



## Second-Half Champion Lynn White

Nominated by friend, Penny L. Tracy

At age 54, Second-Half Champion Lynn White knows more than most about nurturing. She's raised four children, and as a pastor's wife she's nurtured members of her faith community for years. Before Lynn was a mother, she earned a degree in landscaping, but put her career dreams aside to raise her children. As her children grew and began to leave home, Lynn yearned to reignite her love of landscaping and also to help her community in some new and significant way.

Through the years, Lynn routinely helped maintain the public gardens as well as the gardens of disabled residents in her community. Lynn also volunteered as a mentor to women in addiction recovery. She dreamed of combining her love for landscaping with her passion for serving these women, who struggled to overcome addiction to drugs and alcohol. In 2002, Lynn launched Growing Stronger, a program that mentored at-risk youth by teaching them landscaping skills. Growing Stronger was the seed of what grew to be Lynn's bigger dream.

Lynn's community of Willimantic has worked hard to overcome a legacy of drug use and drug trafficking. Lynn wanted to get involved with the women who live in the sober houses in her town, yet she still wanted to have the time to help disabled residents with their gardens. With no computer skills, no grant-writing experience and no background in running a nonprofit organization, Lynn began her Second-Half journey to launch Growing Stronger as a 501(c)(3). She took seminars and classes to learn the skills she needed. She established a board of directors, adopted bylaws and established Growing Stronger as a federally-recognized nonprofit in 2007.

These days, Lynn works with a steady stream of women in recovery. She runs landscaping workshops and life-skills training sessions, and pairs some of the women in her program with disabled residents of the community. Lynn finds that both parties benefit from the experience of growing gardens and beautifying their surroundings. The women in recovery find value in getting reestablished in society, in working hard, and in being appreciated by the residents they help.

Lynn believes the second half of life is an opportunity to share resources and experience with the next generation, and hopes similar apprentice-type programs will be modeled after Growing Stronger.