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HONORING MAINE WOMEN AND GIRLS

Each year, four Maine Women's Fund Awards are presented to women and girls who are working outside the spotlight to eliminate gender barriers. Through a public nomination process, nominees are evaluated by an awards committee for the depth of their commitment to women's equality, their effectiveness as role models for other women and girls, and their impact in their communities. The Maine Women's Fund is proud to announce this year's award recipients, who will be honored at the Evening to Honor Maine Women and Girls on October 12, 2004:

Joanne Kurzmänn

For more than 20 years, Jo Kurzmänn has worked in a variety of capacities as an advocate for women who have been battered, women struggling with substance abuse, women who have been sexually abused, and women who have been incarcerated. Jo is well versed in the challenges of women in jail and on probation because of her own incarceration at Cumberland County Jail and her subsequent release on July 4, 2001 — her own personal Independence Day. Since her release, Jo has dedicated her work to providing support and advocacy for women who are about to reenter life outside the correctional system, first with Family Crisis Services and now with a new program being launched by Women in Need, *Doorway to Hope*. This initiative is aimed at reducing recidivism by providing women recently released from incarceration with safe, supportive housing and links to all the services they need to move forward with their lives.

Safia Nur

Safia Nur and her family moved to Maine in 2001 as part of a secondary



migration of Somali immigrants to the city of Lewiston, refugees from the civil wars of their homeland. Safia enrolled at Lewiston High School where her quiet dignity, shy smile and eager mind quickly made her popular with students and teachers alike. When Lewiston was caught up in the crisis caused by a national white supremacist group targeting the community for an anti-Somali hate rally, Safia, as an active member of the Civil Rights Team, helped educate students about the situation and organized student participation in the *Many and One* pro-diversity rally. Safia has continued to speak up and to speak out, having found a way to be both outspoken and soft spoken, to lead by demonstrating respect for all people while at the same time challenging attitudes and prejudice. She has just begun her college studies at the University of Maine.

Cathy Plourde

Cathy Plourde is a Maine woman making a difference for Maine's youth by promoting dialogue and social

change through theater. She is the founder and Executive Director of Add Verb Productions Arts and Education, and she has created such works as *The Thin Line*, to address eating disorders, *You the Man*, to address relationship violence, and *Money Talks*, to explore women's relationship with money. A former student and now coworker of Cathy's says that as a mentor and advocate, Cathy is "one of the most inspirational, creative, strong and brilliant role models of my life," and notes that Cathy has been "advocating for years to eliminate gender barriers by giving us dialogue and resources

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ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF

by Shannon Nichols

I'd like to thank two women for helping me land the director of development and communications position at the Maine Women's Fund—my mother and Susan B. Anthony. It was my mother who saved one of my writing assignments from second grade. It was Susan B. Anthony who inspired me to write it. Along with my resume and writing samples, I submitted this piece, which reads, "Susan B. Anthony. She made the men let wimin vote. I love her."

I am honored to be working for an organization that is grounded in the values of Susan B. Anthony and so many other amazing women who value equality and justice for all people. During the next six months my primary responsibility will be to craft and support our annual campaign for our Board of Directors and executive director. I will also be working with board members and friends from the Bangor region to develop an advisory council that can help the Maine Women's Fund expand its work in northern Maine.

We will be embracing a new **fund>>forward** branding campaign created by the Women's Funding Network, aimed at showing the power of all women's funds (there are more than 100 of us internationally!) and the collective change that is taking place



because of their investments. Look for **fund>>forward** information on our website and other materials.

When I'm not at the Maine Women's Fund, I'm spending as much time as possible with my husband and two young sons. The other day I was teaching my four-year-old how to play tic-tac-toe. I said to him, "If you move here, you can win." To which he replied, "But, if I move there, you could move here, and then we both win." (Wow! When did he get so smart?) This win-win lesson is what my work at the Maine Women's Fund is all about—finding ways that everyone can win, girls and boys, women and men, old people and young people, those with wealth and those with very little. While I will be happily focused on solutions for girls and women, I do believe efforts aimed at providing equality for girls and women benefit all people and the communities where they live.

Please feel free to contact me with any ideas, comments or suggestions. I'm looking forward to meeting you and to the fruitful and thoughtful year ahead. •

Newsletter contributors

Karin Anderson, Marsha Greenberg, Jo Horn, Shannon Nichols, Shaye McGann Robbins, sisters-IN-sight, Peter Weed

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Funding Forward



fund>>forward, two small words with a big story to tell. The Maine Women's Fund is proud to share its history of funding solutions posed by women and girls to the persistent problems of our society with more than 100 women's funds around the world. The cumulative financial impact of the women's funding movement is impressive: since our beginnings nearly 30 years ago, we have raised \$400 million, distributed \$200 million in grants, and built endowments totaling \$266 million. In Maine, our figures are smaller, but equally impressive: since 1989, we've raised just over \$2 million, distributed more than \$1.2 million in grants, and have an endowment that is currently valued at just under \$1 million. Not bad for a poor rural state that consistently ranks among the five least charitable states in the nation.

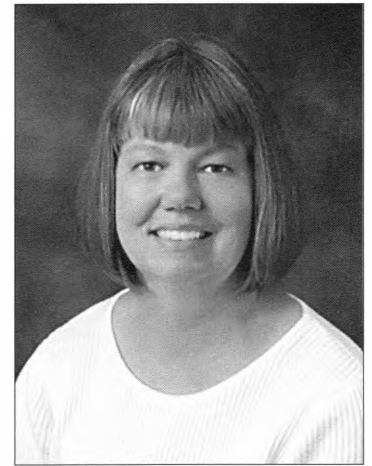
But the **fund>>forward** story is much bigger than just numbers. It's about building lasting relationships, with donors, grant recipients, and funding partners. It's about making change in the political, business, educational, and grantmaking arenas. It's about a vision of culture change that is shaping healthy communities by investing in the power and potential of women and girls.

In Maine, we're proud of our achievements to date and frankly don't toot our own horn enough. In 14 years of grantmaking and leading the charge on women's philanthropy, we have been funding forward in many innovative ways. Our

relationships with our grant recipients are multidimensional and extend far beyond the money we grant to them. With many of our grantees, we are bringing together communities of women and girls who do not always have a seat at the table — in some cases, they don't even have a table, so we provide it. This added value of ensuring that women's voices are heard and influence major decisions that affect our communities is a key aspect of funding forward.

Another attribute of funding forward is our multiyear commitment to grantees that have the potential to effect social change at the regional or statewide level and offer models and lessons for others. In 2002, we began offering two-year grants to applicants that meet specific criteria. This year, we've entered into four-year granting relationships with three leading women's organizations that support our core mission to achieve political, economic, and social equality for women and girls in Maine. These three strategic grantee partners are Maine Equal Justice, the Maine Women's Policy Center, and Women, Work and Community.

Finally, I can't talk about funding forward without talking about our donors. One of the most important qualities of women's funds is our inclusivity and the breadth of our donor community. Yes, we encourage all of our donors — and prospective donors — to stretch when they give to the Maine Women's Fund, and



we'll continue to do so. But we also recognize that stretching is relative, and that all investments in our work are valuable. Imagine my delight upon receiving these words from Lori Allen, a recent New Girls graduate and program manager at the Maine Development Foundation:

"I went through the Maine Women's Fund's *New Girls' Network* program last year and it opened my eyes to the power of philanthropy, not only as a tool for social activism but as a way of building community. And we're not talking large donations here, most of us were giving \$25/month."

My request of you? Help us to **fund>>forward** as a donor, advocate, and partner in social change. As we grow, we will accelerate positive change in our Maine communities.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karin Anderson'.

Karin Anderson
Executive Director



GENEROUS DONATION FROM GREAT WORKS INTERNET

Thank you to Great Works Internet for their generous donation of Internet service to the Maine Women's Fund. GWI hosts the Fund's website and email.

This donation was made as part of GWI's ongoing Charitable & Non-Profit Program, which is designed to help non-profit organizations increase their ability to communicate with the public and further their mission via the Internet.

"The Internet has become an important communication tool for the Fund," says Karin Anderson, Executive Director, "and we are extremely grateful to GWI for their service."

(Continued from page 1)

through theater to get us all talking, thinking and moving in the right direction."

Sonya Tomlinson

Sonya "Santiago" Tomlinson is just the woman to make you reconsider what you think of hip hop music. Sonya's music tells the stories that male hip hop artists seldom mention. As her nominator writes, "With ferocity and skill, she weaves narratives about single mothers, abortion, domestic violence, institutionalized poverty for women as well as the importance of strong female friendships." Sonya's lyrics combine the personal and the political, demanding that attention be paid to the situation of women in this society. In a genre that is dominated by males and has a reputation for degrading women, Sonya is a powerful voice demanding that women and their concerns be taken seriously.



In addition to the Maine Women's Fund Awards, the Board of Directors solicits nominations annually from past board members for the Sarah Orne Jewett Award. This award is given to a woman whose lifetime achievements embody the grit, independence, humor and discipline of the female characters in Sarah Orne

Jewett's writings. This year, the Sarah Orne Jewett Award will be presented to Sharon E. Barker.

Sharon E. Barker

Sharon Barker has worked diligently to improve the lives of women and girls — from her early activist days as a student at the University of Maine until the present day, Sharon has worked to ensure that women and girls have access to education, have control over their bodies, and have healthy relationships.

Her work has spanned the founding of a community school in Aroostook County where she grew up, to co-founding the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center, an independent health center providing women with a full range of education and services, to taking on the position of founding director of the Women's Resource Center.

Sharon has served on a range of boards and committees for nonprofits working statewide to improve women's lives, and has been appointed to gubernatorial commissions examining domestic violence, hate crimes, and finding "common ground" in the choice debate. Sharon is a shining example to women and girls through her generous giving of her time, talents, and monies to causes she believes are making a difference. •

PLEASE JOIN US ON OCTOBER 12 TO
CELEBRATE THESE AMAZING MAINE WOMEN!

sisters-IN-sight

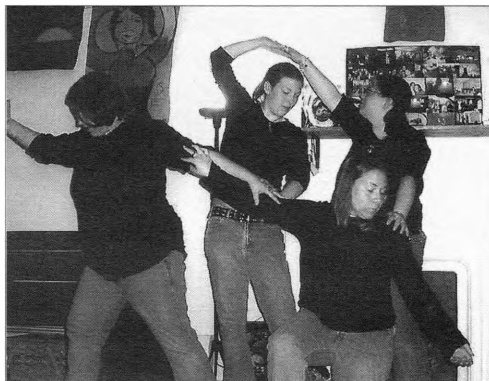
What sisters-IN-sight is to me — a grantee profile

by a sisters-IN-sight member

The most important lesson I have ever learned from a book was to do the right thing even if it hurts someone I love. I have also learned to decide on things because if you don't, life will decide for you, and life has a way of making the wrong choice. Sisters-IN-Sight has helped me and others to have the strength to make those decisions and do the right thing even in the face of adversity. In our high school years and especially as girls, we have to make a lot of hard choices. There are easy choices like which binder to buy and what pens we want for the year (very serious decisions), and there are slightly harder choices — like what classes to take and what to wear to the prom (actually that's a tough one). Then there is also where you want to go to college, if you want to go to college, do you want to take the SATs and do you need to apply for scholarships. But also you have to decide things like if you want to date, if you are ready for sex, if your friends are really your friends, if you want to go to parties, drink or try drugs, and what really is the right thing to do.

These decisions are hard to make for many reasons, but the ones I worry about are if I can deal with the consequences of my choices and if I am ready to make these decisions that will control the rest of my life. Choices like whether to date or have sex are easier to make with the help and support of a friend (hopefully a girl). At Sisters-IN-Sight there is a whole group of girls to help with those decisions.

Last year I went through a great deal with my family. I was afraid my



Members of sisters-IN-sight perform in Presque Isle in June 2004.

father was going to kick me out and I eventually ended up deciding to move back in with my mother. I'm not sure I would have made it through that without my friends, and the support I found at the Sisters-IN-Sight meetings. It seems we are always talking through an issue for someone. When we need to pull together a performance, we usually end up doing it in one or two days before the performance (or even the day of the performance) because we spend more time talking than acting.

We are a theater group in the sense that we do performances at different places. I would place us more under the heading of human rights activists. All of our skits are drawn from life: things we have been through or things we have heard or read about. Our goal is to make a difference in the community, and maybe even in the world. Our skits and performances are to help people and help ourselves cope with the everyday world in front of us—the one we have to go out into everyday. Full of people and work, war and peace, love and hate. It is the world we have been given, and we work to make it better for everyone. •

sisters- IN-sight

The Maine Women's Fund awarded second year funding to sisters-IN-sight in the spring of 2004. Programs for teen girls in Aroostook County are limited, as they are in many rural Maine communities. The Fund is interested in funding innovative approaches to helping young women make healthy choices in their lives, especially in light of the findings of a recent report by the Girl Scouts of Kennebec Council, including:

- Approximately half of high school girls in Maine are sexually active;
- Both middle and high school girls in Maine report increased use of diet pills in recent years;
- Maine girls reported an increase in dating violence in 2003;
- Maine high school girls accounted for the state's highest hospitalization rates for self-inflicted injuries in 2003.

To obtain your copy of *Maine's Future: A Report on the Status of Young Women in Maine*, contact the Girl Scouts of Kennebec Council, 207.772.1177 or kennebec@gskc.org.

A FOND FAREWELL



The Maine Women's Fund's Associate Director, Liz Anderson, left the organization on June 30 after four years of terrific service.

Liz helped support the Fund's fundraising and programmatic outreach and was instrumental in creating the New Girls' Network, launching the "Women Standing Together" initiative uniting women in business with the Fund's grantmaking to economic empowerment for women, and raising the Fund's visibility in the media.

Liz is pursuing studies in web design with the hope of starting her own business in the near future. To say farewell, staff, board members, New Girls alumnae, and other friends made a collective gift in Liz's honor to the New Girls' Fund totaling more than \$1,300.

Good luck, Liz!



WOMEN STANDING TOGETHER - A PERSONAL ACCOUNT

by Marcia Greenberg

On a cold Maine day in January 2003, I sat in the office of Coffee By Design with a small group of women. Our common bond was that we were all women business owners. This group of women was charged with raising money with the hope of having our efforts matched at the Maine Women's Fund's Evening to Honor Women and Girls. Although I had contributed to the fund in the past, I had never been directly involved. The event was to be in October, and we were a very enthusiastic, optimistic group thinking we could easily raise \$20,000 in the allotted time.

We met regularly and continued to report our success at getting other women business owners to join our effort. In May when we were nowhere near meeting our goal, we looked around at each other and with all the determination a small group of women can have, we stuck to our goal and continued to recruit more and more women. The energy, support and encouragement we gave each other brought us to the dinner on October 2 to proudly announce our accomplishment of raising \$23,480 – and an impressive list of the 47 women owned businesses that contributed. The event guests in the room matched that amount that night, bringing the total amount raised to support the work of the Maine Women's Fund to just over \$46,000.

I am proud to call the women I had spent the previous 10 months with my friends. I am equally proud to be working again this year to try and double the number of business women involved in supporting the Maine Women's Fund. I would encourage all women business owners to stand with us and see the results of our collective investments. We are the role models for the women and girls that benefit from our efforts. I was so excited about my involvement in this wonderful organization that I am privileged to say I am now a member of the board. We can make a difference if we come together.

In the wonderful words of Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." •



NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS.



GO VOTE. GO RUN. GO LEAD. GO GIRL.

From Presque Isle to Portland, Bethel to Bar Harbor, 75 women from more than 35 towns gathered at the Augusta Civic Center on August 13th and 14th to participate in Vote Run Lead's *Go Vote* training. By working closely with the Maine Women's Fund, the training was an incredible success. It proved to be the initial step toward creating a network of women versed in political engagement — inviting their friends, neighbors, and family to join the political process now in order to foster their political leadership in the future.

Vote Run Lead is an initiative of The White House Project, dedicated to advancing women's leadership in all spheres. The initiative is committed to educating and recruiting a critical mass of women to create a pipeline of candidates for public office so that we can lead side by side with men in making the decisions that affect our lives, our families and our country. In engaging women in *Go Vote*, Maine's Vote Run Lead efforts joined states across the country by offering trainings to make women a force in Election 2004 and beyond. Other sites included New York, NY, Denver, CO, Minneapolis, MN, Seattle, WA, Des Moines, IA and Washington, DC.

Go Vote kicked off with a special screening of "Unbought and Unbossed: Chisholm '72" — a historical documentary about Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to the national legislature, as well as the first woman to make a bid for the presidential nomination. A vibrant discussion with Marie Wilson, President of The White House Project, followed the film, focusing on the importance of filling the political pipeline with women — particularly young women and women of color — to ensure that women are

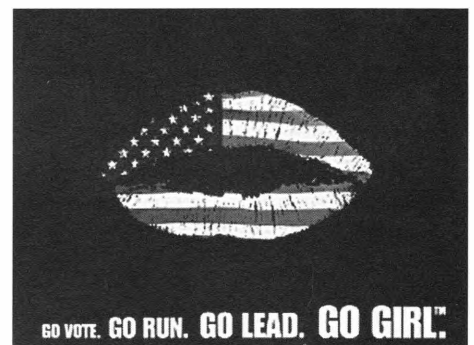


truly leading on equal footing with men. Karin Anderson, MWF Executive Director and Jo Horn at the August 14 *Go Vote* conference.

During the day-long conference on August 14th, women participated in workshops, lead by community and nonprofit leaders, concentrating on voter registration laws in Maine, community organizing, Maine clean elections, and women's advocacy. The goal of the day-long intensive was to give participants the tools to effectively increase women's participation on Election Day and to be the stepping-stone to heightened civic engagement and political empowerment.

The most important work is yet to be done. By utilizing the skills gained during *Go Vote*, women across the state will engage others in civic participation through a follow-up campaign of meet ups, community forums, registration drives, phone banking and coalition building. Vote Run Lead will coordinate these initiatives in collaboration with Vote Run Leaders — women committed to partnering with the project and conducting activities in their

communities. Our first goal: to make Maine women's votes count on Election Day 2004 by bringing more women to the polls. Our overarching purpose: to make Maine women's voices heard by supporting and training them to embrace positions of political leadership on all levels. To find out more about Vote Run Lead in Maine, or to join our statewide team of Vote Run Leaders, visit www.VoteRunLead.org. •



MAINE WOMEN'S FUND 2004 GRANT RECIPIENTS

The Maine Women's Fund is proud to announce its 2004 grant awards totaling \$119,000. The grants span from one to four years in duration and are given to organizations serving women and girls across the state.

MWF STRATEGIC GRANTEE PARTNERS

The Maine Women's Fund has made a four-year commitment to these organizations, its Strategic Grantee Partners, that support its core mission:

Women, Work & Community, Statewide, \$7,500. To continue to integrate financial literacy into all of WWC's programmatic areas: workforce development, microenterprise, leadership development, and asset development.

Maine Equal Justice, Statewide, \$7,500. To support MEJ's ongoing work on health care, welfare and family support, and low-wage work support issues.

Maine Women's Policy Center, Statewide, \$10,000. To support MWPC's general operations, with a major focus in 2004 on economic security issues and Get Out The Vote activities targeting women throughout Maine, with a particular focus on rural areas.

MWF TWO-YEAR GRANTS

Alternatives to Violence-Maine, Women's Unit Program in the Windham Correctional Facility, Statewide, \$3,000 over two years (\$1,500 in year one). To empower women incarcerated in the Windham Correctional Facility to build self-esteem and develop communication and nonviolent conflict resolution skills.

Healthy Community Coalition, An Audit of Community Effectiveness in Responding to Domestic Violence, Franklin County, \$15,000 over two years (\$7,500 in year two). To support a pilot project that will create an assessment tool to evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement, health care providers, and other institutional players in keeping victims of domestic violence safe.

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, VAWA Program, Statewide, \$15,000 over two years (\$7,500 in year one). To support 10 to 12 workshops annually for immigrant community groups and for professionals who work to end domestic violence and to strengthen ILAP's legal services to noncitizen women who are victims of domestic violence.

Mainely Girls, Girls' Action Group, Statewide, \$4,815 over two years (\$2,900 in year one). To continue a support group for girls incarcerated at the Maine youth facility, Long Creek, to explore issues such as reproductive choice, body image, healthy relationships, and women who make a difference.

Mainely Parents, Training Parents as Scholars, Statewide, \$15,000 over two years (\$7,500 in year two). To support a training program for PaS graduates to become mentors and advocates so that more TANF recipients will participate in the PaS program.

MWF ONE-YEAR GRANTS

A Company of Girls, Media and Technology Literacy Through Film, Greater Portland, \$6,500. To foster media and technology literacy in girls through a filmmaking program that partners ACOG with the Maine College of Art, the Cumberland County University of Maine Extension Office, and girls' film initiatives outside Maine.

ACAP/Health 1st, sisters-IN-sight, Aroostook County, \$5,000. To continue to build a strong "girls' culture" in Aroostook County using arts as a medium to explore issues such as self-esteem, making healthy lifestyle choices, and creating positive relationships, and to implement an Aroostook Girls' Conference for themselves and influential women in their lives.

Center for Cultural Exchange, Say It Loud: Hip Hop and Poetry for Girls, Greater Portland, \$7,500. To continue to support a program for high school girls from diverse cultural communities to express their experiences and build a positive community using the uniquely American phenomenon of hip hop and spoken word, and to train a local artist to continue this program into the future.

Girls Talk and Teen Voices Mentoring Partnerships, Franklin County, \$3,500. To develop strong girls in Western Maine through mentoring relationships across generations – involving girls from elementary schools, students at the University of Maine at Farmington, and women from the Kingfield and Phillips communities.

Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center, Uterine and Menopause Health Project, Greater Bangor, \$5,000. To support the creation of a subspecialty in menopause care at MWWHC, Maine's only private, nonprofit free-standing feminist health center, and to support a menopause conference for the general public with CEU credits for professionals.

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, Health Center Advocacy Project, Greater Portland, \$5,000. To build a strong, articulate pro-choice community using student activists to engage clients of Planned Parenthood's Portland health center in public policy efforts.

Sexual Assault Victims Emergency Services, *Girls to Girls: Print Media Outreach*, Franklin County, \$1,000. To support a pilot effort to engage high school girls in designing a print media campaign for middle school students that aims to reduce violence against girls.

Spruce Run Association, Domestic Abuse Outreach and Prevention Project: *A Continued Collaboration Between Spruce Run and the Penobscot Nation DHS*, Indian Island, \$6,050. To continue to work with the Penobscot Nation to increase the safety of native women and girls and to foster a unified community response to domestic violence.

The United Somali Women of Maine, Lewiston/Auburn, \$10,000. To provide general operating support for this new organization that promotes self-sufficiency for African-speaking families and advances cross-cultural understanding in the L/A community.

The Women's Collective, Hancock County, \$7,500. To provide general operating support to this new women's collective that is building networks to provide programs and resources to women and girls of all ages on Mount Desert Island so that they can control their lives, bodies, and minds.

MWF SPECIAL GRANT

Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, \$10,000. To support legal representation for battered women.

2005 GRANT GUIDELINES
NOW AVAILABLE! CALL
207-774-5513 OR VISIT

SHAYE MCGANN ROBBINS, NEW GIRLS' NETWORK COORDINATOR



Shaye McGann Robbins participated in the New Girls' Network's Portland program in 2001-02 and hasn't been able to get enough of the Maine Women's Fund ever since! She joined the Fund's grantmaking committee as a community member in 2002, and when the part-time position of NGN Coordinator

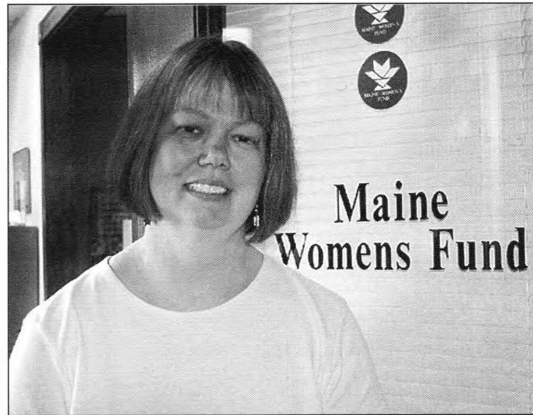
opened up in early 2004, she submitted her resume for consideration. At that point, Shaye was already part of the ad-hoc committee that was in the process of creating the *New Girls Fund for Social Change*, and her combination of knowledge, experience, and sheer enthusiasm for everything New Girls made her the perfect candidate for the job. Since February, she has skillfully provided guidance and support to the many New Girl volunteers who make the leadership program and the grantmaking initiative work: the program facilitators, members of the grantmaking committee, the technology gurus, the Brew Girls event planners, and the FUNdraisers.

When she's not working to expand opportunities for Maine women and girls (or doing the facilitation work that fills the rest of her professional time), Shaye enjoys gardening, ultimate frisbee, her family, and spending time in the out-of-doors with her husband, John. We are delighted to have Shaye on board as part of the staff team! •



MEET ONE OF MAINE'S "10 MOST INFLUENTIAL WOMEN" KARIN ANDERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MAINE WOMEN'S FUND

Since 1990, the Fund has awarded \$1.2 million in grants to some 250 programs. Coming up on her 10th year as executive director of the Maine Women's Fund, Karin Anderson is well placed to offer some perspective on the growth and success of one of Maine's leading nonprofit organizations.



Comments Anderson, "A battered woman may have to deal with the community, court system, law enforcement, sometimes the health-care community, and at every step there's an opportunity for information to be incorrect or not given to her, by people who are helping and don't intend to be part of the problem."

More than 14 years ago, Ellen Wells and 19 other women created the Fund, whose "primary purpose is to make financial investments in the form of grants to women and girls in Maine," Anderson explains. In 1990 the MWF raised \$300,000 and distributed \$10,000 in its first endowment-building year, Anderson notes.

Since then, the fund has awarded \$1.2 million in grants to some 250 programs, most of them outside Cumberland County, that "take a long-term view toward ending gender inequity" and created an endowment of \$1.2 million. Among the projects the Maine Women's Fund recently decided to fund this year:

- sisters-IN-sight, a program in three Aroostook County communities that "strives to increase girls' self-esteem, confidence and self-image using the creative arts as a platform;"
- Healthy Community Coalition, An Audit of Community Effectiveness in Responding to Domestic Violence in Franklin County. The project "create(s) an assessment tool to evaluate the effectiveness of law enforcement, health-care providers and other institutional players in keeping victims of domestic violence safe."

- The Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, "a nonprofit corporation dedicated to providing information and legal assistance to low-income residents of Maine who need help with immigration law and related issues," according to its Web site. Beth Stickney of Portland is the project's executive director and a co-founder.

- A Company of Girls, an eight-year-old performing arts and experience-sharing after-school program in Portland's East End, for at-risk girls from different cultural backgrounds. The program has expanded from theater to film and is working with the Maine College of Art.

Among the Fund's offshoots is the four-year-old *New Girls' Network*, "100 women in their 20s and 30s who have participated in a nine-month program dedicated to exploring the relationship between leadership and philanthropy, and what these things mean to young women today."

The initiative has proved a success, as the network has raised and will be distributing \$20,000 in grant money this year. In June, Anderson says with pride, four New Girls' Network graduates will be coming on the Fund's board. •

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PHILANTHROPY WITH STYLE: NEW GIRLS' NETWORK

By Shaye McGann Robbins, *New Girls' Network* Program Coordinator

On a cold day in March, 300 people packed into the Center for Cultural Exchange to revel in energizing music, great food and tasty local beer. Titled the "Brew Girls" event, this live benefit concert was the work of a group of local philanthropists – the New Girls' Network. As the first major fundraising event for this group of women under 40, the Brew Girls event helped raise one quarter of the New Girls' funds that will be granted later this fall to benefit Maine women and girls. As a philanthropic initiative, Brew Girls does not have the typical feel of charitable giving: whereas most people give just at the holidays, Brew Girls took the lousiest part of the year and made it into a bonanza of good times; where most people see philanthropy as what the rich do, the Brew Girls see philanthropy as an opportunity for any person regardless of economic status to invest in social change; and where philanthropy can be mistaken as a big, dull word, the Brew Girls saw a chance for fun.

Started in September of 2000, the New Girls' Network (a word play on the 'old boys' network) is a growing project created by the Maine Women's Fund to inspire leadership and philanthropy in women under 40. The Maine Women's Fund (www.mainewomensfund.org) has granted 1.2 million dollars since 1990 to organizations in Maine that "invest in the power of women and the dreams of girls." The creation of the New Girls' Network was seen as a chance to connect young women interested in social change with other women with similar values, and with all people who have an interest in the issues affecting women and girls.

The foundation for the Network is a nine-month program that combines conversations on individual views of feminism, philanthropy and community involvement with site visits to local nonprofits that are doing the work that brings about change in people's lives. In these conversations there is no "right" answer but rather a chance for each woman to create meaningful answers for herself. Questions such as "How do I define feminism?" "How do I use charitable giving to express my values?" or "In what ways can I give back to my community at large?" are discussed so that by the end of the program, each woman has created a her own definition of being a philanthropist. Interestingly the most frequently heard statement at the end of the program is "I never realized that I had the power and the resources to be a philanthropist until now."

Of course more happens during the program than a definition of philanthropy. Meeting monthly, participants in the New Girls' program get to know each other as resources in a larger community, as mentors in job searching and career growth, and as partners in social change. As the program advances and after it ends, New Girls organize fundraising events together, meet as board members of nonprofits, or get together at potlucks and other social events to continue and deepen the discussions started during their program.

The staff at the Maine Women's Fund is continually amazed at how involved the graduates of the program continue to be as advocates, educators, and donors. Currently over 100 women are actively involved in the New Girls' Network, and several have stayed involved even though they have moved out of state. Through the work of all these women, the New Girls' Network has been able to create a new philanthropic fund that has increased the annual giving by the Maine Women's Fund by a whopping 16% in just one year.

This summer the New Girls' Fund began to accept proposals from tax-exempt nonprofits to support programming that supports four core funding areas: economic empowerment, prevention of violence, self-determination, and access to health care and health care information. The process for submitting and reviewing grants is a new on-line style, resulting from the work of 12 New Girls graduates. Typically granting organizations ask a small committee to decide upon the distribution of funds; in the case of the New Girls Fund, we have a component of the process that includes an open review for all New Girls to give input into the distribution of the funds.

If at the end of this article you are thinking New Girls' Style, ask yourself this: how many people at the Brew Girls event this past March were philanthropists? According to the New Girls' Network philosophy, the answer is: every last one of them, from the incredible singers who drew the crowds, to the individuals who gave their money in small and large amounts, to the local brewers who donated funds to provide the brews. That is philanthropy with style – New Girls' Style. •

OCTOBER

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 12 - *Evening to Honor Maine Women & Girls*
Presented by the Maine Women's Fund
Holiday Inn by the Bay
Cost is \$35-\$100

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Reception with 2004 Grant Recipients
6:15 PM Dinner
7:15 PM Program

October 14 - *Cure Breast Cancer for ME*
The Holiday Inn by the Bay
11:45 AM to 2:00 PM
FMI call 773-2533 or visit www.mainecancer.org

Breakfast of Champions –
Presented by Maine Women's Lobby and
Maine Women's Policy Center
FMI call 622-0851

October 18 - Holiday Inn by the Bay,
Portland, 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM

October 19 - Four Points Sheraton,
Bangor, 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM

October 26 - Northern Maine Community College,
Presque Isle, 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM



FRIENDS FOR THE FUTURE

Planned gifts such as bequests and charitable trusts, no matter how large or small, are an excellent way to ensure the Maine Women's Fund's financial future. Please let us know if you have named the Fund in your will or trust. We would like the opportunity to thank you for your generosity and to include you in our Friends for the Future group.

- I have included MWF in my will or trust.
- I have included MWF in my will or trust, however, I wish to remain anonymous.
- I would like more information about how to include MWF in my will or trust.
- I would like more information about charitable bequests.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Please return to: MAINE WOMEN'S FUND
P.O. BOX 5135
PORTLAND, ME 04101

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

No matter what its size, every contribution is important. Your gift will enable the Maine Women's Fund to continue providing opportunities and promoting solutions that allow women and girls to achieve their fullest potential. There are many ways to contribute, and we offer technical guidance for all donors wishing assistance:

Cash gift:

No explanation necessary!

Pledge:

A pledge of any amount and on any schedule.

Bequest:

Designate the MWF as a recipient of part or all of your estate.

Insurance:

Designate the MWF as beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

Stock:

By contributing stock, you may receive tax advantages.

Memorial/Honorary gifts:

Honor someone living or deceased, or celebrate any occasion with a gift in the name of someone who has made a difference in your life.

Employee Matching:

Have your employer match your contribution.

MaineShare:

Designate your payroll deduction to the MWF.

Money donated to the Maine Women's Fund is professionally managed and carefully allocated. If you have any questions, please call the MWF office at 774-5513. The MWF is a 501(c)(3) agency. Gifts to the Maine Women's Fund are tax-deductible.