

Female empowerment: Women & Girls Fund awards \$50K in grants

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BRISTOL - The Women & Girls Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation awarded \$53,000 Thursday to 18 area organizations.

Several dozen representatives from the organizations and foundation members attended the annual meeting and grant reception at Doubletree by Hilton. There they spoke about the programs funded through the grants and the impact they will have on local women and girls.

Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation, welcomed the guests.

“This is the 19th year of the Women & Girls Fund; it has been quite an amazing journey,” she said. “The conversation started in a living room about the needs of women and girls in the communities we serve and it has expanded from there to reach the point where we are now.”

Sadecki thanked those who have supported the fund over the years and made it possible to grow the endowment and recruit volunteers for the fund’s “Wonder of Women” fundraiser.

The grant money was raised during the fund’s 18th annual “Wonder of Women” event in 2019 as well as the Main Street Community Foundation’s Barbara Hackman Franklin Fund for Women and John & Gloria DiFrancesco Fund for Women and Girls. These funds will specifically support women and girls in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington and Wolcott.

Julia Weston, chair of the fund’s advisory board, then spoke for the last time in this role before her term ended.

“Our 2019 WOW (Wonder of Women) event was a wonderful celebration of our work in the community,” she said. “We had a speaker, Colleen Kelly Alexander, who was involved in a cycling accident and needed dozens of blood transfusions to save her life. That inspired us to plan a blood drive in Bristol with the Red Cross that year.”

This 19th annual Wonder of Women event will be April 21 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington. Humor columnist Lori Borgman will be the guest speaker.

Cathy Casin was also appointed to serve as the new chair of the advisory board for the Women & Girls Fund and Jeanine Audette, of Plymouth, Jessica Pieri, of Bristol, and Carolyn Ziogas, of Bristol, were elected to serve three year terms on the advisory board.



Mike Orazzi | Staff Arts for Learning CT's John Michael Parker accepts a check from Julia Weston and Jessica Pieri during the grant reception.

The following grants were awarded:

nArts for Learning CT – \$4,500 for an after school theater program focusing on positive youth development for girls at Eli Terry Middle School in Plymouth.

nBoys & Girls Club of Bristol Family Center – \$3,000 to benefit SMART Girls, a critical skill development program for girls ages 6 to 12 focusing on health, education and self-esteem.

nBrian's Angels Homeless Outreach – \$1,000 for warm winter outerwear and boots for women and girls.

nBristol Family Resource Centers – \$3,580 for the Best SELF: Self Image & Esteem, Leadership and preparing for the Future, a social skills program designed to prepare 5th and 8th grade girls for middle school and high school respectively.

nEarly Childhood Collaborative of Southington – \$4,000 to provide training and materials for educators to implement The RULER Approach to Emotional Intelligence for Southington's early childhood educators.

nEdAdvance with the Plymouth Family Resource Center – \$1,685 to benefit support groups in Plymouth schools for mothers of children with special needs and for 5th grade girls transitioning to middle school.

nEnvironmental Learning Centers of Connecticut – \$3,000 to provide camperships for girls.

nGirl Scouts of Connecticut - \$3,000 to provide camperships for girls.

nPlymouth Community Food Pantry – \$1,500 to purchase supplies for the Diaper Bank.

nPrudence Crandall Center – \$4,500 to support Partnerships to Promote Healthy Relationships, a program that provides domestic and teen dating violence prevention services in Bristol, Plainville and Southington schools.

nRushford Center – \$4,000 to support Building Resiliency through Alternative Therapies, which provides women in the behavioral health outpatient treatment programs with alternative therapies such as yoga and meditation.

nShepard Meadows Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc. – \$1,600 to support Equine Assisted Activities & Therapies for women and girls.

nSt. Vincent DePaul Mission of Bristol – \$2,500 to provide housing emergency funds for women and girls.

nThe Agape House – \$1,680 to support the Peer Support and Empowerment Group for homeless women.

nThe Children's Law Center, Inc. – \$6,000 to provide legal representation for female children in family court.

nThe New England Carousel Museum – \$1,225 to support the partnership with the American Clock & Watch Museum to provide free admission for Bristol WIC cardholders.

nTunxis Community College – \$5,000 to fund Launch Your Leadership Journey, a program which promotes student success and retention through the development of leadership skills, abilities and attitudes.

nUnited Way of West Central Connecticut – \$1,260 to support Women's Career Development, a program to assist parents in building connections with other parent leaders, building their sense of self and providing useful career tools.

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