

The Women's Fund

of the Community Foundation for South Central New York

September 2011

CELEBRATING **10** years
2002 - 2012

Women's Fund Prepares to Mark Ten Years of Giving and Growth

As the Women's Fund approaches its tenth anniversary in 2012, we can't help but marvel at the impact we've made in just a decade.

Judith Peckham, executive director of the Conrad and Virginia Klee Foundation and past executive director of the Community Foundation, recalls how thrilling it was to learn about the ins and outs of women's funds at a national conference for community foundations in the late 1990s. "It brought to the fore that women have a much bigger role in philanthropy than people realize," she says.

Since its inception, the Women's Fund has grown a great deal, and so has its profile in the community.

Those early donors met a challenge to launch the Fund with a \$100,000 endowment and then quickly doubled that figure. Since then, membership has grown to more than 400 donors who have built the endowment to nearly \$407,000. Their efforts have put us

Once the Community Foundation started planning its own Women's Fund, it took just 67 donors to get things rolling. Founding donors made gifts of \$1,000 or more, but a person didn't need to be wealthy to play a vital role. Some founders were groups of friends who pooled smaller amounts to make collective donations.

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WF Part of a Vital Tradition, Notes Speaker at 2011 Breakfast

"We're all making history right now," said Dr. Leigh Ann Wheeler, associate professor of History at Binghamton University, in a talk at the Women's Fund Annual Breakfast on June 2.



Speaking on the topic, "Why Does Women's History Matter?" Wheeler noted that women used to form their own organizations because they were barred from most other groups that worked for social improvement. Although women today enjoy much broader opportunities, many still prefer to collaborate

with other women in groups such as the Women's Fund.

Presentations by Sandy Haruk of ACHIEVE and Sara Earl of the YWCA of Cortland County—two recipients of Women's Fund grants in 2010—illustrated the power of women's collaboration. The 177 people in the audience at the Binghamton Club also got an update on the Fund, which had raised \$388,475 as of the date of the breakfast. That put us 75 percent of the way toward our *Five in 5* goal to create a \$500,000 endowment by the end of 2012.

Many thanks to all those who joined us for the breakfast, and deep gratitude to the members of the Women's Fund Special Events and Leadership committees for creating another enjoyable and beautifully-managed event.

Women's Fund Leadership

Lisanne Bobby, *Chair*
Linda Biemer, *Vice Chair*
Sally Akel
Diane Campbell
Heather M. Cornell, Esq.
Lauren A. Kiley, Esq.

Betsy Koffman
Catherine Maliwacki, CPA
Suzanne McLeod
Suh Neubauer
Jennifer Schorr
Towhee Shupka

Faith Sigler
Sue Stephens
Natalie Thompson
Jackie Visser
Maureen Wilson
Jane L. Zuckerman

Ten Years of Giving and Growth *continued from page 1*

well on the way toward our *Five in 5* goal of \$500,000 by the end of 2012.

When we reach that goal, the Women's Fund will be able to award \$20,000 a year in grants to improve the lives of women and girls. We've already developed a good deal of giving power. Since 2004, the Fund has awarded more than \$40,000 to 28 agencies working in health, education and human services. Those grants have assisted approximately 1,000 women and girls.

"We don't give large amounts, but we are aware that women can make a small amount of money go a long, long way," says Linda Biemer, a founding donor and currently a member of the Women's Fund Leadership Committee.

Since its inception, the Women's Fund has grown a great deal, and so has its profile in the community. "More women know about it, and more women want to be committed to it, feeling a kinship with other females," Biemer says.

"A lot of women are involving their daughters," and those efforts to educate the next generation are especially important to the not-for-profit community, says Peckham.

To help widen our circle, we have hosted six annual Women's Fund breakfasts, each drawing a large, enthusiastic crowd. We've also hosted two regional events, in Cooperstown and Norwich. We've trained more than 40 women in engaged philanthropy and held numerous small, donor-sponsored awareness events for music lovers, school administrators, next-generation philanthropists and others.

The Fund increases through gifts of all sizes, and every donor is a full-fledged member. As we near our tenth anniversary, we particularly want to recognize our

Sustaining Donors—those who have given more than \$5,000 in total to the Women's Fund, and those who have

given gifts—of any size—in 80 percent of the years that the Fund has been open. We currently have 24 donors in that category, and we look forward to welcoming more.

We also thank the men who give to the Fund in honor of wives, mothers and other important women in their lives.

One of the most striking aspects the Women's Fund is the diversity of its members, says Peckham. These supporters make an impact through their gifts, and also by spreading knowledge about "wise grant making," the kind that involves both the head and the heart.

As a growing community of philanthropists, we look forward to exercising wisdom of that kind for many years to come.

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GOAL UPDATE

Five in 5 Drive

**Total Women's Fund
assets as of July 25, 2011:
\$406,748**

**Goal:
\$500,000 total
for the Women's Fund
by Dec. 2012**

**Dollars received
toward the goal
(donations and pledge
payments):
\$153,735**

**Outstanding Pledges:
\$35,000**

**Total pledges and
monies received:
\$188,735**

Women Gain a New Look, New Skills, New Sense of Pride

They bought new outfits, had their hair and nails done, gained self-care savvy, smiled and held their heads high. Thanks to a ten-week course at ACHIEVE in Binghamton, supported by a \$1,500 grant from the Women's Fund, women with intellectual and developmental disabilities gained a valuable chance this spring to improve their life skills and boost their confidence.

Sandi Holbert and Brenda Carlsen, both day habilitation specialists at ACHIEVE, developed the "Foundations in Self Esteem" course to help participants feel more comfortable out in the world and inside their own skins.

"A lot of the people we serve have never had anyone take time to teach them how to take care of themselves," says Sandy Haruk, vice president for operations at ACHIEVE. "They're stigmatized because of the way they appear."

Women in the course learned about grooming, healthy eating, social etiquette, exercise and other matters of personal care. "We purchased baskets that had all types of grooming articles they might need—brushes, shampoo, nail polish, deodorant," says Carlsen. The women practiced using those supplies until activities such as brushing hair and teeth became a matter of habit.

The group also learned to

offer mutual encouragement by complimenting one another as they worked together. "We saw a lot of bonding among the women—hugs and support—throughout," Carlsen says.

All this learning helped the women prepare for their capstone activity, lunch at a local restaurant, where they showed off their makeovers and put their social skills to work.

Without the grant from the Women's Fund, ACHIEVE could not have offered the women this chance to gain new competencies and increase their self esteem, Carlsen says. "You could see by the smiling faces and the camaraderie that they developed that this was a wonderful thing for them."