

DECEMBER 2009

## Hot Dogs & Generosity: *Alexander Shares Her Inspiration*

By Eva Gross, Contributing Writer

In the first grade, Wanda Alexander believed in a foot-long hot dog. She wanted her hot dog to the point that she cut class for the first time and got her hot dog for free from a local business owner, "because he knew I had no money."

"No one gave me permission. No one has to give us permission. The minute we wait, it will never get done," she said.

Alexander's determination has served her well in the business world. She is the



president and CEO of Horizon Consulting Inc., a company that provides high volume work flow management and loan quality control to governmental and commercial organizations. Horizon has recently been awarded a position on the *Inc. 500* list of Fastest Growing Private Companies.

As the featured speaker for December's Sterling Women's luncheon, Alexander chronicled her early life and career, focusing on her discovery of the value in motivation and generosity.

"I loved Curious George. I loved Madeline. Pippi Longstocking was my girl. I realized none of them asked for permission. They followed their hearts," Alexander said, adding, "anyone who skips out of school in Northeast DC, in the first grade must have something in them."

Walking to the podium of the Dec. 10 meeting, the first thing Alexander did was give host, Reston Limousine CEO Kristina Bouweiri, a day at the spa for her and a friend. She cited the importance of stepping back to "figure out what you need," going on to commend the Sterling Women for doing just that with their monthly meetings.

Alexander learned such generosity from her parents.

"My parents always gave of their lives to other people," she said.

She was raised the middle child in her family in Washington, DC, with her father a firefighter and her mother working in welfare, helping provide jobs.

"I adore my mother," Alexander said.

She remembered learning of the generous acts her mother provided for those she served.

"I would say, 'She did what for you? She gave you bus fare?' I don't have money for lunch. She just did it," Alexander said admiringly of her mother's drive and motivation.

At 23, Alexander remembered deciding to "pick up the gauntlet my mother laid down. I'm going to serve. I've learned in my short life, the more you give, the more God gives you."

It is this principle of unthinking service that she has held onto throughout her career. Through humorous anecdotes, Alexander set before the Sterling Women a portrait of generosity, expounding on the importance of a life lived for others. She added that she treats her employees like customers and goes out of her way to find the individual skill sets that she believes to be a part of each person.

When asked to give one piece of advice to those listening, she responded that time in meditation and prayer are invaluable to her, returning to the idea that a healthy work life is mirrored by a healthy inner life.