



On November 28, 2006, WeCare Private Duty Services, Inc., and Ms. Geraldine Diggs, Founder, President and CEO, received the prestigious *Bridging the Gap*® Award from the Greater Baltimore Committee, Baltimore's premier business advocacy association.

The GBC *Bridging the Gap*® Achievement Awards is an annual ceremony honoring businesses in three categories:

- Successful minority and women-owned business owners
- Majority companies and/or corporate leaders that have demonstrated leadership in an area of inclusive business practices
- Partnerships or strategic alliances between minority business owners or between minority business owners and majority businesses to pursue new business opportunities

The following article appeared on the GBC website and was the basis of a press release to media outlets in the area.

Below the article is an interview conducted by the GBC staff with Ms. Diggs. In it, she expresses her business philosophy—the values and expertise that have helped her build WeCare to its current size and stature within the greater Baltimore community.

Eight Firms Named Winners of GBC's 'Bridging the Gap' Minority Business Awards

11/29/2006

Eight companies have been named as winners of the Greater Baltimore Committee's 2006 Bridging the Gap Awards honoring minority-owned and women-owned firms for achievement and others for their efforts to strengthen minority business opportunities in the Baltimore region.

Minority-owned business winners range from a successful private-duty caregiver service that began in its founder's Baltimore basement to the African-American-owned company that is performing the demolition work for Baltimore's east-side life sciences park and neighborhood revitalization project. Winners also include two major construction companies that proactively cultivate minority-owned subcontractors and partners as part of their day-to-day business operations.

Winners were announced during a November 28 awards ceremony at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture. The awards program is part of Bridging the Gap, a minority business development initiative of the Greater Baltimore Committee, the region's most prominent organization of business and civic leaders.

"By honoring successful minority and women-owned businesses and others in our region who show strong commitment to diversity, we underscore the economic case for making minority business development a high priority," said GBC President Donald C. Fry. "Our region's economic future depends on all of its business resources being fully-engaged."

After working for more than 30 years in a hospital and also as a private-duty caregiver, this firm's founder started the business in her Baltimore basement 11 years ago. Her company now manages 300 private independent contractor caregivers and serves 180 clients.

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April 2007

Interview with an Entrepreneur



An Interview with Geraldine Diggs

Founder and President - WeCare Private Duty Services, Inc.

WeCare is a woman and minority owned business that provides compassionate, professional care to individuals in need of daily living assistance who prefer to reside in the privacy of their own homes.

Geraldine Diggs began WeCare after working at Children's Hospital in Baltimore for 30 years and also serving as a private duty caregiver.

In June of 1995, Ms. Diggs founded WeCare in the basement of her home with a vision, a staff of ten caregivers, and less than ten clients. WeCare now has over 180 clients, 300 private independent contractor caregivers and have serviced over 2,800 clients.

In 2006, Ms. Diggs received a *Bridging the Gap Achievement Award*[®] in the category of outstanding achievement by a minority business. BTG interviewed Ms. Diggs about her experiences as an entrepreneur:

BTG - What inspired you to start a residential services agency?

G.D. – As a caregiver, I recognized the definite need for dedicated, hardworking, skilled caregivers who could provide clients with excellent care in the privacy and comforts of their homes.

BTG – You have had tremendous success in growing your business to its current size. What has been the most difficult part of getting to this point?

G.D. – Finding people who share the same passion and core values that I have. These values include ethics, skills, knowledge, image, customer service, customer care and a positive mental attitude.

BTG – What has been the most rewarding part of owning your own business?

G.D. – Being able to work with my family as they have been an integral part of this business since the beginning.

BTG – What advice would you give to someone who wants to start a business in Baltimore?

G.D. – My advice to someone who wants to start a business would be to make sure you follow your dream, pursue what you have a passion for, enjoy what you are doing, and surround yourself with trustworthy, dependable, and successful people. It is also very important to fully research those laws and licenses that pertain to the business you are starting.

BTG – What was your hardest business lesson?

G.D. – Recognizing the need to thoroughly research and have a good understanding of the technology needed to smoothly run and expand my business.

BTG – Who/What were your biggest inspirations for your career?

G.D. – My biggest inspiration was my Mother, who is my role model and a caregiver. Providing a stable foundation for my family was a source of inspiration. I was also inspired from within through my God given abilities and passion for what I am doing. My clients provide an opportunity for me to care for them and they have come to depend on and appreciate the services.

BTG – Would you do anything differently if you could re-live your career up to this point again?

G.D. – No, I would not change a thing.



Geraldine Diggs, President and CEO (second from left) of WeCare Private Duty Services with the winners of the Greater Baltimore Committee's Bridging the Gap Award® Winners, 2006.



Geraldine Diggs receives the Bridging the Gap Award® from Barbara Gehrig, Chair of the Greater Baltimore Committee Board of Directors.