

**2008-2009
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**2008-2009
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**2008-2009
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Judy Allison, *Chair*
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 Toni Freeman,
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 Dianne Bailey,
Board of Dir. Incoming Chair ex officio

Retiring Directors

*Thank you to our retiring directors
for their leadership and service.*
 Robin Branstrom
 Vicky Mitchener
 Sally Saussy

Spring Live Ballot at the Mint



*Above: Ruth C. _____ and Burnet Tucker
Below right: Patti Murphy, Darlene Ferguson
and Adelle Anthony-Williams at the Live Ballot.*

that night. "The Live Ballot was an inspiring evening where the top ten projects truly came to life," said Sara. "Members in attendance asked great questions about the projects, giving the Grants Committee the opportunity to provide a more complete picture of the proposals."

The Annual Live Ballot presentation at the Mint Museum of Art on April 28 attracted more than 100 WIF members. Members of the Grants Committee, chaired by Sara Holderness, gave brief presentations about each of the top ten grantees and also took questions. Encore Catering provided the refreshments.

For the first time, the ballots were mailed prior to this annual spring event, so that members were able to vote immediately. Sixty ballots were turned in



Thank you...!

*...to Jo Ann Peer for hosting a new member orientation at her home in January 2008.
 ...to Joanna Virkler, editor, Nan Clarke, Anne Essaye and Sara Holderness for their work on the newsletter.
 ...to Foundation For The Carolinas for its continuing support and, in particular, thanks to staff members Donna Stoeling and Fontella McKyer who have worked so hard to make sure WIF runs smoothly and professionally.*



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SUMMER
2008

in the news

Annual Meeting & Awards Luncheon

The WIF Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon was held on May 22, at the Westin Charlotte. The 2008 Grantees were announced, and our new Board of Directors was voted in. Colleen S. Willoughby, Founding President, Washington Women's Foundation, gave an impassioned speech about our "sacred honor" as women to continue the good work we began five years ago. Colleen has served as a mentor to our organization from its inception.



*Need photo i.d. please
Need photo i.d. please*

Many thanks to our annual meeting sponsor, U.S. Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management. Our great thanks also to Kim and George Cornelson for sponsoring WIF's new video, produced and co-sponsored by Wray Ward, with assistance from Emulsion Arts and Edit at Joe's.

And also thanks to the WIF members who organized the meeting: Judy Allison, Robin Branstrom, Toni Freeman, Sasha Harbrecht, Patty Norman, and Karen Pritchett.

\$443,000 in Grants Awarded at Annual Luncheon

For the first time in WIF's five-year history, our grant recipients received the full amount of their grant requests. Congratulations to our five recipients, one in each of our focus areas: arts & culture, education, environment, health and human services.

- \$70,000 to **Central Avenue Bilingual Pre-school** to introduce art as a new program focus, promoting language development, kindergarten readiness and enhanced parent-child interaction.
- \$98,000 to **Seigle Avenue Partners** to fund an expansion of a free, six-week literacy-rich summer day camp called Freedom School.
- \$55,000 to **Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation** to launch the **Muddy Water Watch**, a community-based measure to reduce sediment runoff, the leading water pollutant by volume in North Carolina.
- \$90,000 to **Shelter Health Services** to fund the **Women and Children's Healthcare Initiative**, providing support to homeless women and children with chronic health conditions.
- \$98,475 to **A Child's Place** to fund the **Flex Social Work Team**, a team with a social worker and student liaison to support multiple schools with triage, advocacy and weekly case management, potentially serving an additional 380 children.

In addition, discovering we had \$31,525 remaining in this year's grant pool, we decided to give \$2,250 to each of our 14 past grant recipients to show our appreciation for their work in the community. These grantees are Pat's Place, Gang of One, Ada Jenkins Center Dental Van, Jacob's Ladder Job Center, BRIDGE Jobs Program, Youth Homes, MedAssist, Citizen Schools, Catawba Lands Conservancy, YWCA's Families Together, Teach For America, Charlotte Community Health Clinic, Carolinas Clean Air Coalition, and Collaborative Arts Theatre.



Annual Meeting Speaker Colleen S. Willoughby, Founder and Former President, Washington Women's Foundation



From Your Outgoing Board Chair

Judy Allison

Five years ago, 161 founding members of the Women's Impact Fund took a leap of faith and invested in a bold, new approach to philanthropy for women. Our founders had the passion for helping the community, the courage to take a risk, the energy to work hard and the belief that it would work.

We have certainly exceeded all our expectations! We didn't dream that in five short years, we would grow to more than 450 members, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing women's collective giving funds in the nation. Our group of generous, smart and committed women has given \$1.4 million in high-impact grants to 19 community organizations. This is significant to our community and is making a tremendous impact.

As I listened to the responses of our six grant winners at the Annual Meeting on May 22, I was struck by the enormity of what our funding will accomplish. My own relatively "small" annual investment, combined with the contributions of all our members, will yield major results...it was an awesome feeling! And to think that we have touched so many lives through the great work of 19 organizations across the community is more than gratifying. This is impact!

Another form of impact is the individual contributions our own members are making through their engagement and involvement in community — because these women were inspired by the Women's Impact Fund. There are countless stories told by members about how they were led to join boards, raise funds and even join the staffs of organizations they learned about through WIF. There is one special story, which I shared at the Annual Meeting, that I want all of you to know. It's the story of Kathy Izard, a founding member whose own personal journey with the Women's Impact Fund is so compelling that we are sharing it in this newsletter. Kathy's story exemplifies the caring and generous spirit of our great organization.

Hundreds of you shaped the Women's Impact Fund into one of the most successful women's philanthropy organizations in the country! I hope you feel the pride that I do about what you have accomplished. There are many to thank, but I want to especially acknowledge our two founders, Mary Lou Babb and Claire Tate, who had the great idea and the passion to launch it...and Michael Marsicano and Foundation For The Carolinas for believing in us and being our valued partner for the past five years.

For me, this has been a great ride! What a privilege to work with such outstanding women for the betterment of our community. We are well positioned to move ahead and continue to grow and make an impact by "giving, learning and leading together". Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Founding Members Celebration

WIF celebrated its founding members at a special luncheon held at The Duke Mansion on March 25. Co-founders **Mary Lou Babb** and **Claire Tate** were pronounced "founding mothers," and Foundation For The Carolinas President and CEO **Michael Marsicano** expressed his ongoing support of WIF: "Bottom line – I wish I could join!"



WIF Co-founders Claire Tate and Mary Lou Babb at the Founding Members Celebration

Thanks to sponsors The Duke Mansion, Foundation For The Carolinas, and **Mary Lou Babb**, as well as Invitations By Lee.

Also thanks to lunch Co-chairs **Robin Branstrom** and **Patty Norman** with **Nan Clarke**, **Kay Ethridge** and **Cyndee Patterson**.

Best of the Best!

Congratulations to WIF on receiving a "Best of the Best" in the "New Charlotte Institution" category of *Charlotte Magazine's* May 2008 issue. According to the magazine, "Charlotte is a city of giving, and that's epitomized in the Women's Impact Fund. Established just five years ago, the organization has grown from 100 members to 450, and each member commits to giving \$1200 a year for five years. They have direct participation in awarding grants and so far have given away \$1.4 million to Mecklenburg-based arts & culture, education, environment, health and human services groups."

WIF is Going GREEN!



To save money, save trees, and demonstrate the same kind of stewardship expected of our grantees, WIF newsletters will now be e-mailed to members with Internet access. (All other members will continue to have their newsletters mailed.) One annual printed issue will be published and mailed after the annual meeting. The new format, called *Connections*, will be a concise "news you can use" summary of upcoming WIF events and news. Look for it in an inbox near you!

If you have suggestions for *Connections* or the WIF website, please contact **Denise Apple** at deniseme@yahoo.com.

The Ripple Effect

by Kathy Izard

Over the years, I have volunteered for numerous organizations but never felt that I was truly making a difference. After reading about Colleen Willoughby and the Washington Women's Foundation in a magazine, I thought...what a great idea for Charlotte. When I heard that Mary Lou Babb and Claire Tate had started a women's collective giving fund here, I joined right away.

Over the next three years, WIF became a huge part of my life, not just because of the time I was spending but because of the women I was meeting. Everyone I met was united behind the idea of what this giving circle could be. I found new friends in women of all ages, women who had been leading in Charlotte for years...as well as women who were new to the community, looking for a place to make a difference. To learn from these women has been one of the greatest gifts of my membership.

I'm especially grateful for the friendship I've made with member Sonja Nichols. Race can be a barrier to making friends in Charlotte, but within the Women's Impact Fund, those barriers do not seem to exist. It's easier to connect and have authentic conversations when you are working together for a common goal. Our friendship is a treasure to me...and we would not have made this connection if it were not for this great organization.

2007 Finalist Awarded \$50,000 Grant (continued from front cover)

In May 2007, WIF announced its commitment to award a \$50,000 grant to Advantage Carolina for the Clean Air Works project. On March 31, 2008, Advantage Carolina withdrew its grant application and asked WIF to cancel its grant commitment to the agency. While Clean Air Works continues to be a viable project serving our region, it has undergone a number of strategic changes in funding and organizational approaches. As a result, Advantage Carolina and WIF agreed that canceling the grant commitment was the best course of action for both organizations.

Several months ago, I decided it was time to make a change in my life. Eventually, I had an "aha" moment and realized that the four years of training and involvement on the grants committee and the WIF board had given me the tools I needed. On Feb. 1 this year, I joined the Urban Ministry Center (UMC) to direct the Homeless to Homes program.

My Women's Impact friends have rallied with their support...many (Sarah Belk Gambrell, Angela Breeden, Sandra Conway, Edwina Willis-Fleming, Anne Essaye, Veronica Esclamado, Karen Pritchett, Libba Rule) have volunteered and one member, Liz Peralta, has just been named UMC director of development. And my friend, Sonja Nichols, was so inspired by the Women's Impact Fund that she has started a new organization, South Charlotte Interest Group (SGIC), whose mission is to teach their members' children about the importance of giving back to the community.

There is an African proverb that says: *If you want to go fast, go alone.* If you want to go far, go together. I am so grateful to The Women's Impact Fund for allowing me to go fast and far with great friends.

This May, after conducting the necessary due diligence, the WIF board voted to award \$50,000 to the other 2007 environment grant finalist, **Carolinas Clean Air Coalition**. The grant, which was also announced at the Annual Meeting on May 22, will fund **Clean the Air for Kids!**, an educational and advocacy campaign aimed at reducing children's exposure to dangerous school bus and car exhaust.

Wilks Named BusinessWoman of Year

WIF member **Lauri Wilks**, executive vice president of Lowe's Motor Speedway, was named 2007 Charlotte BusinessWoman of the Year by Queens University of Charlotte and Wachovia.

WIF Membership Grows to 460!

Welcome to new members **Gail Baron**, **Kelly Brooks**, **Betsy Brand**, **Karen DeMay**, **DeAlva Glenn**, **Rebecca Henderson**, **Pearlynn Houck**, **Peggy Hynes**, **Kathy Mansfield** and **Betsy White**.