

Spring — 2008



Tiara Classic, Take II: Runners, mothers and others ... Page 3

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Women's Fund

A FUND OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

“Clearly no one knows what leadership has gone undiscovered in women of all races, and in black and other minority men.”

— GLORIA STEINEM

There's no mistake about women leaders

When Women's Fund Executive Director Kate Fentress was selected by the Standard-Times as 2007 SouthCoast Woman of the Year, her first thought was that there mustn't have been many qualified nominees. Many of the other women from surrounding towns, also elected for their multiple contributions within their communities, had similar initial reactions. Yet, these individuals are described as women with great energy, leadership skills, and accomplishments.

Bob Unger, editor of the Standard Times, explains the newspaper's choice of Kate: "The SouthCoast Man and Woman of the Year awards are the highest awards we give. Kate was selected because she and the Women's Fund are making an extraordinary difference in the lives of women and girls, and given the many social issues confronting our community, the efforts of the Women's Fund are especially key. She is tireless, committed and principled, and she was an easy choice."

Whether it's Betsy Ellis, who travels to Chile to help build an agricultural high school, or gets children at her Sunday School to collect funds for the Leprosy Foundation; or it is Marcine Fernandes, whose job is foster care and homeless liaison for the Wareham public schools

(among many other things she does); all of the women are impressive, yet all are self-effacing, perhaps to a fault.

In her book "Revolution from Within," Gloria Steinem writes that throughout her travels she has met women who are smart, courageous and valuable, but who don't think of themselves as such. Where does this diminution of our abilities; this inability to recognize our strengths and rejoice in them come from? Is it in our genes? Is it our social environment? Is it our age-old instinct of survival that subjugates our needs and abilities for the common good?

We would love to hear from you as to why you think we do this to ourselves, and what you think we can do to change this mindset. As a first step, let's start off by acknowledging other women in whose eyes we can see our own strengths mirrored and magnified.

S-T WOMEN OF THE YEAR

SouthCoast
Kate Fentress
Acushnet
Betsy Ellis
Dartmouth
Lt. Col Sylvia Friedman
Fairhaven
Constance Fredette
Freetown
Linda Remedis
Marion
Susan Grosart
Mattapoisett
Sheila-Rae Diugosinski
New Bedford
Marjorie Jenney
Rochester
Linda Remedis
Wareham
Marcine Fernandes
Westport
Beth Easterly

Please send your feedback to wf-sc@comcast.net. If there is interest, we will post comments on the Web site, and keep the conversation going.

Mission
*To support
programs that
develop and
protect the mind, body,
spirit and choices
of women and girls.*

*Sundial Building
63 Union Street
New Bedford, MA 02740
p 508.717.0283
f 508.996.8254
www.cfsema.org/womensfund*

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From Our Director

Kate Fentress
Executive Director

Of spring, learning ‘no,’ and powerful giving

Spring is here! With Daylight Savings Time upon us there’s plenty of evening time for outdoor activities. If I weren’t the starter for our 2nd Annual Tiara Classic 5K Mother’s Day Road Race, I would be training every day, determined not to be the last walker across the finish line. Maybe we should add a prize for that person – perseverance goes a long way in this world! Who knew getting up at 6 a.m. on Mother’s Day (don’t panic runners and walkers, we arrive early to set up!) could be so much fun? This year we have a special offer for SMILES mentors who would like to be in the race. (See page 3.) May 11, rain or shine, we hope to see you and your family and friends in Mattapoisett.

Our recent strategic planning retreat deserves a few words. I tend toward yes when opportunities present themselves, but the retreat helped me to recognize that being more focused and selective at this stage of our growth will further define who we are and actually strengthens our identity in the community. We will continue to home in on projects that address education and economic empowerment. As a group, we became more aware of how all of our activities must be in keeping with our values of diversity, equity and independence. Our strategic plan, which is in process, will measure all of it against the important dual purposes of social change impact

and development of the fund (donors and volunteers). That is all of you who have so generously given your time and money, and those of you who I am confident will do so in the future. Bristol County alone is the home for nearly 300,000 women – this newsletter only reaches 1 percent of you so far. We are committed to reaching out to those other women in the coming months and years. As Gloria Steinem has said, “It is more rewarding to watch money change the world than watch it accumulate.”

Speaking of Gloria, the event put on by the Women’s Studies Program at UMass Dartmouth was a very special evening. For us it provided a great example of how aggregate giving works, a hallmark of Women’s Funds. We invited grantees, donors and women of the year from the surrounding communities to join us in supporting the Women’s Studies Scholarship program. Our five tables represented a large presence, a significant sum and an opportunity for all who sat with us to make much more of a difference than if each had bought an individual ticket. We had a great evening, and as a group made a significant financial contribution to UMass. We also had the privilege of listening to Gloria Steinem, who is wise, funny, generous and committed to human rights. I wish all of you could have been there with us for this extraordinary evening.

Men can’t cook this year, but they can give

The New Bedford Board of Health did not provide a permit for the Women Center’s annual fundraiser “Men Who Cook.” The Center is hoping to raise at least a portion of the \$20,000 it usually makes on this event with a raffle. We want to encourage all of the

men we know to consider a contribution to this organization, which has done such good work in our community for more than 30 years. You can log on at <http://www.thewomenscentersc.com/events.php> to find out how you can give, or call 508-996-3343.

Collaboration key to WISE Women program

It's with good reason that ever since seventh-grade science teachers have existed, they've been splitting their classes into groups to work on projects: The tremendous power of collaboration.

That's precisely the paradigm steering the WISE Women Project, sponsored by the Women's Fund, Bristol Community College and the Massachusetts Community College Executive Office. The group approach cultivates deeper interaction among participants, as well as enhanced engagement and better retention of information.

WISE Women – designed to take participants from zero to career-bound in 16 weeks – focuses on three competencies: Phase I, Work Readiness; Phase II, Job Skill Training; and Phase III, Work-based Experience and Job Placement. Targeting economically challenged women, WISE – Women in Successful Environments – borrows a K-12 concept, the Individual Educational Plan, to tailor the program to each student.

Based at BCC's New Bedford campus, students choose one of two career paths during Phase II: Early Childhood Education or Medical Office. During Phase III, students collaborate with local employers to gain hands-on experience in a supervised, real-life environment.

The program launched in February with a class of 20 students – many of them single mothers with small children – for whom the combination of college-level classes and childcare responsibilities presents a significant challenge. They will complete the coursework in May, followed by internships and job interviews. The women are thrilled to be offered this opportunity to learn and to grow together and are determined to succeed for themselves and for their children.

Program support is significant, from workshops and individual sessions for those looking for a job in their chosen fields, to ongoing career assistance to develop future opportunities. Participants have received a high school diploma or GED but are currently unemployed and dependent on aid from the Department of Transitional Assistance. Such women may lack the confidence necessary to navigate the college environment and adapt to the college. Without support and direction, these women run the risk of becoming overwhelmed by the admissions process and easily discouraged when attempting to resolve impediments to their entry and subsequent progress through college programs. Wise Women is designed to fill in those experiential and skill-gaps.

Tiara Classic fun for the entire family

“I am fairly certain that given a cape and a nice tiara, I could save the world.”

— LEIGH STANDLEY



Kate Fentress, Liz Ackerman and Lara Stone enjoy the festivities during the first annual Tiara Classic.

Volunteers are hard at work organizing the second annual Tiara Classic 5K Mother's Day Road Race in Mattapoisset. On Sunday, May 11, kids can participate in a fun run and families can run and/or walk in a 5K road race. While our long-term vision is to move the race from town to town, we had so much fun in Mattapoisset we are staying for a second year.

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ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Jean MacCormack

Carolee Matsumoto

Nancy McFadden

Susan Perry

Cathy Roberts

Robin Robinson

Lara Stone

WOMEN CREATING CHANGE TOGETHER

Women's Fund proves value of aggregate giving

A shared focus of the 125 Women's Funds in the Women's Funding Network is to encourage women of differing means to own their power to be agents of change – whether giving of their time, talent or treasure. Our Women's Fund is a volunteer organization with two excellent, but part-time, employees. Everything else is accomplished by the generosity of the volunteers who “woman” the Advisory Council, head up the committees, do the grant making, put on the events and of course, raise the funds to support our mission.

This year the Women's Fund was fortunate to gather a group of committed women who understood the value of giving in the aggregate to make change. By designating a gift through the Action Fund of the Women's Foundation, these women were able to leverage their contributions to quality programs that serve the women and girls of our region. Together we gave nearly \$100,000 to WISE Women at Bristol Community College, Our Sisters' School, StarKids of New Bedford, Keith Middle School, Bioneers by the Bay, Community Boating, Artworks and the YWCA.

As Abby Disney of the New York Women's Foundation said, we want to challenge our donors to make two gifts – one to our Women's Fund and one designated for another not-for-profit that serves women and girls in our area. It is not either/or. It is much more. We can bust this charitable pool of dollars wide open when we see the power of women giving together and the joy of making positive change in our corner of the world.

If you already give to an organization serving women and girls and would like to learn more about how giving it through the Women's Fund can make a greater impact, please contact Kate Fentress at kfentress@cfsema.org or 508-717-0283. Together we will make a difference!

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This family event honors the mind, body and spirit of women and girls! Runners and walkers may walk in memory or honor of a special woman in their lives. All proceeds support the Women's Fund at the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, a permanently endowed fund. If you are a mentor through the SMILES mentoring program, we would like to offer you a “twofer” – you and your mentee can register to run/walk for the price on one. (Of course, if you want to pay for both we won't stop you...this is a fundraiser, but mostly we hope you can join us for a good time!)

If you would like more information about getting involved, becoming a sponsor or volunteering at the race, please contact Lara Stone at 508-612-8775 or email at lhstone@comcast.net or contact Kate Fentress, Executive Director of the Women's Fund.

Pre-register by May 1 at: www.cfsema.org/womensfund. SMILES participants cannot register online.

C A L E N D A R O F E V E N T S

April 14

OUR SISTERS' SCHOOL INFORMATION SESSION

Our Sisters' School, which is located at Nativity Prep, 66 Spring St., New Bedford, will hold a general information session at 6:30 p.m. The school is still accepting applications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.OURSISTERSCHOOL.ORG

April 23

CAREER GEAR COLLECTION

Business After Hours, sponsored by the New Bedford Chamber and Citizens-Union Bank, at the bank at 95 William St., New Bedford, 5-7 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 508-999-5231

April 24

POET LAUREATE LOUISE GLUCK

Umass Dartmouth Library Browsing Area, 4-5:30 p.m. Gluck is author of several books of poetry, most recently “Averno.” In addition to receiving numerous awards, her collection “The Wild

Iris,” won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992. Gluck will read from her works, respond to questions and sign books.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: JEN.RILEY@UMASSD.EDU

April 25

GIRLS, COMMUNITY & JUSTICE

Fourth annual conference for scholars, practitioners, advocates and policymakers, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., at UMass Dartmouth Woodland Commons

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 508-999-8788 or rrobinson@umassd.edu

May 11

TIARA CLASSIC 5K MOTHERS DAY RACE

Oxford Creamery, Mattapoisett, 9 a.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: CALL LARA STONE, 508-612-8775

August 4

THE WOMEN'S CENTER GOLF OUTING

Held at Allendale Country Club.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 508-996-3343, ext. 25