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The Women's Fund
Of Essex County

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The mission of the
Women's Fund of Essex County
is to raise and distribute
funds to organizations that provide
opportunities and promote solutions for women
and girls in Essex County.

Volume 3 Issue 1

Spring 2009

Hello to all of our friends and supporters! We have had a very busy year and would like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on what we have been doing and share with you some stories from the wonderful people we have met. **The Women's Fund of Essex County** is now in its seventh year of directing grants toward programs that enhance the health, safety, and educational well being of Essex County women and girls. Since its founding in 2003, the Women's Fund has raised over \$450,000 thanks to the generosity of women all across Essex County and corporate donations. We thought you might enjoy hearing from a few of the people who have benefited from programs we have supported :

"RAW makes me amazed with myself. This year I learned how to find a different person and artist in me. RAW has helped me to make big progress in school and at home. I have improved a lot and because of RAW I won a challenge at school. Seeing my art exhibited in the new downstairs gallery, I was so proud of myself." *Meddy, Art for Girlz, Raw Art Works*



"As a freshman, it helped me learn about high school before I actually experienced it. My peers were very helpful to me when I brought a personal issue to the group. It increased my confidence." *Jomaira, Strong, Smart and Bold, Girls, Inc.*

"Having a career working for/assisting a couple of small veterinarians in the past (with limited interaction with horses in my life prior to Windrush) and now finding myself with a chronic physical disability, I couldn't be more excited about a therapy that is closest to what I already knew and felt comfortable with."

Cheryl, Riding Therapy Program, Windrush Farm Therapeutic Equitation

"I am so thankful to this program at the YWCA. I have been treated with dignity and respect. The advocates walked me through (the treatment process) and supported me during difficult times. It is not easy to be alone in this country, not knowing the language and without support, facing an illness like breast cancer. The YWCA not only provided me with support but also made sure that I was connected to the services I needed during (my) crisis."

*A 47 year old Latina breast cancer survivor,
Women's Health Advocacy Program, YMCA of Greater Lawrence.*



"I get great satisfaction when my students do well in school. My contribution is very rewarding. I have a purpose to get dressed up and travel to Lawrence every day." *Ernestine,
Foster Grandparent Program, Merrimack Valley Community Service Corp.*

We hope you have a wonderful summer, and look forward to seeing you at our Fall Luncheon.

With Warmest Regards,
The Advisory Board of the Women's Fund of Essex County,
A collaborative fund of Essex County Community Foundation



2009 Grants

This spring we approved our 2009 donations of \$60,000 in the field of Economic Self-Sufficiency and Security and we are happy to announce the following agency and program recipients:

Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence
Emmaus
Girls, Inc.
Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center
Lawrence Community Works
Notre Dame Education Center
Wellspring House
YWCA of Greater Lawrence

Job Smart/Job Ready
The Bethel Learning Center
Career Path Program
Economic Independence Program
New Skills Academy
Friday Finance
Medi-Clerk Program
Economic Empowerment Program

For more information about these grants, please visit our website: www.womensfundec.org.

Sixth Annual Luncheon

The annual luncheon, held last October, was a resounding success! Over 200 guests joined us as we introduced the eight agencies that were our grant recipients in 2008. We then heard from Ginny Anderson, the Career and Academic Advisor and Coordinator for the Women's Network, sponsored by Northern Essex Community College. The Woman's Network holds an annual "Women Returning to School Information Fair" for women of all walks of life who would be considered non-traditional students. After thanking the Women's Fund for our support for the fair, Ginny introduced Donna Johnson, an NECC student. Donna shared her story about how, at almost 40 years old and as the mother of three teenagers, she

became a full time student majoring in chemical engineering. Despite her initial fears and apprehensions, Donna, who graduated from Northern Essex Community College on May 16, 2009, told us "I have also learned to say yes, I can. I can be a wife, mother, student and even an engineer. I can do it. And I have learned that I can help other women achieve their goals. I have something to offer even if it is just a sympathetic ear."

Liz Walker, our keynote speaker, delivered a powerful, animated talk about the importance of everyone engaging in community building and

service. Liz shared her story of how she went from being a television journalist to minister. Along the way she visited Darfur, and has since made it her mission to raise awareness about human rights and humanitarian issues around the world. Liz was mesmerizing and inspiring and gave us a lot to think about.



Ginny Anderson, Donna Johnson, Liz Walker

Power of the Purse



The Power of the Purse (POP) theme has become so powerful that we decided to give it its own event! In April we hosted our first Power of the Purse Party, an informal "ladies night" cocktail party where our guests enjoyed connecting with new and old friends. We had a fantastic turnout and we were delighted with the response. Our infamous purse raffle was the focus of the party and our guests had the opportunity to buy raffle tickets for chances on 22 unique and distinctive bags. The Brookwood School very generously offered their beautiful lobby as the venue for the event, and we thank them for their hospitality. It was a fun, lively event and we look forward to more POP parties in the future!

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 Sweetwater & Company
 The Fruitful Basket
 The Lyceum
 Timothy S. Hopkins Catering
 Worth collection
 Zinna's
 Carlisle Collection
 Tom & Jean Water
 Bill Safrin
 YMCA of Greater Lawrence
 Girls Inc. of Lynn
 Greater Lynn Senior Services
 HAWC
 Health Quarters
 Sheehan Family Foundation

Save the Date 10/22/2009

**The 7th Annual Fall Luncheon will be held
October 22, 2009 at the Peabody Marriott.**

Our featured speaker will be Maalak Compton-Rock, Activist and Philanthropist. Most noted for her humanitarian work and dedication to improving women's lives, she was identified as one of "Seven Who Break the Barriers of Bias" by www.womenenews.org in late 2008 and served as a judge on the philanthropic reality show Oprah's Big Give. She is also the founder and executive director of StyleWORKS, a nonprofit group that gives makeovers to women leaving public assistance and entering the workforce.

Ms. Compton-Rock recently formed the Angelrock Project, (www.angelrockproject.com) which serves as an e-village where people can find pertinent information on how to volunteer, advice on making monetary or in-kind donations, links to life-changing service organizations, and shop for products that help sustain third-world artisans or raise money for non-profit organizations. She lives by her favorite Marian Wright Edelman quote,

"Service is the rent we pay for living."



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