

# A CLEAN SLATE – And A Thriving New Enterprise

## First commercial cleaning contract was for own home

*Carol Taylor* never planned to be an entrepreneur and found a cleaning business, but her determination to persevere in the aftermath of a tornado put her life on a new path.

Today, A CLEAN SLATE, LLC is a thriving full-service commercial and construction cleaning company employing twelve people in Kansas City, Mo.

The afternoon of May 4, 2003 changed Carol's life forever when a tornado swept through her family's home in Gladstone, Mo.

Her children actually saw the tornado through their living room window, moments before the family scrambled down to the basement for safety.

"We could literally hear the house exploding upstairs as my husband and I shielded the kids in the corner," Carol recalls.

The Taylor family emerged from their refuge with just one injury – Carol's twisted ankle. However, their house was now uninhabitable and they would have to spend that entire summer in temporary housing while waiting for their home to be restored.

"That May was a tough month for us," says Carol, with understatement. "Shortly after the tornado, a close relative passed away suddenly. Next, my son, Skyler, was diagnosed with Crohn's disease."

### Resilience and Determination

Carol chose to leave her job as Project Manager in the technology industry and direct her energies to volunteering in the community and caring for her family. "That summer was very difficult, but I looked at it as an opportunity to think about what I really wanted to do next in my life."

A woman of faith, Carol prayed for guidance. "I know it's hard to believe, but I heard a clear voice telling me to 'Clean your house!'" she says.

Not knowing whether to interpret this literally or figuratively, Carol tried to call her minister, but accidentally speed-dialed the general contractor on her home's renovation. "I want to clean my house!" she blurted out.

The contractor told Carol that a cleaning crew was scheduled to come that next day, but the job was hers if she wanted it.

"Maybe he figured that I'd be more motivated than anyone else to do a good job."

### A Fresh Start

"He told me that he'd pay me \$350 and I could start tomorrow!" Carol laughs.

Cleaning her home gave Carol satisfaction and purpose. She began cleaning other tornado-related projects nearby that fall.

"Stu Van Gorp of Damage Control Restoration told me that I had a real business and encouraged me," remembers Carol.

"I named the company A CLEAN SLATE because I liked the idea of providing a fresh start to other people. After what I've been through, I'm pre-qualified to do this kind of work."



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### Integrity and Hard Work

The volume of business grew, based on Carol's reputation for integrity and hard work, and she began to hire employees. In June 2005, she won her first big commercial contract with local construction company JE Dunn.

"In hindsight, I didn't realize what a big step winning that contract was for us, but at the time I guess I thought we were the only cleaning business in town," Carol smiles. "We didn't realize that we were considered the underdogs!"

Today, ever-resilient CEO Carol Taylor and her hard working team at A CLEAN SLATE continue to provide fresh starts to clients large and small as a full-service commercial and construction cleaning company.



#### KEY KS/MO PROJECTS

- The Kansas State House, Topeka, KS
- Kauffman Foundation, Kansas City, MO
- Ft. Leavenworth Family Housing, KS
- Argosy Casino Hotel, Riverside, MO
- JE Dunn Headquarters, Kansas City, MO