



Photo by Donna Rogers

The Women's Fund of Winston-Salem awarded five organizations grants for 2015. The representatives accepting the awards are (L-R) Erika Stewart and Rosa Miranda of El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services; Rusty Hall and Linda Winikoff of Old Town Elementary School; Joanne Davidson and Sylvia Oberle of Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County; and Trina Stephens of Imprints Cares. Elizabeth Freze of Planned Parenthood South Atlantic is absent from the photo.

Women's Fund ready for next phase

Luncheon helps celebrate its 10th year anniversary

BY DONNA ROGERS
THE CHRONICLE

The Women's Fund of Winston-Salem has been around since 2005 and isn't going anywhere except up, according to the outlook presented at its annual luncheon on Tuesday, Nov. 17, at the Benton Convention Center.

The main purpose of the Women's Fund of Winston-Salem luncheon was to announce the organizations that were awarded grants for 2015.

But officials with the Fund also spoke about some of the findings of the Fund's recent report titled, "A Second Look Through a Gender Lens: The Economic Security of Women and Girls in Forsyth County." It is an update of the Fund's 2010 report on the status of women and girls in the county.

The October 2015 report shows that while high school graduations are up and teen pregnancies are down, poverty is up in the county. The study found 21.7 percent of women in Forsyth County living in poverty. It found 34.2 percent of black women, 50.6 percent of Hispanic women and 16 percent of Caucasian women are living in poverty.

"Having 50 percent of any group of women in our community in poverty is unacceptable, and collectively we must work together to improve the lives of all women and girls," said Tory Gillett, vice chairwoman of the Fund.

As the Fund has grown in membership, endowment and grantmaking capacity, "We need to continue to grow our impact," she said.

"We are a group that is taking action," Gillett said. The Women's Fund gave a glimpse into one of the agencies it supports to show its impact on battling poverty among women and girls.

Representatives from the Circles Program spoke about how the program is helping to pull them from poverty through leadership training, community support and community transformation, which leads to working on problems such as expunging criminal records.

Denise Terry credited her networking with allies in the program as the aspect that has helped her the most. She said she was sinking into depression at one time.

"Talking with my allies helped me overcome this feeling," she said.

For 2015, the Fund awarded over \$107,000 in grants to five local non-profit organizations to address the economic security of women and girls in Forsyth County.

This year, The Women's Fund asked organizations to propose programs that were responsive to the issues and recommendations outlined in its 2010 report, titled "Through a Gender Lens: The Economic Security of Women and Girls in Forsyth County."

In the last nine years, The Women's Fund of Winston-Salem awarded grants totaling over \$1.2 million to local organizations working to improve the lives of women and girls in Forsyth County.

The Women's Fund also reached its \$1 million endowment goal this year. The Fund's over 800 members include female corporate and nonprofit leaders, educators, community leaders, volunteers, entrepreneurs, and students.

The following organizations were awarded grants:

*El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services was awarded \$24,500 for economic empowerment of women in the Latino community. The Economic Empowerment Program will offer help to an initial cohort of 10 women seeking to start their own businesses.

*Habitat for Humanity of Forsyth County was awarded \$15,664 for a home maintenance workshop pilot program for women. This program will provide hands-on maintenance experience to 60 women in Forsyth County.

*Imprints Cares was awarded \$29,997 for programs to prevent teenage pregnancy and to support teenage mothers. Imprints Cares at Downtown Health Plaza will offer parenting services to low-income, unwed teen girls, young mothers and expectant young mothers who receive services at the Downtown Health Plaza and are referred by medical providers.

*Old Town Elementary School was awarded \$7,550 for "Full STEM Ahead," an after-school STEM club for girls who attend Old Town Elementary.

*Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, which is based in Raleigh but has a Winston-Salem office, was awarded \$30,000 to implement the Contraceptive Choice project to educate low-income teenagers about contraceptive methods and empower them to choose the method that works for their needs.



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