

AlphaWeek Q&A: Christine Breck, Texas Wall Street Women

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AlphaWeek's Greg Winterton spoke to Christine Breck, President and Founder of Texas Wall Street Women (TXWSW), which supports the Young Women's Preparatory Network, to learn more about TXWSW's mission.

GW: Christine, thanks for talking today. You founded TXWSW in 2008. What was the 'eureka moment' for you that led you to starting the organisation?

CB: I moved to Texas in 2007 and from my East Coast network, I had introductions to some great folks here in the community. What became quickly apparent was that all of the men knew each other and the women did not. For instance, at the time, there were two fund of funds in Austin, both of the CFOs were women and they were not connected. I started hosting coffees, drinks and inviting people I had met and that put things in motion. The real catalyst behind the organisation however was the formation of the Ann Richards School. I had a friend on the board of directors who was telling me about this new school getting off the ground in Austin offering college preparatory education to economically disadvantaged girls that Ann Richards had offered to spearhead. Sadly as the project was getting off the ground, Governor Richards passed away. This board member felt a real duty to make this school a huge success in her name, so a group of us women got together to figure out how to fundraise for the network of schools of which the Ann Richards School was a part. Giving back to the community through the Young Women's Preparatory Network has been a big driver behind what we do.

GW: So let's talk about the Young Women's Preparatory Network. TXWSW raises money for YWPN through a variety of ways, including its monthly events, so tell us about where the money that you raise goes and what it does.

CB: The Young Women's Preparatory Network (YWPN), based in Dallas, partners with public school districts to open all-girls, college preparatory PUBLIC schools. To date, YWPN has opened eight schools across Texas in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Grand Prairie, Houston, Lubbock, San Antonio, and Ysleta (El Paso). Each YWPN school offers a college preparatory education with a strong focus on science, technology, engineering, and math. A large majority of students enrolled in YWPN schools are economically-disadvantaged and will likely be first-generation college attendees. Currently, YWPN is serving over 4,500 girls in the 6th - 12th grades through its network of schools. Since YWPN's first graduating class in 2009, 100% of students have graduated from high school and 100% have been accepted to college. YWPN alumnae also graduate from college at FIVE TIMES the national average for students from similar economic backgrounds.

The money we raise helps support the YWLA College Bound Program, a comprehensive year-round initiative that fosters a culture of college awareness and support on campus. Through college readiness programs, SAT/ACT test preparation, exposure to higher education, and one-on-one guidance through the college admissions and financial aid process, the program ensures the girls are prepared for, have access to, and can afford a college education.

GW: Excellent. How do you anticipate TXWSW growing in the next 1,3,5 years and what are you looking to achieve for YWPN in the coming years? Are there defined goals?

CB: We now have 5 chapters across the state so our goal for the next few years is to strengthen each chapter and increase the engagement with each of the chapters at the YWPN schools in their local communities. We also want to expand our relationships with local universities so we are offering college and MBA students insight into what a career in finance looks like and give them a head start at building their network. And as always, we want to continue to support our members in their career development by providing access to programming that will help them succeed in their careers. In addition to hard work, I believe the key to success in finance is a strong network and we offer one of the best in Texas - not just because we are a large group with lots of members, but because we are a community that welcomes new members, both men and women, and we all work toward our collective success. Studies have shown that inclusion and diversity strengthen any organisation and we want to be a part of helping to foster that growth.

GW: TXWSW has its 10-year anniversary in 2018. Can you give us a sneak peek into what you have planned to celebrate?

CB: We have some exciting things in store for 2018 including an updated website which will make interaction with our members easier and more robust. We are also thrilled to have Bianca King on board as our marketing director – Bianca has really expanded our presence and engagement on social media, and finally, we will be producing a beautiful and contemporary circle charm that can be worn on a bracelet or necklace. Net proceeds from the charm purchases will go directly to the Young Women's Preparatory Network - benefiting all eight schools. We're currently in the design phase but taking pre-orders on our limited edition first run of 300 charms for late 2017/early 2018.

GW: Thanks for taking the time, Christine, and we wish you every success with the growth plans for TXWSW and the YWPN.

Readers can learn more about TXWSW by visiting their website here <http://txwsb.com/>. Also, to learn more about YWPN and their life-changing work, please watch [this short video](#).

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