



Washington Area Women's Foundation

Community Update

The Passion • The People • The Promise • The Power of Giving Together

Summer 2005

Few Regional Resources Available for Formerly Incarcerated Women

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Imagine yourself dressed in an orange jumpsuit or sweat pants and sweatshirt, dropped off by a van on a street corner somewhere in the Washington region, with no identification, little or no money, and no place to call home. Where would you go? What would you do? How would you begin to start a new life?

Unfortunately and maddeningly, that's the situation faced by hundreds of women from the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and the nearby Maryland suburbs when they are released from jail. The women's prison population is rising, and the services to meet their needs are few and far between.

Nationwide, women represent the fastest-growing prison population. According to the US Department of Justice (DOJ), the female prisoner population has more than doubled since 1990 to more than 94,000 in 2001, with females accounting for 6.7% of prisoners nationwide, up from 5.7% in 1990. Moreover, the DOJ reports, the majority of women are jailed in facilities far from their homes, are mothers of young children, and one in three are imprisoned for drug offenses.

The situation across our region is no different. Hundreds of women annually are released from state and local prisons in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Most are simply released back into the general population, where they are vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence, substance abuse, and prostitution, the same problems that

landed them in prison in the first place. For several years The Women's Foundation has supported the important work of nonprofit organizations seeking to improve this situation. Our Place in Washington, DC; Friends of Guest House



Susan Galbraith and Tonie Rhones of Our Place DC

in Alexandria, VA; and the Life Skills Workshop in Kensington, MD, are grantee partners that are reaching out to incarcerated women and helping them to build a new life.

Our Place DC is the largest of those organizations, and according to Executive Director Susan Galbraith, there is "no immediate fix" for women who are just out of jail. "It's overwhelming," she says, "to go from nothing to a roof over your head and a job. A felony record makes getting a job a huge obstacle."

Susan started Our Place DC in 1999 to help improve what she calls the bleak and hopeless conditions of confinement and release. "No matter what you think about crime and punishment," she says,

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Save the date
October 20, 2005



Board Chair, Donna Callejon, at the 2004 Leadership Awards Luncheon

The Women's Foundation will host its annual Leadership Awards Luncheon at the Grand Hyatt

Full details on back page

From the President



Across the United States and around the world, something dramatic is taking place - women are investing in women and girls to improve their economic independence. Collectively this movement invests at least \$40 million annually to support programs that address the needs of low-income women - a cause for major celebration!

In April, The Women's Foundation staff attended the annual meeting of The Women's Funding Network, preceding the Women & Philanthropy and Council on Foundations conferences, in San Diego, CA. Being involved in the women's funding movement for the past 10 years, it was incredible to see rooms full of women from New Jersey to Nepal ensuring the power of our collective voices. Board members, CEOs, program officers and development staff focused on our core center - women and economic justice - and our role in investing resources wisely. I had the pleasure of sharing this experience with several colleagues including members of The Women's Foundation board.

After attending the week-long events, Marjorie Sims, our Vice President of Program and Operations said "It was great to learn more about the technical aspects of grant making, the vision of the philanthropic sector, and to network with women leaders from around the globe."

Our Board member Marion Ballard also attended the conference and was impressed by a session on planned giving. "We're so busy trying to raise money," she said, "that we have not put thought into resources from planned giving. If people mention The Women's Foundation in their wills, or as the beneficiary of IRAs, it's a wonderful way to build endowments."

Joanna Smith, our Development & Finance Associate, had a unique opportunity to go on a site visit to a women's program in nearby Tijuana, Mexico. Participants discussed the politics, programs, and social issues affecting women and girls in border communities. "It was a powerful experience to connect the faces, places, and conditions of the many initiatives we heard about at the conference."

Now is the time for a stronger conversation about the needs of and opportunities for low-income women and families. The Women's Foundation is part of an international community that gives voice to positive answers and programs that are working to help direct resources that make a difference.

Thank you for joining us in this great endeavor.

Anne B. Mosle
President

Anne is a board member of Women & Philanthropy and The Women's Funding Network.



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Founded in 1998, The Women's Foundation is dedicated to making empowerment, economic security, and self-reliance a reality for low-income, women-headed families in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Our mission is to foster a powerful wave of philanthropy to improve the lives of all women and girls through:

- Donor education and engagement
- Grantmaking and leadership development, and
- Public awareness programs and research.

Through fostering this powerful wave of philanthropy and focusing the power of giving together, we believe that every woman and every girl can have the tools they need to reach their full potential.

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Do you have feedback, a letter to the editor, or a story idea? Please email Suzanne Heiler, *Community Update* editor at sheiler@wawf.org.

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Continued from front page

"when people have done their time, they have paid their debt to society...and I really believe in a second chance... not a lifetime of having to continue to pay that debt."

Our Place arranges once-a-month family visits for the approximately 200 or so DC women who are incarcerated in federal prisons in Danbury, CT; Philadelphia, PA; and Alderson, WV at any one time. The organization provides counseling and information to inmates in those jails and to the approximately 200 others who are confined in the DC jail and the adjacent prison. When the women are released, Our Place provides new clothing, money for transportation, health care, and assistance in obtaining identification and safe housing. "We do about half of our work inside the prisons developing relationships with women so that they know who we are," says Susan. "They trust us when they come out ... we're their safety net."

Our Place also provides legal services, helps former inmates find jobs, and sponsors a program for children of inmates. Susan says she wants to give the children "a chance to have fun, to develop relationships with adults who are consistent in their lives, and let them know that they are not alone in this experience."

Our Place sees about five women a day who walk in the door, and counsels another 15 to 20 a day who are inside federal or local jails. About half of the women, when released, go to a local halfway house, as part of their sentence. The others either go back to where they came from or are looking to start anew. "We try to help them patch something together as a start," says Susan, "and encourage them to look at this as a staging process. Our motto is that we don't send women anywhere we wouldn't go ourselves. So we have to feel that the environment is friendly to women and not run down or dingy and the providers of care have to be highly professional."

One of Susan's most urgent needs

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Rainmakers Giving Circle



Pictured left is Leah Rampy at the 2004 Women in Philanthropy Conference. Leah and Lisa Claudy Fleischman were co-chairs of the Rainmakers Giving in 2004.

The Rainmaker's Giving Circle of The Women's Foundation seeks to improve the lives of young women in the DC Metropolitan Area by applying members' combined resources to support their empowerment, foster their self-esteem, and achieve their full potential.

The Rainmakers' Giving Circle continues in the forefront of women's philanthropy in the DC region with a new round of grants announced December 14, 2004 totaling \$50,000. The Circle members decided upon the following six grants to help support adolescent girls:

The Empower Program \$8,000

The group will train an economically diverse group of girls to educate their peers to end the culture of violence.

Facilitating Leadership in Youth (FLY) \$7,000

FLY helps teens east of the Anacostia River achieve their educational goals and develop individual talents and leadership skills.

The Family Support Center \$8,000

The Center will create a pilot program at St. Gabriel's Middle School in North/Northeast DC as part of their SISTERS program that serves 14 young African American girls from unstable families.

Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care \$10,000

Mary's Center runs a comprehensive program for low-income immigrant teens to prevent teen pregnancy and STD transmission and promote good health and regular school attendance.

Washington Middle School for Girls (WMSG) \$10,000

WMSG will add a fourth grade to its current independent school for grades five through eight serving 48 girls who show academic promise but are at risk of leaving school early.

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) \$7,000

WOW promotes equal opportunity and economic independence for women. They are developing a "Connections to Careers" workshop series aimed at teen girls.

Contact Carolee Summers-Sparks at csummers@wawf.org for more information about the Rainmakers Giving Circle .

Women and Families Financial Independence Initiative Advances

The Women's Foundation is rapidly moving forward with the Women and Families Financial Independence Initiative (The Initiative). This year we had an investors' retreat, launched two major funds, and held six community briefings and information sessions throughout the region. In May, we convened a leadership roundtable hosted by the Initiative's co-chairs, Senator Mary Landrieu; Stacey Stewart, President of the Fannie Mae Foundation; and Julie Jensen of the Genesis Group. Collectively, the 11 grantee partners, detailed below, will support the long-term economic security and financial independence of low-income, women-headed families in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

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Financial Education and Wealth Creation Fund

Launched in December 2004, the objective of this fund is to help low-income, women-headed families in the Washington Metropolitan Area to obtain a base level of financial knowledge and increase their collective wealth by \$40 million in the next three years.

Central American Resources Center DC (CARECEN)
\$20,000 Planning Grant

To create a formal financial education project with Citibank - expanding their current financial literacy work to prepare clients for wealth creation opportunities.

Housing Counseling Services \$65,000 Impact Grant
To support 300 families (primarily low-income, women-headed families) in becoming home owners through their home-ownership support services.

The Women's Center \$15,000 Planning Grant
To add a gender lens to their current financial education and wealth creation program and share this work with other community partners.

Lydia's House \$25,000 Planning Grant
To develop a financial education program including credit reports, debt reduction, savings, home ownership, computer education and one-on-one counseling.

Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, Inc. \$50,000 Impact Grant
To support their Asset Building Pathway Program including financial education and home ownership support in partnership with East River Family Strengthening Collaborative.

Contact Carolee Summers-Sparks at csummers@wawf.org for more information about the Financial Education and Wealth Creation Fund.

Jobs Fund

Launched in March 2005, this fund seeks to help build the life-long economic security of women who head low-income families in the Washington Metropolitan Area by building better pathways to self-sufficient jobs, and by increasing the percentage of single mothers being placed in, retaining, and advancing in high-growth sector or non-traditional occupations.

CASA of Maryland \$50,000 Impact Grant
They will invest in their Women's Workforce Initiative - providing employment support, education and leadership to low-income, immigrant women, and to support advocacy work.

Northern Virginia Family Services \$40,000 Impact Grant
To support their Training Futures program, in particular their work in the health care and protective services non-traditional occupations.

Urban Alliance Foundation \$25,000 Planning Grant
To invest in their Health Care Alliance Program - supporting low-income, single mothers to receive RN certificates and become employed.

Wider Opportunities for Women \$62,000 Impact Grant
To build quality jobs in and institutionalize pathways for the protective services field and work on advocacy around this issue area.

YWCA National Capital Area \$40,000 Impact Grant
To support the reinstatement of a pre-apprenticeship training program for low-income women in DC.

Contact Nisha Patel at npatel@wawf.org for more information about the Jobs Fund.

Strategic Opportunity and Partnership Fund

Urban Institute \$33,000 Grant
The Urban Institute will spearhead the compilation and analysis of data from the US Census and other relevant sources for the purpose of gaining a complete understanding of low-income, women-headed households in the region

Microenterprise and Business Ownership Fund

Looking ahead...The Women's Foundation is in the process of designing a fund, to be launched in Fall 2005, that will assist low-income families pursue microenterprise and business ownership strategies.

Contact Nisha Patel at npatel@wawf.org for more information about the Microenterprise and Business Ownership Fund.

Women and Families Financial Independence Initiative

The Initiative forms the basis of our philanthropic goals for the next several years. We believe the best way to foster long-term economic security for low-income women headed families is to provide them with basic financial education, job training programs, child care and adequate health care. It's our intention that fund provided to our grantee partners and their programs over the next 10 years will give women what they need: the knowledge and self-confidence to succeed.



Marian Siegel of Housing Counseling Services, Inc. talks of being an Initiative grantee partner and how it will help achieve a broader reach.



Pictured above are Marjorie Sims, Stacey Stewart, Anne Mosle, Julie Jensen and Ruth Goins at the May 11th Initiative Leadership Roundtable on Capitol Hill.



Maryland Senator Gloria G. Lawlah talks about the issues of women in Prince George's County, MD, May 11 2005

New Staff at The Women's Foundation

Suzanne Heiler is the new Communications and Marketing Coordinator. Sue was most recently Sr. Director at Civil Society Consulting Group. Her role is to work in partnership with The Board, grantee partners, donors and other community leaders to bring voice to the "power of giving together." Contact her at 202.347.7737 extension 203 or sheiler@wawf.org

Sylvia Kidder Barry is new as Director of Partnerships & Strategic Projects. Sylvia has been part of The Women's Foundation family for almost four years. First as a volunteer, then the consultant charged with the launch of the Initiative. Contact her at 202.347.7737 extension 202 or skidder@wawf.org

Nisha Patel is a new Program Officer. She was most recently Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy. Her primary responsibilities include the Initiative's Jobs Fund and Microenterprise and Business Ownership Fund. Contact her at 202.377.7737 extension 206 or npatel@wawf.org

Carolee Summers-Sparks also joins the staff as a Program Officer having recently served as the Director of Projects and Research for Women Work! Carolee's primary responsibilities include the Initiative's Financial Education and Wealth Creation Fund and the Open Door Capacity Fund. Contact her at 202.377.7737 extension 213 or csummers@wawf.org

Making Connections to the Community

Learning to give and giving together are twin doctrines that support the mission of the Women's Foundation. Board members, donors, grantee partners, and staff take this to a higher level by reaching out to each other to empower women and girls in the region.

Empowering Women through Real Estate

Last December, Cassandra Burton, Executive Director of the African American Women's Resource Center, DC, a grantee partner, attended the launch of the African American Women's Giving Circle. Cassandra overheard circle member Valda Crowder, a veteran real estate broker, contractor, and agent, talking with someone else about real estate investments, home equity, and innovative ways of finding affordable housing for low-income DC residents. Cassandra interrupted Valda's conversation by saying "My goodness, who are you?"

When Valda learned that the Resource Center works to empower women and girls through educational and cultural programs, she offered to give a workshop on real estate investing as part of their series on financial education "Valda really helped us empower ourselves. She got us thinking about real estate investing and the reduction of debt so we could purchase a home or an investment property and she told us it was never too late to get started," said Cassandra. Valda will continue her work with a workshop for teenage girls. "I don't think any of these girls have homes," said Cassandra, "Valda is clear that this needs to happen."

is to find safe shelter for women who can't or don't want to return home. Our Place is planning to open an emergency housing unit scheduled to begin operations mid-August of this year, just down the street from their offices. Susan's aim is to give women a safe place to stay until transitional housing can be arranged.

In Northern Virginia, nine formerly incarcerated women are living at Friends of Guest House in Alexandria, the only facility within 150 miles that serves this population from state prisons or from local and regional jails. Guest House's new director, Kari Galloway, says she hears from at least one incarcerated person per day, and usually more, who would like a chance to start over at Guest House. Most women simply have no place to go.

According to former Guest House director Marie McBride, "women's shelters only accept women if they are in crisis or in danger, and you have to go through social services to be referred to a homeless shelter, so when you get off the bus from prison with your two dollars, what are you going to do?"

Women accepted at Guest House may stay for up to 90 days and possibly longer if they need more help. All the women must find work. And, women with histories of substance abuse are required to attend three treatment meetings a week. Case workers help with resumes, interview techniques, clothing, family issues, and access to life skills classes at the residence. Guest House is planning to start an outreach program to assist other ex-offenders in the region who have found a place to stay, but need help transitioning back into society.

Montgomery County, MD, is the only local jurisdiction that sponsors a release program for female inmates. The Department of Corrections runs a pre-release center in Rockville that houses 50 to 60 women a year who are within six months of release from state or local jails. Stephanie Hall, a unit manager at the center, says inmates are screened to make sure they are motivated to change their lives. "Not only do we have to be interested in them," she says, "they have to volunteer for the program." The county has forged a partnership with local business leaders to help the women find permanent employment that will sustain them once they are released.

Former inmates are also put in touch with other organizations, including another grantee partner, the Life Skills Workshop. Life Skills helps women obtain business clothing and runs seminars on job skills. Executive Director, Teresa Gardner-Williams, says she also provides each woman with a mentor for six months afterwards "to keep her encouraged, find the resources she needs, and to be a sounding board in some instances."

Theresa says the most difficult issue is housing

because of the low vacancy rate of about two percent in Montgomery County. Life Skills helps with housing research, and connects these women with other resources. Life Skills is now forming a graduate advisory council so that women who have successfully fashioned new lives can share information and tips with those who are just starting out.

It is clear that our region needs more facilities to accommodate women released from prisons, especially since inmate numbers are rising each year. While the numbers are depressing, there are many individuals who can offer hope and encouragement to those on the inside.

Tonie Rhones of DC, who was first incarcerated at age 25, was in and out of prison for more than 20 years on various charges. A judge in 1990 sentenced her to 18 years in prison, and she was shipped to the federal penitentiary in Danbury, CT. While there, she encountered Susan Galbraith, whom she had met years earlier while incarcerated in Lorton, VA. Tonie wanted a new life, and Susan offered help.

After 10 years, Tonie was paroled to a halfway house in DC, and Our Place helped her arrange transitional housing, where she was required to put in 40 hours a week of community service. Tonie arranged to do her service at Our Place, and then continued there as a volunteer. Starting at Our Place as a cleaning woman, Tonie was promoted to part-time office manager, then administrative assistant, then assistant program director, and she now works as the full-time case manager.

Most of the DC women now in federal prison know Tonie personally because of all the years she herself spent in the system and they now look to her as an example. "Many of them," said Tonie, put it this way: "Tonie, you are such a powerful example to all of us. You went home and haven't looked back, and you have inspired and encouraged a lot of us to know that we can change." Tonie believes that she and others like her can empower these women to have a secure and successful future, but without Our Place and other organizations like it, many will not have a bright future at all.

"Our motto is that we don't send women anywhere we wouldn't go ourselves"

Find out more information about these organizations by visiting their websites:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Friends of Guest House | www.friendsofguesthouse.org |
| Life Skills Workshop | www.lifeskillsworkshop.org |
| Our Place, DC | www.ourplacedc.org |

Open Door Capacity Fund

This fund provides capacity building grants for The Women's Foundation's grantee partners, to help increase their effectiveness and impact. In June 2005, 10 organizations, detailed below, received funding totaling \$101,000.

- Centro Familia* \$10,000
To develop a sustainable fundraising and marketing plan to reduce dependence on government grants. Funds will be used to hire professional fundraising/development staff that will create a diversified plan that will include goals, prospects, definition of target audience, staffing, budgets required and an evaluation component.
- Community Bridges* \$10,000
To upgrade their technology in order to improve program evaluation, fundraising, communications, operations and organizational management. Funding will support hardware and software purchases as well as training for staff.
- DC Employment Justice Center (EJC)* \$5,000
For an evaluation of its Workers' Rights Clinic, including investigation of how services are reaching and being received by women in the Washington Metropolitan Area. This Evaluation will help ensure that their Worker's Rights Clinics are as useful and successful as they can be. It will also enable EJC to track results and report back to funders and prospects.
- Facilitating Leadership in Youth (FLY)* \$10,000
To fund an assistant to FLY's Director of Teen Leadership in order to increase FLY's capacity to engage and help other DC organizations engage teens in their community. FLY staff will lead workshops, coordinate other training, develop curricula and provide consultations and assessments of the management capacity of teen-oriented organizations.
- Friends of Guest House* \$9,090
To develop a strategic/business plan for professional and board development. Professional development areas include: information management and staff training on group home dynamics, crisis management and team building. Board development includes fundraising, public relations and financial and program assessments.
- My Sister's Place (MSP)* \$4,200
To support the planning, execution and administration of a move to a temporary shelter when the current shelter is torn down. The funding would support the creation of an organizational business plan for MSP, moving management operations, and setting up a temporary facility to provide counseling to survivors of domestic violence.
- Our Place DC* \$8,600
To improve their database technology in order to capture more useful information about the women and families they support, and to be able to analyze that information more efficiently. The anticipated result of improving the grantee's database will be an increase in capacity to provide more responsive services and in-depth program evaluations.
- Silver Spring Interfaith Housing Coalition (SSHIC)* \$9,110
To develop a fully networked database and data management system to enable them to manage confidential client information and interface with state and county agencies. With grant funds, SSIHC will also purchase expanded donor database software in order to increase its direct mail operations.
- Tenant & Workers Support Committee (TWSC)* \$25,000
For a collaborative capacity-building effort between TWSC and Sol & Soul. TWSC seeks innovative ways for staff to educate the broader public on complex social issues. Sol & Soul is seeking to understand community-organizing strategies to help build organizational structure. This collaborative will involve staff development, cross training, and strategic planning focused on building the capacity of low-income women and youth to work for social change by combining arts and community organizing strategies.
- Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE)* \$10,000
To support a grant writer who will work to renew and expand institutional funding for WEAVE in a time of organizational transition.

The Women's Foundation thanks the Open Door Capacity Fund Committee Members: Marion Ballard, Katherine Borsecnik, Jane Fox, Sylvia Kidder, Heather Perram, Edwardo Romero, Brigitte Rouson, Marjorie Sims and Lori Weinstein.

Contact Carolee Summers-Sparks at csummers@wawf.org for more information about the Open Door Capacity Fund.

Publications and Events

The Women's Foundation 2004 Annual Report

Find information about grantee partners and accomplishments during 2004 as well as our agenda for the future. Download a copy at our website TheWomensFoundation.org or please call 202.347.7737 to obtain a hard copy.



The Women's Foundation Annual Leadership Awards Benefit

Thursday, October 20, 2005

Grand Hyatt Hotel
1000 H Street NW
Washington DC
Noon until 2 PM.

Interested in details about The Initiative?

This year there will also be a morning program to discuss the critical needs of and solutions for low-income women headed families in the region as part of the Women and Families Financial Independence Initiative. Program will start at 9:30 AM at the Grand Hyatt.

For more information about the Awards Benefit please contact Catie Harrell at 202.467.6500 or catie@lansdaleassoc.com



Washington Area Women's Foundation

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