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Women GIVE

who

A new local nonprofit taps the powerful potential of female philanthropists



Wendy Block with Vicki Craver

Wendy Block remembers the day she connected with a friend who described her involvement with a Westchester grant-making organization composed solely of women. The encounter resonated with Block, who recognized potential to do good in her own backyard of Greenwich. She enlisted a friend, Vicki Craver, to explore the possibility of creating a Fairfield County-focused, female-funded collective giving group. The goal of the organization would be to make a large, one-time grant to a local nonprofit. Using the framework of existing models, Block and Craver began to structure Impact Fairfield County.



INSPIRICA INSPIRES

To garner the grant from Impact Fairfield County, **Inspirica** proposed a program to address the very real effects of homelessness on families. Its Early Childhood and Parenting Program (ECPP) combines crucial childhood development and a pre-literacy program for youth with essential parenting skills classes for adults. The Impact grant of \$100,000 means that ECPP can support up to 170 parents and their preschool age children. "For our organization, this is huge. We are thrilled beyond words," says Inspirica CEO Jason Shaplen. **Inspirica is the largest provider of services to the homeless in Fairfield County, serving more than 800 clients a year.**

Their work included building a membership. Each person would contribute annual dues of \$1,000, which would be aggregated to a grant of \$100,000 for a nonprofit that members determined to have the best "big idea." The grassroots membership drive met with success: 155 women joined. The first year's applicant pool was also a good harbinger, as sixty-four nonprofits submitted

"This first grant was the culmination of the work of many women in many towns, but it is the beginning of a movement in our county."

— WENDY BLOCK

grant applications. In early 2016, three grant finalists were selected. This past May, the finalists gave presentations to the membership, and a vote was taken. This year's winner, Inspirica (see sidebar), will use its game-changing grant to fund an educational program for parents and their preschool children. For their part, Block and Craver continue to broaden awareness of Impact Fairfield County. —J. Ostrow

FEMININE TOUCH

WHEN IT COMES TO PHILANTHROPY, ARE THERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN?

Half a dozen studies have been published in recent years revealing that women generally donate more, are more actively involved in the given charities, demand more proof of effectiveness and prefer different causes than men.