

Voices

Renew \ri-'nü, -'nyü\ vt (14c)

1 : to make like new : restore to freshness, vigor, or perfection **2** : to make new spiritually : REGENERATE **3 a** : to restore to existence : REVIVE **b** : to make extensive changes in : REBUILD **4** : to do again : REPEAT **5** : to begin again : RESUME **6** : REPLACE, REPLENISH

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition

Creating a stronger voice
for women and girls.

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Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The
Nokomis
Foundation



Nokomis  Renewal

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Inside Story



Nokomis Renewal . . .

As most of you know, we're taking a reflective journey here at Nokomis — a *RENEWAL* — a comprehensive strategic planning process that will provide us with a chance to *look back* at our impact over Nokomis' first 15 years, to *look around* at new ideas and strategies in the field of philanthropy, and to *look ahead* to develop a renewed vision.

Although we aren't publishing our VOICES newsletter on a regular basis during our renewal process, we thought we'd take this opportunity to update you on our progress through this special "renewal edition" of VOICES.

Now that we're in the midst of our renewal activities, I can assure you that, thus far, it has been a fascinating adventure! We did not start this trip with a detailed itinerary, hotel reservations, or even round-trip tickets. Actually, we set out more like explorers — with plenty of optimism and enthusiasm, an overabundance of confidence, some trepidation — and a very sketchy map. Some days, I must admit, I feel that I'm a kid, blindfolded in the middle of a pool, yelling out "Marco" . . . and hoping someone will reply "Polo!" Most days, though, I'm enjoying this trip — for the most part, we're staying on our charted byways, but we're also enjoying side roads and previously unmapped trails. I hope you'll enjoy reading about our renewal activities.

I also hope that you, as a reader of VOICES, will help us with one of our renewal activities. We're currently evaluating several of our programs and publications, and we'd like to get your feedback on the VOICES newsletter. Please take a few minutes to respond to our Reader's Survey included in the center of this newsletter. Your responses will be most helpful to our evaluation.

Kym Mulhern

Who is leading the Nokomis Foundation through the renewal process?

Nokomis will be working with Stephanie Clohesy of Clohesy Consulting throughout the renewal process. Stephanie, who is a creator of models and materials for helping women's funds to grow and thrive, was one of the founding consultants at Nokomis. We're excited that she is able to step back into the life of Nokomis to help us renew.

Will Nokomis make grants during the renewal process?

The Nokomis Foundation will make grants during the renewal process; however, such grant awards will be limited to pre-selected funding partners. The Nokomis Foundation will NOT be accepting unsolicited grant proposals during the renewal process. The Nokomis Foundation has set aside a small pool of discretionary funds available to qualifying organizations during the renewal process.

How can organizations access discretionary grants during the renewal process?

Funding for discretionary grants in 2005 are for programs and projects that:

- create social change for women and girls;
- are located within the geographic boundaries of Allegan, Kent and Ottawa counties;
- are in alignment with the Nokomis Foundation mission;
- are requested for \$5,000 or less.

This pool of funds is limited and, therefore, will be awarded periodically throughout the year at the discretion of Nokomis Foundation staff; based on funds available at that time; and relative to other requests submitted. *(More information about Nokomis discretionary grants is included within this newsletter. Be sure to visit our website at www.nokomisfoundation.org for a complete set of guidelines.)*

Who do we contact with questions or for more information?

- Check our website at www.nokomisfoundation.org for a more complete FAQ listing and more detailed information about the renewal process.
- If you have questions about the renewal process and related activities, you may contact Kym Mulhern at kmulhern@nokomisfoundation.org.
- If you have questions about Nokomis grantmaking, program, or operational activities, you may contact DeDe Esque at desque@nokomisfoundation.org.
- If you have questions about the New Voices Initiative, including the *Prostitution Round Table* and *Nurturing a New Start* programs, you may contact Dotti Clune (dclune@earthlink.net) or Jeannie Hosey (thosey2@earthlink.net).

Renewal FAQ

For a complete FAQ, please visit the Nokomis website at www.nokomisfoundation.org.

What programs will continue during the Nokomis renewal process?

- New Voices Initiative—including the *Prostitution Round Table* and the *Nurturing a New Start* programs
- Women's Technology Consortium
- Discretionary Funding Pool for grants of \$5,000 or less (see information within this issue of VOICES)

What will change during the renewal process?

- Nokomis will NOT be accepting unsolicited grant proposals after December 1, 2004
- *The Taking Flight grants for girls* program will be suspended during 2005 and 2006
- The VOICES newsletter will not be published regularly during 2005 and 2006

Why did the Nokomis Foundation decide to go through a renewal and strategic planning process?

Inspired by the Nokomis Foundation's upcoming 15-year anniversary, the Nokomis board decided that a comprehensive planning and renewal process would be a natural step in our organization's development. The world is a different place than when Nokomis first began 15 years ago. It seems more relevant and appropriate than ever to take this time to reflect and renew, preparing ourselves for change rather than remaining tethered to the status quo.

What will the Nokomis Foundation do during the renewal process?

The Nokomis Foundation will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the renewal process, including: evaluating past programs and grants; creating an organizational history; performing organizational development activities; conducting research; exploring ideas and best practices from around the field of philanthropy; talking to many of our colleagues and partners; and culminating in strategic planning.

When will the renewal process begin and end?

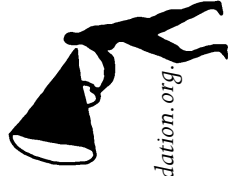
The process actually began in June 2004 with internal planning and program design. Renewal activities began in January 2005. We anticipate the process to be complete by the end of 2006.

Without leaps of imagination, or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning.

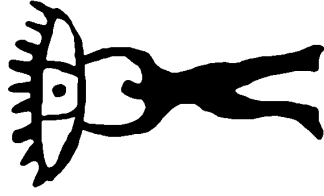
—Gloria Steinem

Did You Know. . .

- The Nokomis Foundation was founded by Mary Caroline (Twink) Frey in July 1989, although grantmaking and foundation operations did not begin until 1991.
- “Nokomis” is an Ojawa word and represents the passing on of knowledge from Grandmother to Granddaughter.
- The first grant awarded by the Nokomis Foundation was to the YWCA of Grand Rapids in 1991. Since then, the Nokomis Foundation has awarded over \$4,000,000 in grants supporting women and girls — with most funding awarded in the Kent County geographic area.
- The Nokomis Foundation first published the VOICES newsletter in 1994. Since then, Nokomis has published 26 issues of the newsletter.
- Over the years, the Nokomis Foundation has developed and managed several programs supporting women and girls, including *Women Matter!*, the *Women's Technology Consortium*, the *Prostitution Round Table*, *Nurturing a New Start*, and *Taking Flight grants for girls*.
- Kym Mulhern has been the Executive Director of the Nokomis Foundation since its inception. Twink Frey, Jim McKay, and Mary Alice Williams have been on the Nokomis board since the beginning.
- Stephanie Clohesy, Nokomis' renewal and strategic planning consultant, was also involved as an advisor to the Nokomis Foundation during the foundation's early formation.



Nokomis Renewal



Spurred by a desire to create a new vision, plan and frame-work for the future, we designed a renewal and planning process for Nokomis that will:

- Help us better understand and acknowledge the achievements and legacy of the Nokomis Foundation over its first 15 years.
- Engage us in evaluation and organizational development activities to help Nokomis become a more effective organization.
- Allow us to learn from others — both in the Grand Rapids/West Michigan community and the larger philanthropic field — to help us develop new strategies and a new direction for the future.
- Be of interest to others — not only to our own partners in the community, but to the larger philanthropic field as well.

Through our renewal process, we're hoping to expand our effectiveness by linking, learning, and acting with others — and especially the nonprofits we support.

We're now nine months into our renewal process here at Nokomis — not quite halfway — and we want to give you an update on our activities.

So . . . what have we done so far?

- We made core operating support grants totaling \$ 260,000 to 9 long-term Nokomis funding partners. We awarded these grants to organizations and/or programs that are closely aligned with Nokomis' mission and values to assure that programs benefiting women and girls in our community continue during our renewal process.
- We began a deep evaluation process of key Nokomis grants, internal programs, and communications pieces. We're using the Making the Case evaluation tool to help us understand the social change impact of our grants and programs like the *Prostitution Round Table*, *Nurturing a New Start*, *Taking Flight*, and the *Women's Technology Consortium*. We're using surveys and interviews to evaluate communications pieces like the VOICES newsletter, the Nokomis website, and other reports.

Discretionary Grants



During 2005 and 2006 the Nokomis Foundation will NOT be accepting unsolicited grant proposals. However, during the renewal process, we will provide a limited number of discretionary grants. To be considered for a discretionary grant in 2005, programs an project must:

- be located within the geographic boundaries of Allegan, Kent, or Ottawa counties
- be in alignment with Nokomis Foundation mission and values
- be requests of \$5,000 or less

Submitting a Request for a Discretionary Grant

Submit a brief (no more than 2 pages) letter describing your project or program and explaining how it aligns with the Nokomis Foundation mission and values. After we receive your letter, we may contact you for additional information or to answer any questions we may have.

Awarding Discretionary Grants

The Nokomis Foundation has a limited pool of funds available for small grants during the renewal process. Grants will be awarded periodically at the discretion of Nokomis Foundation staff, and based on:

- funds available at that time;
- relative to other requests submitted.

The Timeline

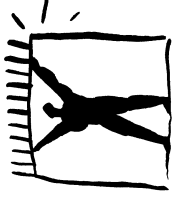
You may submit a discretionary grant request at any time. During 2005 and 2006, we will announce discretionary grant awards periodically throughout the year.

After the Grant

If your request is approved, funds will be disbursed within a week or two from the approval date. Grant recipients will be required to provide a brief summary report on the project funded, including a full accounting of all Nokomis funds.

Please visit the our website at www.nokomisfoundation.org for more complete guidelines.

New Voices



“I Needed To Learn To Live Again”: Nurturing a New Start Supports Incarcerated Women

The Nurturing a New Start project supports women incarcerated in the Kent County Correctional Facility by building links between the women and the larger community and promoting the development of gender-responsive programming for women in the KCCF. The project is a collaborative effort of the Nokomis Foundation, Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women, Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan, the Women’s Resource Center, and the YWCA of Grand Rapids.

For the past year, the four agencies have been providing educational “inreach” programming for women in the KCCF’s Sober Living Unit, an intensive treatment program for inmates dealing with addictions. Program topics range from goal-setting, job-seeking and economic literacy to personal safety planning and developing healthy relationships. In addition to the agency programs, training in nonviolent communication has been offered recently.

In a third-party evaluation, the pilot programming has received positive feedback from participants, the agency facilitators, and KCCF staff members. “I’ve never taken a class like this before,” one participant wrote. “I needed to learn to live again...now I know I have a lot of help out there and I know I can do it. It’s scary, but without this class I’d be totally lost.”

“Please continue this program for all of the other women that don’t have the education that is needed in today’s society,” another participant said. “For a few of us, we may never have been incarcerated if we had this education earlier in our lives. With the help of this program maybe our children won’t have to go through some of the pain we have endured ourselves.”

In addition to programming for female inmates, NNS is involved in plans to provide training for KCCF staff members in gender-responsiveness for women offenders, as well as in nonviolent communication.

- The Nokomis board has begun a comprehensive organizational effectiveness assessment using the Smart Growth organizational development tool. This tool will help us understand our organizational strengths and weaknesses as we move forward in a new direction.
- Because Nokomis is committed to building the capacity of our funding partners, we selected 13 of them to go through the Making the Case and Smart Growth process alongside us. We trained a group of 7 local consultants to implement the tools with our partners. Not only will our 13 funding partners benefit from these organizational development tools, but the Grand Rapids community now has 7 consultants trained in using these innovative tools — and ready to work with other local organizations.
- We’re putting together a “strategic history” of the Nokomis Foundation, highlighting key events, players, decisions, and directions of the foundation to help us reflect on what we’ve accomplished over the first 15 years.
- We’re interviewing local philanthropists and key community leaders to learn their perspective about needs in the community and the Nokomis Foundation, in general.
- With the help of the Community Research Institute at Grand Valley State University, we’ve completed an environmental scan of the status of women in Kent, Ottawa and Allegan counties of West Michigan. This study is a wonderful companion piece to The Status of Women in Michigan report we released in partnership with the Institute for Women’s Policy Research last fall.
- We’re researching other models in the philanthropic field by visiting other philanthropic leaders and by keeping current on philanthropic literature.

What’s next?

Each of the renewal component listed above is still in progress: we’re in the midst of a great deal of activity! We will begin to gather all of our data and information toward the end of 2005. Then, we’ll take some time to synthesize and analyze everything we’ve gathered before moving into the strategic planning portion of the process in early 2006. We are on track to unveil the “new” Nokomis by the end of 2006!

Creating Stronger Organizations



Nokomis has long operated on the following “theory of change”: by providing technical assistance and support for capacity building to our funding partners, we are helping these organizations become stronger and more effective. In turn, these organizations will be better equipped to bring about social change for women and girls in the community. Over the years, we’ve acted on this theory by providing workshops, grants, and networking opportunities for our funding partners.

It’s not too far a stretch, then, to understand why we’re sharing our renewal organizational development tools with a select group of our funding partners. It is our hope that these organizational development tools will help foster deliberate growth and development — for us at Nokomis AND for the 13 funding partners who are using the tools alongside us.

What are the tools?

Smart Growth is a life-cycle assessment tool that enables an organization to determine a “life-stage” for both the overall organization and 11 separate organizational capacities needed to grow the organization (e.g. staffing, board governance, financial development, financial management, communications, etc.). By employing both a scoring mechanism (a “Quick Quiz”) and facilitated dialogue, the tool provides organizations with priorities for deeper assessment. Smart Growth guides participants as they identify organizational strengths, needs, accelerators, inhibitors and “next steps.”

Making the Case is an evaluative tool that enables organizations to define the types of social change outcomes they are seeking, and then to describe success and achievements according to each type of change. Making the Case helps organize and report on performance observations, while also helping organizations begin to understand and articulate their own outcomes-based “theory of change” and how to communicate that to others — especially to funders.

Who are the facilitators?

Nokomis has contracted with seven local consultants to plan, implement and facilitate the organizational development engagements with our funding part-

ners. Our consultant team has received extensive training in both the Smart Growth and Making the Case organizational development tools. The consultant group includes:

Beth Dilley

Nadia Bringham

Mary Reed Kelly

Maureen Kirkwood

Lisa Oliver-King

Darrow Goodspeed

Vicki Rosenberg

Participating Funding Partners

YWCA of Grand Rapids

Center for Women in Transition

Women’s Resource Center

GLSU Women’s Center

Women’s Resource Center of Northern Michigan

WITNESS

Safe Haven Ministries

Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women

Planned Parenthood Centers of West Michigan

West Michigan Women’s Studies Council

Michigan Women’s Foundation

Life Guidance Services/Project Rehab

Girl Scouts of Michigan Trails

To look backward for a while is to refresh the eye, to restore it, and to render it the more fit for its prime function of looking forward.



—Margaret Fairless Barber