

WOMEN & GIRLS' FUND

OF THE MAIN STREET COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

15th Anniversary Newsletter

Fall 2016



WELCOME

As the Chair of the Women & Girls' Fund, I am proud and honored to be leading an impressive group of women in the Fund's 15th year. I want to thank all those that have come before me for making my job easy – because of them, and together with the Advisory Board, I now have been able to showcase all that has been accomplished over the last 15 years. In this special anniversary edition newsletter, you will read about the history of the Women & Girls' Fund as well as highlights from the anniversary year. As the Fund continues to grow and fulfill its mission – to improve the conditions and opportunities for local women and girls – I invite you to join us, either as a volunteer or a donor and supporter of the Fund. Visit mainstreetfoundation.org to learn more.

Dawn Nielsen
Chair, Women & Girls' Fund

History of the Women & Girls' Fund

Family, friendship, basic necessities, progress toward personal goals, career success, positive life experiences, and a helping hand to rise out of a difficult situation are essential to sustaining women as they prioritize and meet the demands of their everyday lives. Main Street Community Foundation (MSCF) has recognized and responded to these needs. The Women & Girls' Fund at MSCF, established in 2001, has awarded more than \$350,000 to programs and initiatives that help to improve the lives of women in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington, and Wolcott.

The idea to establish a Women & Girls' Fund, something that many other community foundations had, was presented by Cheryl Dumont-Smith, then Executive Director of the Main Street Community Foundation. Local female leaders and activists gathered at a breakfast meeting to discuss whether there would be need, interest, and support for a Women & Girls' Fund in MSCF's service area. The women identified and talked about the most pressing concerns, issues, and difficulties in the personal and professional lives of women. Most importantly, they discussed how those needs could be addressed if a permanent source of funding were to be established for specific initiatives.

"Following this meeting, a steering committee of 22 women set out to create the Fund. We were determined to raise \$10,000, which was the initial challenge presented to us. However, we exceeded our goal, and raised eight times that amount! A total of \$78,000 was raised the first year, which was quite an accomplishment," recalled Jeanne Radcliff, a founding member of the Fund and of MSCF. "We are very thankful to the many individuals, local foundations and businesses that supported the idea of a Women & Girls' Fund."

Grant distributions are funded with the proceeds from the annual Wonder of Women (WOW) event as well as two other named funds: the John & Gloria DiFrancesco Fund for Women and Girls and the Barbara Hackman Franklin Fund for Women. Both Funds were established in 2011 in honor of those named in the fund by their families and provide distributions to support initiatives identified by the Women & Girls' Fund.

In 2016, at the WOW event celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Fund, it was announced that a campaign would be undertaken to grow the Fund's endowment to \$500,000, the original dream of the Fund's founders. The campaign kicked off with a group of anonymous donors, including several founding members, pledging \$10,000, leaving only \$25,000 left to raise.

Creators/Original First Board/Steering Committee (2001):

Cathryn Addy	Cheryl Dumont-Smith	Jeanne Radcliff
Melanie Barnes	Marguerite Fletcher	Sue Scully
Mary Benoit	Rita Gerzanick	Jessica Weed
Jarre Betts	Wilma Hart	Katherine Weed
Trudy Brown	Dee Hession	Helen Zervas
Barbara Campbell	Sue Laberge	Carolyn Ziogas
Ann Clark	Diane Macklosky	
Cindy Donovan	Carolyn Norton	

**Fifteen Years. Six
Communities. Over
\$350,000 in Grants Awarded.**



2015 Grantees

The Women & Girls' Fund began its 15th year with the Fund's *Annual Meeting & Grantee Reception* in January. The event celebrated the Fund's accomplishments of the past year while ushering in its 15th anniversary. The Annual Meeting centered around the announcement of grant distributions from the Fund in 2015 - **\$35,350 was awarded to 11 organizations and initiatives** working to improve the lives of women and girls in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington, and Wolcott. These grants were made possible with the proceeds from the annual Wonder of Women (WOW) event as well as two other names funds: The Barbara Hackman Franklin Fund for Women and the John & Gloria DiFancesco Fund for Women and Girls.

Grants were awarded to the following organizations and initiatives:

- Arts for Learning Connecticut
- Bristol Family Resource Centers
- Boys & Girls Club of Bristol Family Center
- Charter Oak State College Foundation
- Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington
- Girl Scouts of Connecticut
- Chapter 126 - Oak Hill
- Plymouth Human Services
- Prudence Crandall Center
- Women & Girls' Fund Endowment
- Women & Girls' Immediate Response Fund

For more about each grant visit mainstreetfoundation.org.

Highlights from 15th Annual WOW Event

The Women & Girls' Fund hosted its 15th annual Wonder of Women (WOW) event in March with over 400 supporters in attendance. The evening featured inspiring speakers from several grantee organizations as well as guest speaker Kara Sundlun, WFSB Emmy Award Winning Television Personality and Author. Ms. Sundlun spoke about her inspirational memoir: *Finding Dad: From Love Child to Daughter*, which recounts the story of how she met her biological father, Bruce Sundlun, when she was a teenager and he was the Governor of Rhode Island.

The room was filled with uplifting inspiration from the very beginning. As attendees walked into the Aqua Turf, they were greeted with photos of special women in their lives. These women were honored during the Fund's *A Toast to Women*, a pay it forward campaign to honor special women who have made a positive impact in the lives of others. Each \$15 donation that was made "toasts" a mother, wife, sister, daughter, friend or relative; acknowledges the positive impact they have made on you; and supports your neighbors.



"Toasting" Women

During the evening, attendees were invited to be part of the dream that the original founders of the Women & Girls' Fund envisioned 15 years ago – building a permanent endowment of \$500,000 to ensure that there will always be funds available to identify and meet the needs of local women and girls. The *First 500 Challenge* was initiated to give everyone an opportunity to be part of making a difference in the lives of women and girls.

As of September 30, there have been over 100 individuals, families and businesses who have given to the *First 500 Challenge*. In addition, there are 39 members of the "500 Club," a designation for those who have donated \$500 or more to the Challenge.

500 Club Members:

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| Dr. Cathryn Addy | Kimberly Lewis |
| Jeanine Audette | Susan and Mark Moreau |
| Tom and Melanie Barnes | Dawn and Eric Nielsen |
| Sofia Bayne | Lisa and Christopher Palen |
| Mary Bencivengo | Marilyn Perzan |
| Mary and Ken Benoit | Sharon Poupart |
| Whit and Jarre Betts | The Frank Radcliff Family |
| Liz Canavan | Betty Radcliff |
| Robert and Teresa Casale | Jeanne E. Radcliff |
| Carolyn M. Checoves DiVenere | Samantha Rajotte |
| Melanie and Jim Dumont | Ralph and Linda Roland |
| Roland Dumont | Susan and Ronald Sadecki |
| Cheryl Dumont-Smith | Noreen R. Schumann |
| Pattie Dunn | Sharon Stotz |
| Marguerite P. Fletcher | Deidre Tavera |
| Barbara Hackman Franklin | Employees of Tracy Driscoll Insurance
& Financial Services |
| Sanita E. Gingras | Julia Weston |
| Wilma and Dennis Hart | Dr. Helen Zervas |
| Victoria Hickerson | Mark and Carolyn Ziogas |
| Angela and Edward Klonoski | |