

Better Decisions Annual Report



Letter from the President

01



Lisa Waddle

President, Board of
Better Decisions

Every time I walk into the prison, my heart constricts as I see the conditions these women must endure daily. But each time I walk out of the barbed wire gates, my heart soars with the enthusiasm and hope each of these women expresses in the midst of despair.

I have volunteered with Better Decisions since 1997 and been on the Board since 2014. What prompted my initial volunteering was a curiosity to go inside the prison and see if it matched what I've seen on TV and movies (spoiler alert: it's not!)

What has kept me involved in Better Decisions is quite simply the women. Both the women inmates and students at Thistle Farms, who I witness taking control of their lives and gaining hope for a new way of being. And the women volunteers and fellow Board members, a group of strong, passionate women from all different backgrounds who are united in our goal to empower other women.

We need your support in the year ahead. We want to reach more women, and increase our data collection to demonstrate our impact. We also want to expand our continuum of care to graduates of the program, to ensure they are supported beyond the prison walls or graduation from Thistle Farms.

We are grateful for your continued support of our mission and programs. Your gift of time, financial support, and mentorship is what keeps Better Decisions going, and we are so appreciative.



Better Decisions Overview

For nearly 40 years, Better Decisions has equipped incarcerated and otherwise vulnerable women with decision-making strategies and skills through structured curriculum and one-to-one mentoring.

We are a volunteer-driven organization, attracting women of all ages and backgrounds interested in working one-to-one with an inmate or at-risk women who want to improve themselves.

Our program incorporates two parts: individualized mentoring and group classes. It is a unique educational program that teaches life-planning and problem-solving skills to incarcerated and otherwise vulnerable women in the Nashville area.

Since 1985, over 1,200 women have been trained to serve as mentors. Together, they have helped over 1,500 women complete the Better Decisions course.

Better Decisions Curriculum

Our curriculum is tailored for women with challenging needs and difficult backgrounds, incorporating concepts of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), an evidence-based approach, in our work.

It is a living curriculum that changes and grows based on the audience and environment. Everyone who participates--students, mentors and teachers--provides feedback about how to strengthen the curriculum. We are grateful for the input of so many to support a robust program that changes women's lives.

Our curriculum is based on a five-step framework:

See the situation clearly

Know what you want

Expand the possibilities

Evaluate and decide

Act!



Better Decisions Impact

24

Graduates

554

Volunteer Hours

19

Inmates Taught

7

Informational Sessions throughout
Middle Tennessee

14

Women Taught at Thistle Farms

8

Hours Training Volunteers

“What was most valuable was having a mentor who saw my strengths and was caring enough to guide me into making better decisions so I can be my best me.”
-Amy, Better Decisions Student



Financial Statements

Statement of Activity July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024 Actual Fiscal Year 2024

\$30,898

Revenue

\$44,435

Expenses

\$(13,537)

Net Revenue

Revenue Details

Corporate Donations \$535
Employer Sponsored \$3,600
Foundation \$10,000
Grants \$8,000
Individual Donations \$8,763
Religious Donations \$0
Total Revenue \$ 30,898

Expense Details

Accounting \$4,210
Copying & Printing \$595
Dues & Subscriptions \$2,404
ED Hourly \$4,263
Fees & Other \$41
Insurance \$965
Meals \$656
Merch Fees \$71
Total Payroll \$27,823
Postage \$106.02
Professional Develop & Services \$1,915
Programming Costs \$1,387.30
Total Expenditures \$44,435



Get Involved

Better Decisions is a small but mighty nonprofit always in need of donations of time and money.

If you'd like to donate, please go to our website betterdecisions.org.

\$15 pays for a course manual for a student

\$25 pays for graduation for a student

\$200 pays for dinner for students in a class cycle

\$300 covers the cost of mentor manuals for a single cycle

If you'd like to volunteer at the prison or Thistle Farms, please fill out a volunteer application [here](#).

