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Record Women's Fund Grant Cycle Assists Area Projects, Programs

Seven programs benefiting girls and five directed to women's projects were chosen for 2006 funding by the Women's Fund for the Fox Valley Region, Inc., for a total of more than \$33,000, the largest grant cycle in Women's Fund history.

"Issues affecting women and girls don't always get recognized or funded for numerous reasons. The Women's Fund is here to address just that. We are an organization to bring a voice, and funding, to women's and girls' issues through grants, advocacy and education. Our funding history has included programs that address economic self-sufficiency, parenting and child care, physical and mental health, the arts, education and violence prevention," said Genie Georgen of Neenah, Grants Committee chair.

"Members are quickly educated by the grant applications about the issues facing women and girls in our community," Georgen said.

"The evaluation process of a grant request is an education in budgets, demographics, need, economics, culture and programs that involve our immediate area. It is eye opening in so many ways. It is a wonderful lesson in philanthropy, as well, and that is just one part of the Women's Fund mission," she said.

This year, four of the grants were awarded to continue successful programs that have previously been funded by the Women's Fund. These include The TeenAge Parenting Program of the Fox Cities Children Museum (\$2,500); the Yellow Dress Teen Violence Awareness Project of Harbor House Domestic Abuse Programs (\$2,885); the Teen Awareness Girls' Group Summer Program of CHAPS Academy (\$5,000); and the Wings of Change Support Group of NAMI Fox Valley (\$3,000).

The King's Daughter Service Circle of Neenah-Menasha supports the Women's Fund by making grants to organizations in Neenah and Menasha. This year they collaborated on grants to Project Power, Providing Opportunities for Women's Employment and Retention of ADVOCAP (\$1,000); to Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha for its Helping Hand Program (\$1,000); and to the Fox Cities Community Health Center for the No Woman Left Behind Female Health Prevention Program, (\$1,000).

Other grants were awarded to the Fox Valley Food Allergy Support Group Education for customized cooking classes for parents of children with food allergies (\$1,500); and to the Girl Scouts of the Fox River Area, Inc. for a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Program (\$2,600).

In addition to awards from the Women's Fund endowment, a new fund, the 4Giving 2Gether 4Women Fund, awarded its first three grants including an additional \$4,000 for the No Woman Left Behind Female Health Prevention project; \$5,000 to Mooring Programs, Inc. for helping to furnish the new Casa Clare substance abuse and drug treatment center for women; and \$2,500 to support a Community Awareness Heroes Program for the Sexual Assault Crisis Center.

"The Women's Fund Grants Committee members are volunteers, both women and men, from the community. Our 'round table' has a business owner sitting next to a high school senior, next to a corporate executive, next to a stay-at-home mom, next to a director of a non-profit organization -- a diverse group of people. This diversity exists not only in their career choices, but also in age and race. We range in age from 16-years-old to well past retirement age."

"What is fresh, and always rewarding, is the fact that we have two high school girls involved in the process. They bring a whole new perspective to the table. It is truly a cross section of the community, and serves us well when addressing issues concerning newborns through the elderly," said Georgen.

The Women's Fund is a supporting organization of the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region and active member of the Women's Funding Network, an international organization. New information and guidelines for the next grant cycle will be posted on the Women's Fund website (www.womensfundfvr.org) in the fall.