

She also learned how to overcome disappointment and challenges, including a fire that destroyed her team's hut and possessions.

Hoffman relied on her faith and in the emotional toughness she gained from thinking of her family and needing to remain strong for them.

She became heartbroken, watching a video of her family sent from back home. As a finalist, she was allowed to reunite briefly with her husband in Nicaragua.

She made the final four before a fellow contestant betrayed her and she was voted off the show. She had come so close to winning the \$1 million prize.

During the series, she lost 22 pounds and suffered physical hardships. When she arrived home, her family was stunned at her condition as she walked into the airport.

"My mom was crying," Hoffman said. "But my 24-year-old son put his arms around me, looked me in the eyes and said, 'I'm proud of you, Mom.' My son had never said he was proud of me."

Then came the son's words that tore at her heart.

"He said, 'I don't care if you win or not (on the reality show), you just made me proud,'" Hoffman said.

"I just won the \$1 million. Those words meant more to me than \$1 million."

Hoffman reminded her audience once again of the six words at the start of her talk. Then, she left the Yankton audience with one word.

Believe.

"Believe in yourself, and take control of your life," she said. "Create your own future."

■ Story by Randy Dockendorf

■ Photos by Ang Pechous & Kelly Hertz

Thank  
You!



The *Her Voice* staff would like to thank all of the women that attended our 9th Annual Celebrate Women event.

We also really enjoyed and greatly appreciated Holly Hoffman being there as our featured speaker. Thank you also goes to all the vendors that were there and a special thank you to our three major sponsors, Yankton Hy-Vee, Yankton Medical Clinic and First Dakota National Bank.

See you all next year!

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