

Voices

Historically, women have funneled their efforts and their money into creating new institutions to bring about social change.

Women are comfortable in the roles of volunteer and giver; they fail to see themselves as philanthropists — leaders capable of helping to shape the future of society. Until recent years, philanthropy has remained uncharted territory for many women. That has begun to change.

Creating a stronger voice
for women and girls.

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Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The
Nokomis
Foundation



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Inside Story

Those interested in women's philanthropy have been lamenting the sorry state of foundation funding for programs serving women and girls for nearly a decade. Research from a variety of sources show that only 5% of foundation dollars go to programs specifically earmarked for women and girls. This 5% figure spurred action when it was first released – inspiring the inception of new women's funds, bringing new women donors together, and encouraging close examination of the gender make-up of the staffs and boards of foundations around the country. The 5% figure also became one of the most disputed statistics among foundation representatives, who often argue the merit of the statistic by claiming that most funding goes for universal programs (those programs serving the needs of both men AND women).

In truth, the issue is a lot more complicated than it appears. The methods of quantifying grant dollars are less than perfect – the Foundation Center only counts large grants from large foundations (grants over \$10,000 from the 1,000 largest foundations). The grant classification system is also limited – forcing funders to classify grants in ready-made categories. The system – and the 5% statistic – has shortcomings.

Some new research by Molly Mead, EdD, of Tufts University, however, is shedding new light on the subject. Molly's research begins with the assumption that most funding for women and girls comes through universal programs. She takes an in-depth look at universal youth programs and evaluates their effectiveness at serving the needs of girls. Her findings are eye opening – and have interesting implications for the foundation world. Molly's research finds that unless a program is consciously designed to address differences in societal expectations and attitudes, it will not serve young women as well as it serves young men, and in the long run it will limit the development of young men as well.

The Nokomis Foundation will be looking carefully at the work done by Molly Mead in the coming year. Watch for more information in future issues of Voices.

Kym Mulhern, Executive Director



Legacy 2000

The Nokomis Foundation is pleased to announce the following Legacy 2000 Mini-Grant Recipients.

- **Frederik Meijer Gardens** – A Botanical Legacy: Three Women of Science
- **Friends of the Englehardt Library** – Women: True Keepers of the Oral Tradition
- **Gilda's Club of Grand Rapids** – Women in Comedy Film Festival
- **GROW** – Do What Needs to be Done
- **St. Cecilia Music Society** – Playing the Ivory Keys
- **Wealthy Street Theatre** – Daughters of Daughters
- **West Michigan Quilters Guild** – Quilt Discovery Day
- **WITNESS** – Research of historical women in local churches
- **Women's Resource Center** – Learn the Legacy: A Look at the Roles of Women
- **YWCA** – Centennial Archival Display

Please look for these well-planned events during the Legacy 2000 celebration this March.

A special thanks to the Nokomis Foundation Legacy Grant Committee – Carol Kooistra, Mary Alice Williams, Endia Weekley, Linda Likely, Tom Clinton, Virginia Moralez, Yvonne Rothwell, Erin Trahan, and Kym Mulhern.



Women Around the World

Women 2000: Beijing Plus Five

“Women’s rights are human rights, and human rights are women’s rights.”

— Hillary Rodham Clinton

The 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing was a historic event, with 189 countries adopting the Platform for Action. The platform calls for economic opportunity and security for women, quality education and health care, full political and economic participation of women, equality, and the promotion of human rights for women. It is one of the strongest policy statements promoting women’s advancement ever made by the international community.

Since the 1995 conference, the U.S. Government has worked with government agencies, and in partnership with non-governmental organizations, to adopt policies and initiate actions resulting in significant progress in these areas. These accomplishments will be celebrated with a recommitment to further action at *Women 2000*, the UN Special Session in June 2000, which will mark the fifth anniversary of the Beijing meeting.

Efforts are being coordinated in the United States by the President’s Interagency Council on Women. For more information, contact the President’s Interagency Council on Women at (202) 647-6227 or email picw@worldnet.att.net. You can also get information about Beijing Plus Five “happenings” for NGOs at the U.S. Women Connect website: www.uswomenconnect.org.



Point to Ponder

In a recent poll for “To the Contrary” 46% of survey respondents believe that children and the poor should receive more than women in charitable contributions. Only 3% believe women should receive more. This belief holds true even among women. But in fact, women represent more than 50% of the poor. Two-thirds of the 60 million women working outside the home have no pension plan and those who do have benefits receive half the benefits of their male counterparts.

Did You Know. . .

- In 1997 women held 50% of foundation CEO positions, 68% of program officer posts, and 93% of support staff positions. (Council of Foundations, 1998)
- Women control 51.3% of personal wealth in the United States. (Federal Reserve Board)
- The non-profit sector accounts for 6.2% of the nation’s economy and employs nearly 6.9% of the total US work force. (Independent Sector)

Economics & Women

Welfare Reform a Success?

Guest column By Laura Stivers, Just Economics

"Work your way out of poverty." This is the message women on welfare are receiving today. The philosophy is to end government's role and let people take care of themselves.

One way to limit government's role is by cutting welfare services. 1996 "welfare reform" tightened eligibility requirements, limited the number of years that individuals can receive welfare, and instituted work requirements. This shift to emphasizing work might be good. According to the new book, *No Shame in My Game* by Katherine Newman, poor people prefer working for low wages to being on welfare. High value is accorded the Protestant work ethic.

The trouble is many workers are poor. We know welfare roles are being reduced - almost 7 million fewer people are receiving welfare now than in 1993 (a 50% decline). Although some of the decline is due to a strong labor market, welfare reform accounts for one-third of the reduction. What we don't always know is how former welfare recipients are faring. Most states have not collected such data.

A Center on Budget and Policy Priorities study found that the although there was an increase in average earnings from 1995 to 1997 for the next-to-the-poorest 20 percent of female-headed families with children, their losses of cash, food, and other benefits canceled out the earnings gains. Many working poor families who qualify for food stamps and health insurance through Medicaid do not know they are eligible for these supports. For those women who have left welfare and joined the workforce, success and self-sufficiency depends on whether they can access jobs with higher wages and benefits - jobs that require education. Yet welfare regulations in many counties do not allow recipients to attend basic education programs (only vocational education) while receiving benefits.



Save the Date

Legacy 2000 happens this March!

This triennial celebration of women is organized by a steering committee of the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council. Watch for a complete calendar of events. For more information call the Legacy Hotline at 616-234-3603 or visit the Legacy website at www.grapids.lib.mi.us/whc.

Reach Us

Need to contact us? Our office hours are from 9:00 - 3:00 each Monday through Thursday.

The Nokomis Foundation
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She Said It

"When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die."
Eleanor Roosevelt

Herstory

Women in Philanthropy

Rebecca Gratz (1781 – 1869) was the daughter of a successful fur trader and a prominent member of Philadelphia society. In her early 20s she helped start the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances. Rebecca was also the founder of the Hebrew Sunday School Society, which became the model for all other Jewish Sunday Schools to come.

Romana Acosta Banuelos (born 1925) was an entrepreneur, opening a tortilla factory in Los Angeles in 1949. She became US Secretary of the Treasury under President Richard Nixon. Before becoming US Treasurer, Romana Acosta Banuelos founded the Romana's Mexican Food Products, Inc. Scholarship Foundation for young Hispanic students.

Grantee News

Legal Hotline for Older Michigianians and the Michigan Pension Rights Project

The Legal Hotline for Older Michigianians provides free general legal advice by telephone to Michigan residents age 60 and older. In addition, the Hotline houses the Michigan Pension Rights Project which conducts pension investigations for retirees of any age.

The Legal Hotline is implementing a new Hispanic outreach project. Currently, a Spanish-speaking representative is available between 9:30 am and 10:30 am, Monday through Friday, to set up client appointments with Hotline attorneys. When the Spanish-speaking client has his/her appointment over the phone, the client will need to provide an interpreter since Hotline attorneys do not speak Spanish.

You can reach the Legal Hotline at 1.800.347-5297.

GROW announces the following dates for Orientation sessions:

December 7, January 4, January 11, February 1
Sessions will be held at the Center for Women, 25 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan from 6:00—7:30 pm. GROW invites you to come and learn about the services they provide. All sessions are free. Please call the GROW office to make reservations — 616.458.3404.

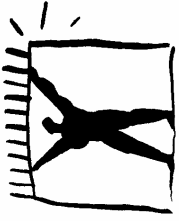
Women's Resource Center is seeking nominations for the 11th annual Employer Recognition/Women in the Workplace Awards. These awards are given to selected West Michigan employers who are innovative and committed to the women in their workplace as demonstrated by their family-friendly policies, the number of women in leadership positions, and the organizational efforts to recruit and retain women in nontraditional jobs. Nominations are due January 31, 2000. To obtain a nomination form or get more information, call Women's Resource Center at 616.458.5443.

If you are a past or present grantee of the Nokomis Foundation, please feel free to share your announcements with us. We will include them on a space-available basis in the next issue of Voices .

Another way of limiting government's role is by having private companies administer welfare programs. Companies such as Electronic Data Systems, Lockheed Martin, and Maximus Inc. claim they will do the job more efficiently at a lower cost. They fulfill this claim by reducing services, hiring cheaper and less trained labor, and getting people off welfare no matter where they end up. These private corporations receive a bonus for every welfare mom who gets placed in a job or taken off the rolls. This is without regard for wage levels, workplace safety, or how long former welfare recipients remain in the job.

How do we define the success of welfare reform? While the government has budget surpluses and corporations are in the black, poor families are barely scraping by. The current rhetoric that individuals should be self-sufficient ignores structural causes of poverty, such as low wage work and astronomical healthcare costs. Without addressing poverty structurally, we end up "blaming the victim" for being poor. To get serious about attacking poverty, we'll need to get serious about creating an economic environment where everyone can meet their basic needs with dignity.

Laura Stivers is a Trainer for Just Economics. She is earning her Ph.D. in Ethics at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA and is an avid swimmer and white water river rafter. You can reach Just Economics at justecon@digc.org.



Recent Grants

Kent/MSU Extension/4-H – Grand Rapids, Michigan - \$1,390
Support for Extraordinary Girls events and related self-esteem program for girls

Elder Law of Michigan – Lansing, Michigan - \$10,000
Capacity building support in the area of fund development

Rose Haven – Grand Rapids, Michigan - \$10,000
Capacity building support in the area of fund development

West Michigan Academy of Music for Girls –
Grand Rapids Michigan - \$7,000
Support for establishing the Grandville Ave. Girls Choir

Planned Parenthood – Grand Rapids, Michigan - \$400
Distribution of SHE kits to Planned Parenthood clients

Jewish Community Fund of Grand Rapids –
Grand Rapids, Michigan - \$5,000
Support for the Jewish Film Festival highlighting Jewish women filmmakers in May 2000

UICA – Grand Rapids, Michigan - \$2,500
Support for Women's History Month programming and events

Women Matter – Grand Rapids, Michigan - \$2,000
Membership challenge grant

Surf Sites

For more information about women in philanthropy, check out these sites on the web:

Philanthropic Allies

Council on Foundations www.cof.org

Women and Philanthropy www.womenphil.org

National Network of Grantmakers www.nng.org

Council of Michigan Foundations www.cmif.org

Philanthropic Support Organizations

The Foundation Center <http://fdncenter.org>

National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy www.ncrp.org

Indiana University Center on Philanthropy www.tcop.org

Philanthropic On-Line Journals

Chronicle of Philanthropy www.philanthropy.com

Philanthropy Journal Online www.pj.org

Philanthropy News Network <http://conference.pj.org/pnmfacts.htm>