



OVATION: A Tribute to Iowa Women and Girls!

The second annual "Ovation" unveilings were held in May. A total of 114 honorees were recognized in Iowa City and Cedar Falls. We celebrated women who have truly left their imprint on the communities and people around them. These women come to us from many areas: Activists and educators, business leaders and medical professionals, entrepreneurs and community connectors. From two young women who founded a conference to inspire their female peers to take a leadership role in their schools and communities to a woman who dispensed polio vaccines in India, snorkeled in the Caribbean, and established a library in Mexico.



We honored an educator who runs like a mother; a woman who has been responsible for many community "firsts," and a strong woman who made life-changing choices on her own. These are women who have dedicated themselves to making a difference.

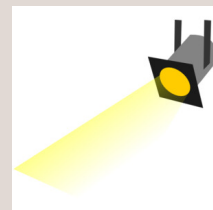
Have a special woman in your life who made a difference for you or your community? Please consider honoring her in the 2016 edition of Ovation. Applications can be found on the [IWF web site](#).

If you would like more information,
please contact info@iawf.org or call 319-774-3813.

2015 Grant Applications Are In!

72 grant applications have been submitted requesting funding totaling nearly \$500,000. IWF will be awarding \$80,000 this year. This will be the largest amount of grant money given in a single year in the history of the Foundation. Grantees will be announced at the annual luncheon on October 14th. Stay tuned. You won't want to miss it!

Grantee Spotlights



**From Refugees to Entrepreneurs:
Equipping the Women of Polk
County**

Iowa Lutheran Services has been

operating for over 150 years serving as a safe and welcoming atmosphere for children. While today the organization still fosters a safe environment for children, the services provided have expanded immensely. Nicholas Wuertz, Lutheran Services of Iowa Director of Refugee Community Services, explained, "As one of the largest human services agencies in Iowa, we partner with children, families, people with disabilities and people of refugee status to help people in times of need, strengthen families and advocate for social justice in our communities."

Recently, the Iowa Lutheran Services received a grant from the Iowa Women's Foundation to fund a unique program called the "Refugee Child Care Microenterprise Program." The program equips refugee women in Polk County with the tools and skills necessary to start their own small-child-care business. Since the program's launch in 2012, it has helped 42 women become licensed child-care providers. Wuertz explained the impact of the program, "First, it is empowering women to generate income as small business entrepreneurs, and second, it is helping meet the need for affordable, culturally appropriate child care within Karen, Bhutanese, Burundi and other ethnic communities in Iowa."

Wuertz spoke about the challenges refugees face moving to a new country with a new language. The language barrier can make it difficult to find a child care provider, and in addition some parents cringe at the thought of leaving children with a stranger. This program creates affordable child care that allows parents to rest assured. In addition, affordable child care reduces the economic burden for refugee parents who are interested

in entering the work force. To grasp the magnitude of the program, Wuertz shared a story painting a picture of the importance of the Refugee Child Care Microenterprise Program.

Wuertz:"Ka Treet and her husband spent years in a refugee camp in Thailand before their family was resettled to Iowa in 2007. Ka Treet needed income to support her family, but she needed affordable child care first before she could get a job. Through LSI's Refugee Child Care Microenterprise program, Ka Treet became a licensed child care provider. She told us, "When I got my certificate, I feel [sic] so very happy." Today her living room has brightly colored chairs for toddlers, storybooks, toys and an alphabet rug where her grandchildren can play and practice their letters. Her daughter, April Paw, also participated in another program at LSI and now proudly tells others, "LSI has helped my family with everything we need."

Treet's story is just one example of how powerful the Refugee Child Care Microenterprise Program is. The grant from the Iowa Women's Foundation has supported the program's success impacting the lives of many women in a positive way. Moving forward, the Lutheran Services of Iowa plans to offer even more support to the current 42 child-care businesses. The group strives to implement literacy education at the businesses through the help of volunteers. The assistance of grant funding and volunteers ensure the success of the program.

By Nicole Neal

**L.U.N.A.
Promotora Project:
Grassroots effort to raise
awareness and prevention of
domestic violence and sexual
assault**



L.U.N.A., Latinas Unidas por un Nuevo Amanecer, exists to empower, educate, and advocate for victims/survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in the community, so that they may build futures free from violence. Serving Polk and Warren counties since it began as a community-based pilot program in 1999, L.U.N.A offers extensive services including a 24-hour crisis line, one-on-one counseling, safety planning, court advocacy, community referrals, domestic violence and sexual assault training.

L.U.N.A contacted Iowa Women's Foundation for support of a new model to spread their mission: a Promotora Program. Laura Velasquez, L.U.N.A Domestic Violence Advocate and leader of the Promotora Program, clarifies, "a promotora is a grassroots worker who provides basic education, guidance and referral services in their community."

Promotoras flourished in Latin America in the 1950's. The initial promotora mission was to bring health care to poor and remote areas. Promotoras today cover a variety of health-related topics, such as mental health awareness and diabetes and cancer prevention.

The promotora approach was identified as a means for L.U.N.A. to reach areas where citizens are unaware of L.U.N.A. services. These neighborhoods need culturally specific programs to pass along the L.U.N.A. message. The goal of this new program was to recruit promotoras from those communities so they can serve as an ambassador to their neighbors. Promotora community outreach plans range from one-on-one sessions to small, informal gatherings, to speeches to larger groups. Depending on the audience, promotoras tailor their presentation to family, friends, neighbors and their community.

While the promotora model seemed ideal, finding volunteers to serve as L.U.N.A. promotoras proved difficult. Ms. Velasquez explains, "to find volunteers is difficult in our community. People come here [Iowa] for work and to earn money to send home to family. Most work two jobs and have little free time. They do not want to use their extra time to volunteer."

L.U.N.A. created a campaign to recruit volunteers. Local radio stations aired ads calling for volunteers and a L.U.N.A. newsletter was distributed. Seven volunteers committed to the inaugural training program.

To educate a promotora on how to present sensitive subjects of domestic violence and sexual assault requires significant commitment: a 30-hour training, time to identify presentation audiences and content, hours spent presenting, and monthly meetings at L.U.N.A. to update on their progress. Ms. Velasquez realizes the huge time commitment meant that not all trainees

would be able to finish the program. She says the organization was, "thrilled to have two promotoras graduate. We consider that a success."

Promotoras serve as an extension of the L.U.N.A. organization while they also improve their self-esteem, learn project management and presentation skills, and develop a stronger sense of leadership. The IWF grant to L.U.N.A. supported the promotora readiness process. The grant was used to provide professional materials for promotoras. Ms. Velasquez comments, "we want promotoras to feel that what they are doing matters." Having their own t-shirts, printed materials, and meals during training showed the promotoras they are legitimate team members at L.U.N.A.

L.U.N.A. promotoras graduated from training in April. They are planning their first set of presentations in their own homes beginning next month.

Melissa Cano Zelaya, L.U.N.A. Executive Director, shares, "We are very appreciative of the financial support provided by the IWF grant which has allowed us to fully implement the promotora program. Through this grassroots program, we are able to educate and empower Latinas to become ambassadors and provide outreach on a wide array of topics including domestic violence and sexual assault within the Latino community. This program also allows us to expand our services in hard-to-reach areas and increase our volunteer base. Thanks IWF for your support!"

By Nicole Neal

Save The Date!

The 2015 Iowa Women's Foundation luncheon will be Wednesday, October 14, 2015, at the Coralville Marriott and Convention Center. Be sure to mark your calendars!

Interested in Supporting the Iowa Women's Foundation?

Want to do more? Looking for volunteer opportunities? Contact Dawn Oliver Wiand at (319) 774-3814.

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

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