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Maine Women's Giving Tree Quarterly Review

Volume I, Issue 1

December 2016

We are happy to present this first edition of a quarterly newsletter designed to keep you better informed about Maine Women's Giving Tree meetings, activities and plans. To the many members who suggested a title for the newsletter, thank you! Although the suggestions were very creative, we ultimately decided to keep it straightforward, in keeping with the seriousness of our work and the profound needs that we address.

During this past year, 15 new members have joined us:

- *from Bath:* Susan Gillis;
- *from Brunswick:* Anne Haslett, Joan Hemenway, Elizabeth Mace, Sharon Hoslety, Christina Oddleifson, Barbara Warner;
- *from Freeport:* Jane Danielson;
- *from Litchfield:* Freda Bernotavicz;
- *from Orrs Island:* Karen Tcheyan, Ruth Hartman, Louise Kieffer;
- *from Topsham:* Marcia Marks, Marjrie Platou, Joan Reynolds.

Our membership is now 69 women strong. You should all feel proud of our progress and our expanding ability to support our community.

At our annual awards ceremony, June 15, 2016, we awarded a total of \$47,258 to eight agencies. It was our largest award amount to date and brought us to over \$150,000 in overall giving. We would like to match or exceed our giving for the 2017 year, as we have each previous year. Unfortunately we do not have enough available funds at this time to do that. We set our giving amount on the dollars we have available on December 31st of each year. If you have not already made your annual contribution please do. If you are considering giving a gift in remembrance or in the name of family or friend, again please do before the end of the year. The more we have the more grants we can give.

Thank you for your involvement and Happy Holidays!

Susan Mikesell and Bianca Chambers

Annual Membership Meeting, September 17, 2016

The following were elected officers for 2016-2017:

- *Co-Presidents:* Susan Mikesell (2015-2017), Bianca Chambers (2016-2018)
- *Vice-President:* Lynn Lockwood (2016-2017)
- *Treasurer:* Cyndy Bush (2014-2017)
- *Secretary:* Lynn Shipway (2016-2018)

The following were named to Standing Committees:

- *Nominating Committee:* Immediate Past Three Presidents: Coordinator Judy Collette, Jane Cabot, Nancy Hallett
- *Membership Committee:* Coordinator Lisa Burke,

Nancy Hallett, Abbie Mott, Sandy Neiman, Lili Ott

- *Grants Committee:* Co-Chairs Peggy Harris & Lynn Lockwood, Jane Cabot, Donna Barmore, Nancy Hallett, Lynn Shipway, Judy Collette, Karen Tcheyan. Alternate members: Lili Ott, Freda Bernotavicz, Joan Reynolds
- *Education Committee:* Coordinator Ann Taft, Peggy Harris, Sue Loebis

The following were named to Ad Hoc Committees:

- *Communications Committee:* Coordinator Anne Barnes, Lisa Burke
- *Events Committee:* Coordinator Cyndy Bush, Kitty Paiste, Judy Collette, Marjorie Platou, Lili Ott, Brenda Darcy, Diane Field, Sally Haggett, Susan Gillies

Members approved changes to the grant process

For the past several years, MWGT welcomed grant proposals that supported programs or projects in the broad areas of education, health and welfare, shelter, food and nutrition. However, such a broad invitation has proven difficult for the Grants Committee and the grant reviewers to adequately address. In the past year, 29 organizations submitted applications, requesting a total of \$195,218, and only 18 grant reviewers were working to determine how best to award our limited funds. Therefore, to control the number of applications and to concentrate the impact of our grants, a decision was made to limit applications for one-year grants of up to \$10,000 to only those projects that address a more focused theme: "*Child and Youth (0-18) Well-being*". And to further facilitate the grant review process, applicants must now submit a brief one page Letter of Intent by November 1.

Executive Committee, October 3, 2016

The Executive Committee (club officers) set the following goals for 2016 – 2017:

- Increase membership with an emphasis on members aged 35-55.
- Create a new membership category for "Associates" aged under 55 making a minimum contribution of \$200, an addition which requires a by-laws change.
- Create an update/alert/newsletter with photos that reaches members on a regular basis.
- A member survey following the grant awards in the spring to review and evaluate the new grant process.
- Plan a winter member event.
- Share information on "neighbor gatherings" as a recruitment strategy.

Education Meeting October 5, 2016

Bianca Chambers

At the The Highlands' Holden Frost House in Topsham, Laura Young, Vice President of the Maine Community Foundation, shared her thoughts about the act of giving. Laura began with the question of why we give, noting those who start with the "why" have the ability to inspire others. So, why do you donate to the Maine Women's Giving Tree?

Laura referred to social science research by Russ Alan Prince and Karen Maru File (*The Seven Faces of Philanthropy*, 1994) which analyzed the motivations of individuals relative to their interest and support of nonprofit organizations. Prince and File categorized us into 7 distinct groups but noted that many of us have overlapping motivations:

- *Communitarians*: Believe doing good makes good sense, i.e. small business/community builders. Believe being active in the community makes good sense, builds the community's potential; they generally serve on boards.
- *Devout*: Believe doing good is God's will, i.e. churchgoers. Their values and beliefs guide their giving-time, treasure and talent.
- *Investor*: Believe doing good is good business, i.e. the affluent with eye on institution and taxes; "Millionaire Next Door" invests based on the cause but equal merit to good business strategy and tax benefits.
- *Socialite*: Believe doing good is fun, i.e. auxiliarians, volunteers, connectors, social events to benefit nonprofits.
- *Altruist*: Believe doing good feels right, i.e. anonymous donors, spiritual/recovering people; generosity and empathy.
- *Repayer*: Believe doing good in return, i.e. grateful citizens/employees/students who benefited by an institution feel loyal to it.
- *Dynast*: Believe doing good is a family tradition, i.e. inheritors do what is expected of them, because that what their family has stood for.

Laura shared her "why" with direct quotes:

"There is no power equal to a community discovering what it cares about."
Meg Wheatley, author

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead

"The greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than any other nation, but rather in her ability repair her faults."
Alexi de Tocqueville

Subsequent issues of the newsletter will present her thoughts on the role of civic organizations in our society and building community through "social capital."

Maine Community Foundation: Inaugural Summit

Susan Mikesell

On November 1, 2016, Dr. Allan Johnson gave a speech entitled "Privilege, Power and Difference" to over 600 interested

members of the Maine community. Sandy Neiman and I were there. In his talk, Dr Johnson challenged us to begin to understand the Systems of Privilege in which we live and work. We as individuals make social systems happen. Privilege is a social system. He defined Privilege as "an advantage that is unearned, exclusive to a particular group, and socially conferred." The System of Privilege has four characteristic elements. Dominance, Obsession with Control, Identification (Dominant group is seen as the standard for human beings in general) and Centeredness (Path of least resistance placing members of the dominant group at the center of attention). As participants in this and other social systems, our lives are shaped by socialization and paths of least resistance.

To listen to Dr Johnson's speech in its entirety go to:

www.mainecef.org/AboutUs/MaineCFInauguralSummit.aspx.

Education Meeting, November 2, 2016

Anne Taft, Coordinator, Education Committee

Jamie Silvestri, Art Therapist and founder of the ArtVan, spoke about this mobile arts therapy program whose mission is to bring art to underserved neighborhoods while providing a safe, collaborative, and creative environment to children and youth who have little or no access to the arts. The art making process used by the program provides a direct and tangible way for these youth to channel feelings, adjust to new circumstances and develop creative solutions to their problems.

Brunswick Area Student Aid Fund (BASAF) Board members Kate Cutko, Kara Douglas, Karen Tilbor and Board President Marie Whitney shared information on the history and background of this organization whose primary function is to award needs-blind scholarships to eligible area high school graduates. The organization's secondary mission, and that which is of interest to MWGT members, is to assist grade K-12 students overcoming challenges that interfere with being a productive student, such as assistance with the cost of eyeglasses, clothing, doctors and dentists visits, and other necessities.

In December, Donna Verhoeven from Tedford Housing and Mary Booth, Heath Coordinator for SAD 75 will speak about Tedford Housing's Merrymeeting Project, a program that works with three area school systems to aid homeless students to ensure school enrollment and educational stability for homeless children and youth.

Calendar Alerts

Business/Education Meeting – December 7, 2016

Third Annual Winter Luncheon – January 18, 2017

Membership Business Meeting – May 17, 2017

Fifth Annual Awards Reception – June 14, 2017

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