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Maine Women's Fund

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Maine Women's Fund

Annual Update

2008-2009





Together We Can Create the Change We Want to See

The Year in Review...

What does social change look like? Depends on whether you take a micro or a macro view.

At the micro level, it looks like 5,280 miles driven between Portland and Bangor in order to support **women galvanizing other women in philanthropy, leadership, and community.**

... 700 hours invested by young women from Augusta, Bangor, Portland, and the Midcoast using their voice, vision, and resources to unleash their leadership potential through the New Girls' Network.

... 500 hours of dialogue between women of all ages, determining how to use their purse, power, and potential in their professional and civic lives through our statewide Brown Bag Series.

... 300 hours from women offering their business savvy, experience, and expertise to budding entrepreneurs through executive roundtables at Women Standing Together.

... A cold Saturday morning at the Spotlight on Philanthropy identifying how each of us will accelerate the mission of the Maine Women's Fund.

... 24 women, 1 editor, 5 writers, and 1 photographer sharing the stories, values, and vision that help us all aspire to be Women Making Change Happen.

It looks like nearly **\$80,000 invested in nonprofit organizations** in the areas of education, public policy, entrepreneurship and better jobs, and financial literacy and asset-building; **\$60,000 invested in leadership programs**; and **thousands of dollars** and

hundreds of hours donated by women who believe in investing in the power of women and the dreams of girls.

At the macro level, it looks like women using their philanthropic resources in service of a common vision. It looks like women recognizing their power, and USING IT, to create change in their lives and in their communities. It looks like a portfolio of investments in organizations providing critical services that build economic security for women, girls, and Maine.

Social change is a mosaic of actions – large and small, personal and professional, philanthropic and voluntary, community oriented and statewide – that improve the lives of others.

Catalyzing this change, this year, has been a challenge, but one we have faced head on. Over the last three years, the Maine Women's Fund has been preparing

itself for growth, preparation that is also enabling it to weather the worst economic climate in recent history. We've restructured our staffing plan, relied heavily on a core of volunteers, recruited local statewide leadership, and in the process **cut our costs by over 40 percent.** We focused all our work around our core pillars of philanthropy, leadership and economic security, providing and scaling those programs that most effectively serve all three interest areas.

In short, **social change looks like you.** It is the women and girls of the Maine Women's Fund community creating the change we want to see in the world by leading and giving in service of all the women and girls in Maine. Thank you for giving generously to make change happen for Maine.

"Social change looks like you. It is the women and girls of the Maine Women's Fund community creating the change we want to see in the world by leading and giving in service of all the women and girls in Maine."

Elizabeth Stefanski, Executive Director,
Maine Women's Fund

The Year Ahead...

The Maine Women's Fund is a philanthropic and leadership community for women in Maine. Our community enables women to use their vision, voice, and resources to create lasting change for everyone.

Through our **grantmaking**, we aggregate our collective resources to focus deeply on funding programs that build economic security for women and girls, and through them, our broader communities.

Our **leadership programs** provide resources, community, skills and experience that enable women to tap fully into their leadership potential in service to others and in their personal and professional lives.

In the coming year, you will continue to see more of the same exciting programs and resources that connect and inspire women from Portland to Bangor, Lewiston/Auburn to the Midcoast:

- Grantmaking through our Economic Security Initiative, utilizing our expertise to access the most diverse set of perspectives in the allocation of philanthropic resources.
- Our Regional Advisory Councils in Bangor, L/A, the Midcoast, and Portland are made up of resourceful, innovative women who are engaging their communities in advancing the goals of the Fund at the regional level.
- The New Girls' Network, a 10-month program for women in their 20s and 30s to explore themes of leadership, philanthropy, and social change.
- The Women's Leadership Series, a four-part series engaging Maine women in juicy conversation and in community to support their efforts to create lasting change.
- Women in the Workplace, an opportunity for professional women to explore and reflect on the leaders they are today and the leaders they want to be tomorrow through facilitated leadership panels and discussions in their workplace.
- The Spotlight on Philanthropy, an exploration of how our philanthropic efforts can and will accelerate social change in Maine.
- Women Standing Together, a giving circle that leverages the business acumen of its members.
- Women Making Change Happen, sharing the stories of bold women who are building businesses, nurturing families, teaching young people, leading industries, and strengthening communities.

We hope that you will join us and lend your time, talent and treasure to creating social change by building economic security for women and girls.

Maine Women's Fund Staff: The Face of Social Change



(clockwise from upper left)

Elizabeth Stefanski, Executive Director

Lauren Dietlin, Director of Development

Kristin Chase Duffy, Director of
Communication and Programs

Jessica Wallner, Administrative Assistant

**Working with you to create
lasting social change by
investing in the power of women
and the dreams of girls.**

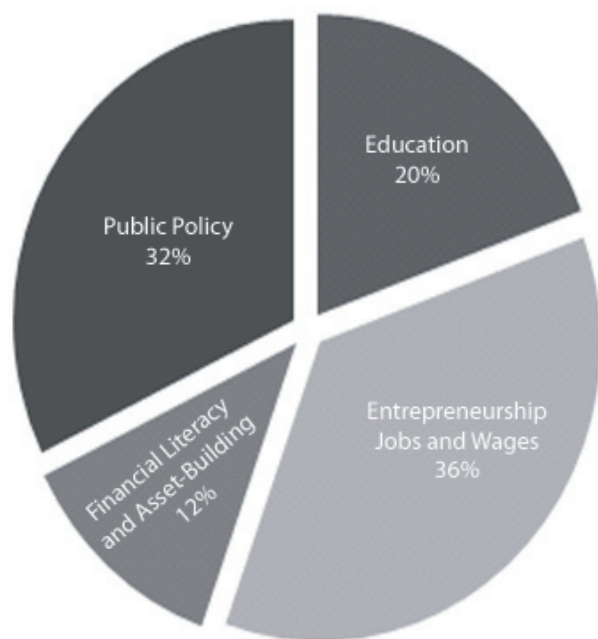


Economic Security Initiative 2008-2009 Grant Partners

Economic security is the core thread that weaves through all aspects of our mission to create lasting social change by investing in the power of women and the dreams of girls. With financial security, women can break the cycle of violence and access better housing, healthcare, and employment. Economic stability enables a woman to improve the quality of life for her family, her community and our entire state. Every dollar that comes our way supports our mission.

We invest in non-profits committed to helping us achieve our goal of economic security for all Maine women and girls. In the 20 years since our inception, we have granted over \$1.5 million. In our 2008-2009 grant cycle, we granted nearly \$80,000. The non-profits we support help us by focusing their work on strategic areas that together will advance economic security: public policy; education; entrepreneurship and better jobs and wages; and financial literacy and asset-building.

Grant Allocations by Strategic Area



Caring Unlimited

\$4,500 to provide a savings match for battered women living in transitional housing in York County. For women who stay the full 24 months, they will leave with up to \$1,200 in savings which can be used to secure permanent housing, transportation, and other needs.

Cobscook Community Learning Center

\$5,000 for the Passages Program (see Making Change Happen profile on page 5).

Dress for Success

\$5,000 to provide disadvantaged, low-income, job-ready women statewide with the attire and self-confidence they need to enter the workforce.

Greater Portland CA\$H Coalition

\$5,000 to help refugee and immigrant women learn to navigate the banking system, as well as inform bank and credit union representatives about the needs of this diverse customer base. The program will also provide a 5-part financial literacy series.

Hardy Girls Healthy Women (Year 2)

\$10,000 for statewide and national expansion (see Making Change Happen profile page 6).



Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

\$3,000 to provide the advocacy required to enable undocumented battered women in Aroostook, Washington, and Androscoggin counties to leave their domestic situations, attain immigrant status, get access to public housing and enter the workforce.

Maine Equal Justice Partners (Year 2)

\$10,000 to support work to improve benefits for families on TANF and those transitioning off the program so that they can achieve economic independence; improve access to health care for low-income families; and increase opportunities for low-wage women workers to attain education and training that will improve their employment options.

Maine Women's Policy Center

\$15,000 to support their work championing economic security for women across Maine through increased flexibility at work, adequate paid time off, the end of unfair profiling practices, and equal pay.

Women, Work, and Community

\$10,000 for year two on the Kennebec Corridor Creative Enterprise Project, which targets the needs of low-to-moderate income women artisans and emerging entrepreneurs in communities along the Kennebec Corridor that includes the towns of Augusta, Waterville, Skowhegan, Gardiner, Richmond, and Bath.

\$10,000 for the Crown of Maine Creative Enterprise Project, which provides small business networking and skill building opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Aroostook County.

The Maine Women's Policy Center and its sister organization, the Maine Women's Lobby, work tirelessly to make life better for women and girls statewide. They employ a twofold approach: enacting ground-breaking public policy to improve women's lives, and empowering women to create change in their own communities. "We don't simply advocate for women and girls. We also teach them to advocate for themselves through local and legislative action," explains Sarah Standiford, Executive Director.

The MWPC organizes and trains women to speak up and participate more fully in their government. The organization also offers experiential programs such as Girls' Day at the State House, giving Maine eighth-graders a chance to see the legislative process up close, from meetings with legislators to mock hearings and press conferences. These training programs, says Standiford, "make the pathways to change visible" for participants, who come away with a deeper understanding of what's at stake and what they can do about it. By working with the women who are directly affected by the policies the MWPC is implementing, they are creating tomorrow's active leaders. "There is a great tradition in Maine of encouraging the next generation to step up to leadership," Standiford says.

The cost of their vigilance is paid in part by grants from the Maine Women's Fund. The MWPC used the most recent MWF grant cycle to focus on the economic status of women working in Maine: increasing wages and wage equality, introducing an effort to broaden access to paid sick days, expanding Maine's Family and Medical Leave coverage, and working to end "maternal profiling," a form of discrimination in which women are denied opportunities for career advancement based on perceptions of their commitments at home. "Establishing innovative public policies that benefit working women improves the lives of families and communities," Standiford says, echoing the Maine Women's Fund's own mission statement. "We're working toward prosperity for all."



Cobscook Community Learning Center's Passages Program: *This Is What Empowerment Looks Like*

Part of "Making Change Happen: Women Creating a Better Maine"



Developed at The Community School in Camden in 1994, Passages is designed for students ages 14 to 21 who find it difficult to attend high school while pregnant or caring for their children. The Cobscook Community Learning Center's branch in Lubec opened in 2007 and began accepting students in 2008. Nine students, including one couple, are now enrolled in the program, which has one staffer in addition to Charley Martin-Berry, CLC Passages Lead Teacher/Coordinator. Passages plays a critical role in Washington County where, Martin-Berry says, "young parents who know full well the ramifications of being high school dropouts are highly motivated to become successful parents and professionals."

Passages students schedule one-on-one sessions with their teachers in the young parents' own homes. The curriculum includes the academic subjects required for high school graduation, as well as life and parenting skills such as budgeting, child development, understanding abuse, job hunting and health and nutrition.

Funding from the Maine Women's Fund and other sources provides students with a laptop so they can connect with

their teachers and one another, and it covers transportation to group gatherings such as workshops and play groups. Perhaps the most important thing the MWF grant did for Passages at the CCLC was to put the program on the map in Washington County. In Passages' early months, Martin-Berry and the staff at CCLC worked with local health officials, teachers, guidance counselors and school superintendents to spread the word about Passages' services. Recently, a student came to Passages with referrals from three separate sources—a definite sign of success, according to Martin-Berry.

Of course, a successful student is another sign that Passages is doing its job. There is no shortage of these stories, including one of a 17-year old mother of an infant daughter, who hopes to become an occupational therapist. With coaching from Martin-Berry, she enrolled in the Career Center's Youth Program, scheduled a financial aid workshop with MEOC staff, took the SAT, applied to colleges and interviewed — and was hired—for a part-time job. "... it occurred to me later that somehow I must have delivered the information to her in a way that helped her feel like she had discovered it on her own," says Martin-Berry. "I think that's what empowerment looks like."

To read the complete Making Change Happen profile on Cobscook Community Learning Center's Passage Program, visit www.makingchangehappen.org.

Hardy Girls Healthy Women: *Helping Girls Change Society*

Part of “Making Change Happen: Women Creating a Better Maine”

Hardy Girls Healthy Women aims to help girls in grades 2-12 be their beautiful, strong selves. It offers girls the opportunity to become involved in their communities and to connect with adults and peers who challenge them. Moreover, as a systems-oriented program, HGHW shifts the focus from the individual girl to the culture in which they are growing by teaching girls critical thinking and media literacy skills and to ask who benefits from them feeling bad. For instance, girls internalize societal messages about what it means to be feminine and often feel as if something is wrong with them if they don't fit the mold. When this happens, people tend to say that girls just need the self-confidence to rise above Barbie's impossibly perfect appearance. But Hardy Girls says differently. “Instead of placing the onus on the girls to change,” Megan Williams, Executive Director, explains, “we encourage them to change the culture, to look around and fix society rather than looking inward and fixing themselves.”

Williams first witnessed the benefits of HGHW's approach through the experience of twins who, along with Hardy Girls' staff and board members, insisted that Kmart remove from its stores a t-shirt that depicted a big grin on a boy's face after he pushes down a girl. The caption read “Problem Solved.” The twins went as far as calling the CEO of Sears Holdings, Kmart's parent company. “They could have written, but they chose to speak with the CEO instead, believing it would be more effective,” says Williams. And perhaps it was, since after hearing so many concerns, Kmart agreed to stop selling the offensive t-shirt in stores across the country. Throughout the process, the twins learned to use their voices differently.

With the help of a grant from the Maine Women's Fund, Hardy Girls hopes to extend its reach. They plan to bring programming to Maine's rim counties, Portland and Bangor. Also in the works is an online hub that will offer a one-stop-shop for people and organizations nationwide that aim to support girls. “Such a site,” Williams posits, “could provide a platform from which to protest or celebrate matters that affect young women and help Hardy Girls achieve its goals.”

Meanwhile, Hardy Girls will continue to listen to the voices that matter most, measuring the success of their programs through the words of those who attend. When they hear girls say that they “learned to trust other girls” and “that magazine images aren't real” or that they think “people should know that girls can do anything that boys can do,” they know they've made a difference.

To read the complete Making Change Happen profile on Hardy Girls Healthy Women, visit www.makingchangehappen.org.



Kindred Spirits

Become a Kindred Spirit by making a monthly contribution – an easy way to maximize your investment in our work.

Many thanks to our current Kindred Spirits:

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"Women thrive by connecting. Our combined energy moves all of us forward in greater and greater leaps. Pooled philanthropy is a gift we give to our communities and to ourselves. Our influence and visibility as leaders increases as we engage and take responsibility for the well being of our communities."

Susanna Liller, Liller Consulting, LLC
 Women Standing Together Member, Women in the Workplace Facilitator, and Leadership Donor

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"The Maine Women's Fund is an important and positive change agent for our state, encouraging women and girls to fully participate in their own best lives. At Garrand we applaud efforts like those of the Fund to lift up and celebrate the creative potential resident in us all."

Brenda Garrand
President and Strategic Director,
Garrand and Corporate Contributor

Tobi Leanna Schneider
in honor of Rebecca Schneider, Megan Williams and Jackie Dupont
Anne Koch
Schonberger
Mary Schwanke
Karen Schwarzer
Maxine R. Sclar
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Bazaar Strategies LLC
Bernstein Shur
Brown Goldsmiths
Buzzie Bee Diapers
Camp Bow Wow
Citi Smith Barney
Coffee By Design
Dead River Company
Designs by Lucinda
Diversified Communications
Family Violence Project
Feminist Spiritual Community
Flatbread Portland
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Joel D. Davis and Associates
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Law Offices of Joe Bornstein
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Maine Federation of Women's Clubs
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MaineShare
Material Objects
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New Form Building Systems, Inc.
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Passage to India
Plastic and Hand Surgical Associates
Queen of Hats
Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution
The Capital Group Companies
Charitable Foundation

Treats
Trillium Asset Management
United Way of Eastern Maine
University of Maine
Verrill Dana

FOUNDATION GRANTS
Apple Lane Foundation, Inc.
Fore River Foundation
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Maine Community Foundation
Maine Health Access Foundation
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GIFTS IN KIND
98.9 WCLZ
Add Verb Productions
Monique Bidwell
Cabot Creamery Cooperative
Celebrating Human Creativity
Community Television Network
Sara Cox
Lynn Deeves
Dore's Cafe & Market
Holly's Own Deli
Local Sprouts Cooperative
Mainebiz
McCabe Duval & Associates
Cynthia S. McMullin
North Star Music Cafe
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Vanessa Torres
Katie Webber
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Thank you for helping to make change happen in our communities!

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"I volunteer for the Fund because I wholeheartedly support the Fund's mission. But I've gotten a lot out of it too -- I've met so many interesting women along the way! Giving to the Fund makes me feel like I am part of the solution. My small gift has a big impact when coupled with all of the other contributions that people are making. It's very satisfying to me to see my ideals and values in action."

Jessica Thomas
New Girl, New Girls' Facilitator,
2009-10 Making Change Happen
Editor and Donor

* July 1, 2008 -
June 30, 2009



Save the Dates

Bangor

Women's Leadership Series, 12:00 - 1:30 pm
Oxford Networks (60 Summer St., Bangor)

November 12: Womenomics

January 7: The Difference

March 4: Stepping Up ...

May 6: Shaping the Agenda

Lewiston/Auburn

Women's Leadership Series, 12:00 - 1:30 pm
YWCA (130 East Ave., Lewiston)

November 10: Womenomics

January 5: The Difference

March 2: Stepping Up ...

May 4: Shaping the Agenda

Midcoast

Women's Leadership Series, 12:00 - 1:30 pm
Rockland Library (80 Union St., Rockland)

November 17: Womenomics

January 12: The Difference

March 9: Stepping Up ...

May 11: Shaping the Agenda

Portland

Women's Leadership Series, 12:00 - 1:30 pm
Maine Women's Fund (565 Congress St., Ste. 306, Portland)

October 28: Womenomics

January 6: The Difference

March 3: Stepping Up ...

May 5: Shaping the Agenda

Women Standing Together

Portland Harbor Hotel

October 22: 11:45 am - 1:45 pm

January 14: 7:30 - 9:30 am

March 11: 11:45 am - 1:45 pm

June 17: 7:30 - 9:30 am

Save the date March 6 for the MWF's Second Annual Spotlight on Philanthropy!

For more details on these events and others, visit
www.maine womens fund.org.



Maine Women's Fund

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The Maine Women's Fund is a public foundation, creating lasting change by investing in the power of women and the dreams of girls. We are passionate in our belief that all Maine women and girls can reach their full potential. Our programs engage and enrich women at every stage of life, encouraging confident strides, supporting emerging leaders, and creating lasting change that improves our communities and the world for generations to come.