



IOWA WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

Newsletter November 2015

\$100 Million Collaborative Funding Commitment Announced in Washington D.C.



On November 13, 2015 Dawn Oliver Wiand, Executive Director of the Iowa Women's Foundation (IWF), traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in announcing membership in Prosperity Together. Prosperity Together is a nonpartisan partnership of public U.S. women's foundations dedicated to improving the economic security of low-income women and their families in America. The IWF participated in announcing a collective five-year, \$100 million funding commitment to create pathways to economic security for low-income women and their families in America.

While women account for 57% of the workforce, the wage gap persists - women in Iowa earn 77 cents for every dollar a man earns - and too often occupy minimum wage or part-time jobs, with little to no employer-sponsored benefits, and limited opportunity for growth and advancement. Additionally, women in Iowa struggle to reach independent prosperity, with 70% of Iowa's female heads of household struggling for economic security; 40% in poverty and 30% earning less than basic living expenses.

These barriers to economic prosperity are even greater for low-income women and

women of color.

According to IWF Executive Director, Dawn Oliver Wiand, "these are unacceptable and that is why IWF does the work that it does. We know that an investment in women and girls reduces poverty, increases productivity, and accelerates economic growth. Economically self-sufficient women can lead the nation's next chapter of economic growth. Investing in women and girls means an investment in our economy. Iowa's 1.5 million plus women deserve nothing better."



Prosperity Together will harness the collective power, leadership and proven effectiveness of women's foundations working together to ensure women's economic security in America. The partnership will also issue a call to policymakers, business leaders, the philanthropic community and the public to understand that economic prosperity for all is guaranteed only when economic security and equal opportunity are guaranteed for low-income women. Partners will use their respective experience and knowledge to continue funding programs that are proven effective in their communities and states. The types of programs that will be funded include:

- Job Training: Fund job training programs customized to address the cultural and educational needs of low-income women to secure stable, higher-wage jobs.
- Child Care: Fund programs that enable access for low-income women to affordable, high-quality childcare, so they can be successful in the workplace and their children have a strong academic start in life.
- Research: Fund state and national research to inform best practices and policies that increase economic security for low-income women, particularly women of color.

The Iowa Women's Foundation is proud to announce its partnership with the current 27 other women's foundations members of Prosperity Together. The announcement in D.C. was just the first step. There is much more to come!

Iowa Women's Foundation Announces Record Number of Grants at 2015 Luncheon!

The Iowa Women's Foundation held its annual luncheon on October 14. Over 800 women and men celebrated the organization's purpose of improving the lives of Iowa's women and girls with the awarding of \$89,750 grants to sixteen organizations across Iowa.

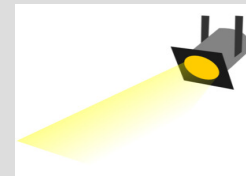
The programs funded are varied in location as well as in focus. One will provide safe housing to survivors of domestic violence; another will make possible a mentorship program for women

leaving state correctional systems. Examples of other granted programs include training for aspiring farmers, providing vehicles to single mothers, and the continuation of a fund for a child care training program that has enabled 90 refugees to find work. The impacted communities span the state of Iowa, from South Sioux City to Osceola, from Des Moines to Dubuque and from Fort Dodge to Iowa City.



Dawn Oliver Wiand, the Executive Director of the Iowa Women's Foundation, said, "without the generosity of our supporters we could not do the work we do to improve the lives of Iowa's women and girls. We are excited that this year we are able to financially support a record number of varied organizations and we look forward to hearing about the impact our grants have made over the next year."

2015 Grantee Spotlight



Iowa Youth Writing Project

By Audra King

The Iowa Youth Writing Project (IYWP) was founded in 2010 by graduates from the Iowa Writer's Workshop who deeply believed in the transformative powers of the written word.

IYWP works to bring empowerment workshops to at-risk young women. With the help of Iowa Women's Foundation, their current plan is to launch a literacy project that can provide ten mentors for up to twenty-five participants. The project will run for about four months, and will produce four publications created from student work.

When asked what she would like to share about the program, Lisa Roberts, who coordinates the workshop with Mallory Hellman, said "I wish people knew...how incredibly brave they are. And how deeply committed they are to changing their lives." Many of the participants are abuse survivors, and Ms. Roberts noted that she is in awe that the young women continue to be open to the possibilities of bright futures that the mentors help them to envision.



She shared the story of one participant who, when faced with the very real possibility of aging out of the system when she turned eighteen, decided to stand up for herself. The young woman requested that she be allowed to stay with the program until she graduates from high school. By speaking up, she has been able to work with the

mentors on her writing skills prior to attending community college in the fall.

Another participant, who had previously preferred drawing over writing, recently realized that because of the support she had been receiving, she had been able to write a piece that was longer than anything she had ever written before. The pride that rolled off of that participant when she finished the piece and had the opportunity to read it to the group was amazing.

Ms. Roberts would be happy to talk with anyone who is inspired by the work IWYP does or the people they help. Interested people should visit the organization's website at <http://www.iowayouthwritingproject.org/> or write to her for more information at lisa@iywp.org, or IWYP's Director Rachel Yoder, at rachel@iywp.org.

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIINGTUESDAY
December 1, 2015

Don't forget that tomorrow, Tuesday, December 1, 2015 is #GivingTuesday! The IWF appreciates all donations. Each donation helps us improve the lives of Iowa's women and girls!

For more information about Giving Tuesday, click [here!](#)

To donate to the IWF, click [here!](#)

To check out our Giving Tuesday Page, create an account and then click [here!](#)

Interested in Supporting the Iowa Women's Foundation?
Want to do more? Looking for volunteer opportunities?
Contact Dawn Oliver Wiand at (319) 774-3814.

For more information about the Iowa Women's Foundation - Visit our website at www.iawf.org

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