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Women and Girls Fund members award $50,000 to address service gaps

A program that targets barriers to stability for female-headed households, female adolescents and women aged 18-23 in the region, was voted to receive a $50,000 grant from The Community Foundation’s Women and Girls Fund.

The grant was awarded at the Women and Girls Fund’s annual Live Ballot event, where the hundreds of women who have joined the fund to date are invited to hear directly from the groups applying for funding, and then vote to award the grant.

This year’s Live Ballot took place Tuesday [May 14] at the Mary Washington Monument—the first U.S. monument ever erected by women for a woman—in Fredericksburg courtesy of Washington Heritage Museums.

Fund members came together to learn about the programs of four organizations and voted to award this year’s grant to Loisann’s Hope House, for its HOPE (Housing, Opportunity, Prevention, Equity) Diversion Program. The HOPE Diversion Program provides supportive services to ensure access to stable housing, quality childcare, reliable transportation and successful education outcomes. These areas address key barriers to the success of women and girls to ensure equitable opportunity, development and advancement of the population. The HOPE Diversion program is unique to the region and was developed with adaptability in mind to address service gaps on the path to stability. Through targeted support and empowerment, it paves the way for transformative change, offering hope for a brighter future.

Loisann’s Hope House Executive Director Cait Woodward said, “The support from The Community Foundation and Women and Girls Fund members of the HOPE program marks a significant milestone for our agency. It enables us to address critical needs such as childcare, transportation, and education for women and young girls experiencing homelessness, empowering us to fulfill our mission of breaking the cycle of homelessness.”

Loisann’s Hope House was one of four grant applicants who presented at the Live Ballot event. Fund members also heard from three other grant applicants:

Healthy Families Rappahannock Area Empowering Her program, nurturing new mothers postpartum. The Empower Her project is dedicated to addressing the needs of mothers during their Fourth Trimester.
STEM Education and Innovation Center (STEM EIC) Technovation Girls of Fredericksburg, Stafford and Caroline County. For girls who want to be changemakers in their communities using technology, the new Afterschool Program would empower girls to become leaders and real-world problem solvers.

Virginia Community Food Connections 2024 Women, Infants, and Children Veggie Voucher Program. The WIC Veggie Voucher Program allows families participating in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) federal nutrition program to access more fresh, local, and whole food. Each week, families can present their WIC card at one of six regional farmers markets to receive a Veggie Voucher worth $15 for FREE fresh fruits and vegetables. In 2023, the Veggie Voucher program served nearly 500 households (nearly 8,000 individuals, predominantly women and children ages five and under).

The Women and Girls Fund has a vision of growing a fund made up of 1,000 women, each giving a one-time contribution of $1,000, to create a $1 million endowment to fund programs like these for years to come. Women from Caroline, Fredericksburg City, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford can join at any time and make payments on a one-time, quarterly or yearly basis.

“This event, the fund and its grants, are a testament to the power of collective action,” said Community Foundation Executive Director Teri McNally. “The members of the fund and the nonprofits are, together, building a community where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive.”

To learn more, visit www.cfrrr.org/who-we-are/women-and-girls-fund

About The Community Foundation

For more than 25 years, people who give through The Community Foundation have made a significant positive impact by establishing over 200 funds that collectively gave over $2.3 million this year to local nonprofits, churches and schools.

The Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization that manages and distributes charitable giving in the Rappahannock River region. The foundation promotes greater philanthropy by addressing the challenges faced by donors in a responsible and knowledgeable manner. We distinguish ourselves from other local charities by providing efficient and effective services to build a collection of permanent funds.

The Community Foundation offers a spectrum of services for individuals, organizations and businesses that are eager to achieve impactful results with their charitable actions. For more information call 540-373-9292, email info@cfrrr.org or visit www.cfrrr.org.

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Picture by Tina Jackson Photography:

Representatives from Loisann’s Hope House left to right: Heather Cohen, Cassie Payne, Cait Woodward, Melissa Moore, Makaela Silver and Maria Serpas.