



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

*** Media Welcome ***

Who: Rochester Women's Giving Circle
What: Celebration Breakfast and Formal Presentation of Grants
Date: Wednesday, June 17
Time: 7:30 a.m.
Place: American Association of University Women,
494 East Avenue



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rochester Women's Giving Circle Awards \$55,312 in Grants to Support Women and Girls

Rochester, NY – The Rochester Women's Giving Circle of Rochester Area Community Foundation is awarding \$55,312 in grants to eight local organizations and programs that support women and girls.

Grant amounts range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 for a variety of programs that promote economic independence for women. The Giving Circle's mission is to help women and girls who may have been through crises like substance abuse or domestic violence but are not presently in crisis.

"We want to reach women who are ready to start making decisions and help young girls stay in school," says Shirley King, one of the Circle's founders.

The Rochester Women's Giving Circle was formed in June 2007 by King and four other women (Ellen Bevan, Paula Carter, Amy Irish and Alyce Van Patten) and now has 39 members. Every member makes an annual donation of at least \$1,000 and has the opportunity to participate in the grantmaking process. The dollar-in/dollar-out philosophy of the Giving Circle, under the umbrella of Rochester Area Community Foundation, means that donations in any one year are available for distribution that year via grants. In its first round of grants last year, the Circle distributed \$37,500 to six agencies.

The following agencies have been awarded RWGC grants:

Borinquen Dance Theater (\$5,000)

Founded in 1981, Borinquen uses a dynamic blend of Puerto Rican Folk culture and Latino contemporary dance as a way to emphasize education and discipline for 30 young Latina and African-American girls, ages 8 to 20. In addition to dance training, life skills classes are held for 42 weeks and include finance, college/career guidance, body wellness/diet, public speaking, professional etiquette and social skills. Girls must stay in school and maintain a 2.5 grade-point average. The focus is on attendance, responsibility, and discipline with college as a goal for this high-risk population.

Catholic Family Center, Healthy Sisters Soup and Bean Works (\$10,000)

This work-readiness program that provides intensive employment training, on-the-job- work experience, and support services to women in substance abuse recovery. More than 100 women are referred annually from CFC's treatment programs, ensuring consistent oversight and follow-up. The women are involved in every aspect of the work, including buying, packaging, selling, inventory, and marketing. The grant pays for stipends for 35 women.

Heritage Christian Services, Management Training (\$9,812)

Heritage Christian Services provides services to children and adults in group homes and day programs. Managers and supervisors are mainly women (74%) with high school degrees and are promoted from aide positions with no previous supervisory experience. This grant will support management/leadership training for 11 women, giving these new managers the necessary skills to be successful in their new roles.

Hope Hall, The Young Women's Club and Scholarship Program (\$5,500)

Hope Hall in Gates serves high-need, "educationally stranded" children in grades 2-10 from 19 school districts in the greater Rochester area. This is the second year of supporting the Young Women's Club for seventh-, eighth- and ninth-grade girls, most of whom live at or below poverty level. The group meets weekly to address conflict management, personal hygiene, manners and etiquette, and employment opportunities. Additionally, \$4,000 will go to a scholarship fund that will help support four girls attend the newly established 10th grade at the school. Each year, an additional grade will be added so that these educationally challenged young women have an increased chance of completing high school and finding gainful employment.

Sojourner House, Henrietta Hammond Institute of Life Skills (\$10,000)

Sojourner House in Rochester helps women and their children reach family and economic stability, sobriety, and deal with mental health, education, and employment issues. This is our second year of supporting the Henrietta Hammond Institute of Life Skills, which is a highly structured eight-session program that helps women prepare for living independently with their children. It addresses parenting, money management, health, cooking and nutrition, healthy relationships, job readiness and home maintenance, along with other elective courses. More than 50 women will attend and must complete 75 credit hours during their stay at Sojourner.

Visiting Nurse Foundation, Life Skills Support Program (\$5,000)

This program provides education, training, and tangible support to low-income home health aides to help them stay in their jobs and/or take advantage of career opportunities. A Life Skills advocate will provide support and intervention in crisis situations, helping the aide develop a solution for the immediate problem (short-term answer) and then a strategy for prevention (long-term solution). All employees contribute to a fund that will cover emergency needs.

YWCA of Rochester, School-Age Parents Program (\$7,500)

The goal of this program is to help young pregnant women stay in school while completing their pregnancy, obtain their high school diploma or GED and to avoid repeat pregnancies for 24 months after completing the program. Participants are involved in intensive case management, individual and group counseling, life skills training, career exploration and parenting education. Most services are delivered at school. The grant covers rent in Franklin High School and Hart Street Family Learning Center.

Wilson Commencement Park, RAFIKI (\$ 2,500)

This is the second year of supporting RAFIKI, which means “friend” in Swahili, a program launched last year that provides training on relationships (including mother/daughter), etiquette, health/nutrition, book club, “pamper me,” career exploration and field trips for 10 girls ages 11 to 15. The girls, who come from both Wilson and the surrounding neighborhood, are paired with closely screened successful, motivated women, ages 22-28, who are mentors and role models. Upon completing the program, the girls become junior mentors to new group members.

As greater Rochester’s largest grant-making foundation, the Community Foundation engages passionate philanthropists in improving our community through grants and initiatives that address aging, arts and culture, civic engagement, early childhood development, education, environment and animal welfare, health and nutrition, historical education and preservation, the needs of women and girls, youth and families, and more. For additional information, please visit www.racf.org.