

Garden Pathways, Inc.

2007 "Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield"

Jeanette Richardson Parks



Jeanette Richardson Parks has a heart for life – the life of community, the life of family, and life in its amazing kaleidoscopic expressions. As artist, teacher, gallery manger, marketing director, minister, radio and television host, author, fundraising strategist, non-profit director, and active consultant, Jeanette has endowed the communities in which she has lived with a vibrant legacy of improvement and positive change.

Following her ordination in 1981, Jeanette was welcomed to Bakersfield as the associate pastor at Saint Marks United Methodist Church, and later also volunteered as Executive Director of the Growing in Joy Ministries at Kern Christian Center. Jeanette then became the former Assistant Director and Director of Marketing and Development for the Bakersfield Museum of Art. For seven years, she hosted and produced both radio and television programs and was the Public Affairs Director for KERO TV 23. Jeanette took great pleasure in co-producing and hosting a children's TV show and hosting *Celebrate Life*, which she describes as "perhaps my most fun and interesting position." Additionally, Jeanette helped to run telethons and produced *Relay for Life* and *Children's Miracle Network*. More recently, Jeanette served as Executive Director for the Centennial Celebration Foundation – the biggest challenge of her career – overseeing over fifty public festivals, events, plays, and concerts. As the only employee, (supported by a great board and 1,000 volunteers), Jeanette raised 2.5 million dollars for the creation of Centennial Plaza. In addition to her current role as Executive Director of the Arts Council of Kern, Jeanette is an active consultant — creating funding campaigns, and teaching managements, media relations, strategic planning, marketing, funding and development to non-profit organization. Jeanette considers herself "very blessed to have worked with some amazing people." In Bakersfield, she has "found opportunity to be anything she wanted to be."

Jeanette's volunteer efforts reflect her enormous heart for our community. She has partnered with physicians to enable people take control of health issues, such as PMS, diabetes, and smoking cessation. In her collaborating with Aunt Cherie, Jeanette has assisted unwed moms find a future through education. She has taught some of our community's most needy citizens at Teen Challenge and the Rescue Mission and has had the pleasure of helping other non-profits find funds and public awareness.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay area, Jeanette began her quest for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom as an art major at San Jose State University, and continued with postgraduate work in nonprofit management at University of Indiana and CSUB. Jeanette's love of learning is reflected in the diverse subjects she has studied — art therapy, nutrition, psychology, education, non profit management, publishing, development, business and theology. Before moving to Bakersfield, Jeanette worked as an artist, teacher, gallery manger, and director of a private art school. She had a great interest in nutrition and studied and taught healthy cooking, as well as wrote a cookbook for healthy eating for families on the run.

Jeanette's personal joys are her children, grandson Ethan, and her amazing mom who constantly encourages and inspires her. Jeanette has experienced both tragedy and great joy in her life. After losing her husband Nelson to cancer, she has been blessed to be very happily remarried to the husband of her youth, Woody Parks. The family is reunited. Jeanette enthusiastically declares, "My, you never know what God will do with a life. I can't wait to see what's next!"