

Changing Lives, Changing the Future

When Lela Jahn took her UW-Stevens Point diploma in hand in June 1962, she headed into a world very different from that of most Elementary Education graduates—and took her first step in a lifelong commitment to empowering women with self-reliance and freedom of choice.

Her first home after graduation was the *Morro da Favela*, the largest slum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and a world apart from her home in Green Bay. Working for the Methodist Mission Board, Jahn spent three years recruiting and training local women to run community health and child-care programs, organizing and managing a summer children's camp, creating after-school programs for elementary schoolers, and teaching English to many of the teenage gang members living in the slum.

From Rio, Jahn moved on to Chicago's rough West Side, living in the ghetto and working for nearly six years to redevelop the community's infrastructure. She created a year-round after-school program for elementary school children, hired and trained neighborhood women to teach preschool, enlisted local gang members to help start a youth center, and won grants of nearly a million dollars that helped propel change in the community.

Jahn's path later took her to Nairobi, Kenya, where she led a self-sustaining rural development community project, working to help women in local villages establish educational and economic structures that would allow them to become self-sufficient. After five years in East Africa, Jahn once again moved to Rio to head a nongovernment organization focused on effective management for Brazilian government agencies and for multinational corporations headquartered in Brazil.

In 1980, all of Jahn's organizational and managerial expertise took her to San Francisco, where she became a vice president at Wells Fargo Bank in San Francisco. Seven years later Jahn launched her own financial planning and investment advisory firm; in 2007, Jahn Investment Advisors



Above: Lela Jahn '62 (right), pictured here with Kathy Buenger, director of development for the College of Professional Studies, recently reconnected with UW-Stevens Point and plans to make teaching students part of her retirement.

Right: Jahn was featured on the cover of the September 2008 issue of *Wealth Manager* Magazine. [CLICK TO READ](#)



managed more than \$150 million in assets for its clients, 75 percent of whom were women.

Jahn, who sold her investment firm last year, plans to continue to share her knowledge and experience; in 2009 she will return to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point to teach a course as an adjunct professor in the Division of Business and Economics.