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A Fund For Women: Names community grant winners, honors fabulous firsts 10/16/2008

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Record crowd at annual fundraising event also hears Mavis Leno address the continuing challenges facing women and girls in Afghanistan

MADISON – Seven area community organizations will share \$100,000 in grant money from A Fund For Women to develop programs and offer services that build opportunity and promote self-sufficiency among women and girls.

The community grants, announced Wednesday evening at A Fund For Women's annual dinner and fund-raising event, raise the group's community contributions to more than \$724,000 since the Fund's inception in 1993. Through the philanthropic gifts and volunteer involvement of women throughout Dane County, A Fund For Women provides financial and other support to nonprofit organizations that address unmet community needs.

Jen Winiger, chairwoman of A Fund For Women, said this year's grants focus on programs and services to improve the academic, social and career skills of adolescent girls as well as projects that provide domestic abuse intervention and counseling.

The record crowd of more than 600 at the fundraising event, held at Monona Terrace Convention Center, also welcomed keynote speaker Mavis Leno. Leno, wife of comedian Jay Leno, is chairwoman of the Feminist Majority Foundation's campaign to help Afghan Women and Girls. She has spent more than a decade working to restore the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan while engaging the international community in education and relief efforts.

The continuing plight of women and girls in Afghanistan has attracted international media attention and is the focus of the recent CNN documentary, "Behind the Veil."

Jan Gietzel, executive director of A Fund For Women, said the theme for this year's annual event was based on a quote from Mahatma Gandhi: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." The theme reflects the need for women to become engaged in efforts to address the challenges facing women and girls everywhere.

This year's AFFW local grantees include:

Papers
Blue Book Archives
Wis. Court Cases
State Employee Directory
Find Your Legislator
LINKS
Media, Gov't & Political Links
LEGISLATIVE TRACKING
Legislative Notification Service
State Legislation
U.S. Congress
HOME

African American Ethnic Academy, \$20,000; Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, \$5,500; East Madison Community Center, \$9,500; Girl Scouts of Blackhawk Council, \$25,000; Goodman Atwood Community Center, \$15,000; Madison Children’s Museum, \$5,000; and YWCA Girls Inc., \$20,000. Winiger said the fund’s impact can be seen in the many success stories of young women and girls who have benefited from programs supported by its grants.

“Through our annual grants and the work of our volunteers, A Fund For Women has made it possible for many young women and girls to overcome academic and personal challenges, to prepare themselves for rewarding careers and to break free from unhealthy relationships,” Winiger said.

Also at Wednesday’s event, six women were honored for their achievements as “Fabulous Firsts” in the community. The honorees were: Marla Ahlgrimm, founding partner of Madison Pharmacy Associates; U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, Wisconsin’s first female member of Congress; Julia Bolz, a UW Law School graduate who is now building schools in Afghanistan; Deidre Green a senior at La Follette High School, and a journalist for the Simpson Street Free Press; Margo Melli, a professor emerita at the University of Wisconsin Law School, where she was the school’s first woman tenure track law professor; and Lupita Montoto who helped create La Movida, Madison’s only all-Spanish language radio station and La Voz, a newspaper aimed at Madison’s Hispanic population.

To encourage other women to give, Wednesday evening’s event concluded with the announcement of a challenge grant pledged by JoAnn Six Plesko, a long-time community volunteer and philanthropist who has promised to provide up to \$50,000 to match individual contributions by additional donors through the end of 2008.

Wednesday evening’s event was made possible through the generous support of a number of community business partners, including lead sponsor Parfitt Facial Cosmetic Surgery Center.

A Fund For Women was established in 1993 to improve the lives of girls and women in our community. Since that first year, when a group of visionary donors put together an endowment fund of \$100,000, the Fund has grown to more than \$1.3 million and has provided in excess of \$724,000 to more than 60 community organizations. For more information, visit www.affw.org.