In January 2005, I received a letter from a group of women inviting me to join them. While I don’t recall the specifics of the letter, I do recall that the women were a group whom I highly respect, and they were looking to make a difference. A few weeks later, I joined these leaders, along with several other women who had received similar invitations. The discussion went something like this: “How can we fill the gaps in this community?” “How can we foster education in our community?” On that cold afternoon in late winter 2005, Women United in Philanthropy was born.

So here we are, five years later. As I consider the history of this organization, I am amazed at what we have accomplished. In our early days we focused on high level issues. We hosted Olivia Mellen, who told us about the psychology of money. Laura Nash came to us with research regarding finding balance in our lives. Ellen Remmer talked to us about how to become effective philanthropists, and Andrea Pactor shared information with us about collective giving.

Like the collective mothers of a single newborn, we fiddled, discussed and adjusted. Should we cover local matters? Focus more on women and less on children? We gradually shifted to a more local focus. The late Professor Nock educated us about trends of poverty in our own community. We heard from Judy Smith at CHIP about challenges facing local low income women and their children and Susan Donovan with International

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see First 5 Years
On Monday, May 10th, Women United members and guests gathered to learn of the seven grant finalists and of the work each contributes to our community. Many of these programs are facing funding cuts from federal, state and local budgets.

Children, Youth and Family Services are in need of support for the Home Visiting program that helps new mothers who are still teenagers, those parenting alone, or those living in poverty to learn how to cope with the added stress of taking care of a new baby. The Home Visiting program provides early intervention services for new moms and babies to mitigate risk factors and promote children’s healthy development. Program data has shown that 25% of the babies born to families enrolled in Home Visiting programs in Charlottesville were premature; 90% were born to single moms, and 27% were born to teenagers. Ninety-three percent of participating families lived in poverty. Parents’ lack of knowledge about parenting and community resources can lead to developmental delays, disrupted family relationships, and inadequate health care. Children from these families are likely to arrive at kindergarten lacking the skills they need to succeed, and studies show they are likely to stay behind academically throughout their school years.

Foothills Child Advocacy Center works with children of abuse and neglect. A forensic interview with the alleged child victim is the centerpiece of the multi-disciplinary team and child advocacy center work. This is a neutral fact-finding assessment of the reported abuse, assault and/or victimization completed by a specially trained forensic interviewer. Interviews are digitally recorded, reducing the number of times children need to be interviewed, therefore reducing any trauma the victim may experience. Foothills would like to be able to add Extended Forensic Interviews as a service to children who may take longer to share information about abuse. Additional funds and staff would be necessary for them to add this service.

Jefferson Area CHIP serves children under the age of seven and their families by providing healthcare through home visits. Childhood obesity and unhealthy eating patterns are a growing concern in our community. CHIP is looking to partner with Kroger to help low income families focus on nutrition and exercise. This grant is meant to address the problem through educating and working one-on-one to improve eating patterns.

CASA plays an important role for abused and neglected children who are in the court system. CASA investigates, gathers information, and writes a report for the judge to make recommendations for placement of the child (whether to return home, placement with a relative, foster care, specialized foster care, or a group home). They advocate for the child alone and work closely with the Guardian ad Litem. Their report is an important part of the judge’s decision. The number of children for 2010 doubled (by May) over the previous year. CASA anticipates serving 40 more children this year and believes the increase is due to the economy.

Our 2010 Grant Finalists

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Children, Youth and Family Services

Children, Youth and Family Services is a multi-disciplinary team that fact-finds, gathers information, and writes a report in the court system. CASA investigates, gathers information, and writes a report for the judge to make recommendations for placement of the child (whether to return home, placement with a relative, foster care, specialized foster care, or a group home). They advocate for the child alone and work closely with the Guardian ad Litem. Their report is an important part of the judge’s decision. The number of children for 2010 doubled (by May) over the previous year. CASA anticipates serving 40 more children this year and believes the increase is due to the economy.

The Grant Committee has been working diligently this spring to determine the recipient for our $40,000 grant for 2010, to be presented at our September luncheon. Each of these programs fulfills needs of women and children in our community and would be able to put our funds to great use. The presenters each gave a quick overview of the programs in their proposals and the attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about each program and agency. We thank all seven presenters for their time that they spent to help educate us of needs in our community.
Member Profile: Kate Zirkle

The first thing you notice about Kate Zirkle is the incredible smile that fills the room. She shakes your hand, looks you in the eye, and you know you are sitting with a bright, intense, compassionate woman.

She must be all of this: She cares for husband Bud and five children, ages 16, 18, 21, and 23. Her fun? Tennis. With that family schedule in mind, Kate still finds time for her “other” children.

Originally from Huntsville, Alabama, Kate Zirkle came to Charlottesville via Raleigh, North Carolina. After she put her five children in several different schools and enrolled them in loads of activities, she started to focus on an obvious passion: more children.

As a board member for the Boys and Girls Club, Kate spends many hours doing everything from raising funds to hands-on work with the kids as they prepare for their big bike events. When Kate speaks at events on behalf of the Boys and Girls Club, our area’s schools, or about after-school programs, you hear the determination and intelligent thought in her words. That same enthusiasm and care is present with her efforts on behalf of the Women’s Committee at Martha Jefferson Hospital.

Kate was introduced to Women United in Philanthropy by friend and WUP donor member Janet Miller, also of the Boys and Girls Club. Kate signed up immediately and now says, “…the grants are very well-deserved and needed in the community and they also help to unite WUP… love how accessible and available the group is to all ranges of women in the community…and would like to help increase the diversity of the group.”

Diversity and the spirit which accompanies such a culture is paramount to the success of WUP’s ability to serve our community. It is no wonder that Kate Zirkle is such a great addition to the membership of Women United in Philanthropy.

First 5 Years
Continued from Page 1

...continue reading...
Save the Date!
WUP Annual Luncheon is September 21, 2010

Since 2005, Women United in Philanthropy has awarded grants to organizations in our community with a focus on women and children. These grants are made possible by contributions from our Donor Members. We are proud to announce our Award Recipient this year will receive a grant of $40,000 at our Annual Human Services Grant Award Luncheon on September 21, 2010 at Farmington Country Club.

Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Luanne Freer, a graduate of the University of Virginia and a physician who built the first emergency room station on Mt. Everest. Dr. Freer “gives lessons from the top on forging partnerships between passion and profession. She shares her fascinating story of what it’s like to provide medical care in one of the world’s coldest and most austere environments, and how sometimes competitive human nature can cause more accidents than the mountain.”

Tickets to the WUP Annual Luncheon are $35 for members and $45 for non-members. You may also reserve a table for a group.

Becoming a Sponsor

It is our hope that you or any business with which you are affiliated will consider being a sponsor for this rewarding luncheon. Each sponsor level will include tickets to the luncheon and promotional mention in print and other media advertising. As a sponsor you will also have the opportunity to meet Dr. Freer in a private gathering before the luncheon begins.

Sponsor levels range from $1000 to $4000, with the number of attendee tickets and promotional opportunities corresponding to your contribution.

Please contact one of us for more information. Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Adair Hayes  
Co-Chair  
434-987-4949

Robin Amato  
Co-Chair  
434-981-0767

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