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INVEST *in* Baltimore

## **Women Pool Resources to Award Over \$300,000 to 19 Local Nonprofits *Seek to Improve Life for Disadvantaged Families***

(Baltimore, MD, 06/09/08) The Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle (BWGC) will award more than \$300,000 in grants to 19 Baltimore–area nonprofit organizations this year. The Circle, a group of female donors who have pooled their charitable dollars—each member contributing \$1,100 yearly—decides together where those dollars will be spent. Selected from 77 applicants, the 19 organizations’ programs and services match BWGC’s goal of improving life and promoting self-sufficiency for economically disadvantaged women and their children in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

“Our many members are highly engaged in the process from beginning to end,” says BWGC’s immediate past co-chair, Anne Donahue, “and this brand of hands-on philanthropy, of ‘down in the trenches’ grantmaking, is one of the things that makes the Circle unique. In the two years Lynn Sassin and I have been co-chairs,” Donahue adds, “Circle grants have benefited:

- babies - HIV transmission prevention;
- children - child care while mothers were in life skills classes;
- pre-teens whose mothers were incarcerated;
- teenagers - lots of teenagers - being mentored, learning to make videos, preparing for college;
- young women with addiction, sexual abuse, mental illness, illiteracy, refugee histories;
- mid-age women - financial literacy, life skills, how to interview for a job, GED classes;

- older women - exercise classes, learning how to care for an Alzheimer's patient.

“We have helped train women to be culinary workers and child care providers,” she points out. “We have purchased computers so women could learn those skills. We have trained mediators, employed case managers, supported a college counselor, taught English. We assisted 48 women and their families in 2007 alone with transitional housing needs, and have helped provide free medication and health care.”

A fund of the Baltimore Community Foundation, the BWGC was started by 52 women in 2001. The Circle has grown to include more than 300 members in 2008, and to date has awarded more than \$1.3 million in grants.

“The Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle demonstrates the power of collective giving to increase the effectiveness and reach of successful community programs,” notes BCF President Tom Wilcox, “and BCF is proud to support the women of the BWGC as they work to build a greater Baltimore area in which all can thrive.” The organization was launched with a \$10,000 grant from BCF, “proving again,” says Donahue, “the value of small, targeted grants.”

Baltimore Women’s Giving Circle grantees serve women and their families in the following key areas: domestic violence, health services, housing, life skills, literacy/education, mentoring, and parenting skills.

The 2008 grantees include:

**Community Mediation Program**

A \$10,375 grant to provide for a mediation and conflict resolution program for residents of The House of Ruth, a Baltimore City shelter for battered women and their children.

**Episcopal Community Services of Maryland**

A \$15,000 grant to support the Ark School, the only state-accredited preschool serving homeless children in Baltimore City.

**Hampden Family Center**

A \$20,000 grant to fund a part-time case manager to serve low-income single women, children, and elderly women on fixed incomes.

**INNterim Housing Corporation**

An \$18,504 grant to fund “Learning to Be Self Sufficient” workshops for homeless women in Baltimore County, which address topics such as time and household management, life skills, job retention, budgeting, and employment resources.

**Jewish Family Services**

A \$3,360 grant to fund two therapy groups for women survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

**Kids on the Hill**

A \$20,000 grant to train a group of teenagers so that they can conduct peer education and outreach in Baltimore City around sexual and reproductive health issues.

**Living Classrooms Foundation**

A \$14,400 grant to fund a part-time mentorship coordinator for the Girls’ Empowerment Mission, a program that serves at-risk, economically disadvantaged girls.

**Mercy Health Services**

An \$18,024 grant to fund the SHINE program at Catherine’s Hearth, a Baltimore City support center for homeless families. The programming, offered to adults in transitional or emergency housing, targets parenting and leadership skills, communication, adult education, self-esteem and confidence building, and artistic expression.

**Mission of Mercy**

A \$20,000 grant to provide free health and dental care in Baltimore County via a mobile medical clinic.

**Mother Seton Academy**

A \$15,000 grant to strengthen the Graduate Support Program, which provides academic and financial assistance to MSA graduates during high school and the college application process.

**My Sister's Circle**

A \$20,000 grant to hire a part-time college counselor for this mentorship program serving girls from disadvantaged neighborhoods through middle school, high school, and into college.

**NAMI-Metro Baltimore**

An \$11,000 grant to fund two courses of Peer-to-Peer, a ten-week support program for mental health clients interested in establishing and maintaining their wellness and recovery.

**The Power/Excel Foundation**

A \$20,000 grant to help prepare incarcerated women for reentry into their communities by teaching conflict resolution and financial skills, facilitating career planning and development, and providing support and reinforcement to help them stay in jobs.

**The Pro Bono Counseling Project**

A \$15,000 grant to reinstitute Parenting Alone: Helping Women to Build Healthy Families, a mental health counseling program that provides free counseling referral services and transportation to help low-income women and their families.

**Ready At Five Partnership**

A \$15,000 grant to expand the Learning Laboratory program to Baltimore County in order to improve young children's school readiness and promote parenting skills.

### **St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center**

A \$15,000 grant to bolster the “hardship fund” of the Rental Services Supportive Housing Program. The fund is used to help low-income residents in St. Ambrose housing with items such as beds, cleaning supplies, and air conditioners.

### **St. Frances Academy**

A \$20,000 grant to provide tuition assistance for Baltimore City girls of limited means.

### **Susanna Wesley House**

A \$15,000 grant to increase organizational capacity as the Susanna Wesley House expands to serve more homeless women and their children in Baltimore City.

### **YMCA of Central Maryland**

A \$20,000 grant to fund the Druid Hill Transitional Housing Project, which integrates transitional housing with substance abuse counseling, permanent housing support, life skills and job readiness training, health services, and early childhood education programs.

## **ABOUT THE BALTIMORE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

The Baltimore Community Foundation is the third largest grantmaker among Maryland’s charitable foundations, with distributions in 2007 of \$30 million to hundreds of nonprofit organizations in the Baltimore region and beyond. With assets of \$194 million, BCF comprises more than 500 different charitable funds.

BCF’s civic agenda combines economic development with poverty reduction through strategic investments in the areas of human services, youth, education, transportation, neighborhoods, diversity, environment, arts and culture, and promoting Baltimore.

BCF helps individuals, families and organizations carry out their charitable plans, with the common goal of improving the quality of life in the greater Baltimore region, today and for generations to come. To donors, BCF offers a complete toolkit for charitable giving, expert assistance in learning more about the causes they care about, and the opportunity to join others with similar interests to learn and give together. To the community at large, BCF offers a permanent, growing source of grant monies, as well as a common meeting ground and leadership on important issues in our region.

In addition, BCF provides grantmaking oversight for two independent foundations, the William G. Baker Jr. Memorial Fund and the Leonard and Helen R. Stulman Charitable Foundation.

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