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J. J. Keller Foundation Inc. challenge grant helping Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region Inc.; event held at Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in downtown Appleton

By Kara Patterson
Post-Crescent staff writer

A J. J. Keller Foundation Inc. challenge grant is helping the Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region Inc. recruit new support for financial fluency and violence prevention education initiatives.

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During the ninth annual Women's Fund luncheon, "Invest in Her," Women's Fund executive director Becky Boulanger said Thursday the foundation will match dollar for dollar, up to \$10,000, the total amount of funds from first-time Women's Fund contributors through Oct. 15.

In its spring grant cycle, the Women's Fund provided a record \$57,000 to programs improving the lives of women and girls, a 70 percent increase over last year.

However, Boulanger said, the amount of requests the Women's Fund received — up 54 percent over 2008 — outnumbered available funds. This left about \$72,000 in grant requests unfulfilled, she said.

The event at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in downtown Appleton, which about 950 women and men attended, was the opportune time to announce the challenge grant and also unveil a fundraiser book, "Woman to Woman: Creating Community Connections," Boulanger said.

"This is our one time a year to be in front of a group that's this large and make a connection about the Women's Fund and what we do," she said.

This fall the Women's Fund is partnering with others to offer financial fluency programs including:

- Seeds for Sustainability Award, a \$2,000 award for a woman business owner.
- Money Smart Week Wisconsin events Oct. 10-17, including The Big Read. Libraries' story hours feature children's books on money management. The Women's Fund is giving a free book to each participating child.
- "Fifty Ways to Save Money in 50 Minutes," a workshop from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Oct. 26 (site not yet set.)

"Part of what the Women's Fund has done since day one is provide grants and financial assistance," said Maureen O'Hern Hahn, a founding donor who runs a financial planning business. "A complement to that is providing women with the knowledge to make better decisions about money."

The nonprofit in spring plans to start new violence prevention education efforts. Boulanger said the nonprofit likely will work with Fox Valley Voices of Men, a group of men who speak out against abuse of women.

Additional Facts

How to help

Donate funds: The J. J. Keller Foundation Inc. has presented the Women's Fund with a dollar-for-dollar matching grant of up to \$10,000. The grant, effective since its announcement at the Sept. 10 Women's Fund luncheon, applies to funds that new donors contribute through Oct. 15.

Purchase a book: "Woman to Woman: Creating Community Connections" is a compilation of stories, essays and poems by Fox Valley women about the special women in their lives and about women's contributions to the community. Copies cost \$10, and proceeds benefit the Women's Fund. To purchase a copy, call the Women's Fund office or stop by between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays. The Women's Fund is located inside the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region Inc. at 4455 W. Lawrence St., Grand Chute.

Volunteer: A meeting for prospective Women's Fund volunteers begins at 8:30 a.m. Thursday at the Women's Fund office.

Learn more about financial fluency: To register for fall financial fluency programming that the Women's Fund supports, go online or call the Women's Fund office.

Contact: 920-830-1290

On the Web: www.womensfundfvr.org