



Women's Giving Circle of Howard County Community Launch

Feb. 26, 2002

Jean F. Moon, Opening Remarks

Welcome to the Community Launch of The Women's Giving Circle of Howard County ... **and to the beginning of our journey together to improve the lives of women and girls in Howard County.**

I am Jean Moon, one of the founding members of the Women's Giving Circle. The other founders are Buffy Beaudoin-Schwartz, Maggie J. Brown, Yolanda Bruno, Beth Sandbower Harbinson, Dorothy V. Harris, H. Elizabeth Horowitz, Barbara K. Lawson, Cathy Lickteig, Jane Vance McCauley, Darlene Miller, Shelley Mulitz, Linda Odum, Migsie Richlin, Joanne Maria Saltzberg and Arlene Sheff.

There are many familiar faces here today. **Some of you have started your fourth decade of service to the cause of women's equality. Others, young enough to be our daughters – some, in fact, who are our daughters – have taken up the challenge,** and we warmly welcome you to the cause.

Thirty years ago, a gathering like this would have taken place at The Women's Center. It was where we sought the support of other women as we struggled to forge new identities during a period of upheaval.

We were young and we were powerless – it was a time in Howard County when women began to emerge as volunteers in the political arena, but very few women held positions of authority and responsibility. Few were in a position – financially or professionally – to make a significant difference in the larger community.

When we look around the room today, it is hard to imagine that time.

In this room are performing artists, a professional photographer and a sculptor, the founder of a museum and the owner of a theater, heads of arts institutions, journalists, women who own their own businesses and those who work for major corporations, health professionals, lawyers, educators, Executive Directors of organizations that are the backbone of the delivery of human services in Howard County, department heads and government workers, the director of the Howard County library system, bankers, realtors, a parish nurse and a minister and women who have devoted their lives to volunteerism. The President of Howard Community College and the President of the Columbia Association are women. There's a woman on the County Council today and women candidates who want the job next. We have a woman State Senator and two women Delegates from Howard County.

When we were younger, poorer and less powerful, we never imagined such a day. It is important to celebrate our achievements, to be proud of the distance we've traveled, the foundation we've laid for succeeding generations of women.

But it also important to remember that we are here because **our individual dreams became women's collective ambitions and eventually became institutionalized goals of our society**. Laws were changed, business practices overhauled, college admission procedures revamped, new services and programs created to help women. **We didn't get where we are without help.**

There are many women in Howard County today who are struggling, who are desperate for a chance to change their lives for the better – they want to leave abusive relationships, get an education, find a decent job, beat the cycle of poverty, keep their children safe and healthy, live with dignity and self-respect.

They need a hand.

There are young girls at risk in our county, and they are vulnerable to predators and to peer pressure and the consequences of low self-esteem.

- Half of the clients of the Sexual Trauma Treatment Advocacy and Recovery Center are under 18. Half of them are under 12.
- Less than 2 weeks ago in Howard County, a 15-year old girl was raped by two teenage boys while three other boys watched.
- There was a 21% increase in the number of crisis intervention services provided by the STTAR Center last year.

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- The Domestic Violence Center saw a 30% increase in the number of clients during the same period.
- Grassroots can't keep pace with the need for temporary housing for people in Howard County who become homeless. Most of those people are women and their young children.
- The soon-to-be released report of the Howard County Commission for Women on the Status and Needs of Women in Howard County reveals that 1/3 of the single mothers here with children under 5 have incomes below \$15,000 a year in a county where more than \$40,000 a year is necessary to obtain basic necessities for a family of three.
- Of the people seeking housing assistance from the county, 82% are women.
- The rise in immigrant populations has been widely reported, and the situation of foreign-born women is particularly acute, compounded as it frequently is by language barriers. They are strangers in a strange land.
- In addition, as has been pointed out in previous studies, three out of every five seniors in Howard County are women... the "graying of the county" is a women's issue, and it is going to increase in significance, not decrease, as time goes on.

In other words, there is much to do to help others.

And today, women are in the position – financially and professionally – to make a significant difference in the larger community, to address the issues of at risk girls, economically challenged women, foreign-born women and women who are aging and on their own.

We believe women of concern, compassion and generosity can make the greatest difference by working together for change... and The Women's Giving Circle is one way to do that.

You can join the Women's Giving Circle for as little as \$25 and as much as \$5,000, and you can spread your contribution over a 5-year period.

We are looking for women to make ambitious, generous multi-year commitments **in addition to the contributions they are already making to worthy organizations and causes.**

We recognize that you may contribute money to your church, your alma mater, arts organizations, environmental groups, political candidates, as well as the wide spectrum of important human service providers in Howard County, some of which concentrate their efforts on serving women. That is a good thing.

We are looking to you to add to your contribution list, to make helping women and young girls a priority. **It is important that we build a community of women philanthropists who are committed to helping other women.**

From the beginning, we've talked about generating \$500,000 to officially launch the Women's Giving Circle. That would provide a good start for the endowment, as well as money to give away in grants immediately.

We hope you will think about your own situation and what you can afford to invest to address the needs of women and girls in Howard County now. **What kind of legacy do you want to leave for the long-term support of issues related to women and girls?**

Buffy Beaudoin-Schwartz
Director, Baltimore Giving Project

This is a really exciting time for women in philanthropy!

For centuries, women have focused efforts and fortunes into creating new institutions and bringing about significant social change. The role of "volunteer" and "giver" is a traditional one for women, yet few people have thought of women in their own rite as philanthropists and until recent years, philanthropy remained somewhat uncharted territory for many women.

But this has begun to change.

As leaders in all areas of society, women are beginning to understand their full potential as philanthropists, and as shapers of society.

As we begin the 21st century, women in the U.S. – and here in Howard County - are in a position of unprecedented wealth and economic power. Today, women control more individual, family, shared and inherited wealth than ever before and women are becoming increasingly more astute about their own financial resources and responsibilities.

For example:

- Women make up 53% of the workforce and are increasingly moving into higher-paying professional careers.

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- Women make up 1.6 million of the top wealth holders in the U.S., with a combined net worth of almost \$2.2 trillion.
- And, perhaps most striking of all, because women are living longer than men, women will end up in charge of much of the \$41 to \$136 trillion dollars that are expected to pass from one generation to the next over the next fifty years.

It is very exciting that more and more women are considered philanthropists, and are comfortable viewing themselves as visible philanthropists.

There is the belief that philanthropy - or the trend of combining volunteerism with financial resources - is the next frontier of the women's movement.

So, What Motivates Women To Give?

Research has found that women have unique giving patterns and don't give in the same way that men do. Grounded in a tradition of volunteerism and sharing, women are bringing a new voice to giving that is based on partnership and engagement.

There are Many Reasons Why Women Give, Including:

- "Giving gives me a feeling of value and satisfaction ...
- It helps me to perpetuate a certain viewpoint or philosophy ...
- It allows me to memorialize a friend or loved one ... while giving around a purposeful mission ...
- It's a chance for me to give back to my community ... to leave a legacy ... and to satisfy a desire for leadership ...
- It allows me to network and socialize with like-minded individuals ... and to capitalize on tax advantages ...
- But most of all ... its an opportunity to create my own journey and make a mark that's important to me."

Sondra Shaw-Hardy and Martha Taylor, co-founders of the Women's Philanthropy Institute, identify six recurring themes – or the **6 C's of why women give**:

Create

- Women want to create new solutions to old problems.

Change

- Women give to bring about social change.

Connect

- Women like to see the human face their gift affects.

Collaborate

- Women prefer to work with others as part of a larger effort.

Commit

- Women often volunteer and give to the causes they care about over the long haul.

Celebrate

- Women like to celebrate their accomplishments and have fun with philanthropy.

Women Who Give Identify the Following Benefits:

- A sense of self-empowerment
- Gratitude for the opportunity to impact causes of importance to them
- The knowledge of being a part of a larger community
- Meeting others who share interests and values
- Participating in the process and watching a project unfold.

Ways that Women are Giving:

Women continue to grow as philanthropists in a variety of ways, among them:

- Making more and larger direct gifts to charity
- Becoming more knowledgeable about planned giving options
- Establishing a fund at a community or public foundation
- Starting a private foundation
- Developing a corporate giving program or corporate foundation

New Trends in Women's Giving:

There are some new trends in women's giving, such as the women's fund.

Women's funds raise and distribute money to programs that benefit women and girls. The growth of women's funds has been tremendous the last decade. For example, **in 1990, 5 women's funds existed ... in 2002 there are over 100 women's funds** operating around the country.

One type of women's fund – the giving circle – is a growing trend around the country – and what we have developed here in Howard County.

A giving circle is comprised of a group of individuals who contribute to a pooled fund and participate in decisions about how to distribute the funds. Giving circles are popular because they are quite flexible, and they allow donors to:

- Leverage financial, intellectual and human capital for change
- Have an increased impact
- Network and socialize with like-minded individuals
- Experience hands-on grantmaking
- Learn more about the community
- Grow philanthropy
- Create a legacy of giving

Giving circles are helping to chart a new model of social change philanthropy. More and more women are enjoying the collaboration, camaraderie, and leveraged impact of a giving circle.

We here in Howard County are at the **forefront of this trend and are poised to make a significant difference in our region both now and in the future** – and serve as a model for others around the country.

My **nine-year-old daughter Jordan – one of the first members of the Women’s Giving Circle** - and I invite you to join all of our efforts to grow philanthropy and to make a difference for women and girls through the Women’s Giving Circle of Howard County.

Thank you.

Jane McCauley, Education Based Philanthropy

Buffy has spoken to you about the concept of the Women's Giving Circle as a new and effective way for women to collaborate in order to address the particular needs of women and girls by pooling both ideas and funds to make strategic grants and build an endowment for giving in the future.

Dorothy has explained how a Giving Circle - ours in particular - actually works.

Now I am going to tell you about a working Committee that is fundamental to the achievement of our objectives:

The Education Committee

The Women’s Giving Circle (WGC) of Howard County is making no assumptions about what is needed to support women and girls in our County. Instead, we are committed to **becoming educated, well-informed philanthropists.**

We intend to be open to innovative and under-funded programs, to ideas and possibilities for new ways to address old problems, as well as to the support of proven, existing programs.

The Education Committee is the "research and analysis" arm of the WGC.

Though this event is the actual launch of the WGC, we have already begun inviting direct service providers, experts, and community representatives to educate us about existing programs, and about their observations and suggestions on services to women that are still needed - either to fill a gap, or extend the reach of those programs that already exist.

Some of the individuals we have heard from to date are:

- Carole MacPhee --from the Columbia Housing Corporation
- Jean Lewis - from the Howard County Board of Education
- Marion Miller - the Principal of Running Brook Elementary School
- Patty Keeton - from Howard Comm. College

We are **enormously grateful** for their input and support. And, there are many others of you here that we hope will accept our requests when they are made in the near future!

These "training sessions," as we call them, and to which the **entire WGC is invited**, serve to inform us about the needs of the whole spectrum of women and girls: from the elderly to toddlers in Head Start, from displaced homemakers to girls in the juvenile justice system.

We are accumulating a **base of information that will assist us in the process of making decisions** on the grant recommendations that will come from the Grant Review Committee (GRC) when it is formed and functioning.

The GRC will develop the criteria and standards, the process by which grants will be awarded, and the system for review of awards after they are given. The entire WGC will be most attentive to the **performance of grantees, and to the outcome of grants** given.

The WGC is committed to the education of the larger community beyond the members of the Circle.

One opportunity for this will be at the Annual Meeting for all members called for in our by-laws. And, as the WGC grows and develops, we expect to sponsor additional programs that will bring the needs of various groups of women to the attention of the

larger community beyond the membership of the WGC.

At this point, those of you who are interested can get involved almost on the ground floor. **We welcome you at Education Committee "training" sessions**, and to join the committee if your interest extends that far. Just indicate your interest on the information sheet in the materials you will receive, and, when we are organized and ready to move ahead in the area you have chosen, you will be called.

It is our fervent hope that, as more and more women become conscious of the needs of women and girls in Howard County, and of the impact the focused attention and strategic grants of the WGC can make, we will see a growing number of women - of all ages - **bringing their creative thinking, their concern and compassion, and now their philanthropy** as well, to the WGC.

So, the next time you despair over some upsetting news story about the desperate situation faced by a Howard County woman or girl, and wish there were something you could do to help -THERE IS!

Join the Women's Giving Circle of Howard County. We WILL make a difference, now and in the future.

Thank you.