



# Community Update

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

## Washington 100 sees how comprehensive strategies help women thrive after economic crisis.

Three years ago, Melissa Meltzer was homeless. Today, she is three years sober, employed and living in her own apartment with her son. Her journey wasn't an easy one, and it never would have been possible without support.

When Melissa emerged from the program that helped her get sober, she had the tools to stay that way. But she had so much debt she couldn't get an apartment, and needed a steady place to live in order to get a job to eliminate the debt.

Homestretch, a nonprofit in Northern Virginia, stepped in to break this vicious cycle of poverty that is all too common for many women in our region.

Melissa met with Christopher Fay, executive director of Homestretch, and received the keys to her own apartment that day.

Then, Melissa began meeting with her case worker, Alejandra Vindell, on a regular basis. With Alejandra's help, Melissa got a job at Starbucks. Now, they're working together to find her a job as a physical therapy aid—the first step to her goal of becoming a physical therapist.

When she began with Homestretch, Melissa was thousands of dollars in debt. As of April 1, 2008, when Washington 100 visited Homestretch, she had \$174 left to pay back.

Nine percent of every paycheck she earns is sitting in a savings account that she can't touch until she completes the program. It will serve as the springboard that will pay the deposit on her first lease or tuition towards her physical therapy degree.



Melissa Meltzer shares her story with members of Washington 100 at the spring site visit to Homestretch.

Members of Washington 100, The Women's Foundation's premier network of philanthropic leaders, heard this story from Melissa when they visited Homestretch to learn more about the power of investing in programs that bring women out of poverty.

Board member and Washington 100 member, Leonade Jones, said, "It's always great to go beyond the statistics. It really underscores that one person can make a difference, that a group, a community, can make a real difference."

The Women's Foundation invested in Homestretch to help alleviate the burden of families affected by the job loss that occurred following September 11.

Today, Homestretch's work is the same, but

## From the President



Dear Friends-

Since I came on board about six months ago, we've had eight new staff members join us, bringing new energy, enthusiasm and ideas to our work.

The addition of these new colleagues also symbolizes the atmosphere around The Women's Foundation as we celebrate our 10th year. Now fully staffed, this new team represents The Women's Foundation's growth, investment in its future and commitment to bringing some of the brightest minds to our work.

The energy around this transition is palpable, and exciting for me as the foundation's leader. It is humbling to serve at the helm of this team and to have the privilege of bringing us together and focusing our talents into new goals as we move into our second decade.

Much of the enthusiasm in the office can be felt in the shuffling, organizing and cleaning taking place as we make way for our new colleagues.

I imagine it may be similar to what teachers feel as they prepare their classrooms for the new year, with the excitement of new ideas and new possibilities with the arrival of each class.

This is the feeling we have as we enter our new fiscal year, preceded by a "spring cleaning season" that kicked off with our annual board meeting on June 10, followed by an inspirational opportunity to meet and talk with board members who served throughout our 10-year history.

Now, with a sense of our history and the passion that has driven the success of The Women's Foundation, we approach a new year with a restored, inspired and ready sense of purpose and drive.

We are looking forward to walking into a future where we are able to build up from the solid foundation that has been created over the past decade, to generate even more opportunities and success for our region's women and girls.

To do so, we'll rely on the support, wisdom and involvement of our community—at all levels—and we look forward to having you with us as part of our ongoing journey.

Sincerely,

*Phyllis R Caldwell*



## Washington Area Women's Foundation

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Washington Area Women's Foundation is a powerful nexus for social change, philanthropy and women's leadership.

### Mission

Washington Area Women's Foundation's mission is to foster a powerful wave of philanthropy to improve the lives of women and girls through:

- Expanding and leveraging women's philanthropy;
- Increasing social change philanthropy in our community;
- Providing grants, operational resources and technical assistance to local organizations; and,
- Serving as a regional voice for women and girls.

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Do you have **feedback**, a letter to the editor or a story idea? Please contact Lisa Kays at [lkays@wawf.org](mailto:lkays@wawf.org).

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now families come to them as a result of the economic downturn and mortgage crisis. According to *The Washington Post*, in Northern Virginia, the majority of the homeless are working families unable to keep up with rising costs.

***“It really underscores that one person can make a difference, that a group, a community, can make a real difference.”***

***—Leonade Jones***

Nearly half of homeless women have fled an abusive situation where they had no control over their finances or weren't allowed to work, Christopher explained.

In Fairfax County, there are 2,000 homeless families and 300 housing units, Christopher said. Homestretch has 75 units; 90 percent are occupied by women-headed families.

In addition to housing, Homestretch provides case management, ESL and GED classes, child care, job training and psychological counseling.

After two years, most families move out on their own. Eighty-five percent of graduating families are still self-sufficient two years later.

Change like this doesn't happen without comprehensive support. As Melissa said, “Everything is here. All you need is a willingness to better your life.”

For Amy Dunbar, a Washington 100 member, the site visit confirmed her decision to support this work. “It makes you understand the purpose of The Women's Foundation. It brings home the importance of our contributions to help solve those problems.”

Leonade agreed that solving complex problems requires strategic solutions. “Women give all the time. But it makes you think, if we join together, we can have greater impact. When you get down to it, it's about giving dollars to people who help change lives. I left the site visit thinking, ‘I wish I had more to give.’ That's what happens when you see the work.”

## The Women's Foundation thanks Loribeth Weinstein!

“Loribeth has probably served in every role imaginable since The Women's Foundation's founding,” Chief Operating Officer Marjorie Sims says. “Volunteer, executive director, board member, committee chair, you name it.”



The Women's Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to Loribeth Weinstein for her instrumental impact and influence on our work through her nine years of board service.

Loribeth's service to The Women's Foundation is aligned with her philanthropic and professional vision. As executive director of Jewish Women International, Loribeth is devoted to the well-being, economic security and advancement of women. Her family's tradition of philanthropy has instilled in her a deep commitment to giving back to her community.

Though Loribeth's term as a board member ended in June, she will remain active in The Women's Foundation, leading new efforts to harness the wisdom of former board members by offering meaningful opportunities for them to be engaged in our work.

Her legacy of leadership and service will also stay with us in the form of the strength of our current board, due largely to her efforts heading the board development committee, as well as her diligence in heading the search committee tasked with finding our new president last year.

“Loribeth was an invaluable source of support and wisdom for me as I transitioned into my new role,” President Phyllis Caldwell says. “She will be missed on the board, but her influence will find us in other ways, and I know we will continue to benefit from her positive outlook, grace, experience and dedication.”

## The Women's Foundation's Open Door Capacity Fund supports local nonprofits as they lift up local women and girls.

When CARECEN—The Central American Resource Center—conducts its financial education courses for women, one of the first things they establish is the importance of having a goal, and a plan to achieve it.

Just as CARECEN supports women as they chart their financial futures, The Women's Foundation is supporting CARECEN as they undergo a similar process for their organization—a strategic plan to set long-term goals and to ensure the financial sustainability to meet them.

CARECEN's clients, members of the Central American and Latino community in the Washington metropolitan area, rely on CARECEN for legal, educational, housing and other services that help foster their individual and collective empowerment and economic security.

Women make up 65 percent of the tenants' associations CARECEN works with to ensure that landlords provide safe, fair housing for them and their families.

"The philosophy of CARECEN is empowerment—individually and for communities—and that goes directly to women, who are at the forefront of issues like housing," says Ana Negoescu, Director of the CARECEN Citizenship and Civic Participation Program.

The Women's Foundation is supporting CARECEN's strategic planning process through the Open Door Capacity Fund, which supports investments in infrastructure, staffing, professional development, strategic planning and any other needs that contribute to the growth, sustainability and effectiveness of the work of The Women's Foundation's Grantee Partners.

In June, 12 Grantee Partners, including CARECEN, received Open Door grants totaling \$145,500, invested in a range of capacity supports, including strategic planning, communications and marketing, professional development, program evaluation, database development, fundraising and board development. (See opposite page for list of grants.)

For CARECEN, this investment was timely, says Executive Director Saul Solorzano. "Last year was particularly difficult because of the housing crisis and the anti-immigrant climate. We have been so committed to growing our programs to meet increasing



**Ana Negoescu congratulates Trinidad Rios, CARECEN citizenship class graduate.**

needs that we haven't been able to focus enough on fundraising. This grant will allow us to focus on our long-term vision and ensure that we can continue to respond to the needs of our community."

CARECEN will determine the best strategies to meet changing needs among the Latino community throughout the region, including a rapidly changing legal climate, limited health care access, rising alcohol and substance abuse due to increasing unemployment, and gang violence, Saul says.

The uncertain economic climate is one issue that he expects could influence the lives of women, as many of the sectors facing job losses employ Latino men, which could mean that women will increasingly assume the role of breadwinners for the families CARECEN serves.

Just as CARECEN wants to provide the most effective supports for families as they work towards economic self-sufficiency and stability, The Women's Foundation is committed to providing opportunities for our region's leading nonprofits serving women and girls to enhance their own effectiveness and stability.

**Create a legacy of empowerment and opportunity for our community's women and girls...**

**include The Women's Foundation in your planned giving strategy.**

**To talk over planned giving options, contact Stacey Miller, Director of Development and Philanthropic Services, at 202.347.7737 ext. 213.**

## More than \$1.1 Million Invested in Women and Girls This Year!

*June docket totals \$645,500, bringing 2008 grantmaking to \$1,147,500 invested in local women and girls!*

This quarter, nearly \$650,000 was awarded in grants, bringing The Women's Foundation's annual grantmaking for 2008 to more than \$1.1 million! To learn more about all Grantee Partners, visit [TheWomensFoundation.org](http://TheWomensFoundation.org) and click on Volunteer and Connect.

### Stepping Stones Financial Education and Wealth Creation Fund

To help low-income, women-headed families in the Washington metropolitan area obtain a base level of financial knowledge and increase their collective wealth.

**Capital Area Asset Builders: \$45,000**

Financial Education and Individual Development Accounts to low-income, women-headed families.

**Community Tax Aid (CTA): \$40,000**

Free tax preparation clinics and tax education for low-income, women-headed families.

**Doorways for Women and Families: \$45,000**

Build women's financial and behavioral capacity to escape poverty.

**International Migrant Development Fund: \$37,500**

*Powered Latinas!* program to increase engagement in the formal financial system.

**Lydia's House: \$40,000**

Ward 8 Financial Education Center's strategies for low-income, women-headed families.

**Tenants Empowerment Network of Catholic Community Services: \$37,500**

Financial education and asset development services to low-income women in Ward 8.

### Stepping Stones Jobs Fund

To build the life-long economic security of low-income, women-headed families in the Washington metropolitan area by building better pathways to jobs for single mothers in targeted high-growth sectors and other non-traditional occupations.

**Goodwill of Greater Washington: \$40,000**

Support of the Women in Construction program.

**Urban Alliance Foundation: \$30,000**

Train D.C. residents for sustainable nursing careers.

**YWCA of the National Capital Area: \$50,000**

Support of Washington Area Women in the Trades.

### Stepping Stones Strategic Opportunity and Partnership Fund

To provide grants to nonprofits engaged in research, policy, advocacy, grassroots efforts, capacity building or communications and media activities that support the overall goals of Stepping Stones.

**D.C. Coalition on Long-term Care: \$30,000**

Improve wages, benefits, training and job opportunities for home-care workers.

**Empower D.C.: \$15,000**

Child Care for All Campaign.

**Prince George's Child Resource Center: \$15,000**

Continue the National Harbor Child Care Project.

**Virtuous Enterprises: \$30,000**

Mini-documentary on the needs of the Stepping Stones target population in Prince George's County.

**Fairfax Futures: \$15,000**

Child care and early education advocacy efforts in Fairfax County and Richmond.

**The Training Source: \$30,000**

Financial education services for women in transitional housing and employment programs.

### Open Door Capacity Fund

To help Grantee Partners build their capacity and strengthen their work and infrastructure.

**CARECEN: \$12,000**

Strategic planning process.

**Covenant House Washington: \$12,000**

Organizational assessment and program evaluation.

**Crossway Communities, Inc.: \$9,000**

Organizational assessment and professional development.

**Facilitating Leadership in Youth (FLY): \$12,000**

Strategic communications and marketing plan.

**Friends of Guest House: \$12,000**

Professional development and a part-time grantwriter.

**Hispanics Against Child Abuse and Neglect (HACAN): \$12,000**

Fundraising plan and board development.

**Hispanics in Philanthropy-DC Funders' Collaborative: \$25,000**

Support grantmaking to build strong Latino communities.

**Interstages: \$8,500**

Program evaluation and a database.

**New Neighbors Education Center: \$12,000**

Support strategic communications and marketing.

**NOVACO: \$10,000**

Administrative position and professional development.

**Our Place DC: \$9,000**

Strategic planning process.

**Through The Kitchen Door: \$12,000**

Organizational assessment and development.

## Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole to lead our 10th anniversary celebration at the 2008 Leadership Luncheon!

The Women's Foundation is thrilled to announce that Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole—prominent educator, humanitarian, scholar, community leader and ground-breaker—will lead the Leadership Luncheon and anniversary celebration on October 15, 2008.

Dr. Cole is President emerita of Bennett College for Women and Spelman College. She is the only individual to have served as the president of the two historically Black colleges for women in the United States. She is also Professor emerita of Emory University from which she retired as Presidential Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, Women's Studies and African American Studies. Her work as a college professor and president, her published works, her speeches and her community service consistently address issues of racial, gender and all other forms of discrimination.

*For more information on Dr. Cole and the 2008 Leadership Luncheon, please visit [TheWomensFoundation.org](http://TheWomensFoundation.org). We look forward to celebrating our 10th anniversary with you!*

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