

THE WOMEN'S FUND CONTINUED TO RAISE AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH ANOTHER YEAR OF SUCCESSFUL EVENTS. VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE OR TO SEE PHOTOS.

Annual Celebration

November 12, 2008

Keynote speaker, MacArthur "Genius" Fellow, and feminist economist Dr. Nancy Folbre spoke on the Power to Care and women's role as caretakers in the economy. Dr. Folbre received the Women's Fund's Ripple Effect Award in recognition of her work on behalf of women and girls, along with three other women: Girls Inc. of the Berkshires participant Champagne Eurquhart, Youth Alive participant Talya Taliferro and Voices from Inside participant Moana Rawlins.

For the Love of Women Winter Gala

February 7, 2009

For the tenth consecutive year lesbians and friends gathered from the four counties of Western Massachusetts to support the mission of the Women's Fund. Attendees of the gala enjoyed an evening of music, dance and delectables.

Vagina Monologues

February 21, 2009

Hundreds of women attended this very special fundraiser for the Women's Fund at the Academy of Music. Evelyn Maria Harris, Julie Waggoner and Connie Casagrande performed Eve Ensler's play "The Vagina Monologues," raising thousands of dollars for the foundation.

Women's Fund Conference

March 10, 2009

"Innovative Voices: Crafting a New Agenda for Leadership" drew over 200 professional women from across all sectors. Attendees enjoyed keynote speaker and bestselling author Sara Laschever, as well as luncheon speaker and comedienne René Hicks. The diverse and talented workshop presenters from across



Conference attendees enjoy networking.

the state were joined by more than 25 event sponsors and exhibitors to create a day rich with networking and information sharing opportunities for conference attendees.

Eileen Fisher Shopping Day

March 28, 2009

Once again, the Eileen Fisher store of Northampton chose the Women's Fund as the recipient of its Spring shopping day, generously contributing 10% of the day's proceeds in support of the foundation's work.

save these dates

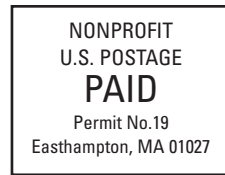
Make sure to save the dates of these upcoming Women's Fund events! More information to come at www.womensfund.net.

WFWM ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC Monday, July 27, 2009 Hickory Ridge Country Club Amherst, MA www.hickoryridgecc.com	2009 ANNUAL CELEBRATION Thursday, November 5, 2009 Log Cabin Meeting and Banquet House Holyoke, MA
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thank you to OUR 2009 caLENDAR of EVENTS SPONSORS



116 Pleasant Street, Suite 358, Easthampton, MA 01027
www.womensfund.net



LINKING ARMS

Spring 2009

Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts

Letter from the executive director

We can. We must. We will. These short but powerful sentences have become our mantra at the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts. They became our mantra as we announced this past January, in the midst of unprecedented economic crisis, that we had made the commitment not to reduce, not to level fund, but to increase our annual grantmaking by 150% over the next two years. These simple sentences also capture our unshakeable belief that when we all put our resources together, we can absolutely face any of the challenges of our day and make a tremendous impact in our communities by investing in the lives of women and girls.

We can because we stand on the shoulders of WFWM's founders, who joined together and against conventional wisdom said, "We will infuse money and invest in the lives of the women of western Massachusetts as soon as we have any earnings that can be distributed." *We can* because we have "run the house" as careful stewards. Like all foundation endowments, the months of decline in the markets have had an impact on the endowment of WFWM. However, our Investment Committee continues its close attention and astute work in maintaining our conservative investment approach, which

has served us well in this particular market period. We have also taken steps to hold or reduce expenses for the next year, including a freeze on salaries and benefits, a strategic and cost-effective schedule for our capacity building

programming, and a decision to reduce printing and mailing costs by moving almost entirely to electronic communications.

We must because what lies beneath the media headlines, pundit debates, and editorials is the reality that women disproportionately bear the impact of the economic crisis. When you make only 77 cents on the dollar to begin with, any increase in the cost of basic necessities throws your entire household into a tailspin. When you work part-time, as many women in this country do, and a lay-off occurs, your income doesn't meet the minimum requirement to collect unemployment. When times are hard, incidents of domestic and physical violence increase exponentially.



Andrea Burns

*we can.
we must.
we will.*

continued inside

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JOIN THE WOMEN'S FUND...

TO ENSURE THE SURVIVAL AND CONTINUING HEALTH OF KEY PROGRAMS SERVING WOMEN AND GIRLS. SUPPORT OUR INITIATIVE TO INCREASE ANNUAL GRANTMAKING TO \$500,000 OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

The Women's Fund is able to take this bold action in a time of great need because of the collective support of thousands of donors across Western Massachusetts. Your contribution will be put to immediate and good use. Know that your commitment of support is of more importance than the dollar amount—any gift that is meaningful to you is deeply appreciated.

Please use the enclosed reply envelope or visit www.womensfund.net to make your gift. Thank you.

www.womensfund.net

women's fund GRANTEE PROVIDES CRITICAL FINANCIAL SKILLS

HAP, Inc's Family Sufficiency Program addresses the Women's Fund's focus area of economic justice. The Women's Fund selected HAP, Inc. as a grantee in 2008 because of their strong efforts in breaking the cycle of poverty and developing economic strength among low-income female heads of households. FSS counselors help participants set and achieve goals that build their financial literacy, self-confidence, job skills and ability to support themselves and their children. Graduates of the program move from dependence on public assistance to economic self-sufficiency and go on to achieve their goals of purchasing their own car, funding their education or buying a home for their children to grow in.

2008 HAP, Inc. graduate celebrates success with her family.



“In an economic climate where assistance for nonprofits can be hard to come by, the **women’s fund of western massachusetts is stepping up** when it counts.”

—*Daily Hampshire Gazette*
January 28, 2009

“At a time when most foundations are cutting back or maintaining last year’s spending, a few are doing what hedge fund manager Ken Nickerson of the EOS Foundation calls ‘counter-cyclical giving.’ **they’re increasing their grants....The Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts, a public foundation, announced last month that its grant-making will jump from \$100,000 to \$250,000 in both 2009 and 2010.... ‘Our board looked at the impact the entire economic situation was**

having on women and children,’ said executive director Carla Oleska. ‘They are absolutely aware of the level of fundraising we will be doing from here on out.’”

—*The Boston Globe*
February 16, 2009

“We commend the fund and its donors for recognizing that an investment in needy women and girls is **THE RIGHT THING TO DO** and is—in the long run—good for the economy. It’s a **COURAGEOUS AND ENCOURAGING** move given the tough shape the local and national economy is in....We applaud the leadership shown by the Women’s Fund to **BETTER THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS** in our backyard.”

—*The Republican*
January 30, 2009

Letter from the executive director continued from front page

We must because women also possess the knowledge and experience to be leaders in turning around the systems that have led us to this crisis. Women must be included in the creation of solutions; we need to examine solutions based in a different way of doing things.

We will because very quietly and without fanfare, our steadfast donors have continued to support our efforts; because one new visionary donor brought us a gift that served to spearhead our efforts to increase our impact and scale up our grantmaking to unprecedented levels; because our Board of Directors has committed its energies to leading major fundraising efforts; because our staff is more than ever passionately determined to make it all happen. *We will* because we also know that there are still more women and men who seek to support those efforts that dare to go against the tide, that choose to move forward from a perspective of strength.

And here’s the caveat. *We will not go back.*

We will not go back because there will inevitably be more crises in our future, and women and girls must not have to start all over again; they must not find themselves once again disproportionately bearing the impact. *We will not go back* because we

will continue to invest our grantmaking at a level that will produce the strongest positive results—ensuring that the women and girls of these four counties are equipped with all the tools, education, economic stability, and safety from violence that will secure their continued advancement.

We will not go back because I ask you today to join us in our commitment. I ask you to make your annual gift which is essential to carrying out our programmatic work, to consider making a multi-year pledge to support the “running of the house,” to join us at our July golf tournament or our November annual event. And last but not least, to stay informed, involved, and engaged by sending us your email address in the enclosed gift reply envelope.

We can. We must. We will. And we will not go back.

Carla
Carla Oleska
Executive Director

*women must
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of SOLUTIONS...*

BOARD ALUMNA DR. MARIA SIROIS WROTE TO WFWM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARLA OLESKA ABOUT HER REACTION TO THE *we can, we must, we will* INITIATIVE.

Dear Carla:

I’ve been wanting to write to you and to the board of directors ever since I heard about the incredibly wonderful, bold, compassionate direction we as a community will take with the *We Can, We Must, We Will* initiative. I must tell you that my first reaction was one of tremendous pride for the creativity and wisdom of our group. My second was one of wonder for our bravery. My third was one of gratitude...to be in connection to women of integrity and honor and courage is a dream that has been sustaining throughout my 48 years; in your company, I have lived that dream again and again.

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This idea, this movement, if you will, has inspired me in a few ways. I have used it as an opening to bring the concept of boldness in a fearful time to two other organizations I love. Recently I presented to the executives at a retreat center your/our story and through it opened the door to a conversation

about offering the center as a sanctuary to those who have lost their jobs. I know that the concept of being fierce in the world while grounded in compassion and financial wisdom appealed to the executives greatly...and I know that they long to step up and name themselves as leaders in the same way we have chosen to through the Women’s Fund.

Also, in honor of you, of our staff, of that wonderful anonymous donor, of our board and board alum, and of our combined bravery and beauty I will be doubling my annual gift for this year. Generosity has always begotten generosity. May it be so again.

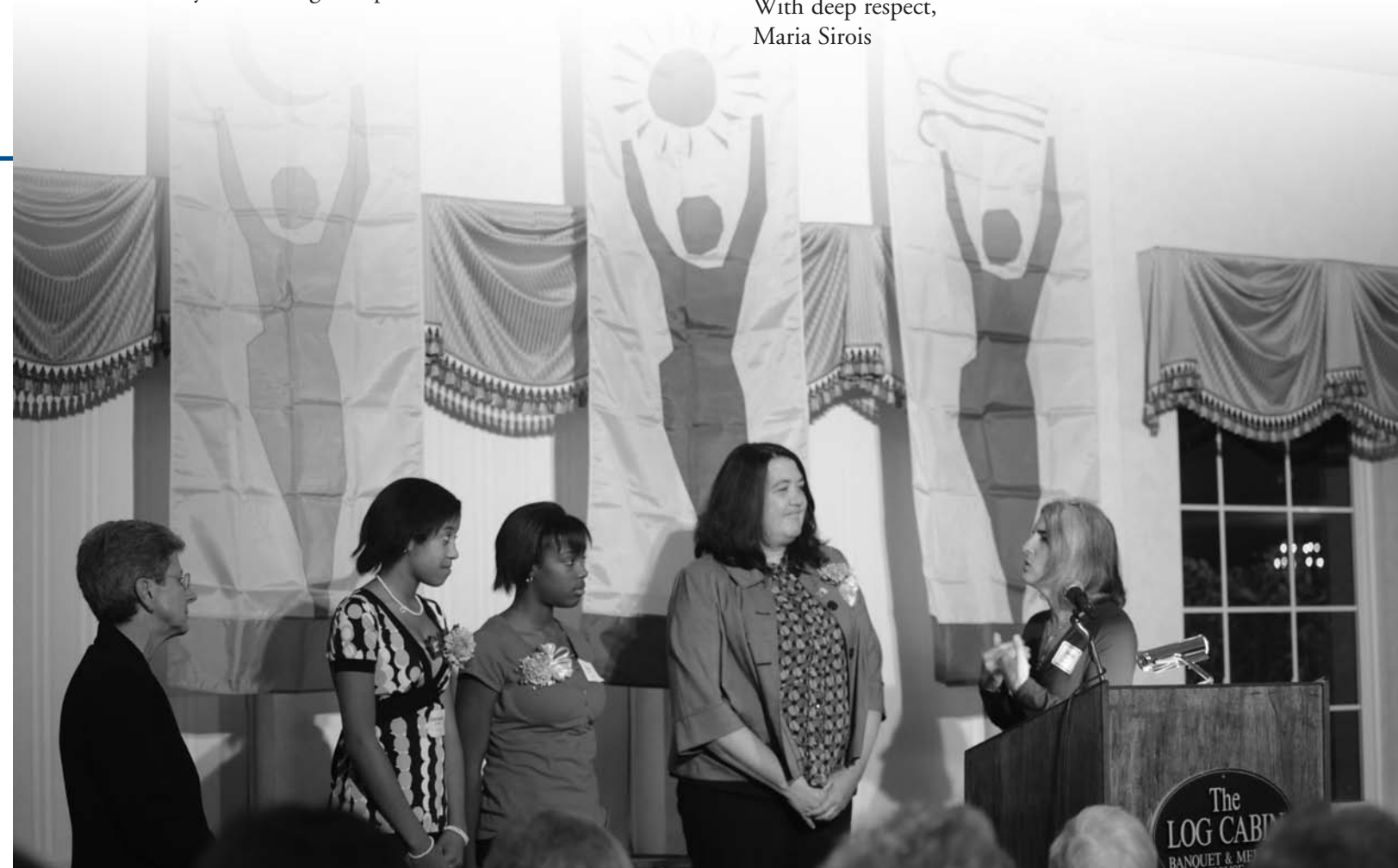
May we each go from strength to strength.

May we find a thousand ways to care for each other.

May we remember, especially in those nights when *We Can, We Must, We Will* feels like a steep climb up a cloudy incline, that we are not alone.

Thank you for this opportunity to connect to the daring and the gallant within me.

With deep respect,
Maria Sirois



Maria Sirois (right) and Board President Anne Paradis (left) present the Ripple Effect Awards to three 2008 recipients.

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HELEN BERUBE TEEN PARENT PROGRAM

As an alternative education site for Pittsfield’s young mothers and their infants, the Helen Berube Teen

Parent Program is unique from other programs for young mothers because it works directly with the city’s public school system. Students who attend the Helen Berube center graduate with a degree from the local high school although it is the center that offers a full range of support to meet their educational, health and social service needs. Young mothers in the program benefit from prenatal care, child labor and delivery classes, one-on-one tutoring, college preparation, parenting course work and child care. Their children, from infants up to age two years and nine months, are cared for by professional staff at the center.



Program participants enjoy a field trip.

The Women’s Fund is proud to have supported the work of the Helen Berube Teen Parent Program this past funding cycle. The operating support grant made a big difference for the center, according to Executive Director Dorothy Mack. “The Women’s Fund allowed us to continue operations at a critical time. Without them we would have had to cut pieces from our full spectrum of support services. Now we can move forward and help Pittsfield’s young mothers and their children succeed. This grant has helped us, certainly, but so has the Women’s Fund workshops, their conference, and all the

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opportunities to meet other grantees and collaborate with them. I tell everyone that the Women’s Fund as a whole is an empowering experience for us.”