



February 2016 Iowa Women's Foundation E-Newsletter!



Kicking Off the New Year!

The IWF is excited for another year of improving the lives of Iowa's women and girls! 2016 is off to a fabulous start and we want to share the latest news.

- **SHE Matters Tour:** IWF traveled 4,800 miles visiting 18 Iowa communities. At each tour stop, we gained a better understanding of the challenges faced by women and girls in Iowa. We heard stories describing a disconcerting number of barriers that Iowa's women and girls must overcome to reach their full potential. Some barriers were unique to an individual community while others were evident across communities. We learned of general themes that were indicators of struggles associated with economic illiteracy. A full report on the findings is now being drafted. IWF will use the report to focus its ongoing work. We will also return to each community, share the report, and call our community partners, business leaders, educational institutions, nonprofits, and elected officials to action.

- **Prosperity Together:** Following the announcement in November 2015 of a \$100 million commitment from Women's Foundations across the US, the IWF will utilize information gleaned from the SHE Matters tour and future endeavors to support programs that create pathways to economic success for Iowa's women and girls!
- **Run Like A Mother:** Run Like a Mother, a 5K event hosted by Chicks for Change in Cedar Falls, will be Saturday, May 7, 2016. Registration information will be available soon. Details will be provided in future newsletters and on our social media sites.
- **OVATION:**The third edition of OVATION will be unveiled Monday, May 9th. If you are interested in recognizing a special woman this year, please email dawn@iawf.org for more information.
- **Luncheon:**The IWF Annual Luncheon will be held Thursday, October 6. WHO will be the guest speaker? See more information below!
- **Grantees:** Sixteen IWF grantees received checks in January. Each month we will spotlight a grantee and the work it is doing for Iowa's women and girls. Today you can learn more about the event and find a link to the names and missions of all sixteen grantees.
- **New Board Members:** Three outstanding women have joined the IWF Board of Directors. Do not miss their profiles below.

It is because of your support that we are able to do the work we do! Thank you for your confidence and trust. Together we will continue improving the lives of Iowa's women and girls.

The IWF Welcomes 3 New Board Members in 2016!

We are pleased to introduce you to these amazing women

Diane Benoit (pictured to the right) recently retired from Life Care Services (LCS), brings expertise in service administration and client services, and has extensive volunteer and supporting experience with the Iowa Women's Foundation, Des Moines Performing Arts, and the Drake Bulldogs. She attended Iowa State University and Drake University, and is a native of Des Moines, IA. We are very

excited to welcome Diane as a Board Member!

Lori Lane (not pictured) brings expertise in arts administration and leadership, and has extensive volunteer experience in the Cedar Rapids public schools as well as the Sioux City Art Center. Lori received her degree from the University of Iowa in Interdisciplinary Studies and is now pursuing a Master's of Strategic Leadership at Mt. Mercy University. She is a native of the Waterloo area and currently resides in Cedar Rapids. Lori is a great addition to our Board of Directors and we are excited to welcome her aboard!



Susan Judkins Josten (pictured to the right) brings expertise in banking, government relations, economic development, and business management/development. She received her Bachelor's degree in Business Management from Simpson College and went on to receive an MBA from the University of Iowa. She has been a central Iowa resident for forty years and has volunteered extensively for many women's programs. Susan brings great talents and skills to the Board of Directors and the IWF is excited to have her on board!

2016 Grantee Partners & Check Presentation

The Iowa Women's Foundation awarded a total of \$89,750 to sixteen organizations October 14, 2015, at the IWF Annual Luncheon. These organizations received their first checks at a special event in January with IWF donors, grants committee members, and community review panelists in attendance. Each organization described the program being funded by their grants, providing IWF donors with an opportunity to learn how their gifts were making a difference.

Through the 2016 grants, we are supporting women in both rural and urban communities from Sioux City to Osceola, Des Moines to Dubuque, Fort Dodge to Iowa City, reaching women and girls across the entire state. The goals of the programs vary widely, and include providing safe housing to survivors of domestic violence, mentorship for women leaving state correctional systems, and training aspiring women farmers in entrepreneurship and business planning. Others focus on fostering a passion

for STEM careers among underserved middle and high school girls; providing vehicles to single mothers to help them drive to work, run errands, and safely transport their children; and funding a child-care training program that has already put 90 refugees to work.

For a complete list of our 2016 grantee partners, please visit our website [here](#).

We Have A Surprise For You!

Who will be the Guest Speaker for the IWF Annual Luncheon?

Over the next two weeks, we will be sharing clues with you on our social media sites ([Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#))!

Watch closely, every few days a new clue will be posted. We invite you to comment or tweet at us when you know who the speaker is.

Your first clue is below!

We look forward to introducing our speaker soon!



Clue 1: She has won countless awards, including three Emmys!

Grantee Spotlight

Cedar Valley Friends of the Family

By: JoEllen Zmolek Nyquist

Cedar Valley Friends of the Family (CVFF), which started in 1992, marks its twenty-fifth year of service in 2016. This organization based in Waverly, Iowa, provides safe shelter, confidential support, and housing assistance to families and individuals affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and homelessness. Its service area extends across 14 counties in Northeast Iowa. In 2015, Cedar Valley Friends of the Family provided 6,290 nights of safety to 386 women and 249 children who were victims of domestic and sexual violence.

The Cedar Valley Friends of the Family received its first grant from the IWF in

2015 which was followed by a second grant in 2016 demonstrating the IWF's confidence in its programs. CVFF focuses on three main areas of service: emergency shelter, housing assistance, and financial education. "The overall goal of this program is to increase housing stability for victims of domestic violence. This includes providing both immediate safety and long-term stability for women and children affected by domestic violence in Northeast Iowa," notes Ben Brustkern, Cedar Valley Friends of the Family Executive Director.

Cedar Valley Friends of the Family has provided extensive assistance to those whose housing has been affected by domestic violence. In 2015, the agency provided short-term rental and utility assistance, as well as case management and budgeting assistance to 134 adults and 29 children. An additional 38 households were prevented from becoming homeless after domestic violence. "In some cases, when the client reaches out before being evicted from their property, we can step in and get them caught up on their bills so they don't end up on the streets or in a shelter," says Brustkern. "Keeping families in their home is not only more comfortable for them, but is also more cost-effective than having them enter a shelter."



CVFF's Americorps volunteer hosts a training for clients who wish to learn more about credit, money management, and basic tenant rights.

Individuals who contact the center are first assessed to determine if they are in immediate danger, and then may be provided with shelter, case management, housing assistance (such as rent or utility support) and crisis support and counseling. Immediate physical safety and planning for future safety and stability are both key.

The 2016 grant from the Iowa Women's Foundation helps support their goals of housing stability and financial empowerment. Through this support, Cedar Valley Friends of the Family aims to decrease the average length of stay in their emergency shelter, provide intensive case management to those that need assistance and to provide direct

housing assistance to individuals in order to reduce barriers to obtaining first month's rent and deposit. "The dynamics of domestic violence results in many women being socially isolated, having little or no rental history, and having little or bad credit. Through financial education, we empower women to provide for themselves and their children independently," said Casey Reints, Development Director for Cedar Valley Friends of the Family.



CVFF staff meet with clients affected by domestic violence to discuss the cycle of abuse, the power and control dynamics of abuse, and how to plan for future safety. This picture shows a client (actor) meeting with her advocate.

"Through prevention education and community engagement, we seek a future free of violence and homelessness."

To learn more, or to help support Cedar Valley Friends of the Family, please visit www.cvfriendsofthefamily.org

Are you interested in helping or supporting the Iowa Women's Foundation? Would you like some more information? Please email info@iawf.org, call 319.774.3813, or visit our website at www.iawf.org!

Interested in donating to the IWF? [Please click here!](#)

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