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Funding Women and Girls (2006 - Spring)

Maine Women's Fund Staff

Maine Women's Fund

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GRANTMAKING SEASON:  
THE HEART OF OUR WORK

Spring is a special time for the Maine Women’s Fund. It is the heart of our grantmaking season. For the 2006 funding round, we received 41 applications, of which 16 applicants have been invited to submit full proposals. To make these very important decisions about where MWF invests its grantmaking dollars—$90,000 in 2006—a committee of board members and community members commit to thoroughly reviewing and talking with the applicants about their proposals.

Newcomer to the grantmaking committee, Bobbie McGann of York, enjoyed the proposal review process. "Reviewing the grant applications was a lesson in geography. There were requests from every corner of Maine. The projects were so interesting and innovative," she said. Ms. McGann recently became involved with MWF through her daughter, former Maine Women’s Fund staff member, Shaye McGann Robbins of Bowdoinham. "I was looking for something to be involved with, and this is it—this [helping MWF] is where I want to be," said Ms. McGann with a smile.

Now that 16 final grant proposals have been submitted, members of the grantmaking committee and all of the Maine Women’s Fund’s board members will jump on the highways and country roads of Maine to make site visits and learn more about each of the proposals. After the site visits, the grantmaking committee comes together again to make tough choices about who gets funded and at what level.

"As a women’s fund we have created a grantmaking process that is quite different from other foundations," said Jan Broberg Carter of Portland, Chair of the Grantmaking Committee. "We are the only funding source dedicated to women’s and girls’ initiatives in Maine. We’re not afraid to take risks. We love helping good ideas become reality. And, we are very interested in investing in solutions that are developed by the people affected by the problem," said Dr. Carter. "We feel these strategies ensure that women’s and girls’ voices are heard and supported!"

Grant awards for 2006 will be announced in June. Thank you to our grantmaking committee and board for their work on the grantmaking process, as well as to the many nonprofits who apply to MWF for grants. We are proud to partner with so many individuals and organizations to make positive change for Maine women and girls.

THANK YOU  to the Maine Women’s Fund Grantmaking Committee members for their time, perspectives and commitment to social change.

Jan Broberg Carter, Ph.D., Chair, Portland  
Connie Adler, M.D., Wilton  
Karin Anderson, Portland (staff)  
Susan Dubuque, Cape Elizabeth  
Vivianne Holmes, Ph.D., Buckfield  
Lynda Means, M.D., Portland  
Stie Merrill, Portland  
Roberta McGann, York  
Lisa Rideout, Cumberland Foreside  
Andrea Summers, Portland

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Combating Human Trafficking in Maine:  
Help For Russian Brides In Bangor

In 2005, the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP) received a two-year grant of $15,000 from MWF to help immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence.

Some of MWF’s recent support helps ILAP respond to a disturbing trend—the importation of women, coming to Maine from Russia as “mail order brides.”

Beth Stickney, Executive Director of ILAP, was recently featured on Bangor’s WLBZ-TV station about the two “mail order bride” or “international matchmaking” companies located in greater Bangor and the effects these businesses have on the women involved.

“We receive calls from 40-50 women each year, many of whom are looking for ways to escape abusive relationships with the men who have ‘purchased’ them as mail order brides,” said Stickney. While this activity is technically legal, it is usually a violation of the human rights of the young, mostly low-income women who are often forced, coerced, or deceived by leaving their homes and then sold into a life that too often includes violence and, sometimes, sexual exploitation and/or slave labor.

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Getting Even
by Karin Anderson, Executive Director

On April 25th, women across the U.S. will celebrate a dubious commemoration known as Equal Pay Day (in Maine, we celebrate on the first Tuesday of April). This day represents the 115 “extra” days a woman must work to earn the same amount as a man earns in one year. Put another way, American women still only earn 77 cents for every dollar men earn, in spite of pay equity laws. Over a lifetime, this wage gap results in a loss of $700,000 for a woman with a high school diploma and $1.2 million for a college graduate. A professional school graduate loses $2 million to the wage gap.

Is your blood boiling yet?

Evelyn Murphy’s is! The former lieutenant governor of Massachusetts (and economist) conducted research over eight years to understand why the wage gap persists. Her finding? Sex discrimination. Now, she is waging war against the wage gap through a national grassroots initiative known as The WAGE (Women Are Getting Even) Project. The book that summarizes her research, Getting Even: Why Women Don’t Get Paid Like Men And What To Do About It, suggests that the wage gap will only diminish as women take action to change it.

The WAGE Project helps organize women across the country to gather information, build allies, and create change in their workplaces. Through “WAGE Clubs” of women who come together for personal support and to help each other take action to close the wage gap, The WAGE Project is empowering women to be the solution to the problem. Just as June Jordan reminded us in her beautiful tribute to South African women constrained by apartheid, “We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

In Maine, we are proud to partner with many of our grantees and allies to lead the way in launching The WAGE Project (see sidebar for list of participants to date). Women’s economic security and empowerment are at the core of our vision of a world where all women are healthy and safe, their voices are heard at all tables where important decisions are made that affect their lives, and they have the resources they need to thrive. Getting paid equally for equal work is the baseline ingredient for this vision to be realized.

As some of you know, I was in Italy on vacation recently as part of a six-week sabbatical. One Sunday while I was in Rome, I happened upon an open air market, complete with booths staffed by members of political parties and volunteers with any number of worthy causes. One woman stood alone representing WIA, which translates to the International Association for Welfare. Even my limited Italian allowed me to see that her work was on behalf of women. A t-shirt she had available for a “donation” (the best 10 euros I spent the entire trip) was about valuing women’s work. In our subsequent labored conversation, I conveyed that I, too, worked on behalf of women’s rights. She smiled and said (at least I think this is what she said), “If we have to work harder than men, at least we should be paid for it.”

Gettine even. It’s about time.
Bangor Women Connect & Act

"I had never heard of the Maine Women’s Fund before my friend was invited to a small event hosted by Judy Groth," said Jennifer Eastman of Bangor. "I decided to check it out and was blown away when I learned about the concepts behind the work of the Maine Women’s Fund! I thought, ‘What a valuable asset this is, especially for this part of Maine.’" A week later, Ms. Eastman had lunch with Ms. Groth and learned more about how she could get involved. "I was raised with a community service focus," said Ms. Eastman. "For a long time, I felt like that part of my life was lacking. The minute I connected with the Maine Women’s Fund, I knew I had found what I was looking for!” recalled Ms. Eastman.

This is how MWF Board Member Judy Groth of Bangor has developed a steering committee of young women to help host numerous friend-raisers throughout the Greater Bangor area for the Maine Women’s Fund—one inspiring conversation at a time. To date, the events have been held at the President’s House of the University of Maine, the Isaac Farrar Mansion and the Bangor Museum & Center for History.

Ms. Groth moved to Maine in 1997 and started her firm, Groth & Associates, a financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services. “I knew from the time I was young that I would get involved in women’s issues—they spoke to me,” said Ms. Groth. “To me, women’s issues are about having choices, and recognizing women for their talents and capabilities. When I moved to Maine I was so happy to meet like-minded people through the Maine Women’s Fund. It was exciting to learn about the many great programs in our state,” she stated.

Today, Ms. Groth is giving others a chance to share her enthusiasm and learn more about the exceptional nonprofits working with women and girls in greater Bangor. "I want women in Bangor to know about, and value, all the resources we have. I hope these events help people understand what they can do to support positive change for women and girls through the Maine Women’s Fund and all of the nonprofit agencies we fund.” In fifteen funding rounds, the Maine Women’s Fund has invested more than $215,000 in Bangor and northern Maine towns.

The Maine Women’s Fund has also offered a New Girls’ Network class in Bangor in 2005-2006. New Girls’ classes give women in their 20s and 30s an opportunity to meet once a month and have facilitated discussions about activism, feminism, philanthropy and leadership. Ms. Eastman has been an enthusiastic member. “From the beginning, I loved the idea of the New Girls’ Network, especially for this area where there are so many young people who want to give back. I’ve really enjoyed sitting around the table with such intelligent and caring women,” reported Ms. Eastman.

Look for more Maine Women’s Fund programs and events in greater Bangor, including an Evening to Honor Maine Women & Girls Awards Dinner, currently in the early planning stages for 2007. If you are interested in getting involved in any way, please contact Judy Groth at 990-4787. “There are so many ways to plug in,” assures Ms. Groth. “We need volunteers for our events, young women to join the next New Girls’ Network session, and of course, people who can write checks!”

Bangor Steering Committee Members

Melissa Adams, Groth & Associates
Jennifer Eastman, Eaton Peabody
Judy Groth, Groth & Associates
Julia Munsey, Collabrie
Tanya Pereira, Town of Brewer
Elizabeth Sutherland, Sutherland & Westin Marketing
Gretchen Ziemer, Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence


Nicky Blanchard
Nicoie Blood
Jennifer Eastman
Laura Mitchell
Elizabeth Sutherland
Gretchen Ziemer
Tina Roberts

Maine Women’s Fund would like to thank

Groth & Associates
A financial advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial

for its generous support of activities in greater Bangor in 2005 and 2006.
New Statewide Partnership: Women Helping Women

The Maine Women's Fund is pleased to announce a new partnership with the Maine Federation of Women's Clubs, beginning this summer when Gloria Leveillee of Limerick becomes president of the organization.

"I chose the Maine Women's Fund as the President's Project because the General Federation of Women's Clubs and Maine Federation of Women's Clubs have always provided a means for women to learn and grow and are dedicated to community improvement," remarked Ms. Leveillee. "The two group's objectives seemed like a natural fit."

The Maine Federation of Women's Club is one of the world's largest and oldest women's volunteer service organizations. With 29 clubs in Maine, club members support the arts, preserve natural resources, promote education, encourage healthy lifestyles, stress civic involvement, and work toward world peace and understanding. Anne Marie Withee-Heald from the Madison's Women's Club will be the Chair of the President's Project that aims to raise $5,000 for the MWF over two years.

"I have been a personal contributor to the Maine Women's Fund for years. I firmly believe that access to capital is oftentimes the stumbling block in keeping a good idea from becoming a reality," said Ms. Leveillee. "The Maine Women's Fund has provided that access to capital for women and for people interested in making the lives of women and girls easier and more productive."

Maine Federation of Women's Clubs are located in: Bangor, Bath, Castine, Dexter, Dover-Foxcroft (two clubs), Gorham, Hancock, Hartland, Kezar Falls, Limerick, Livermore Falls, Lubec, Machias, Madison, Milbridge, Newport, Old Town (two clubs), Patten, Pittsfield (two clubs), Skowhegan (three clubs), Waldoboro, Westbrook, Winter Harbor and Winterport.

If you are interested in learning more about Maine Federation of Women's Club events that may be taking place in your community during 2006-2007, or learning more about MFWC, please contact Gloria Leveillee at gleveillee@adelphia.net.


Nearly $12,000 was granted by the New Girls' Fund for Social Change, the newest fund within the Maine Women's Fund, in January 2006. This fund was created by New Girls' Network graduates, women in their 20's and 30's who have spent time exploring leadership, activism, philanthropy and feminism through their New Girls' sessions.

Jennifer Eastman, a New Girl from the 05-06 Bangor class, served on the most recent grantmaking committee for the New Girls’ Fund for Social Change. "It was amazing to work with the other women on the committee and say 'let's support these projects, not just with lip service, but with money," said Ms. Eastman. "I'm proud that this work is of real service to the community and that we were able to help by taking action."

2006 New Girls' Fund for Social Change grants include:

$3,000 to Hardy Girls Healthy Women to create the Girls Advisory Board (GAB), which brings together 11 girls between the ages of 12 and 17 to learn about teamwork, leadership, and philanthropy. The GAB provides ideas for new projects, shapes the Girls Only website, and supports the new Girl Philanthropists program.

$2,660 to Mainely Girls to include more girls in the Girl-to-Girl mentoring program that provides a safe space for participants to explore their ideas, test their voices, and envision new ideas.

$2,000 to Positive Outlets to provide hip-hop workshops for female juveniles housed at Long Creek Youth Development Center. The end result of the workshops will be an original song produced by, and featuring, all participants to be presented on a CD.

$1,270 to Prevention, Action, Change to create a new program, Girl Time, which will offer workshops throughout the Portland area on awareness, physical and verbal skills, and community action to girls ages 11 to 14.

$3,000 to United Somali Women of Maine to create multi-media public relations material to be used for fundraising and educational purposes. The organization will also create a digital archive of materials such as photographs, transcripts, and written documentation of programs for use in brochures and grant proposals.

To learn more about the New Girls' Fund for Social Change, please visit http://www.mainewomensfund.org/grants/ngfsc.php.

THANK YOU to the following women who serve on the 2005/2006 Grantmaking Committee for the New Girls’ Fund for Social Change:

Marya Baron
Lindsay Cadwallader
Jennifer Eastman
Stephanie Lemieux
Tabitha Plaisted
Shaye McGann Robbins
Melinda Shain
Rebekah Smith
Kate Quin-Easter
Karen Wyman
Maine Women’s Fund Welcomes Anna L. Kent

Anna L. Kent of Portland was recently hired to coordinate the New Girls’ Network and the New Girls’ Fund for Social Change for the Maine Women’s Fund. A philanthropist and community-builder since her late teens, Anna brings her unique brand of enthusiasm, organizing skills, and a deep understanding of social change to the New Girls’ position.

A New Girl herself (Portland class of 02-03), and current “Kindred Spirits” supporter (a donor program that allows monthly gifts to be debited from one’s checking account automatically) of the New Girls’ Fund for Social Change, Anna has experienced the power of programs designed especially for young women. “Women in their 20s and 30s are making important choices about work, life, and community every day. Sometimes we find ourselves acting in a vacuum, wondering if we’re doing the right thing. Being well connected with our peers means we make better decisions about how to spend our time, energy, and resources. The New Girls’ Network represents a great opportunity for Generation X—individually and collectively—to make a difference through philanthropy in Maine.”

“Being well connected with our peers means we make better decisions…”

Anna has worked for a variety of nonprofit and academic institutions, including Harvard University, the Institute for Civic Leadership, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees/ AFL-CIO, and the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts. She currently serves on the board of the Maine Association of Nonprofits and is a graduate student in public policy and management at the Muskie School of Public Service at USM. She is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College.

When she’s not organizing young women to change the world, Anna designs knitwear, travels with friends, and pretends she’s the Swedish Chef. The Maine Women’s Fund is pleased to have her on board!

What is the New Girls’ Network?

by Anna Kent

Imagine re-endowing a condemned building with landmark status as an arts and community center. Imagine leading a program to educate young women in new technologies in the health professions. Imagine starting a philanthropic giving circle among hundreds of younger professionals in your community.

These are all examples of real projects developed by members of the New Girls’ Network, a program of the Maine Women’s Fund. Launched in 2000, the New Girls’ Network was started to create a web of young, active, and powerful women throughout Maine. The New Girls’ experience, geared to women in their 20s and 30s, begins with a nine-month exploration of philanthropy, leadership, activism, and feminism. It continues with a life-long connection to a growing network of women—150 to date—committed to empowering Maine women and girls.

Since its inception, fourteen New Girls sessions have been convened in Portland, Bangor, Lewiston-Auburn, and the Midcoast region. In lieu of paying tuition, each woman has pledged a donation to the Maine Women’s Fund, on a sliding scale between $150 and $500.

New Girls are also encouraged to participate both as donors and grantmakers through the New Girls’ Fund for Social Change, a fund of the Maine Women’s Fund. Annual grants are given in the fall, and Opportunity Grants are available throughout the year.

In addition to the program, the New Girls’ Network has created a signature fundraising event: the Brew Girls Festival. Held in 2004 and 2005, Brew Girls has showcased several well-known musicians—female solo artists and female-led bands—who have donated their performances. Attendees have enjoyed local brews and catering done by volunteers and restaurants.

New Girls enjoy multiple networking opportunities throughout the year, including the Evening to Honor Maine Women & Girls, other Maine Women’s Fund events, and community events organized by volunteers. New Girls use a password-protected message board to do outreach, stay connected, and share information on activism, projects, and events in their fields of interest. Regular email updates, web-based resources, and e-newsletters also keep New Girls engaged in the work of the Maine Women’s Fund and its community partners.

For more information about the New Girls’ Network, or to request an application for the 2006-07 sessions, please contact Anna Kent at the Maine Women’s Fund: anna@mainewomensfund.org, tel: 207-774-5513.
Passamaquoddy Women Amplify Their Voices

What do you do when the importance of women's voices and their role in Native communities diminishes?

You focus on the deep strengths of Native women and connect them to local, national, and international networks and organizations that help amplify, cultivate, expand, and organize the power and potential that women bring to their communities.

That is what Stephanie Bailey of Indian Township Reservation is doing by starting a GROOTS chapter for women in Washington County. Ms. Bailey is a member of the Passamaquoddy tribe, and she was recently asked by the Cobscook Community Learning Center to lead the GROOTS project, which is supported by a $7,000 grant from the Maine Women’s Fund in 2005.

In March 2006, Stephanie held her first GROOTS meeting for Passamaquoddy women. “The Tribe is often divided when it comes to many things, including our rules, distance, economic ventures, land, and government. Allowing both Sipayik and Indian Township women to meet first and talk about ‘us’ and the greater Passamaquoddy community helped us gain a solid footing on what the Passamaquoddy community collectively sees as a healthier tomorrow,” Ms. Bailey reported.

While many in her tribe have called Ms. Bailey a ‘troublemaker,’ she senses there are a number of people who are ready for a change. Through GROOTS, and with the support of Cobscook Community Learning Center, Ms. Bailey hopes to help Passamaquoddy women strengthen and amplify their collective and individual voices, and build a structure for promoting positive changes for their Tribe, the greater community of Washington County, and the environment that they share.

"Working with surrounding towns and cities to create a healthier future, while recognizing the strength of women, this is what GROOTS is about and this is our beginning!" Ms. Bailey exclaimed.

Stephanie is off to a strong start, “We—the tribe—have so much to offer the county. We could be doing really good things! But before we can help anyone else, we need to make ourselves healthy first,” she observed.

We will keep you posted on the progress of her work.

continued from page 1

"ILAP has been able to help many of these women who come to Maine expecting a new life of love and opportunity, but find instead oppression, isolation and abuse. We help them gain permanent residency status so that they can escape from the abuse and live independently of their abusers," Stickney explained. The Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project is Maine's only provider of immigration legal services to immigrants, refugees, and U.S. citizens alike. ILAP's services are offered free or for very low fees.

Maine Women's Fund is pleased to partner with ILAP and other Maine organizations that are tackling the well-organized and funded industry of human trafficking. U.S. government statistics show that 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year. Millions more are trafficked within their own countries. Approximately 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States on an annual basis. A staggering 80% of trafficking victims are women and girls.

Our internet educational campaign, U.S. Women Without Borders, has connected friends of the Maine Women's Fund with others throughout the world who are combating human trafficking and domestic violence issues on a global scale. Through U.S. Women Without Borders, we have reflected upon our progress and continue to take action on the different forms of violence against women. You may learn more about this global campaign by visiting http://www.fundforward.org/uswomenwithoutborders/.

We plan to continue our commitment to making the local to global linkages, both through U.S. Women Without Borders and as a new member of the Women's Edge Coalition, a national advocacy organization working to ensure that U.S. international trade and assistance programs create economic opportunities and self-sufficiency for women and their families worldwide. For more information about the coalition, visit www.womensedge.org.

THE MAINE WOMEN’S FUND

Our mission is clear: to create a just society by supporting programs, policies and practices that empower Maine women and girls.

The MWF is strategically focused on four priority areas:
- Eliminating violence against women and girls.
- Fostering self-esteem and self-determination for girls and women.
- Promoting economic security for every woman in Maine.
- Providing access to quality health information and health care services.
True North Shows Expertise and Style with Red Shoe Event

Friends of the Maine Women’s Fund were treated to an evening of delicious food and valuable information about women’s health from our friends at True North on February 2, 2006.

After giving people a chance to eat, tour the True North facility and mingle, Bethany Hays, MD, FACOG, gave a talk entitled, “More than Menopause: Hormones Health and You.” For the younger women in the audience, Susan Fekety, RN, MSN, CNM spoke about “The Emerging Woman: Health Care for the Teens and Twenties.”

True North is a center for healing that combines the best of conventional medicine with the finest complementary health care practices. Its mission is to provide a patient-centered environment for the health and healing of the body, mind and spirit.

"Many of the health disorders we see in later life can be prevented if positive health habits are established when a woman is young.”

The event was conceived by Christine Bicknell Marden, Director of Development for True North, who invited guests to “wear your red shoes for the Maine Women’s Fund.” Chris explained, “I wanted to host an event that was both playful and informative, since finding time to play is such an essential part of staying healthy. Wearing red shoes introduced a playful element and also invited individual expression – which I know the Maine Women’s Fund values. This event was great fun. We believe whole heartedly in the Maine Women’s Fund and enjoyed partnering with them.”

We asked Dr. Hays and Ms. Fekety to summarize some key points from their lectures.

Dr. Hays: Lifestyle behaviors—particularly relaxation, movement and nourishment—have a critical impact on hormone function. Tuning in to your body’s signals about these things can often minimize, if not eliminate, your need for hormone supplementation. It is also possible to test your hormones to find out what your body needs.

Ms. Fekety: Health care encounters during the teen years set the stage for a young person’s relationship with the medical system for the rest of her life. Many of the health disorders we see in later life can be prevented if positive health habits are established when a woman is young.

Keep your eye out for another Red Shoe event in February 2007 as True North and the Maine Women’s Fund continue to support women in living healthy, inspired lives.
Thank you to all these donors—and those who choose to remain anonymous—for their support in 2005!
GIVING MADE EASY
Kindred Spirits Giving Program Celebrates First Anniversary!

Now supporting positive and systemic change for women is easier than ever through the Kindred Spirits of MWF, a program that has donated $2.11 million throughout the year.

As a Kindred Spirit, you tell the MWF the amount you want to give, monthly or quarterly, and provide a credit card number or a voided check—we do the rest. Once you are set up, your donations will be processed every month or quarter, and will automatically be debited from your credit card or checking account around the 15th of the month.

Giving this way is convenient and allows you to stretch your giving capacity by giving your gift over time.

If you would like to become a Kindred Spirit of the Maine Women’s Fund, please complete the Kindred Spirits section of the enclosed envelope. We hope to welcome you this spring to the ever-growing group of Kindred Spirits who have found a convenient and effective way to invest in the power of women and the dreams of girls!
SAVETHEDATE- OCTOBER 30, 2006
FORTHE16THANNUALLEVENINGTOHONORMAINEWOMEN&GIRLS
AWARDSANDFUNDRAISINGDINNER

If you want to nominate a woman working for positive
social change for women and girls, please let us know
by emailing your name and contact information, the
nominee’s name, and a brief description of her
work to thewomen@mainewomensfund.org.
We look forward to celebrating with you.

4:00 – 6:00 PM Open House with 2006 Grantees
of the Maine Women’s Fund
and the New Girls’ Fund for
Social Change

6:15 – 8:30 PM Dinner and Awards Program

Special thanks to Dead River, our long-time primary event sponsor!
And special thanks to Claudia Diller, the Maine artist who created and donated
the use of this mandala for the Evening’s promotional materials.

INVESTINGIN THE POWER OF
WOMEN AND THE DREAMS OF GIRLS!

Maine
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