

Message from your co-chairs

Because of your support, the Women's Fund of Vanderburgh County had another successful year, making great strides toward our mission thanks to all our grant partners! We are proud to stand with such innovative leaders and the communities they serve every single day. Together, we are creating a more equitable and just future for families in our community. We are thankful to have an opportunity to look back on our accomplishments and share them with you. However, we are mindful there is more work to do to create a thriving community for all.

As we review the past year and our accomplishments, we cannot help but marvel at how far the Women's Fund has come in nine short years. The time has really flown and we've passed many milestones we can rightfully be proud of: just a few of the recent ones are outlined in this Annual Report. In this report you will read about how our grants have impacted the community and those who have made this work possible — including our exclusive sponsor St. Mary's Hospital for Women and Children. We hope you will take a moment to see what you helped those in our community achieve.

What began with meetings in our Founder's homes and an initial donation of \$500 has burgeoned into a tremendous network of hundreds of women who came together to practice collective philanthropy in our backyard. A unique feature of the Women's Fund is the collective nature of our mission — we are a granting organization rather than a service organization. Our funds are pooled so that substantial, meaningful sums can be awarded in the form of grants to local non-profits. Each member is accorded a voice in the process, regardless of the contribution size.

With the help of the Lilly Endowment's GIFT VI Initiative, our endowment increased by close to a quarter of a million by the end of 2015 - and you won't want to miss our 2016 annual meeting on November 2 when we'll share even more exciting news!

As we end our ninth year, we honor the contributions of hundreds of women (and men) who founded and have sustained the Women's Fund. Our members have pooled their funds, increased their knowledge of local needs, and cast their votes for worthwhile grants, thereby improving the lives of so many in our community. Your generosity is what makes it all possible. Thank you for your commitment to the Women's Fund!



Denise Johnson



Michelle Smith

Denise Johnson Michelle D. Smith

\$90k Awarded at Annual Meeting!

Members convened to vote on 2015 grant awards

There were shouts of joy, gasps of excitement, and more than a few tears when this year's grant recipients were announced at the Women's Fund annual meeting last November. The Tropicana was host to our event again and set the mood beautifully for our "big reveal."

Again this year, three charitable organizations sought funding for program-related efforts and another three sought funds for capital projects. Their journey started with a thorough vetting process designed by the Women's Fund grants committee, whose charge is to take a pool of about forty applicant organizations down to the six who are invited to present their proposals to the Women's Fund membership at the dinner. Members then cast their votes.

This year's voting was as difficult as always, with some members holding on to their ballots until the last possible moment. After all the votes were counted (with our thanks to Harding, Shymanski and Company for providing their professional services), the Program Impact Grant was awarded to Youth Resources. Their \$35,000 award will be used to support Teen Court, a restorative justice program for first-time juvenile offenders.

The Project Impact Grant was awarded to the Evansville Christian Life Center. Their \$35,000 award will be used for a complete remodel of their kitchen, which has had very little updating since it was installed in the 1940's.

The remaining finalists — Echo Housing, Koch Family Children's Museum, Parenting Time Center, and SWIRCA & More — each received a gift of \$5,000 from the Women's Fund.

"Each year we are astounded at the enormity of the impact of our community's nonprofit organizations and the work they are able to do every day while faced with limited budgets, funding cuts, and increasing need," said Denise Johnson, who cochaired the Women's Fund this year and will continue in that role along with Michelle Smith in 2016. "Our ability to support their efforts with grants totaling \$635,000 over the past nine years is something that fills us with pride and joy — it's just tremendous! V

Update on the Endowment

Thanks to the support of our Women's Fund members, as well as the Lilly Endowment's recent matching grant initiative, the endowment has continued to grow by leaps and bounds! At the close of 2015, the balance of the endowment was just under \$780,000, an increase of nearly a quarter of a million dollars in just one year! Our members and supporters can be exceptionally proud of growing this significant resource from an initial gift of just \$500 in 2007. Gifts to the Women's Fund endowment are never spent but grow over time and generate proceeds year after year that will be granted in keeping with the fund's purpose. This year's proceeds were returned to the endowment to take advantage of Lilly's dollarfor-dollar match.



Mhere are they now?

Update on 2013 Grantees Lampion Center and Potter's Wheel

"Lampion Center's 9,000-square-foot building had seen better days. The carpets were worn, the furniture broken, the roof leaked, and the building overall worked against us, rather than for us," says Jennifer Childress, the center's development director. "We were spending an enormous amount of time trying to prevent ceiling tiles from breaking due to water damage, repairing broken furniture and trying to soften the bad impression that our building gave our clients."

The \$35,000 grant awarded by the Women's Fund allowed for muchneeded renovations to the Lampion Center, an organization well known for providing critical therapy services to our community's most vulnerable. Over the course of 13 months, a four phase renovation took place, fixing damaged walls and floors, leaky roofs, and replacing old and broken furniture.

According to Childress, now when children walk through the building to the office of their therapists they gasp with excitement that the office is "just so pretty." She says parents and other adults have said they now feel more at peace at Lampion.

Potter's Wheel — an innercity ministry providing various programming such as support groups, GED classes, parenting classes, and a clothing bank launched SING (Stopping Incarceration for the Next Generation) with a \$35,000 impact grant from the Women's Fund. SING



combines boxing with other programming aimed at keeping youth engaged and away from the dangers of being on the streets. Local charity boxing program Guns and Hoses trainers, most of whom are firefighters and law enforcement professionals, volunteer their time to provide kids not only with top-quality coaching but also with excellent role models.

"Results of the program have been extremely positive — kids are Top: a common therapy space in the Lampion Center before (left) and after renovations. Below: A Guns and Hoses trainer works with Potters Wheel kids in the SING program.





showing more respect and cooperation, learning to make positive choices, and steering clear of decisions leading to poverty, substance abuse and incarceration," said Mike Kough, director of the Potter's Wheel. "Without the Women's Fund, there would be no SING program."

Note: grantees are permitted two years to carry out their proposals, which is why we typically opt to report on the status of grants at the conclusion of each two-year period. Watch for an update on 2014 grantees in our next annual report.

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