

WORKING woman

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“20 Under 30”

By Leslie Jay

Keep your eye on this gang because you're sure to be hearing from them again. The women we've profiled—entrepreneurs, community activists, dot-commers, and executives—have plenty of time to top their already considerable accomplishments, seeing as how they were all born in the 1970s or later. One thing they have in common is guts. They've carved out their own careers and invented their own images. (In fact, half of them took their own photos for this article.) When Heather Halstead, opposite, was getting ready to sail around the world for the first time, she knew that she might not make it. But, she says, “you only learn by doing. Planning a long voyage is like planning a short voyage, just with more days. If you worry about what might happen, you'll never leave the dock.”

Jessica Sager and Janna Wagner All Our Kin, New Haven

Introduced by a mutual friend, Janna Wagner and Jessica Sager discovered they had a lot in common. Both are the daughters of single moms, and they share a social vision. The pair teamed up to create All Our Kin (allourkin.org), a nonprofit educational center for welfare recipients to train as day-care workers. Unlike other programs, their New Haven center accommodates participants' preschoolers on-site. “Even if you're upper class, child care is difficult to manage,” says Sager. It's a real challenge for those less affluent.

Wagner and Sager launched All Our Kin in August 1999, securing space from the city of New Haven and funding from the federal government, foundations, and individuals, along with a \$30,000 fellowship from Yale Law School, Sager's alma mater. The first five enrollees, chosen after careful screening, studied early education and worked with young kids for nine months at the program's lab school. Four of the women now have day-care jobs. All Our Kin will double in size this year with a second site opening, and Wagner and Sager plan to expand beyond New Haven. “We want to make cities more livable for poor families,” says Wagner.