



FULL CIRCLE NEWS

June / July 2015

THINK IMPACT!

The Grants Committee has completed its current review cycle. Thirty members shared their time and expertise to produce an impeccable slate. Ninety-five members voted in person, by email or by fax for the new 2015 grantees. With the power of our new on-line application protocol, the rigorous grant process, and the voices of the majority, we can now begin to focus on the most important part of our mission, *making an impact* in our community.

With our collective philanthropic dollars, we are hoping for a high payoff. Some grants will significantly transform the lives of a few in a concentrated, life altering ways. Other grants will impact many to recast the landscape of hopelessness and helplessness. All grants have the potential to significantly touch the lives of women and families.

There will be opportunities in the coming year for members to contribute to this impact. Attend the June 10 education session, [Living on the Ledge Part II: Debunking the Myths of Poverty](#), to better understand the myths and realities of poverty. Learn how our philanthropy and actions can begin to heal those who suffer this burden. Join the Post Grants Evaluation Committee to follow our grantees throughout the year to understand more about their mission and work. Attend a book group discussion to see how many ways we are all involved in the critical issues of our community. Finally, consider joining the Grants Committee to participate in and facilitate the power of our Giving Cycle.

However you choose to participate, use your Giving Circle knowledge and influence to create change and opportunity. Think IMPACT!

[Maureen Cavaiola](#), President
[Mary Grace Folwell](#), Vice President

2015 Grantee Awards Announced

May 13 was the day -- the day we put our collective philanthropy to work. Our members chose to provide \$105,505 in funding to nine programs that will impact the lives of families, women and young people in our county:

- Anne Arundel Community Action Agency: Green Summer Works

- Anne Arundel County Food Bank: Back Pack Buddies
- Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency: Youth Suicide Awareness Action Team
- Anne Arundel County Public Library Foundation: Creating a Family Literacy Center
- Center of Help: Homework Help & Leadership Development
- Food Link: Emergency Baby Pantries
- He Opens Paths to Everyone (HOPE for All): Transitioning Homeless Families
- The Light House: Family Assistance Program
- Rebuilding Together: Women Homeowner Renovations

Anne Arundel Community Action Agency: Green Summer Works (\$10,000) Provide twenty-four low-income students with paid work experience and in-depth mentoring in workplace skills, financial literacy, team-building and setting goals for success in school and future careers. Anne Arundel County

Food Bank: Back Pack Buddies (\$10,000) Expand weekend meals to an additional 250 food insecure children through 26 back pack buddies programs run by schools and churches in the county ensuring proper nourishment, a sense of security and improved learning and school attendance.

Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency: Youth Suicide Awareness Action Team (\$15,000) Expand a piloted class on youth suicide to 8 new schools, reaching as many as 1000 students with the QPR protocol (Question, Persuade, Respond) and enabling students to be the bridge between young suicide victims and critical support services.

Anne Arundel County Public Library Foundation: Creating a Family Literacy Center (\$15,000) Create a “Play and Read” space at the Severn Community Library which serves the largest number of young and vulnerable children in the county by providing multi-sensory activities of talking, singing, writing and reading which are key to developing early literacy skills and starting on a path to lifetime learning.

Center of Help: Homework Help & Leadership Development (\$6,000) Help improve school grades by offering academic support and tutoring for 30 Hispanic students as well as field trips and other enrichment activities to broaden their exposure to American culture, foster integration into the community and support their future success.

Food Link: Emergency Baby Pantries (\$15,000) Support nine baby pantries in the county which provide indispensable diapers, formula, and hygiene products to mothers facing an emergency (job loss, abuse, homelessness) and to ensure their babies can avoid serious health risks and enjoy a healthy development.

He Opens Paths to Everyone (HOPE for All): Transitioning Homeless Families (\$4,505) Create a stable and healthy home atmosphere for women and children as they transition from a shelter into permanent housing and reintegrate into the community, by providing clean and appropriate bedding, basic furniture, household items and school supplies which they do not have the resources to provide for themselves.

The Light House: Family Assistance Program (\$15,000) Provide a wide range of services to empower 14 mothers and 24 children as they move toward self-sufficiency, including counseling in goal-setting, parenting and life skills; real-work job training in culinary arts or facilities maintenance; and support for children through tutoring, summer camp and enrichment activities.

Rebuilding Together: Women Homeowner Renovations (\$15,000) Avoid homelessness or foreclosure for 8-15 low income women homeowners (often older or disabled) by providing necessary (and often substantial) home repairs to keep them safe, dry, warm and independent in their own homes.

The Laurie Sharp Running with Scissors Award

In honor of Laurie Sharp, AAWGT's 2013 President and member from 2007 – 2014, the Laurie Sharp Running with Scissors Award was presented for the first time at the May 13, 2015, meeting. Laurie saw no barriers to success; she always had an idea and a plan. Bronwyn Belling, Judy Coughlin, Barbara Haight, Sandy Sweeney had a **vision** to greatly improve our grant program. After months of **research** and a successful **quest for start-up funding**, they successfully launched our brand new on-line grant process. Like Laurie, they saw no barriers, executed a plan and delivered!

A plan that included creativity, problem solving, inclusiveness, transparency and implementation. She had a desire to improve the world and create opportunities for leadership. In doing all of this – and with her wild and zany sense of humor – Laurie would say she was “running with scissors.” She did run with scissors, but always with the best of intents and for the right reasons! She left a wonderful legacy for AAWGT and we honor her contributions with this award. Laurie Sharp was an AAWGT Member from December 31, 2007 – March 21, 2014. She was President in 2013.

Proclamation: As an evolving Women's Giving Circle, AAWGT has been developing its grant program for eight years. Lo and behold there came a time when the complexity and growth of the system clashed with the ability of AAWGT to keep track of its process using paper and pens and clunky IT. But it came to pass that several visionaries in AAWGT had a glimmer of an idea. Would it be possible to change the course of the grants cycle by placing it on a new and stronger platform?

First, there was the need to get buy in from strategic leaders.

Following that, were many months of rigorous research as well as miles traveled for discovery.

Finally, there was the quest for funding for the first three years of operation.

The initial process took well over a year and yet another to implement the plan. Persistence and patience dominated!

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! The “Running with Scissors” idea has blossomed from plan to reality! AAWGT now has a brand new on-line grant process that ensures a future of procedural integrity as well as continuing historical and statistical perspective for our philanthropy. AAWGT prodigiously thanks the following women for their incredible steadfastness and leadership in birthing and developing this new tool for the Giving Circle.

- Judy Coughlin: for her vision of seeing the need for sustainability of the grants process.
- Barbara Haight: for technical expertise in programming and implementing the data for the on-line program.
- Sandy Sweeney: for her dedication to making sure the essence and heart of the grants process was included in the new innovation.
- Bronwyn Belling: for her continuing historical perspective and hands on labor of love for improving the grants process and AAWGT.

We hereby designate the above four AAWGT members as the inaugural recipients of the Laurie Sharp Running with Scissors Award.

Date: May 13, 2015

Maureen Cavaiola, President

Mary Grace Folwell, Vice President/President Elect

Karen Smith, Immediate Past President

Membership News

AAWGT welcomes three new members and thanks 21 members who renewed their membership during the second quarter.

New Members April 1 – May 31

Stephanie Butler	Lori DeRose	Janet Ghatti
------------------	-------------	--------------

Renewing Members April 1 – May 31

Martha Blaxall	Kathy Dahl	Matty Matzen
Patty Brown	Nancy Greene	Mary Petersen
Heidi Busch	Barbara Hoffstein	Pam Polgreen
Virginia Clagett	Marty Keegan	Peg Redd
Keely Clifford-Sweeney	Karen Kelly	Lynda Salamon
Joanna Conti	Nancy Kling	Martha Schwieters
Susan Cook	Jody Lacey	Helene Tenner

Join or Renew

Click [HERE](#) to Join or Renew

[Membership & Outreach](#)

Heidi Busch, Chair

Paula Abernethy, Assistant Chair

What Our Members Are Saying . . .

“Kudos to both Sandy Sweeney and Caroline Purdy and the entire Grants Committee for the outstanding materials!!! The write-ups were the most thorough since I have been a member and

voting by email was very easy. Many thanks for all your efforts to make the voting process from the cover letter to the ballot -- so thoughtful and complete."

Donna Stackhouse (Member since 2010)

"What an amazing collection of grant candidates, all of which are deserving of dollars. The choice was nearly impossible. Thank you to the committee for its incredible work."

Nancy Haiman (Member since 2015)

"Love the diversity of proposals."

Pam Polgreen (Member since 2013)

"I think our voting on where our money goes is our big selling point as an organization — this is what makes us cool!"

Susan Cook (Member since 2014)

Why Conduct a Member Survey?

Assess, Evaluate, Inquire, Explore, Weigh and Plan our Future

The Annual Member Survey was sent to all members last Tuesday, May 26. Your feedback on this survey is invaluable. We want to know what you value about AAWGT. We are curious how you want to engage with the organization now and in the future. We are looking for feedback on how we operate and suggestions for the future direction of the organization. Finally, we are looking for your thoughts on the values reflected by the organization. We value how you feel and what you want!

If you did not receive a link to the Annual Member Survey, please send an e-mail to giving@givinttogether.org and you will receive the link to complete the survey.

Please let us hear from you. The Survey will remain open until June 21.

Ways to Get Involved

AAWGT's eleven committees welcome your interest and participation. Each committee is briefly described with contact information on the [Committees](#) page on our website.

Seven committees are currently looking for help:

[Education Committee](#)

Brainstorm & coordinate AAWGT programs

[Governance Committee](#)

Help review & streamline AAWGT by-laws

[Grants Committee](#)

Review grant applications and site visits (February to May)

[Marketing/Communication Committee](#)

Taking photographs, graphic design & writing

[Membership Committee](#)

Call & welcome new members/walk them thru AAWGT website

Help with events

Post-Grants Evaluation Committee

Evaluate agencies in year after AAWGT grant is given

Web/IT Team

Website support (help manage member database/event registration etc.)

Monthly Meetings: What's Coming Up . . . and What's Already Happened

June 10 Meeting Preview: Living on the Ledge – Part II Debunking the Myths of Poverty

Some of our neighbors live in poverty, struggling to make ends meet. Who they are and what they receive in assistance has led to many myths such as: the poor live off welfare and do just fine, the poor are lazy and don't work, or women have babies to get more money.

We will hear from four professionals working in the field of human services discuss these myths and offer some observations and suggestions for systemic change and philanthropic efforts.

- Rev. Dr. Carletta Allen, Pastor, Asbury United Methodist Church
- Mario Berninzoni, Executive Director, Arundel House of Hope
- Cathy Bird, Executive Director, Food Link, Inc.
- Edith Harrison, Deputy Director, Department of Social Services, Anne Arundel County

The meeting is open to the public. Members are encouraged to invite friends and colleagues. For complete details and to register, click [HERE](#).

Education & Program Committee

Lois Kelberman, Chair
Pam Polgreen, Assistant Chair

April 8 Meeting Review: Open House: "Smarter, Funnier, and with Big Hearts"

Eighty women came together at the Loews Hotel to network, encourage other members to get involved, and persuade others to join. AAWGT member Barbara McMahon, General Manager of the Loews, was recognized for the hotel's significant support of the evening's activities. AAWGT

President Maureen Cavaiola opened with a comparison of AAWGT to a three-legged stool. The seat represents AAWGT's mission of improving the lives of women and families in Anne Arundel County. The three legs are membership, education and grant making, which create a solid foundation. Around the seat is a band of leadership - representing the leadership of each member in her support of the mission. It takes all of these elements, each reinforcing and strengthening the other, for the organization to positively impact the community.

Heidi Busch, Membership Committee Chair, introduced several members who shared how they learned about AAWGT, why they joined and how AAWGT has evolved during their varied tenure with the organization.

Prue Clendenning discussed her experience gained serving on the Grant Committee. She advised members to get involved, join committees and share their skills. She also encouraged everyone to take advantage of AAWGT opportunities to gain new skills that can be shared in the community.

Bronwyn Belling was touched by AAWGT's focus on women and families, our role as longterm investors in the community, and her view of the group as a sisterhood of caring and compassionate women.

Cele Brown described AAWGT's book group as a "gateway drug" to the Giving Circle . . . a great way to meet people and engage in thoughtful discussions about things that matter. Jan Hoffberger called AAWGT a sisterhood, a way to stay connected and involved in the community. Over the years she has seen the group transform into a large, spectacular group of women.

Barbara McMahon joined AAWGT as a newcomer to Anne Arundel County, seeking a group of women similar to herself, "But a little smarter, a little funnier, and with big hearts." AAWGT was a chance to get involved in a way that was important to her. "If you want to continue to bloom as a woman," she said, "this is the organization to be part of."

Kathy Potter said her experience as chair of the Grants Committee has enabled her to make connections, learn about the community, and learn about grants. "The moral," she said, "is put your hand up, don't be shy—your knowledge will increase a hundredfold."

Wanda Stansbury opened with an engaging story about parking that revealed her creative problem-solving skills. She then offered, "Networking brings resources and resources make all the difference. There are many people in this town who hurt, who don't have opportunities, don't have access." It intrigues Wanda to understand what it takes to get people to come together and write a check to meet a need—not just to talk about problems, but to give and participate in order to change lives.

Each person described a unique journey with a common thread . . . all were drawn in by the resolute, take-action, get-stuff-done attitude that makes AAWGT's Giving Circle so unique and so successful.

Susan Borden and Tanya St. John

In helping to write this meeting synopsis, Tanya St. John reflected on her own experiences within AAWGT, and offered the following personal perspective. This was Tanya's first volunteer experience with the Marketing/Communications Committee.

"I've been described as gregarious, but truth be told, I'm incredibly shy and feel absolutely awkward in large group settings. So why in the world would I force myself to venture well outside of my comfort zone and attend AAWGT large group gatherings like the Open House at the Loews Hotel in Annapolis? Simply put, I am compelled by the deep and genuine commitment these women have to their community, and inspired by their resolve to fix what is broken, right what is wrong and enrich what is merely good. If testosterone is what fills a room full of men, chutzpah is what fills a room full of AAWGT members. AND...they have a great sense of humor. You can't beat that combination!"

Tanya St. John (Member since 2014)

May 13 Meeting Review: Voting: Now It's Your Turn

The sunny, crisp May morning air added to what is always an exciting meeting when AAWGT's members come together to determine which of the many qualified grant applicants will receive the organization's support in the coming twelve months. Grants Chair Sandy Sweeney reported that 35 applications totaling \$404,000 were received.

Twenty-seven AAWGT members participated in the review process, including ten first time reviewers.

The reviewers divided into four teams to review the applications. Team leaders later met to determine which applicants would go forward. Twenty-one site visits were conducted and reports from Post Grants Evaluation Committee were considered for returning grantees.

A review of the financial condition was conducted on each of the remaining organizations. The team leaders then voted on which applications would go forward to the membership for consideration. With \$105,505.03 to award this year, Sandy briefly described each organization, reviewing the information previously distributed to members.

Of the fifteen finalists, six are new applicants; some are small, some are large; some would serve hundreds of people, some could profoundly change the lives of a small number of people. Seventy votes were cast at the meeting and 25 absentee votes were cast by email, including one sent from Spain. The votes were discreetly tallied and announced at the meeting. Members were reminded that all grant matters are to be regarded as confidential.

While the votes were being counted, Carol Cronin, Leadership and Development Committee Chair, introduced several questions about member engagement that were enthusiastically discussed in small table groups.

The outcome of the table discussions were reported and will be included in the upcoming Member Survey, to gain further insight from our members. Ideas discussed included: diversity, recruiting, interest in more interaction with grantees, alternative grant options, corporate membership, the membership fee and the endowment fund.

Grants Committee

Sandy Sweeney, Chair
Caroline Purdy, Assistant
Chair

April 24 Spring Field Trip Review: Food Link Wholesale Charitable Produce Program It Happens Every Friday

Every Friday, long before most of us are out of bed, a semi loaded with boxes and crates of food leaves the Maryland Wholesale Produce Market in Jessup. And every Friday, regardless of the

weather, a hardy group of Food Link volunteers await its arrival at the Riva Road Farmers Market. On a blustery spring morning, twenty AAWGT members were able to see this program in action.

Cathy Bird, Food Link Executive Director, and Kathy Nellius, Board President and AAWGT member, provided details about the organization's vital role in ensuring that Anne Arundel's most needy citizens have access to fresh fruits and vegetables -- food items often hardest to afford on limited means. Through the years, Cathy's "Friday family," as she describes her workers, have streamlined their systems for efficiency and yet demonstrate compassion for all. On any given Friday, anywhere from 25 to 30 nonprofit organizations and as many as 100 individuals arrive to pick up food. Witnessing Food Link's critically important role in connecting families in Anne Arundel County with healthy and nutritious food was impressive indeed.

Your Dollars At Work:

The Light House: Family Care Management

The Light House is nearing completion of our 2014 \$15,000 grant for the Family Care Management program. The grant supported a portion of the Family Case Manager's salary. Six committee members visited the shelter during the afternoon on April 14 to learn how their program was progressing and to tour the facilities. Light House Executive Director Elizabeth Kinney hosted the visit.

We were met by the Family Case Manager, Kathryn Mattison, who explained how the program works towards its goal of reuniting and stabilizing families separated due to homelessness, and stabilizing and preserving families living together in homelessness. The following services are offered the Family Care Management Program:

- Creating a Service/Success Plan Counseling and goal setting Identifying housing needs and options Identifying workforce development needs.
- Enrollment into school and/or workforce development programs Coordination with an addictions counselor if needed to ensure client remains sober
- Eligibility determination for government and other benefits
- Navigation services for enrollment in health insurance and other entitlement programs
- Advocacy for children at school They also provide enrichment programs such as leading family field trips for a fun beach day, and holding a fall festival with pumpkin carving, crafts and games for the entire family. Plans include a nutrition class at Whole Foods, and infant CPR training from AAMC.

To date, eight adults (seven mothers and one father) have been served through the Family Case Management program as well as 22 custodial children and two non-custodial children. Families are shepherded through the transition phase from living in The Light House (could be six to eight months) to moving through transitional housing and into their own permanent place once they are able to sustain independence with a regular job. Transitional housing is found near the schools that the children currently attend, and close contact is maintained. Families that have moved on to permanent housing are encouraged to come back and act as mentors; they can continue to use and benefit from the Light House services.

Homeless families are interviewed before being accepted to the Light House. No active substance abuse or violent crime is tolerated. The most vulnerable are given the first spaces that become available, and on occasion, in emergencies, cots are found for them in the shelter, or at places such as The Stanton Center.

After our briefing, Elizabeth Kinney showed us around the entire facility, which is light and airy, in spite of its extensive size. The building houses four individual family apartments on the top floor; male and female dormitories on the second floor with entirely separate staircases and secure from each other; a large computer room on the first floor with several computer stations; a dining room; kitchen facilities; self-service laundry; a recreation/TV room; counseling rooms; offices; conference rooms; and a medical room. Every space is in use. There is a fenced back yard with children's play equipment and an area where they are growing vegetables. We were all impressed with the facility, the program and the dedication and caring of the staff.

[Post Grants Evaluation Committee](#)

Judy Templeton, Chair
Madelyn Schaefer, Assistant Chair

What's Happening With Our Committees?

Membership & Outreach

On April 22, the Membership & Outreach Committee hosted a coffee for new members at the home of Karen Davis. Nineteen members visited and got to know each other in an unstructured setting. New members offered insight into their past and interests in AAWGT; long-time members talked about their history and involvement in AAWGT and shared ideas for how to get involved. This is the second small group gathering in 2015 and one more is planned for the fall.

[Membership & Outreach](#)

Heidi Busch, Chair
Paula Abernethy, Assistant Chair

What Our Members Are Reading

The Education Committee has spent several months researching and reading in preparation for the June 11 education meeting that will address the myths of poverty. The committee offers this list of topical articles and books, and a great video, as early summer reading:

[When Work Isn't Enough to Keep You off Welfare and Food Stamps](#)

Washington Post blog on the numbers of working people eligible and using various forms of public assistance, because they do not earn enough to make ends meet.

[Where the Poor and Rich Really Spend Their Money](#)

Washington Post blog about research from the Bureau of Labor Statistics about the breakdown between different income groups and spending in absolute dollars and as a percentage of income on housing, food, and transportation.

[Maryland's Safety Net Reduces Poverty, Helps Children Succeed and Boosts Our Economy](#)

An article by the Maryland Center for Economic Poverty about the types of safety net programs available in Maryland and how these programs increase household incomes.

[Poverty Facts](#)

An article by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) that provides poverty facts based upon census data. There is also an interactive map on CCHD's website, which provides a picture of poverty distributed across the United States, by county.

[Why Poor People's Bad Decisions Make Perfect Sense](#)

Huffington Post originally posted this in November 2013; then it went viral.

[NYT Book Review of Hand to Mouth](#)

This is a link to the New York Times review of *Hand to Mouth* by Linda Tirado, published in 2014. Be forewarned: the language is raw; the author honestly shares her perspective on challenges facing the working poor.

[NYT review of Nickeled and Dimed: On \(Not\) Getting by in America](#)

Originally published in 2001, journalist and writer Barbara Ehrenreich attempted to live on job wages available to unskilled laborer.

[The Line: Poverty in America: It's Not What You Think](#)

This 43-minute video gives multiple perspectives on living below the poverty line in America.

Did You Know?

- 120 members (59%) have logged on to AAWGT's website in 2015
- 44 members (21%) have logged on to AAWGT's website sometime before this year
- 41 members (20%) have never logged on
- When a member logs on, she gains access to the membership directory, minutes of past meetings, AAWGT's Bylaws, list of officers and committee chairs, and other restricted information.
- If you would like help logging on, send an email to webmaster@givingtogether.org and AAWGT's Webmaster Eve-Marie will make it happen!

Calendar of Upcoming Events

June

5 Friday Steering Committee

10 Wednesday [Education Meeting](#): Living on the Ledge Part II: Debunking the Myths of Poverty

17 Wednesday [Book Group](#): Quiet: The Power of Introverts

July

15 Wednesday [Education Committee Meeting](#)

Full Circle News

The Full Circle News is published bi-monthly throughout the year. Suggestions, feedback and questions are welcome and can be sent to marketing@givingtogether.org.

[Marketing & Communications](#)

Jenny Kottler, Chair

Deb Schilling, Assistant Chair