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## Bake sale that sparked Women & Girls Fund celebrates 25 years and \$1 million milestone

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William Fenlon; Jeanne Radcliff, Susan Scarritt, Mary Benoit, Joanne Picard and Susan Sadecki. | Main Street Community foundation

POSTED BY: LAURA BAILEY MARCH 4, 2026

by Laura Bailey | TBE news editor | March 4, 2026 |

What began as a bake sale outside a newly opened Walmart store in Bristol has grown into a million-dollar endowment supporting women and girls across six communities in central Connecticut.

In June 2001, a group of women known as the Early Leaders organized what they called the first fundraiser for the Women & Girls Fund at Main Street Community Foundation. The goal was to raise \$10,000 to establish a permanent fund dedicated to serving local women and girls.

“This was the ‘Mother of All Bake Sales’ thanks to the willingness of so many mothers, future mothers, mothers in spirit (and a couple of guys, too). It was a tremendous success which helped to raise funds towards the \$10,000 needed to start a fund dedicated to serving the needs of local women and girls,” stated Mary Benoit, an Early Leader of the Women & Girls Fund.

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event co-chairs, recently returned to the Bristol Walmart location where the effort began.

“We want to thank the Store Manager and the staff of the Bristol Walmart for once again partnering with the Women & Girls Fund to celebrate the 25th anniversary of both the Fund and the opening of this location in Bristol,” stated Jeanine Audette, Co-Chair of the 2026 WOW Event.

“Walmart’s continued support will help us create change for local women and girls.”

This year, the Women & Girls Fund is celebrating what organizers call “A Million Reasons to Celebrate.” The fund has grown to an endowment of more than \$1 million and has awarded a total of \$921,000 in grants since its establishment in 2001.

Organizers are inviting the community to attend the 25th Anniversary Wonder of Women event April 30, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington. The guest speaker will be Kara Wolters, described by organizers as an Olympic gold medalist, UConn national champion and WNBA champion, as well as a nationally recognized broadcaster and entrepreneur.

The Main Street Community Foundation, established in 1995, is a nonprofit public charity created by private citizens to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations in the communities it serves. The foundation works with donors to build permanent charitable endowments and has provided more than \$33.6 million in grants and scholarships since its founding.

Proceeds from the event will support grants for programs assisting women and girls in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville,

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For more information about the Women & Girls Fund and the anniversary celebration, contact the Main Street Community Foundation at 860-583-6363 or visit [mainstreetfoundation.org/women-girls-fund](https://mainstreetfoundation.org/women-girls-fund)

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