

M a k i n g Change

Newsletter of the Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley

FALL '05

Think Big. Act Bold.

Invest in Women and Girls!

The new Fund for Girls ensures grant money for the future

There is now a permanent source of funds for girls programs, thanks to the work of WFGV Board member Janine Wheeler, who spearheaded the idea, and to a generous pledge of \$50,000 from Robin Flaherty, owner and founder of Benefit Link, LLC, and her husband, Tim. The pledge is the cornerstone of the Foundation's new Fund for Girls. Income from the fund will go directly to grants for girls in our seven-county region. "Creating this fund is a major step for all who want girls to grow up healthy, safe, and on a path to fulfill their dreams," said Rosemary Mitchell, Executive Director of the Foundation.

Programs for girls have come a long way since 1997, when the Foundation launched Voices of Experience to show high school girls what it takes to reach their dreams. Board member Janine Wheeler, who chaired Voices for several years, remembers it this way. "We didn't expect to make money from Voices – we sold tickets just to cover expenses. But in 2000 we had a nice surprise: the program sold out and we made a profit." Wheeler and Executive Director Rose Mitchell talked about how to take the profits to move to the next level.

"I wanted my daughters to learn at an early age how dollars can make a difference," Wheeler says. "Rose and I started talking how Girls Grantmaking could mirror the adult grantmaking process, and how Voices could provide the funds to work with. There were a few other examples of what we were thinking about, such as the Girls Best Friend Foundation in Chicago. So in 2001, we put together a skeleton of how it would work, and board member Amy Irish volunteered to oversee it."

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Robin Flaherty



Janine Wheeler

"The Women's Foundation provides girls and young women with a blueprint for success and self-sufficiency in life. I consider it a privilege to give back to our community in such a positive way."

-Robin Flaherty



Sarah Wetenhall

In the right hands, a few dollars make a world of difference That's what Girls Grantmaking taught the Wetenhall family

When Sarah Wetenhall joined the Girls Grantmaking Committee three years ago as a sophomore at Brighton High School, the odds were high that she'd graduate and go to a top-rated college. Sure enough, this talented young woman completed high school with unusual distinction, and is now beginning her freshman year at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this fall.

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IMPROVING LIVES BY FUNDING CHANGE

Vision: All women and girls have the power to realize their full potential.

Mission: To create and manage a permanent endowment fund to perpetuate grant making explicitly for women and girls.

To lead the way in funding and advocating for programs that encourage growth and promote women's economic self-sufficiency.

To model equitable partnerships that encourage diversity and inclusivity.

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XEROX EMPLOYEE GROUP LAUNCHES NEW FUND

The Monroe County Chapter of The Women's Alliance (MCWA), a not-for-profit organization created by employees who work at Xerox Corporation, has established a Women in Technology Scholarship Fund.

The fund will provide scholarships for women pursuing higher education degrees in technology fields, helping to strengthen the long-term business climate of Monroe County. The Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley will manage these assets as a donor-advised fund. Through this partnership, the Women's Alliance determines who can receive a scholarship but relies on the Women's Foundation for guidance, administrative assistance and management of the principal.

J. Christine Wilson, daughter of Xerox founder Joseph Wilson and a long-time supporter of The Women's Alliance, joins in this collaborative effort. "I'm thrilled that the Women's Alliance and the Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley will be working together in ways that extend my father's vision of how technology can help people and communities," said Ms. Wilson.

This kind of partnership is unusual, but not without precedent. In Texas, the Women of Texas Instruments created a fund that supports projects to encourage girls to enter science and technology professions. Texas Instruments employees donate to the fund, and the Dallas Women's Foundation offers guidance and management of the assets.



Present at the launch, from the left, are Nancy Rees, Senior Vice President Xerox Supplies Business Group, Anne Mulcahy, Chairman and CEO of Xerox; J. Christine Wilson; Christine Stewart, Monroe County Women's Alliance Chapter President; and Janice O'Rourke, The Women's Alliance President.

Think Big. Act Bold. Invest in Women and Girls!

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Wheeler's daughters, Jessica and Sarah, have both served on the Girls Grantmaking Committee, as did Mitchell's daughter, Mary Ellen.

"Creating the Fund for Girls was the next logical step," says Mitchell. "Now, the Girls' Grantmaking Committee can increase grant dollars because this permanent source of income will supplement proceeds from Voices. With more granting dollars, we'll help more girls take their education further and develop the confidence and life skills that will expand their potential."

"Young women need to connect with a basic truth," Robin Flaherty says. "Their future is not just 'out there' but is a result of today's actions and decisions -- the future is always the sum of yesterdays. On the threshold of 40, I am enjoying some of the fruits of my labors of the last 25 years, and see how fortunate I was to recognize and appreciate the positive role models that the Lord put in my life to navigate me through the more critical, life altering decisions that I faced when younger. I consider it a privilege to give back to our community in such a positive way."

Save the Dates! Voices of Experience returns Thursday, Oct 20, at 7 p.m. in the Ramada Inn, Geneva, and Thursday, Oct. 27, at 7 p.m. at Genesee Community College, Batavia. Proceeds from the Spring 2005 Voices program raised \$8,000 for Girls Grants. For tickets, call 585-242-0940.

Ontario/Yates Fund for Women Focuses on Self-Sufficiency

By Peggy Kane

Driving through the largely rural counties of Yates and Ontario, one sees the beautiful lakes, the wheat covered fields, the lush orchards and grape vines, the hills dotted with fat white sheep. However, behind this beauty is a very different, perhaps invisible story - one of poverty and lack of opportunity.

Recent research commissioned by the Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley shows these facts about Ontario and Yates counties:

In Yates county 81% of those living in poverty are women and children; in Ontario County the figure is 76%.

In these two counties, a family of three needs \$34,500 to attain economic self-sufficiency. Yet the annual income of female household heads in Yates County is about \$20,000; in Ontario County, the figure is about \$27,000.

This gap between what a woman earns at a minimum-wage job and what she needs to pay for food, rent, travel to work, the doctor and dentist means that over 20% of families in Yates do not earn enough money for child care, health care, heating, or adequate clothing.

In addition, the Women's Foundation study showed that 34% of women who drop out of high school will live in poverty. In Yates and Ontario Counties, 30% of new mothers do not have high school diplomas. And while teen pregnancy rates are down nationally, there is a rise in Yates County.

Clearly, ONYA (Ontario/Yates Fund for Women - an endowed fund of the Women's Foundation of Genesee Valley) has a daunting task. However, its leadership of 10 women who live and work in these counties is committed to addressing these unmet needs.

Thanks to contributions from 235 donors to date, ONYA has established a \$130,000 endowment from which

grants are made to programs for women and girls in Ontario and Yates counties. ONYA's vision is to award grants to new and innovative programs that can have an immediate impact on the lives of those in our area.

Awarding grants to new or young programs that haven't yet established track records requires a multi-pronged approach. First, proposals to ONYA must contain clear measures of success and a solid logic model. ONYA conducts an on-site interview as part of its evaluation. When ONYA funds a proposal, it assigns liaison to the grantee to ensure accountability and to identify and resolve potential bumps in the road. ONYA also works with the grantee to find creative ways to make the program work and grow.

For example, Jillian Hoad, Childbirth Educator for H.E.R. (Health. Education. Resources. program run by the Outreach Department of the Rushville Health Center and a 2004 ONYA grant recipient) reveals that discussions she had with the ONYA liaison about problems reaching women in need with educational materials led to more effective delivery systems. Hoad now has met with over 30 pregnant women for eight week sessions and the program is going strong.

Situations like these have taught the ONYA Advisory Committee that strong relationships between the Committee and grantees goes a long way toward solving problems and developing new stories of success for women and girls in Ontario and Yates counties.

For more information contact Peggy Kane, chair of ONYA, 165 Carousel Lane, Canandaigua 14424 or e-mail her at pkane4@rochester.rr.com.

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‘I wanted work to feed my soul’

After a successful career in financial services, Kathy Wright recently joined the Women’s Foundation Board and made a Challenge Gift of \$10,000 at the Donor Breakfast in December 2004. Making Change interviewed her about what led to the personal and financial commitment she has made to the Foundation.



How did you hear about the Women’s Foundation?

Mary Spurrier invited me to a reception at her home. The women I met were unpretentious, serious-minded and professional. Everyone had such a strong belief in the Foundation – you could hear it in their words and see it in the financial commitments they had made. I’d been involved in other fundraising efforts and some seemed like an exercise in futility – you’d go to meetings at 7 a.m. for months to plan a fundraising event, and in the end, you might raise a few hundred dollars. It was a diversion of resources that could have been directed in more productive ways. When a woman becomes successful, she can do things to help others that no government program can do. There are so many ways to contribute. As a Board member, I’m serving on the Endowment Committee and the Voices of Experience Committee.

Tell us about your background.

I came from a family with five children and grew up in New York City. We had our own house; we weren’t poor, but we weren’t privileged. I wanted to go to college, but my father didn’t think it was important for girls to go. Nonetheless, I worked my way through Brooklyn College and was the first in my family to go to college. What I learned from that experience is that you have to be determined if you want to accomplish things. When I started work, I never viewed any job as beneath me, and I was willing to take jobs that only men had held before.

When I left New York, I went to work at Lincoln First Bank, which later became Chase. I married, had a daughter, and then was divorced. Being a working single mom with a two-year-old was a real balancing act. But I continued to work hard, and when I remarried, I had a supportive mate. It was a tough time in the banking world: There was a lot of downsizing, I had to travel for business, and I was working 60 to 70 hours a week the majority of the time. In corporate life, your family doesn’t really come first – your job does. Somehow, it all worked out, though. I had great neighbors – my

“you have to be determined if you want to accomplish things”

daughters called them Mom 2 and Mom 3 -- and a very supportive husband. My girls have grown up to be well balanced and terrific young women. My husband and I made time for them, though it sometimes meant that we brought work home and worked till 2 am.

What about the business you founded?

When I left Chase to start a business, I held a senior position as a vice president and manager. Despite the risks of starting a new business, with my family’s support, I gave up my position to become a founding partner of EPIC Advisors, a firm that administers 401K retirement accounts. My partners and I operated the business for 12 years until one of our clients recently acquired us. EPIC had four partners when the company was sold. The agreement called for two partners to stay, and two to go. I volunteered to go. I’d had a good career in financial services, but I was ready for a change. I looked forward to being more involved with the Foundation – to do work that would feed my soul. When I was operating a business, it had to be all about meeting demands and deadlines and chasing financial success. It’s wonderful that I’ve been able to step away from that. It’s so much more rewarding to think about how I can contribute to improving lives.

What do you especially like about the work of the Women’s Foundation?

Everyone needs mentors, but some women and girls aren’t fortunate enough to have that assistance readily available. When you give them the support they need to get through day to day life, it will help on the economic side – and that’s the logic I see behind many of the grants the Foundation makes.

How about examples?

Girls need support and guidance to get to college – and if their families aren’t providing it, someone else needs to be there. Some women need mentoring to find ways to cope with the demands of single parenthood – working, cooking, shopping, and rearing children. Sojourner House does a great job helping these women. Sanctioned women without a social safety net need help getting a toehold back into society – and the Jennifer House program offers that assistance. The Coffee Connection helps women learn the skills involved in running a business. Mentoring is like a tree – you teach someone something, and it blossoms. That person helps others, and then those people help still more people.



Thanks to *all* for a great tournament!

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Tournament organizers Jaime Anderson (left) and Alyce Van Patten (right) thank LPGA Champion Dottie Pepper for her participation in the June 20 event, which raised \$30,000 for the Women's Foundation.

In the right hands, a few dollars make a world of difference

That's what Girls Grantmaking taught the Wetenhall family

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But as a high school sophomore, Sarah already understood that her likelihood of establishing a secure economic future was a lot better than those of some other girls her age. "I knew that teen pregnancy and high school dropout rates were problems here," she says. But what she learned over the next three years from her involvement opened her eyes and changed her thinking in ways that neither Sarah nor her parents, Paul Wetenhall and Kathy Pearce, expected.

Maybe the biggest surprise, at the end of the day, was the sense of optimism and hope that Sarah received from those who serve low-income families, and from the girls served by grants. "I was amazed," says Sarah, that the service providers "can take a few thousand dollars and create a year-long program that can inspire a young woman."

Sarah was impressed with the girls being served by grants. "They are some of the nicest and most energetic people I have met. They are similar to me and my friends in so many ways, but their situations -- foster homes, group homes, single-parent homes -- are very different and challenging from what I'm personally familiar with." Despite those difficulties, says Sarah, "They weren't unhappy; they were optimistic in their lives. This really made me feel positive about the money we gave."

Her service on the Girls Grantmaking Committee taught her many other things, too. She gained a deeper understanding of community problems from evaluating grant proposals: "I learned specifics by reading statistics, and even more importantly, by talking to social workers and the girls in some challenging situations." She saw the not-for-profit world at close range: "I learned a lot more about the people who work at non-profit organizations. I saw that Rochester has both large and very small organizations."

Paul Wetenhall, Sarah's father, remarked on the powerful impression those site visits made: "The field visits let her discover the sense of passion that program advocates have for their work and their sense of commitment to people they serve. It was valuable for her to see how people with diverse backgrounds succeed and get things done."

Sarah also learned the nuts and bolts of grantmaking -- including setting strategic priorities. "Before I joined the committee, I didn't understand the process. I now have a clearer idea about what constitutes a good grant proposal, the criteria we consider when granting, how to make logical decisions as a group, and how to publicize and announce the decisions of the committee. It's all very interesting."

Each year, the girls' committee evaluated 20 to 25 grants. "We narrowed them down through two phases of screening and site visits. We looked for programs that would affect a lot of girls in a positive way, programs likely to succeed, or ones that were unique and tied together a number of different goals. Leadership was especially important -- it's been my observation that an inspirational adult leader plays a big role in the success of a program. In addition, we looked at how badly a given organization needs the money we have to give."

Other skills Sarah gained include working with financial information and budgets, making logical decisions, presenting the committee's work to the community by speaking at events, writing articles, and doing a radio interview.

She's aware that the knowledge and skills she gained from this experience will serve her well in the future: "I plan to major in economics at UNC Chapel Hill. I'm interested in possibly going into journalism, business, or public policy. Girls Grantmaking provided opportunities for me to learn about the business of non-profits, dynamics in government, and social services, and public relations/public speaking. I enjoy these things, and will want to do them in my future career."

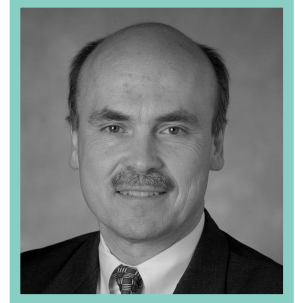
Kathy Pearce, Sarah's mother, says the experience put her daughter in closer touch with the challenges unique to women and girls. "I've been a donor to WFGV for many years," Pearce says, "I feel strongly about the importance of concentrating on women and girls' needs, and this experience gave Sarah more appreciation for those issues."

Sarah's dad, Paul, notes that she has been interested for several years in how an economic system affects the people who live under that system. "Economic systems can help people realize their personal dreams -- this experience helped her think about how economic systems help or hurt people, and what she can do to make those systems have better outcomes."

So what was the best part of the whole three-year experience for Sarah? Her answer is straightforward, and revealing: "It was the power we had, through money, to create positive change for girls right here in Rochester."



*Kathy Pearce, Director,
Cameron Community Ministries*



*Paul Wetenhall, President
High Tech Rochester*

From the BOARDROOM to the Family Room

By Deborah Baker, Vice President, KeyBank N.A.

Any working mother can tell you her day does not end at five o'clock. She spends long days at the office and then goes home to spend hours attending to the needs of her family. She is a woman who is always on the job, juggling the roles of businesswoman and mother. Today, women are joining the business ranks and starting their own businesses in unparalleled numbers, leaving those who are working moms in a bit of a conundrum. It's that pesky B word...BALANCE. And while current thinking suggests that you create balance by separating work and home life, I think there are some healthy ways that the two can overlap and even enhance your family life.

1. Introduce the kids to your professional side

One of the most important things you can do as a working mother is to expose your children to your career. An easy way to do this is to participate in "take your children to work" days. Show them what you do daily and why it's important to you. Or, bring them with you to a work engagement, like a speech or other industry event. These opportunities will provide them with a deeper understanding and respect for what you do when you're not at home. Another good way to introduce your children to your professional side is to involve them in decisions you are making at work. You can use situations like hiring new employees, or making difficult personnel decisions, as a way to introduce them to some of "life's lessons."

You can also expose your children to other career options by giving them the chance to "shadow" some of your colleagues or use everyday experiences (like a trip to the vet) to teach them about other careers.

2. Run your home like the office

Organization and time management are essential for keeping everything running smoothly both at home and at the office. They are also necessary skills for children to learn. Show your children how to stay organized by teaching them to use a calendar or assignment book to keep track of important details, like homework, tests and extra-curricular activities. Also, teach them how to plan and use their time wisely. For example, to make the most of their mornings, have them do as much as they can the night before—packing lunches, laying out clothes, etc. You also can incorporate a nightly "homework time" for all of you.

3. Establish your family "team"

As a successful businesswoman, you rely on your team of co-workers and employees to share the workload at the office. Practice the family team approach by involving your children in important family decisions, like deciding the next family vacation. You can also practice your delegating skills at home by enlisting your family "team" to help with the housework. Write a chore list for each family member and establish a weekly chore time. Also, hold them accountable—do not pick up the slack. Requiring more from your children at home will teach them responsibility and teamwork, not to mention the value of a dollar, if you choose to pay them an allowance. If your children are older, they also will gain independence as they learn how to cook for themselves and handle the laundry.

4. Be choosy about commitments

In addition to time management, it is necessary to set priorities. Deciding what is important in your life enables you to accomplish tasks you both need to do and want to do. It also is a good way to make sure you don't stretch yourself too thin. Working mothers, as you know, have both limited time and energy, despite the desire of wanting to do it all. Aside from giving yourself a break, you will also be teaching your children how to set limits by controlling their own involvement in extra-curricular activities.

5. Play follow the leader

Finally, as a parent you have the opportunity, and responsibility, for establishing yourself as a positive role model for your children. Adults have a habit of telling their children they have to go to work to pay for food or toys. They also may commonly gripe about bosses and co-workers. As a result, children grow up treating work as a chore, rather than a fun and challenging experience. Frame your conversations about your career in a positive tone. Your children will learn how to find pleasure and satisfaction when they are ready to take on the responsibility of a job. Also, as a working mother, you set the stage for shaping your children's attitudes and opinions toward women. Use your career as a tool for positioning women as business leaders in the minds of your children.

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