



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

*** Media Welcome ***

Who: Rochester Women's Giving Circle
What: Celebration Breakfast and Formal Presentation of Grants
Date: Wednesday, June 16
Time: 7:30 a.m.
Place: American Association of University Women,
494 East Avenue



For information:

Alyce Van Patten
(585) 442-4522
Nancy Rutherford
(585) 244-1385
Shirley King
585-271-3807

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 11, 2010

Rochester Women's Giving Circle Awards \$55,000 in Grants to Support Women and Girls

Rochester, NY – The Rochester Women's Giving Circle of Rochester Area Community Foundation is awarding \$55,000 in grants to seven local organizations and programs that support women and girls.

Grant amounts range from \$5,504 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 making positive decisions about their future and to help young girls stay in school," says Shirley King, one of the Circle's founders. "Even in this difficult economic downturn, our members remain committed to providing opportunities that improve the lives of women and girls in this community."

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 55 members. Every member makes an annual donation of at least \$1,000 and has the opportunity to participate in the grant-making 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 the past two years, the Circle has distributed \$92,812 to 14 agencies. With this latest round of grants, the total contribution to the community is \$147,812.

The following agencies have been awarded RWGC grants:

American Association of University Women: “Girls Taking Charge!” — This program is an expansion of the AAUW’s Women Helping Girls mentoring program, which aims to break the cycle of poverty. The mentoring program pairs professionals and retired professional women with at-risk girls in the Rochester City School District and is designed to encourage the girls to make solid, positive choices in their lives to broaden their horizons, complete high school, and seek further education or enter the work force. The mentors/mentees meet twice a month for individual activities. Girls Taking Charge! will provide a series of monthly programs for the girls and their mentors on healthy relationships, decision-making, personal safety, and developing goal-directed behaviors, with the goal of helping them develop leadership skills and to take charge of their lives. **\$8,000**

Ausangate: “Women’s Opportunity for Work” — This employment and life skills training program is for women who do not succeed in conventional welfare-to-work programs because they have multiple barriers to employment. Within the context of a coffee business, the training links counselors to trainees and trainees to each other, enabling women to recognize, practice, and bolster the skills they need to help themselves. Services include pre-employment, job, or education readiness training in a supportive environment, personal skills development, job coaching, substance abuse counseling, guidance to educational opportunities, budget and financial education, and Medicaid education. **\$10,000**

Brockport Auxiliary Service Corp: Leadership Academy for Girls — This week-long residential camp for girls age 12-15 is designed to provide leadership skill development by creating self-awareness, building character and self-confidence, and enhancing decision-making skills through fun programs and activities that provide girls with direction and tools for continuous growth and success in high school, college and life. The girls, who are referred by Rochester City School District counselors, learn to develop a personal leadership style based on their unique personality strengths, while gaining an understanding and ability to learn from and work well with others. The counselors are State University College at Brockport student interns, who also develop their own leadership skills through participation in the program. This will be the program’s second year and the Giving Circle’s grant will support 10 girls who would otherwise not be able to attend the camp. **\$5,750**

The Corner Place Tutoring: Math Matters — Tutors at School 35 will provide intense math intervention to increase the math competency of 3rd and 4th grade girls and improve their future outcomes in math skills and financial literacy. Girls who do poorly in math in elementary school often fail and drop out of high school, have poor career opportunities and limited life choices. The program, an outreach service of Third Presbyterian Church, provides group tutoring in math drilling and financial literacy to these young girls and is designed around a “club” model using incentives, motivators and activities directed to different learning styles. **\$5,504**

Safe Journey: Survivor Resettlement Program — Safe Journey serves victims of domestic violence, primarily from the suburbs of Monroe County. Many of these women come from middle-class families, are not eligible for public services and are financially dependent on their abuser. Safe Journey offers a Survivor Transition Program (counseling and support groups for victims) and a Survivor Resettlement Program (assisting victims in securing safe housing and becoming financially independent). This grant will fund the financial independence portion of the program that will offer individual financial counseling for three to six months. The financial counselor will work with clients on their chosen goals, such as developing and managing a budget, restoring and maintaining good credit and setting appropriate financial goals. Following the more formal counseling, clients may choose to have a qualified volunteer mentor to work with them as they continue on the path to financial independence. The Resettlement Program is affiliated with Ecumenical Ministries of Perinton. **\$7,106**

Volunteers of America: Working Wardrobe on Wheels — This effort helps low-income women move from public assistance to self-sufficiency. Working Wardrobe provides business attire for interviews, as well as coaching in appropriate conduct and appearance during an interview. Wardrobe on Wheels is a new program that seeks to expand the Working Wardrobe program by taking clothes and counseling to various sites throughout Monroe County to increase accessibility for women who do not have transportation. All clients of are referred by social service agencies and Monroe County's Department of Social Services. **\$8,640**

YWCA of Rochester and Monroe County: Young Parent Support Services — The School Age Parents Program provides strength-based case management and support services to pregnant and parenting teens at Rochester City School District high schools. Rochester's teen birthrate in 2006 was more than twice that of the national birth rate. The national statistics speak to the greater concern — 75 percent of female students who become pregnant drop out of high school. This program provides the support and services needed to assist these teen mothers so that they can complete their high school education and avoid repeat pregnancies. **\$10,000**

To find out more about the Rochester Women's Giving Circle, visit www.therwgc.org.

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.

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