me.

Key words:
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Saint Vincent De Paul
 Hunks in Heels
Fashion show luncheon
Fairy Godmother Project
Sister
Grandparents
Alzheimer’s Association
Brother
Uncle
NCCJ
YWCA Development Committee
10 Top Women
YWCA Women of Influence
Urban League
Women's Movement
Indexed by: Ashley Whitaker

Index

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Started getting involved with community since she was 13 years old. She grew up in
the 50s and 60s. She saw racism at its worst and wanted to change. Was an activist in
college. Learned about community activism through her mother in law. Has been
married for 42 years. Mother in law was a part of the women's movement.
Keywords:
Women's movement
C.J. Mcline

0:12:02-30:40 Clothes that Work
Talks about the challenges of the funding and getting people to work together. The
history of how the organization came about. Opening the organization up to men.
Pays rent to Saint Vincent De Paul. Clients must make appointments to come in.
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Keywords:
Dress for Success
Saint Vincent De Paul

0:30:40-43:16 Fundraisers
Hunks in Heels, Fairy Godmother Project, and Fashion Show Luncheon are yearly
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family values and how daughters are also community volunteers.
Keywords:
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Fairy Godmother Project
Fashion Show Luncheon

0:43:16-59:06 Family history
Talks about where grandparents are from and the racist instance she encountered
because of her dark complected sister. Her parents were not volunteers like her family
in law was. Talks about the different rewards she has received.
Keywords:
NCCJ
I received brochures and Froelich's business card. It was not referenced in the interview. The recording cut off after 59 minutes and I did not realize it. I switched out the cards but when I checked the interview on the second card later that day there was no recorded info. The parking lot at the Job Center was very small. I went into the main doors and followed the signs to the donation drop off. She met me there and led me through a dark room full of clothes and then into her office. Her office was very organized and had a nice round table to sit at with me.

Transcribed by: Ashley Whitaker

Interview transcript

Whitaker: Today is the 18th of February 2011. I, Ashley Whitaker, am the interviewer and Marsha Froelich is the interviewee. We are in her office of Clothes that Work located at the Job Center in Dayton, Ohio. Well, nice to meet you today Marsha. This is pretty awesome.

Froelich: Thanks, nice to meet you Ashley. I’m delighted that you are here.

Whitaker: Thank you. Um, so we’re going to talk today about Clothes that Work. Um, and I would kind of like to start it out as a timeline um, from the beginning to now.

Froelich: Sure.

Whitaker: Um, so my first question is um, how did you get involved with community issues or your community service today?

Froelich: Well that would go back a long time I think. Um, and has not too much to do with Clothes that Work, but um, I am a- I grew up in the 50s and 60s. Um, I grew my younger years were in the south. Um, I saw racism at its worst and um, I guess subconsciously at that time decided that um, something needed to change, so I was in college in the 60s. I was an activist then um, but I really learned I believe community participation and how to get things done through my mother in law. I started dating um, my husband- I moved- when I moved to Dayton
I moved next door to this really cute guy and I was about 13 years old when we started dating and we been together ever since and married 42 years at this point. Um, so really his parents and my parents were friends, but his mother I believe was um, one of the ground breakers of the women’s movement. Um, at least at that time in Dayton and I learned um, social action and community action through-through watching her and admiring her. She was um, she was the first woman asked to run for the city commission um, she didn’t through C J McLine at that time. Um, she- she didn’t do it but um, was very flattered she was asked. She was president of the League of Women Voters um, and I just- she- she is really my role model and my mentor. Whitaker: Awesome. She’s done a lot herself. Froelich: Yea. Whitaker: Um, okay (clear throat) and then um, with your community um, service now, how has this changed um, over time in your life on what you’re doing now, like how has your- how has your mind changed, has it deferred in any way or has it made you stronger? Froelich: I think experience makes you stronger um, and the longer you’re in the social service and activism network the more contacts you make and the more contacts the make-you make, the more valuable you can be to change what you think should be changed. Um, so that- I feel that now at my age of 62 almost 63 after having done this for many many years um, it’s much easier to pick up the phone and call somebody to- to get something done and um, I have more confidence to do that, I wouldn’t have at your age. Whitaker: (laughs) Yup that’s very lacking right now. That’s also something good to have. Froelich: I think that’s pretty normal. (Laughs). Whitaker: Yea, I think that’s really good to develop that overtime. Froelich: Exactly. Whitaker: I think that confidence can always get better. Um, so tell me about the background and the preparation for this community service that you’re doing? Froelich: well um, I have always- my- most of my working career I’ve been involved with um, services to the underserved and the poor- i- but that is not my training. My- in college I got a degree in speech and hearing therapy. I did that for a year in the Dayton public schools and decided to stay home and have children and um, then when they went to school I started looking around for what I wanted to be when I grew up and um, I- I knew it wasn’t my degreed area. So um, I started doing volunteer work at places, I started serving on boards um, at that point- at that time there was an organization called SCAN um, S-Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect. I started working um volunteering with them, I was a board member there um, when I then went to work I started at United Way and was involved there with many of the services that um, provided um, the agencies that provide services in this community. I stayed at United Way for um, 7 or 8 years and then um, was recruited to the YWCA, which was truly um, one of my best working experiences ever. I was the vice president for development, which meant I raised money to keep the organization going and um, it was a wonderful team um, management and leadership at that time and so um, we were able to um, keep- that’s- that’s the domestic violence shelter. Um, we were able to keep that agency going and the shelter regrettably was always full, but I met some remarkable women and I would see terrible things but I would also see miracles every day. It just takes 1 or of those to keep you going. Um, sometimes women would come in the middle of the night straight from the emergency room wrapped in only a blanket um, with their children dragging in back of them and um, it was- it
was rewarding to work with those women and watch them evolve um, and- and make a life for themselves. I was um, active in starting a scholarship for um, domestic violence ladies um, so that they could go back to school, so that um, if they wanted to go to beauty school and would become anything that would make them self-sufficient, and the aha moments that you saw from them that they really didn’t need a man um, were wonderful to watch. Also the children um, were kind of forgotten at that point I used to call them the um, silent victims of domestic violence, because people wanted to take care of mom but you know, that kid was really scarred and so one of things that we started at that point was when a child came into shelter we would give that child no matter what the age, a stuffed animal and um, those animals stayed with those kids not only as long as they were in shelter but a long time after that and I remember getting a letter um, from someone who had just graduated college that she had been the D.V. shelter as a kid and still had the stuffed animal that she took to college with her and it was always gonna hold a special place in her heart. So um, just examples of the kind of things that-the kind of things that happen here in Dayton and the miracles that we see. I’ve also been involved um, with really horrible situations um, when the shelter was full and we wouldn’t find a safe house for the woman or she refused to come to the downtown shelter for whatever reason. Um, I was involved one time um, with someone who got killed and had to go with the Executive Director to tell-to- to tell the children and apologize. That was something I don’t wanna do that anymore. But um, I was not looking to leave the YWCA because it was just the right place for me I thought and then when um, the Executive Director of Clothes that Work at that time wanted to move on to another position I was recruited to come over here and um, I been here ever since! (Excitement) and it’s been- it was a good move- it was good- this organization is really an amazing organization.

Whitaker: um okay, how long have you been here?
Froelich: 5 years.
Whitaker: 5 years. Okay um, and then your scholarship for abused women is that still going on today?
Froelich: It is. It’s called.
Whitaker: are you still in charge of that?
Froelich: no, um it’s called a Carolyn Kerns Young scholarship fund and it is endowed by her really remarkable women Carolyn Young’s daughter, who is still living and um, very active and she herself is an interesting story because um, she went back to school later in life and got her masters and social work and could: because of her age, could not find any place that would accept her to do her intern ship. And so, she came to the YW, it did accept her and then she-she worked at the YW for a little while. Later on um, she wanted to get back and so she was able to start this fund. And- it- the fund did things like paying for books, for training college, to even buying a watch for a future nurse who needed watch with a second hand. It covered a multitude of things and is still going strong and so is she.
Whitaker: (laughs) I’ve never heard of that before that’s really interesting. Um, and then working with SCAN, what actually were you’re- you’re um, role playing there?
Froelich: I didn’t work with clients directly. Um, my role there was um, working on the board setting policies.
Whitaker: Okay, um what were some of the policies that you were involved with setting that you can- kind of sticks out? (Laughs)
Froelich: Whoa! (Laughs) that goes back so long I'm not sure I remember. Um, I don't remember specifically. SCAN is not around anymore.

Whitaker: really?

Froelich: but um, I- I believe that the service now fall under um, job and family services, family service association.

Whitaker: Okay um, and what are some of the obstacles um, frustrations, disappointments or challenges um, that you face in your community work?

Froelich: Um, impatience. I-I think things don't change quickly enough for me um, and um, some of the challenges are sometimes trying to get your team together because nobody works by themselves, so you have to find like-minded people who want to not just pay lip service to what needs to be done but truly roll up their sleeves and get down and dirty. So that's a challenge um, the challenge here at Clothes that Work because we serve so many um, underserved people um, is always funding. Last year um, what Clothes that Work does is provides interview- gently used interview clothing to men and women looking to get off of welfare and get back into the workforce and um, so we do interviews skills training plus give them the clothes and um, last year we saw 2,000 men and women which was up 25% from the year before. Um, the economy plays a huge role in that, so that even though we saw 25% more people from the year before funding didn't go up 25%, funding actually went down. Um, so the challenge was how do we get the job done with fewer dollars and- and that's the challenge that every social service agency faces and continues to face.

Whitaker: um, so with the funding who actually funds it for you guys, like is there a- is it through the government or through the state or anything like who actually helps to fund this.

Froelich: we have various funding sources. We have a very small um, contract with the county but to see folks who come through the job center um, and- and so we have those dollars. Every year we have to reapply for those dollars we don't know whether the County will have them. We got them for this year we don't know whether their gonna have them for next year so, it's- it's kind of a keep your finger crossed but that's not the bulk of our funding. Most our funding comes from individual donors, corporations and foundations. So were always by the grants meeting with community leaders trying to get the word out that what we do is valuable, community service we need to keep going. This is- Clothes that Work is um, and this goes along with the questions you're asking me, this is a grass roots organization. It was started 13 years ago by local women who um, at that point there was some changes in the welfare to work laws for women they started only seeing (inaudible} and women only had a certain amount of time to get training and get a job before their benefits, welfare, um, food stamps were gonna be cut off. So the ladies in this community all-and most of them are still around and names that if you’ve been in the community for a while you would know um, got together and said, “What can we do to help this situation? We've got good clothes hanging in our closet, if we would pull our resources, and- and be able to distribute these clothes to women um, that's one less thing they have to worry about. They can get the training and we can get them ready for the interview and they can get the job um, become self-sufficient, and take care of their families.” And at that time um, about 75% um, of women was um, of the people receiving welfare benefits were single moms. So um, the need was certainly there. These ladies got together, they formed a 501C3, which is a tax um, um, tax category for legitimate nonprofits. It's a lot of paperwork and (inaudible) they have to go through. And they- the job center gave them free
rent for a year, it was a little, little space at- but they started that first year and saw about 250 people, and 13 years later, we saw 2,000 people. Um, and we also probably um, 5 or 6 years ago- 6 years ago maybe opened up our services to men, so that we just don’t serve women anymore. Men make up about 35% of the clients that we see.

**Whitaker:** Um, and do you think that was a- kind of a good good choice to go to open up to men as well. Does it help the organization?

**Froelich:** I do, I do. I- I think it’s a good choice um, because we’ve been getting in men’s clothing and um, when- there’s an organization that a lot of people have heard of called Dress for Success. Um, there’s a Dress for Success in Cincinnati and there’s a Dress for Success in Columbus. Those are franchises, you have to buy those bus- businesses mod- business models, they don’t see men and so a lot of people confuse Clothes that Work with Dress for Success and the difference is that we’re not a franchise and we do see men. Um, the men are um, you see probably the biggest difference in a man from when he walks in for his appointment. He could be in shabby jeans and um, unshaven and need a haircut and he walks out- in a suit and tie and um, shoes we’ve had prisoners- ex-offenders who have come straight from being released here, to get clothes and huge, big men actually crying when they see themselves in the mirror for the first time. The community is wonderful to this organization. Um, we have barbers that volunteer to cut hair, we have salons that will do hair, manicurists, um, dry cleaners um, people wanna help and it’s just- it’s inspiring.

**Whitaker:** it’s a good thing that um, the community can pull together in such wrong times and help those that need help the most.

**Froelich:** Absolutely. And I think it’s because- this organization works because it’s simple, it’s just so simple. Clothing donations come in from donors and there sorted into 3 categories. 1st what helps our client what our clients can use. Secondly, maybe things come in that our not job appropriate, cocktail dresses we’ve even had wedding dresses come in, and so we opened a small retail boutique that’s open to the public and the proceeds from that then go to buy the sizes that we don’t get for our clients and then there’s a category of um, we can’t use it all and our landowner here at the Job Center is Saint Vincent De Paul. Um, most people think the county owns this building but that’s not the case the Saint Vincent De Paul owns it. We pay rent to them just like the county pays rent to them. So, we give the things that we absolutely can’t use to Saint Vincent and in exchange they give us...interruption from employee who needs money for the register, Froelich leaves the room to attend to this matter.

**Froelich:** Can we pause for a second?

**Whitaker:** Mm hmm. Marsha Froelich has now left the room to handle some business for Clothes that Work, she will return in a moment.

**Froelich:** I’m so sorry.

**Whitaker:** Oh no problem.

**Froelich:** Okay, I apologize.

**Whitaker:** Okay we are now back again to finish the interview with Marsha Froelich um, and we were talking about um, you paying- you’re paying rent to Saint Paul.

**Froelich:** were paying- paying rent to Saint Vincent De Paul um, so we donate the clothes that we can’t use to them in exchange they give us free warehouse space in the building so that when donations come in that are summer time and it’s the middle of winter we can save those donations and pull them out when the season is right. The other thing that happens um, is that
a client has to make an appointment, you can’t just walk in here um, when you make an appointment you’re met by a staff member or a volunteer, we’re very heavily dependent on volunteers here, um, who takes you into the client showroom, helps you pick out that outfit and sends you on your way, but then when you get the job you can come back here for 3 additional work outfits um, appropriate to whatever job you got, so if you are in a - in the hospital you need scrubs and we have those, and that’s what we give you. If you are at McDonalds, you need black pants and white shirts, so we have that um, if you need to wear a business suit every day, we give you that. So that’s pretty much the way this works then and I told how- who our main sources of funding comes from, but we also have to do fundraisers, and um, we have 2 major fundraisers a year. 1 is the Hunks in Heels, where the men put on heels and race around the Greene and the other is our luncheon in October. Um, it’s a fashion show luncheon and our models are our clients. They model the clothes that they wear without fail if they are not working at the time of the luncheon um, whenever they come off the runway somebody in the 600 person audience will say, “I’d like to talk to you about a job.” So usually everybody then gets a job from that and that’s really neat. The thing we’re gearing up for right now is um, 3 years ago I got a call from the Disney Corporation and they wanted to bring people into Dayton um, they were going to bring the ice show into Dayton, the princesses, and what they wanted to do was partner with an agency that could help to collect gently used prom dresses and distribute them to the young ladies who maybe didn’t go to prom if they didn’t have a dress. And um, so we partnered with them, it was a huge success, we’ve done it every year now um, even without Disney and this year we’re getting ready to do - do our dress distribution on the 13th of- on the 12th of March, I’m sorry, and so far we’ve got about 400 prom dresses. We don’t ask for ID, we just spread the word if you need a prom dress come, um, and um, we’re expecting about 300 400 girls so it’ll be fun. And it’s not a fundraiser, that’s just something we do for the community.

Whitaker: Awesome. Um, how long have you been doing these fundraisers? You said every year, have they been going on since Clothes that Work had started or have they recently been going on?

Froelich: No, the luncheon has been going on for probably 11 years of the 13 year history. The um, race the Hunks in Heels, we’re going into our 4th year for that and the Fairy Godmother Project, just the prom dresses, this is the 3rd year. So, every nonprofit agency has to do fundraisers to keep themselves going and um, we’re no different than anybody else. Usually when you can come up with a good idea you stick with it and the other agencies then back away from it.

Whitaker: (laughs). Um, now how did you come up with the Hunks in Heels?

Froelich: um, I was driving to work one day um, and this just goofy idea popped in my head. I think I saw a-a-a bulletin board or a sign someplace that- who knows. And- and I came in and I said to the staff, “you think we could do this”, and um, they looked at me like I had 3 heads and the first year we decided to give it a try. We didn’t you know, we thought it would be just a small little event and it turned out to be a great fun event. Now we’ve added the best legs contest and an online best legs contest where people can vote um, and it’s a happening place- it’s at the Greene and people just hang around all afternoon after the event is over and: and party. It’s funny because the guys don’t take off their heels, they just are so proud of those
heels and I thought originally they would walk- it- there would be races walking around the courtyard at the Greene, they out n out run. Nobody’s been hurt yet so, it’s good (smiles).

**Whitaker:** and then um, what inspired you for them to be in heels? Was it something for the women or?

**Froelich:** Yea, I thought um, we did it- we have always done it on Mother’s Day weekend, Saturday before Mother’s Day, so that men can show how much they appreciate the balancing act that women do every day. That’s how it started.

**Whitaker:** (laughs). And then also with the research for that um, I believe it said to participate it’s about a $100 dollars a person?

**Froelich:** Uh huh.

**Whitaker:** um, what does that money go towards?

**Froelich:** operations. All operation of the organization and um, so the guys can either pay the registration fee up front or a lot of times they’ll say to people they know, “will you give 5 bucks, it’ll go towards Clothes that Work and I’ll participate for us in this race”. So- it doesn’t all have to come out of pocket.

**Whitaker:** kind of gives a little extra community work in there (laughs)?

**Froelich:** exactly.

**Whitaker:** um, looking back what do you see as some of your most satisfying contributions or accomplishments?

**Froelich:** Mmm. Well, I- I think probably my work um, with the YWCA, but also growing this organization. Um, it was very small when I came. We moved to this new space um, to be able to accommodate a lot more clients um, raising the dollars to be able to make that move. I think those are pretty satisfying.

**Whitaker:** um, what has been the impact of your involvement in community on you and/or family and/or friends?

**Froelich:** um, well on me it’s just- it’s- it’s just natural. It’s what you do, it’s what I do. Um, I have 2 daug- 2 grown daughters um, who also are- are active in their communities um, they live in Columbus, but um, sometimes it’s a hinderance too because um, sometimes my kids say to me, “well we could never do everything that you and dad do”. Well I couldn’t do it at their age either so um, but there: there young women that I’m very proud of. They all do their own thing.

**Whitaker:** um, and what are some of the um, activism that they’re involved in?

**Froelich:** um, well one daughter is in Columbus and is a hairstylist and she um, volunteers her services at the battered women shelter in Columbus um, and then the other daughter does um, community programming in Columbus for the underserved. Um, she brings in educational projects and things like that the community can participate in.

**Whitaker:** um, and do you think you’re involvement with this um, and them kind of knowing about your past does that kind of help influence them to help the community like they are?

**Froelich:** I think they don’t know any other way. Um its- it’s just um, I’m very proud that when they see something that they think is not fair or shouldn’t be they just don’t complain about it, they take some steps to try to correct it. Now sometimes it’s very frustrating because you can’t do that. It’s- it’s like hitting your head against a brick wall sometimes, but if you try.

**Whitaker:** kind of following in your footsteps there a little bit?

**Froelich:** well (laughs) that’s okay, that’s good.
Whitaker: (laughs) um, and so basically um, you talked about being from the south?
Froelich: Mm hmm.
Whitaker: and you went to college for speech and hearing um, so as a child what did you see um, or what did you get involved in that made you want to help that made you realize you wanted to help others?
Froelich: I don't think as a child I- I knew that I wanted to help others but um, I have um, some­­some memories of early years that I knew um, I knew there were wrongs in the world. And, but I- at that point I never dreamed that I'd be the one helping to change .um, I grew up in Norfolk Virginia and um, it was a very heavily segregated community at that time. I remember that um, um, my sister and I um, were taking- taking a bus to downtown and my sister's very dark complected and the bus driver wanted her to sit in the back. So I remember that, I remember separate drinking fountains, I remember- I remember separate lunch counters um, bathrooms all of that is in my history so, I don't think there was ever just a moment dawned on me that­­that said this isn't right, you can do something, but I think- I think everything in life takes us to where we are today and, the fact that I moved next to- next door to such a dynamic woman who played such a- an important role in my life and taught me that you can be heard. All of those things contribute.
Whitaker: um, and what were some of the um, activism that you participated in college?
Froelich: Hmm. Um, well mostly the women's movement. Um, things around that.
Whitaker: um, were you um, in any activism that got out of hand or um, had to use violence or anything like that or was pretty much safeness for you?
Froelich: the- the- the most violent thing we did in those days was burn our bras (laughs).
Whitaker: (laughs). Um, so Basically I would like to know um, with your involvement in the community um, has this helped you to become more involved now than you were before or has it- has it changed in any way have you kind of stepped up- back a little bit to?
Froelich: Um, no my passion remains the same um, and- as I said before I think that my ability to get things done as I've gotten older um, and my name has gotten out there a little bit has-has has been helpful. Um, I've been involved with um, the National Conference for Community and Justice for many years now um, and that fights racism, bigotry, all the -isms. Um, so that- that still remains part of what I want to do.
Whitaker: um, what lessons do you carry away from your involvement in the community and community service?
Froelich: that you can make a difference, that I can make a difference, that um, that um, there's some really great people around that are willing to work with you. And- and it's not just one person, its one person that works with another person that works with another person um, to get something done.
Whitaker: um, you say that your sister was very dark complected um, was your whole immediate family from Virginia or you guys- were any of them immigrants or anything like that you know of?
Froelich: Mm mm, well my grandparents um, immigrated from um, Russia and Poland um, but um, um, my whole family on both sides, my mother and my father, um, all from Virginia. So um, it's pretty much in grained.
Whitaker: um, did your- was your parents involved in a lot of {volunteering} back then or anything?
Froelich: not at all, not at all. My parents um, um, probably to some extent helped the division continue. It doesn’t mean they weren’t good people, they were great people and um, that’s just all they knew and all they wanted to know.

Whitaker: um, and as an adolescent um, or a young adult um, you biggest influence was your mother in law with- with kind of getting you into that community service mind set?

Froelich: My mother in law and then um, my mother in law um, came down with early onset Alzheimer’s many years ago and um, but by that time she had- she had 2 sons, 1 my husband. Um, and- and my father law in law they were always involved in doing things. My father in law-when my mother in law was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s my father in law started the Alzheimer’s Association here in Dayton. Um, so they are just people that did things, they saw a need they got it done. My husband is an elected official, and um, and I think because um, because of his passion for certain things he continues to get elected so.

Whitaker: it’s very interesting that it wasn’t your immediate family but yet your family in law,

Froelich: I know, I know.

Whitaker: that kind of got you into that direction (laughs).

Froelich: and- and what’s also interesting is that um, my parents and my in laws were very good friends. They were totally different types of people, but very good friends. So um, people are all- not just all one way or the other. I remember one dinner, family dinner, um, with my parents and my sister and I, where my sister said something so against the Vietnam War and my father actually just dropped his fork (laughs) in his plate. I mean, and then years later he agreed with her, she was totally right but, I just, that memory is there.

Whitaker: kind of like one of those movie scenes like everything just goes quiet and everything just stops (laughs).

Froelich: that’s exactly it (laughs). You could hear it and I’m like oh she’s-she’s gonna get it now (laughs).

Whitaker: so pretty much I was gonna ask you about your family but you’re talking about now um, and was it just you and your sister was there any more siblings involved?

Froelich: no, just me and my sister.

Whitaker: and did you live next to your future family in law um, since you were a little girl or?

Froelich: I moved there when I was 13 and um, that was it.

Whitaker: (laughs) and are you still pretty- are you still pretty close with them are they still?

Froelich: well, my- both of my in laws are deceased um,

Whitaker: I’m sorry about that.

Froelich: my brother had- my- my husband has a brother here in Dayton and were all very close. And- and my sister and her family are here in Dayton, so.

Whitaker: okay, um, is he also your brother in law involved with community service?

Froelich: very involved.

Whitaker: um, what was your reason for moving to Dayton from Virginia?

Froelich: um, my father um opened- wanted to open a business here and um, it my- my uncle had the same kind of business in Indianapolis and together they thought well it’d be good to open a branch in Dayton, so here we are and here ever since.

Whitaker: what are the most interesting or compelling programs or events that you’ve been involved with?
Froelich: Yea, right.
Whitaker: what has been the relationship between your work and your community involvement?
Froelich: it’s all part of the same thing. I- I don’t think I could make a line.
Whitaker: and you said that your motivations um, overtime has not changed it- I mean your passion is still there so it’s not anything that has decreased anything?
Froelich: no, I think it’s all about um, women’s issues, women’s rights, and services to the um, underserved.
Whitaker: and are you still participating with the um, the women’s shelter, do you still go down there and try to help out with them?
Froelich: I- I serve- I-I don’t- I’m not hands on with the ladies anymore but I still serve on the YWCA Development Committee um, trying to- to find money to keep the place going.
Whitaker: Mm hmm, do you- do you feel that’s pretty successful (laughs)?
Froelich: (laughs) no it’s a challenge it’s always a challenge but the doors are still open, so.
Whitaker: that’s good. Um, have you been involved with any of your um, services that was pretty much on the verge of going down or you know if you didn’t have enough funding for it or anything like that or?
Froelich: well, I certainly been um, um, hands on or volunteered with organizations that have had to close their doors. Um, I- I love the Urban League of course they just had to close after 67 years um, I was involved in kids voting and um, it hasn’t closed but it’s, well it has closed now so you know, that’s not around anymore. Um, the literary- the literacy council um, was an organization I had an interest in and its funding, it’s all funding.
Whitaker: do you find that you kind of have to come out of your own pocket to kind of help that- that um, teeter totter so that way it doesn’t topple over or if it’s getting too close to maybe, okay you guys might want to start doing more funding to keep it going, do you ever have to go into your own pocket to try to keep it going?
Froelich: sure, well if you believe then you have a responsibility I think to do that.
Whitaker: um and how many people are employed here?
Froelich: um, we have 4 full time employees and 3 part time employees and about 50 volunteers.
Whitaker: and um, how does your service run is it Monday through Sunday or just the weekdays?
Froelich: the weekdays, Monday through Friday and then um, the second Saturday of every month were open from um, half day. 9-12.
Whitaker: now is that also for um, clients by appointment only or is that kind of like a public day or?
Froelich: it’s always by appointment um, but the boutique is not by appointment um, that boutique is the dark room I let you through but it won’t be dark when we leave. Um, that’s open to the public and so you don’t need an appointment to go there. (Inaudible) place to find inexpensive (inaudible).
Whitaker: I was going to ask are your prices um, kind of like the Goodwill is or are they a little more affordable for those who you know don’t have any?
Froelich: um, we think they’re pretty affordable and we’re always running some kind of sale. A lot of times we have dollar sales and- and that’s when we have an overabundance of inventory
or we’re changing the inventory in the client room. Um, and um, those are just huge happenings. Um, I think right now there’s a 50% off sale going on, and we also have little coupons in there that once you spend $100 dollars you get $10 dollars off your next purchase. Um, but we’re limited on that boutique because um, we can’t put up any signage. Um, the Job Center doesn’t want us to do that and so a lot of people don’t know that we’re here.

Whitaker: Hmm, is there a reason why they don’t allow you to put up a sign?

Froelich: they don’t allow anybody to, not just us. It’s part of (inaudible). And parking, I don’t whether if you had a problem parking but parking is a challenge so um, that’s another um, another thing we deal with.

Whitaker: now is there any type of advertisement at all that you can put out besides the signs out front that you could let people know you’re here to help?

Froelich: we have a facebook page, we have um, um, twitter, we um, all the social networking we actually have. One of our employees is- her job is to put together the fundraising events but also to keep up with the social media and more and more nonprofits um, are taking advantage of that um, because it’s inexpensive and it- it does reach a lot of people. Um, we- we send out monthly newsletters and we do that electronically through constant contact. So years ago non-noprofits would have to send out newsletters through snail mail and um, it was expensive, it was expensive to print it and postage was expensive but now this is so much easier.

Whitaker: do you get a lot of word of mouth, is that pretty successful for you.

Froelich: uh huh.

Glossary: Any special terms, events, people referred to in the interview and/or transcript

Husband
Women’s movement
C J McLine
Dayton public schools
SCAN
YWCA
Domestic violence shelter
Carolyn Kerns Young scholarship
Carolyn Young’s daughter
Saint Vincent De Paul
Hunks in Heels
Fashion show luncheon
Fairy Godmother Project
Sister
Grandparents
Alzheimer’s Association
Brother
Uncle
NCCJ
YWCA Development Committee
10 Top Women
YWCA Women of Influence