



Women for Women Making New Connections

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Creating positive connections with other people is incredibly important for maintaining personal wellness and healthy communities. Shortly after I moved to Springfield, I was fortunate to be invited by Julie Zara to join the Young Philanthropists at the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. Through Young Philanthropists, the Community Foundation provided me with an excellent experience connecting with the Springfield community. I met great people, and I learned about its other initiatives. In 2013, I was excited to join Women for Women, which makes larger grants focused on helping women and children.



Sarah Beuning

More than a decade ago, former Springfield Mayor Karen Hasara and a dynamic group of women had a vision of how they could provide a lasting impact in the community. They created Women for Women and The Women's Fund endowment at the Community Foundation. This giving circle brings together like-minded women who focus on giving back to others through compassion, knowledge, friendship and philanthropy. In the years since its founding, Women for Women has continued to grow and engage additional women for the common goal of helping women and children in our community. There are more than 100 current members of Women for Women. By coming together, we participate in grantmaking that is impactful and we create connections with each other and with the community.



Women for Women's most recent grants reflect our common goal to address a wide range of community needs for the benefit of women and children. We are helping local at-risk elementary school students improve academic skills and participate in enrichment activities at Camp Compass this summer, and we are supporting more opportunities for mothers healing from poverty, addiction and abuse with a grant to Wooden It Be Lovely's transitional employment program.

Also, Women for Women made its first grant outside Sangamon County this year. In May, we provided funding to launch Deaf Wings, a program through the Jacksonville Area Center for Independent Living that provides training in trauma-informed interpreting to assist deaf and hard of hearing individuals dealing with domestic violence and abuse. These trained sign-language interpreters will help empower those in particularly vulnerable situations. Deaf Wings is a program that we are excited to see grow, and we are thrilled to connect with the Jacksonville community in this way.

These three most recent grants are excellent examples of the impact Women for Women is making. We continue to build on our 10-year history of collective grantmaking. Since its first

grant in 2008, which supported a mentoring program connecting UIS athletes with students from Springfield School District 186, The Women's Fund has supported a number of projects, including MOSAIC Moms (a program that addresses the mental health and well-being of single mothers and their children), curriculum empowering girls to address cyber-bullying and eating disorders, and a program reconnecting recently incarcerated women with their families.

Women for Women strives to make large, thoughtful grants that help improve the lives of women and children. We celebrate the successful programs that Women for Women has funded, but we know there is still much work to be done. Please don't wait – now is a great time to connect with other women and your community through Women for Women. We kick off our year of philanthropy in July. I invite you to join us!

Change can happen with individual effort, but we can be so much more powerful when we work together as part of a connected community with common goals.

Sarah Beuning is the Women for Women steering committee chair. For more information about Women for Women, please contact the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln at 217.789.4431