

# Wonder of Women Gala has strong turnout, awards \$20K in anniversary grants to local organizations

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@brianjohnsonBP

BRISTOL – The Main Street Community Foundation awarded \$20,000 in anniversary grants to seven local organizations during the 20th annual Wonder of Women (WOW) Gala.

The gala, which celebrated the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Women & Girls Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation, was held Sept. 8 at the Aqua Turf Club. Although the event had to be canceled last year, it drew a strong turnout this year, with about 350 people attending to show their support. In addition to the grant presentations, the evening featured Patti Russo, executive director of The Campaign School at Yale University, as the guest speaker.



Christine Theborge, executive director of St. Vincent DePaul Mission, speaks at the Main Street Community Foundation's Wonder of Women event. - The Main Street Community Foundation

Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation, said it was “wonderful” to see the fund’s supporters come together again for the same cause – supporting and advancing opportunities for local women and girls.

“It was devastating when we had to cancel last year, but with the precautions we put in place it was an amazing event,” she said. “A lot of the attendees have been coming to the WOW event for 20 years.”

Representatives from the recipient organizations were present to receive their grants. Excerpts from their applications, which included poems and mock press releases, were shared with the audience. Eligible applicants were asked to answer a single question: “Twenty years from now, what do you hope others see as your organization’s legacy for women and girls?”

Chair of the Women & Girls Fund’s Advisory Board Cathy Cassin recalled how one application envisioned the year 2041, and hoped by then the challenges the organization helped their clients to overcome was no longer an issue.

“A lot of organizations are working to solve a variety of community and social challenges that we all hope will no longer be here or will be greatly reduced in 2021,” Sadecki said.

The recipient organizations were selected by a grant distribution committee that looked over the applications and selected seven from among them.

“Attendees at WOW were able to hear how their support of the event and the Fund is directly contributing to the ideas and solutions that organizations presented,” Cassin said.

The 20th Anniversary grantees are:

- \*Jane Doe No More - \$5,000
- \*The Children's Law Center - \$4,000
- \*Prudence Crandall Center - \$3,000
- \*Environmental Learning Centers of CT - \$2,000
- \*Literacy Volunteers of Central Connecticut - \$2,000
- \*Plymouth Community Food Pantry - \$2,000
- \*St. Vincent DePaul Mission of Bristol - \$2,000

Since 2001, over \$620,000 in grants have been awarded to improve the conditions and opportunities for women and girls in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington and Wolcott.

"The Women & Girls' Fund began with a living room meeting of local, dedicated women," Cassin said. "It is thanks to their commitment and the commitment of hundreds of other supporters that the fund is able to impact women and girls so broadly and so deeply."

The first fundraiser for the Women & Girls' Fund was a very successful bake sale. The Wonder of Women fundraising event has been held each year since. These fundraisers have resulted in the endowment now being valued at \$830,000.

"We will continue moving forward together," Cassin said. "As an endowed fund, the Women & Girls' Fund will be here forever."

For more information on the Women & Girls' Fund, contact the Main Street Community Foundation at 860-583-6363 or visit [mainstreetfoundation.org](http://mainstreetfoundation.org).

Brian M. Johnson can be reached at 860-973-1806 or [bjohnson@bristolpress.com](mailto:bjohnson@bristolpress.com).