

# The Bristol Press

## Wonder of Women event keeps grants that help women and girls coming

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SOUTHINGTON -Community leaders and other civic-minded people gathered at the Aqua Turf Club Tuesday for Wonder of Women, an annual fundraiser for the Women and Girls Fund of the Main Street Community Foundation.

The Women and Girls Fund was established in 2001 to support grants and programs that help women and girls in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington and Wolcott improve conditions of and opportunities in their lives. It has distributed more than \$450,000 in grants over the years and Wonder of Women event is its largest fundraiser. Guests bid on silent auction items.

Grants are awarded each fall using the money raised in the spring.

"The more money we raise tonight the more we can give back to the six communities we serve and advance opportunities for women and girls," said Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation.

Julia Weston, chairwoman of the Women and Girls Fund's advisory board, said the fund awarded a record \$50,111 in grants last year, due to the success of last year's Wonder of Women. Some of those grant recipients expressed their gratitude Tuesday.

04/24/18 Wesley Bunnell | Staff The 17th Annual Wonder of Women was held Tuesday evening at the Aqua Turf Club. Comedian Jane Condon was a guest speaker.

“This special evening celebrates the accomplishments over the last year through the hard work of our volunteers and grantee organizations,” said Weston. “Together, we provide programs that help women and girls in the communities we serve obtain the skills they need to lead successful lives. Tonight’s event also allows us to empower and celebrate the women in our community and increase public awareness of the needs that exist for women and girls as well as the opportunities available to bridge the gaps.”

Kathy Cassin, co-chairwoman of the Women and Girls Fund, said that she hopes that this year’s total raised will at least match or hopefully exceed last year’s. She said she is grateful for the strong support the fund has received from the community.

“There are a lot of nonprofits and agencies that are always looking to expand their offerings in the six communities we serve,” she said. “We’d just like to support them as much as possible.”

Ursula Sowinski, another fund advisory board member, gave opening remarks.

“I want to let you know that your donations make a huge difference in our community,” she said. “Every year you continue to make what we do possible and make a difference in the lives of the women and girls we support.”

Sowinski said that the theme of this year’s fundraiser was “laughter.”

“We need laughter, especially now,” she said. “There is so much darkness and turmoil in this world, but we want to turn it around.”

Comedian Jane Condon offered an inspirational speech followed by her standup act.

A Greenwich resident and a comedian for 20 years, Condon was voted Audience’s Favorite on NBC’s “Last Comic Standing” and had a one person Off-Broadway show titled “Jane Condon: Raw and Unchained.”

“It’s for a great cause,” said Condon. “The fund helps women and girls in six communities and I’ll do anything to help women.”

Among her jokes was the following:

“Kids have all these dating apps like Tinder and Bumble and OkCupid. I think they should come out with a dating app for older people called something like ‘I can drive at night’ or ‘I bought my burial plot and there’s room for you.’”

Other guest speakers included representatives of the Girl Scouts of Connecticut and Jane Doe No More, both of which have benefited from the fund.

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