

# Rochester Women's Giving Circle



## How We Got Started

In 2007, five women – Shirley King, Paula Carter, Ellen Bevan, Amy Irish, and Alyce Van Patten – envisioned the power of women supporting women through hands-on philanthropy, and the Rochester Women's Giving Circle was born. Within several months there were 29 members, and in 2008, they awarded \$33,500 in grants to six local organizations. The Giving Circle operates under the umbrella of the Community Foundation.

## Our Mission

With its grants, the Giving Circle supports programs and organizations in Monroe County that help women and girls gain the necessary education, training, and skills that lead to economic independence.

The Giving Circle also provides members with opportunities to understand the power of philanthropy as a vehicle for social change and to engage in thoughtful and systematic grantmaking, investing in the future of women and girls in our community. Members choose their own level of involvement.

## **Our Impact**

Since the Giving Circle was founded, membership and grant awards have grown steadily. There are currently more than 170 members. Every member contributes a minimum of \$1,000 annually, which goes directly to grants, as well as a \$50 administrative fee. Our philosophy is that we distribute 100 percent of our grant dollars every year so member contributions have an immediate impact in the community.

In 12 years, this group of women has granted more than \$1.4 million. More than 4,300 low-income women and girls have been directly helped through training, education, and services provided by the programs the Giving Circle has supported.

Through its grantmaking process, the Giving Circle has seen the challenges of keeping girls in school, helping them graduate from high school, and providing women with the skills and competencies to get a job that pays a living wage. The Giving Circle continually looks for innovative ways to deliver greater benefits to women and girls in our community. For example, in 2015, our "Venture-Up" Grant committed \$50,000 a year for two years to Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection for wrap-around support and services to two groups of 20 at-risk female graduates from the Rochester City School District, who were enrolled in a certificate, AAS, or skilled apprenticeship

program.

To learn more about the Rochester Women's Giving Circle, visit [therwgc.org](http://therwgc.org) or [contact one of the members](#).

You are invited to become a member of the Rochester Women's Giving Circle. As a member, you will join a growing group of dynamic, committed women making a difference in our community through social investment.

## Membership

Annual dues are a minimum \$1,000, plus \$50 towards operating expenses. To join, please download and complete [this form](#) and mail it in with your membership dues.

As an all-volunteer organization with virtually no overhead, almost 100 percent of members' contributions go directly to grants for women and girls, maximizing the impact of members' dollars.

## Gifts

The Giving Circle welcomes anyone who shares our passion for creating opportunities for women and girls to reach their full potential, and invite you to make a donation of any amount.

If you would like to contribute to the Giving Circle, please [contact us](#). If you make a gift in honor of someone, your gift will be acknowledged to that individual.

## Volunteer Opportunities

The Giving Circle is led by a Steering Committee comprised of co-chairs and chairs of the following five standing committees:

- Grant Making
- Evaluation
- Communications
- Membership

Members are encouraged to participate on [standing committees](#), combining their talents, energy, and passion to accelerate the work of the Giving Circle.

The Rochester Women's Giving Circle considers and funds programs that help women and girls who are on the path to achieving economic independence. Programs that serve males and females are eligible as long as Giving Circle funds are directed to the women and/or girls in the program. Organizations must be located in and serve women and girls in Monroe County.

The Giving Circle seeks to support programs that provide the following:

- Education and training;
- Money management and financial literacy skills;
- Life skills and job-readiness skills;
- Leadership opportunities for women and girls;
- Mentoring programs for girls; and
- Put women to work.

For more information about the Giving Circle's grant criteria and annual grant cycle, [click here](#).