



## THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

\*\*\* Media Welcome \*\*\*

**Who:** Rochester Women's Giving Circle  
**What:** Celebration Breakfast and Formal Presentation of Grants  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 15  
**Time:** 8 a.m.  
**Place:** Asbury Methodist Church  
1090 East Avenue

**For information:**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 14, 2011

### **Rochester Women's Giving Circle Awards \$86,500 in Grants to Support Women and Girls**

Rochester, NY — The Rochester Women's Giving Circle of Rochester Area Community Foundation is awarding \$86,500 in grants to 10 local organizations and programs that support women and girls.

Grant amounts range from \$5,000 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 70 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. With this latest round of grants, the Giving Circle's total contribution to the community is \$230,312.

The following agencies have been awarded RWGC 2011 grants:

Empire Justice Center's C.A.S.H. program \$10,000

The Creating Assets, Savings and Hope (C.A.S.H.) program provides financial literacy training and coaching for 30 low-income working women in Monroe County. As low-income families lack access to mainstream financial products and services, the program gives the women the information they need and the ability to put their new knowledge into behavior-changing action. C.A.S.H. provides teaching and counsel on budget development, savings to debt ratio improvement and credit report review. The women set their own goals, change day-to-day financial habits and take financial behaviors tests. They receive monthly reports for 1:1 coaches with 80% expected to complete at least one goal. Grant funds will be used to cover the cost of providing professional training and support for volunteer coaches for one on one financial coaching to the 30 women over nine months.

Ausangate's Women's Opportunity for Work (WOW) \$8,000

Women's Opportunity for Work (WOW) is an employment and life-skills training program for women with a history of substance abuse 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 WOW training program integrates employment and life-skills training including pre-employment, job, or education readiness training, personal skills development, job coaching, substance abuse counseling, guidance to educational opportunities, and budget and financial education. The program is finding the women are stressed by increased mental health issues and links them to other programs as appropriate. While the number of trainees is small, the training is intensive with a good rate of success. Program "graduates" often return to mentor other trainees and offer successful role models. The agency is considering opening kiosks in various locales and hopes to be completely self-sustaining within a year. Grant funds are primarily for stipends for the trainees.

Safe Journey's Survivor Resettlement Program \$5,000

Safe Journey, a program of Ecumenical Ministries of Perinton, serves victims of domestic violence, primarily from Monroe County suburbs. 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* (offering counseling and support groups for victims) and a *Survivor Resettlement Program* (assisting victims in securing safe housing and becoming financially independent). This grant will support the financial independence portion of the program that will offer individual financial counseling to 65 survivors plus phone counseling for an additional 200. The financial counselor will work with clients on their chosen goals, which may include developing and managing a budget, restoring and maintaining good credit, and setting appropriate financial goals. The long-term outcome is that 70% will complete their goals, including financial independence. This grant will be used for salaries of professional staff.

Catholic Family Center's Healthy Sisters Soup and Bean Works \$10,000

This work-readiness program provides intensive employment training, on-the-job work experience and support services to women in substance-abuse recovery to help them move toward dignity and self-sufficiency. This grant will support the program's current goal to "re-tool" the services to enhance program sustainability. They are now in a new facility and working with Complemar, a Rochester-based, women-owned packaging and fulfillment business. There are nine women in the program and this year's goal is to expand to 40 women, reduce production costs by 30% and distribution costs by 17%. They are also developing a new marketing plan and new packaging to enhance shelf presence. The program is supported through product sales (80 %) and hopes to become self-sufficient by 2012.

### The Corner Place Tutoring Program's Math Matters

\$7,553

Tutors at School 35 provide intense math intervention and drilling to increase third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade girls' math competency 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. In 2010, only 12% of girls in third grade and 30% of girls in fourth grade passed state math tests. The program, an outreach service of Third Presbyterian Church, provides group tutoring in math drilling and financial literacy. It is based on a business model with community investment, performance incentives, and clear outcome measures. The teachers report students in the program grasp new concepts quickly. The program is laying the groundwork for other funders. This grant will be used for professional fees, teaching materials, and student incentives.

### AAUW's Women Helping Girls

\$8,500

*Invest in Girls!* is an expansion of the American Association of University Women's Women Helping Girls (WHG) mentoring program, which aims to break the cycle of poverty. WHG pairs women mentors (professionals and retired professionals) with 55 to 60 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 workforce. The girls that are selected exemplify an interest in succeeding despite numerous obstacles. The mentors/mentees meet twice a month for individual activities with the relationships usually lasting throughout the student's secondary school education and beyond. The *Invest in Girls program* is a series of life skill-focused group activities to help the girls succeed. In 2010, outcomes included 80% of the girls continuing in the program, 90% progressing to the next grade level, and 50% participating in community service. Long-term outcomes are that 90% of seniors will graduate, 80% of those will go to college and that graduated girls become volunteers and mentors. This grant will support programming and college prep support.

### SPCC's Successful Futures

\$10,000

This program, sponsored by the Society for the Protection and Care of Children (SPCC), supports 50 at-risk pregnant and/or parenting teens (ages 14 to 21) through employment, education and community service components. Successful Futures coordinates with the City of Rochester and provides a school-based, evidence-based national curriculum. The program includes weekly groups, individual support, supported work assignments, transportation, and child care. The goals include reducing repeat teen pregnancies and the rate of young girl pregnancies (ages 13 to 15). Girls in the program set their own goals with as many as 20% going on to higher education and 85% getting and holding jobs. Grant funds will be used to pay for "wrap-around" services for out-of-school women — child care, transportation and day trips to colleges and trade schools.

### Center for Teen Empowerment's Female-Male Youth Dialogue Series

\$8,000

The Center for Teen Empowerment (TE) empowers youth and adults to become agents of individual, social, and institutional change. Thousands of Rochester youth in TE focus groups over the past seven years have identified teen pregnancy and dysfunctional and sometimes violent "drama" in relationships between young women and men as barriers to their advancement. The Female-Male Dialogue Series is designed to help the predominantly African-American community of youth in the Southwest quadrant of Rochester to unearth and address root causes that result in destructive attitudes and barriers. Opening these avenues to healthier communication will help put young women on the path to economic independence through greater understanding, empowerment, self-esteem and improved relationships that better support their growth and advancement.

St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center's Women on the Move

\$10,000

Women on the Move (WOTM) assists female heads of households progress toward sustainable economic self-sufficiency through an intensive nine-month program of group and individual counseling and support. The program targets 15 women who are GED-prepared with a previous relationship to St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center. The program focuses on employment skills, further education, housing, financial management, transportation, and security with both professional and peer support. WOTM has run for the past four years with 62% completing the program showing a significant increase in movement toward employment, increased wages, increased movement from part- to full-time work, and an increase in educational pursuits and in-housing stability. This year's goal is for 75% to make significant gains toward sustainable, economic self-sufficiency. Evidence-based tools are used in partnership with the UR Behavioral Health staff. Grant funds will support staff salaries.

Sojourner House's Henrietta Hammond Institute

\$9,447

The Henrietta Hammond Institute for Life Skills (HHILS) offers skills training 50 to 60 women living at Sojourner House to encourage self-sufficiency, employability, money management, responsible parenting, healthy practices, and positive peer relationships. Since 1982, more than 2,000 women and their children have achieved more emotionally and financially stable lives through this program. To receive the Life Skills Certificate of Achievement, women must complete eight, three-credit core courses (parent education, money management, organization, cooking/nutrition, job readiness, home maintenance) and two elective classes (computer basics, body works, women's talk, quilting, esteem-building). Outcomes include: 65% of women at Sojourner will graduate from the program; 75% of them will make progress with child-custody issues; 85% will demonstrate increased life skills; 100% will have plans to transition to the community; and 95% will move to permanent housing. Grant funds will be used for salaries for the institute's staff.