The recipients of the 2016 Women United Human Services Grant Awards are the Children Safe at Home program offered by Albemarle Housing Improvement Program (AHIP), and Piedmont Housing Alliance’s (PHA) Nutrition and Community program at Friendship Court.

Both programs provide vital services to the women and children in our community. The Children Safe at Home program offers critical home repairs for families who do not have the financial resources to make them. AHIP Executive Director Jennifer Jacobs, who accepted the grant award, said that they will use the money for thirty home repairs, which will result in “immediate, tangible” improvements in the lives and security of the children in these households. In accepting the grant award for PHA, Chief Operating Officer Karen Reifenberger said that the after-school snacks purchased with the grant funds “are often the last meal of the day” for the children of Friendship Court.

Both programs recognize that issues of security, either physical or nutritional, affect a child’s ability to thrive. Children do better at school, better at relationships and all other aspects of their lives when their most fundamental needs are met and the anxiety associated with insecurity is thus mitigated.

The 2016 Human Services Grant Awards totaled $40,000, bringing the sum of Women United’s grant awards to $412,000 since the first grant was awarded 11 years ago.
Maia Bannan, Programming Committee
Maia graduated from Sweet Briar College. She joined Women United in 2008, served as Membership Chair 2009-2010, Chair of the Steering Committee in 2013, and currently serves as Co-Chair of Programming. She is a wife and mother who enjoys tennis and museums.

Carolyn Cullen, Women United Chair
Carolyn has been a Women United member for three years, currently as the Steering Committee Chair. She credits her grandmother for her strong sense of philanthropy. She works at UVA as a Learning and Development Manager at the Center for Leadership Excellence. She also volunteers as co-chair of the Charlottesville Chamber's Businesswomen Mentoring Program.

Margery Daniel, At Large
Margery provides clinical case consultation to mental health practitioners in our community. She graduated from Duke University and holds an MSW and PhD from Smith College School for Social Work. As a member of Women United, she values the opportunities for community education and collective giving it provides.

Jen Fiest, Programming Committee
Jen is COO of Murray Enterprises. She worked in Wealth Management for eight years, and practiced real estate law. She was drawn to Women United because of the unmet needs of women and children she encountered in the Charlottesville Area. Her activities include home zookeeper and child taxi driver.

Susan Bell Friedman, At Large
Susan is the President and CEO of the Alzheimer’s Association of Central and Western Virginia. She holds a BA degree from Purdue University and an MS from Indiana State University. She serves on the Steering Committee for Women United, and has been a member of the Albemarle County School Board.

Allyn Gutauskas, Grants Committee
Allyn has enjoyed a thirty-year career in the field of Human Resources. For the past 18 years, she has been employed as the Human Resource Manager at Farmington Country Club. Allyn participates in various community workforce initiatives, including Charlottesville Works Initiative, PluggedIn VA, and the Charlottesville Growing Opportunity (GO) programs.
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS, CONT.

Jennifer Lehman, Grants Committee
Jennifer has 20 years experience as a CPA and is an active, involved member of the Charlottesville community. As COO of Hantzmon Wiebel, with a client focus on employee benefit plan audits and work for high net worth individuals, Jennifer brings an understanding of financial issues related to philanthropy to WUP.

Kim Martin, At Large
Kim has been a member of Women United for six years, serving on the Grant, Communications, and Membership Committees. She attended UVA and met her husband here twenty years ago. She is a Board member for the Sexual Assault Resource Agency and Chair of the Chamber Business Women’s Round Table.

Stacey McDonough, Grants Committee
Stacey is an attorney practicing in the areas of estate planning, real estate, and business law, and a founding partner of Royer, Caramanis & McDonough, PLC. She has been involved with Women United since 2010, most recently serving on the Steering Committee as Grant Committee Chair. She is also on the board of the United Way.

Deborah van Eersel, Women United Co-Chair
Deborah started her professional career as an administrator for the Greater Richmond Retail Merchants Association. Upon moving to Charlottesville in 1988, she functioned as CEO for the Charlottesville Area Association of Realtors (CAAR). She currently serves the UVA Foundation as Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Marketing.

Erika Viccelio, United Way Liaison
Erika is Executive Vice President of United Way and serves as the staff liaison to Women United. She served in leadership roles at the Charlottesville Free Clinic and the Virginia Institute of Autism. She is on the boards of the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics and the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Contributing Members

Byrd Abbott
Kate Acuff
Amanda Norris Ames
Maia Bannan
Sharon Barker
Louisa Barrett
Pamela Bracey
Kim Martin, At Large
Kim has been a member of Women United for six years, serving on the Grant, Communications, and Membership Committees. She attended UVA and met her husband here twenty years ago. She is a Board member for the Sexual Assault Resource Agency and Chair of the Chamber Business Women’s Round Table.

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Between 1980 and 2004, a major shift took place in American philanthropy. In cities across the country, women started playing a larger role in charitable giving through empowerment groups and giving circles. A group of eight women began thinking about how talented and successful women in our area might play a larger role in philanthropy and how a woman's perspective might shine a different light on the needs in our community. What evolved in 2005 from our conversations was Women United in Philanthropy, an organization with a mission to engage and educate women, who were growing influencers and philanthropists, on the needs of women and children in our community.

We made some important organizational decisions at the start. We would ask all members to give money to support the educational mission, but members could choose whether or not to donate to the collective grants. We hoped once women understood the unmet needs of women and children, they would want to contribute to the grants. Recently, the membership has been expanded to include corporate members and underwriters, and membership levels have been redefined.

Our educational programs enlightened us about the work of local human resource agencies that serve the under-resourced. To date, we have heard from about 50 program directors. We also wanted to provide opportunities for area women to hear about important issues affecting them and their children. Each year, we have hosted about three of these informational programs, in addition to the agency presentations. Not to be forgotten are our popular annual luncheons that took place at Farmington where the grant recipients were announced and we heard from nationally known speakers. In recent years, Women United offered events for socializing and networking.

Women United has continued to evolve. We have learned how to expedite our grant making process, yet keep the high level of committee member engagement in the vetting process. After this fall's gift, we will have donated over $400,000 to improve the lives of area women and children. From a group of eight like-minded women, we now have grown to 176 members, 95% of whom reported in a recent survey they would recommend Women United to a friend. What a remarkable foundation to take forward!

By Deborah Conway, Women United Founding Member