



Women's  
Foundation  
of MINNESOTA

Political Representation | SPRING 2007

GROWING EQUALITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

# EqualityReport

## Fast FACTS



- SEVENTY WOMEN WILL SERVE in the 2007 Minnesota Legislature, a gain of seven seats from the 2006 session. This is an historic high (34.8%).
- AS OF 2006, WOMEN'S representation on Minnesota school boards (37.6%) and city councils (28.1%) is at an all-time high.
- THIRTEEN PERCENT (113) of Minnesota's 854 mayors are women.
- OF 457 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS in Minnesota, 52 (11.4%) are women.
- NO WOMAN HAS BEEN ELECTED to the position of governor in Minnesota. Five women have served as lieutenant governor continuously since 1983.
- TO DATE, NO WOMAN OF COLOR has ever served in Minnesota's congressional delegation or in a statewide elected office.
- THE POSITION OF STATE AUDITOR has been filled by three consecutive women since 1994.
- WOMEN BECAME ELIGIBLE to vote and run for election to the Minnesota Legislature in 1922. From 1922 to 1970, women's representation ranged from 0% to 2.5%.

SOURCES: "Women in Elected Offices of Local Governments in Minnesota, 2007," Office on the Economic Status of Women; "Women in the Minnesota Legislature, 2007," Office on the Economic Status of Women; and "Women in Minnesota Executive Offices, 2006 General Election Results," Office on the Economic Status of Women.

## President's Message

Lee Roper-Batker

Dear Friends,

It's only spring and this has already been a good year for women leaders! In February, Harvard elected Drew Gilpin Faust to be its first woman president since its founding 371 years ago. Locally, Karen Diver, a Women's Foundation trustee, made history when she was sworn in as the first woman tribal chair of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

More women ran for legislative seats in 2006 than ever before. For the first time in American history, a woman—Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.)—serves as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher became the second woman Speaker of the Minnesota House.

Amy Klobuchar became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate; Lori Swanson, the first female Minnesota attorney general; and Patricia Torres Ray, the first Latina in the state Senate. And at 34.8 percent, the Minnesota Legislature now has the highest number of elected women in its history. These achievements were not accidental, but the result of collaborative efforts by candidates, volunteers, donors, and grassroots candidate training initiatives.

Still, serious barriers block equal representation. In her book, "Closing the Leadership Gap: Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World," Marie C. Wilson contends, for example, that women are rarely positioned as leaders in the media. When they are, the story tends to be light on content (good hair, bad dress) and sensational in nature.

The antidote to superficial media coverage of women leaders and to our culture's higher standards for women candidates is this: *equal representation*. When women hold political office, they become power brokers instead of targets. When women help make the rules, the rules change. And our grantees are a part of this revolution, as you will read inside these pages.

While the composition of the U.S. Senate is now 16 percent women—a new high—we've set our sites higher: the state governor's office is still for men only and no woman of color has ever been elected to statewide office in Minnesota.

At the Women's Foundation, we believe that when women enjoy equal influence in matters of public policy, they will bring new perspectives and expertise that will advance equality and justice. We're closer to that summit than ever before.

Onward,



*At the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, we hold tightly to the belief that women will enjoy equal representation at all levels of government, bringing new perspectives and expertise that advance equality and justice. Policy discussions will revolve around investments in education, preventative health, and building a family friendly economy and culture.*

### SOMALI ACTION ALLIANCE

## Engaging and Developing Women Leaders to Address Public Education

WOMEN'S FOUNDATION GRANTEE, SOMALI Action Alliance, develops women leaders by training them to advocate for an issue close to their hearts: responsive and culturally respectful public education for Somali children.

In Somalia, there are few leadership opportunities for women. As a result, one of the biggest barriers to their leadership in the United States is often their own fear of abandoning traditional roles. The Alliance builds women's comfort levels by using its internal programs and systems of governance as "incubators" for women's leadership.

Developing women leaders is central to the Alliance's mission to build understanding of public policy and expand civic engagement among members of the larger Somali immigrant community in the Twin Cities.

"Women have a very strong presence in the Somali community, but they are not visible publicly," said Executive

Director Hashi Abdi. "This organization helps them develop a comfort zone and see the power they can have. Then they connect these skills with the outside world and understand how to share them."

The Alliance has seen an internal power shift since it made a commitment to developing women leaders: five out of its nine board members are women. Women head most Alliance committees and constitute most of the members of the Immigration and Education committees. Women are increasingly the face of the organization. For example, at the Alliance's candidate forum last October, two women welcomed Amy Klobuchar to the podium.

The Alliance's commitment to this issue has ruffled a few feathers: it forces transition on a community that has already had its share. "It is challenging at first, but now the men realize that this is about dignity," Abdi said.

The Alliance also offers more formal

leadership training for women. Since 2004, it has conducted yearly trainings for 75-100 women to develop their community leadership skills. As a direct result, growing numbers of Somali women are joining neighborhood associations and PTA (Parent Teacher Association) groups. Five women attended The White House Project's *Vote Run Lead* training in 2006, and five more attended the training held in March 2007.

Abdi says that Somali women have a strong sense of obligation to share information with other women: many conduct mini-candidate trainings and give speeches to community groups about their new skills.

"Now they really understand their own power and leadership," said Abdi. "They see who they want to be as leaders and see that they can run for office. Some do have this ambition." □



(Second from left) Amira Ahmed, Somali Action Alliance, listens alongside (then) candidate Amy Klobuchar (third from left) to a speaker at the U.S. Senatorial Candidates meeting convened by the Somali community in October 2006.

## TRI-COLLEGE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

### Training Women Leaders of Tomorrow

TRI-COLLEGE UNIVERSITY'S NATIONAL Education for Women's (NEW) Leadership Institute, a Women's Foundation grantee, took a national model and ran with it. Since 2004, the organization has trained 137 women from the Moorhead, Minn., and Fargo, North Dakota metropolitan areas and surrounding communities to become leaders in social change.

Women leave the institute with new information and skills, an action plan, and a mentor to help them put their personal goals into action. Many of the institute's graduates are now public leaders: several have run for elected office and dozens are working on women's campaigns throughout Minnesota and North Dakota.

Participants attend a five-day summer workshop in community organizing, public policy advocacy, fundraising and grantwriting, networking, public speaking, media relations, anti-oppression work, and running for office. And throughout the training, they network with professionals in all of these roles.

Rutgers University's Center for



*Personal passion and a vision for social change are what women bring with them to the Tri-College NEW Leadership Development Institute five-day workshops. Last summer, this group of women engaged in grassroots organizing around the social justice issue of tribal lands.*

American Women and Politics developed the NEW Leadership institute model. It is now used by 15 schools nationwide that adapt it to fit their communities. Tri-College's unique version of the model, for example, is open to all women, instead of only those attending college.

"We felt it should be accessible to all women, especially those who wouldn't normally have the opportunity," said Deb White, the program's director and Moorhead State Professor of Sociology. "College students are the people who already have opportunities."

Roughly one-third of participants are on public assistance. The institute covers all expenses, including campus housing, meals, and materials. Full scholarships are available for child care and transportation.

For many participants, personal healing

is the beginning of civic participation.

At one of the trainings, a survivor of domestic violence shared her experience for the first time and found support at the institute. Now, she's a public speaker and activist in her community.

Outreach is central to the program's success. A tribal contact on the Fond du Lac Reservation, for example, helps recruit Native women participants. "I'm a white professor," White said. "Some women of color may be less likely to participate if they hear it only from me."

"We rely on community contacts who work with women who wouldn't necessarily self-select for something like this, and don't see themselves as leaders," continued White. "It helps to have a personal connection say, 'I see this potential in you.'" □



## **SHEILA WELLSTONE INSTITUTE**

### **Empowering Minnesota's Native Women to Lead for Social Change**

THE RATES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, sexual assault, harassment and stalking among Native American and Alaska Native women are more than three times higher than for any other ethnic group in Minnesota. Only five out of the state's 11 reservations have a sexual assault program, and in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, there is only one.

The Sheila Wellstone Institute (SWI), a Women's Foundation grantee, isn't going to take it any more. SWI, a training program within Wellstone Action!, a national center for training and leadership development for the progressive movement, develops grassroots organizers, encourages electoral participation, and implements policies to end domestic and sexual violence.

On February 27-28, SWI convened the first Camp Sheila in Indian Country, a one-and-a-half-day leadership development and grass-

roots organizing training that addressed two problems: underrepresentation of Native women in government and the resulting lack of policies that address the safety needs of Native women.

"The Twin Cities have the second largest Native population in the country, and yet we have no Native office holders to represent their communities on matters of sovereignty, jurisdiction, law enforcement, education, or health care or safety for Native women in Minnesota," said Lonna Stevens, director of the Sheila Wellstone Institute.

The 57 women who attended Camp Sheila in Indian Country represented tribal colleges, the American Civil Liberties Union, citizen activists, and domestic violence and sexual assault service providers. After becoming familiar with proposed legislation, participants and their mentors lobbied legislators to fund seven new sexual assault programs for Native women. They also educated policy makers about the urgent need to address disproportionate rates of international trafficking of Native girls.

At camp, several women signed up to give committee testimony in March at the Minnesota State Capitol. Participants will also lobby their tribal leaders to make tribal sex offender registries compliant with a federal law that requires states to make their registries uniform and accessible to all law enforcement. The final day of camp culminated in participation at Violence Against Women Action Day in the rotunda of the Minnesota State Capitol.

Emerging women leaders will pursue further training in citizen activism, campaign work or running for office from Camp Wellstone, The White House Project, Indians List, and ongoing technical assistance from SWI.

"We're recruiting office holders," said Stevens. "This is the beginning of a pipeline. If two or three new leaders that want to run for office emerge out of this first Camp Sheila in Indian Country, the program will have been a success." □



*On the final day of Camp Sheila in Indian country, Lonna Stevens (at podium), director of the Sheila Wellstone Institute, spoke at the 2007 Violence Against Women Action Day, convened at the Minnesota State Capitol. The rally enabled Camp Sheila participants to put the organizing skills they developed during training into action.*

## WOMEN'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

### Positioning Women to be Agents of Change in Their Own Lives

HALF OF ALL HOMELESS WOMEN ARE victims of domestic violence. Women's Foundation grantee, Women's Community Development Organization (WCDO), located in Duluth, understands this connection. It helps women and children experiencing violence, homelessness and chronic poverty in southern St. Louis County by providing a safe environment in which women strengthen their ability to influence the direction of their lives.

WCDO provides many services, including transitional housing, life and career assessment and goal-setting services, case management and advocacy, service coordination, financial assistance, and community-building opportunities. It served 111 women and children last year.

"We help women be a powerful force in their own lives," said Development Associate Maria Danz. "Women already have this ability. What we do is provide the safety, time and space to help them to discover and build on their strengths." The organization also has a nationally recognized public policy focus to develop a range of long-term safe, affordable housing options for low-income women.

And its new Women's Program is kicking it up a notch: it builds individuals' capacity to advocate for affordable housing and, ultimately, women's political representation. The program does this by giving the women living in its transitional housing program the education, training, exposure to the political process, and support to participate in future events and local leadership opportunities.



*Five women find their voices and rally for social change during a recent Take Back the Night demonstration in Duluth. Each are participants in the Women's Community Development Association's leadership program.*

"Our goal is the same as The White House Project's: to increase the pipeline of women in leadership," said Danz. WCDO clients have participated in local Get Out the Vote initiatives, Take Back the Night vigils, Juneteenth celebrations, pow wows, Martin Luther King Day events, local city council meetings, and statewide political rallies, such as Housing Day on the Hill and welfare rights demonstrations.

"We hope women will keep building on what we teach them and go on to lead."

*And they are:* one participant worked in the Mayor's office for a year; two now

serve on Duluth commissions; and 10 went to the Violence Against Women Action Day training and rally at the Minnesota State Capitol in February. And in March, 10 women participated in The White House Project's Go Run! training. Danz calls these levels of participation "a big bang."

"Our clients experience day-to-day poverty and are trying to find a job and stabilize their homelessness. But once they realize how many things they can influence, it's amazing how much enthusiasm and interest they have." □

# 2007 SOCIAL CHANGE FUND CONVENING

## Advancing Women's Equality through Social Change

ON FEBRUARY 16, 2007, TWENTY-TWO FY07 Social Change Fund grantee organizations from across the state converged on the Minneapolis Community and Technical College campus for the Women's Foundation's third annual Social Change Fund (SCF) Convening.

Throughout the day, grantees had the opportunity to network, share best practices, and develop collective strategies to grow women's economic,



FY07 Social Change Fund grantees

political and social equality.

This year's theme, "Advancing Women's Equality: What is Social Change?" featured workshops focused on effective program evaluation, building organizational diversity, and expanding women's political representation—all through a social change lens.

Over the noon hour, a "progressive lunch" was as inspirational and motivational as it was delicious! This platform enabled Foundation stakeholders to connect directly with grantees to learn how their organizations are creating social change for women and girls. Thirty donors, board members, volunteers and other guests participated in the staff-

facilitated, interactive table conversations with different grantees over each course of the meal. Lunch guests were captivated by grantee stories and asked questions about grantees' work centered in the Foundation's five cornerstone areas of social change: Economic Justice, Safety & Security, Health & Reproductive Rights, Political Representation, and Human Rights.

The convening also kicked off the capacity-building program the Foundation makes available to all SCF grantees to build organizational effectiveness, improve outcomes, and move equality forward for women and girls in Minnesota. □



**LEGACY  
CIRCLE**

**Giving back**  
*to a world that gives  
so much to us*

## REMEMBER THE WOMEN'S FOUNDATION IN YOUR WILL

Become a Legacy Circle member and move equality forward for future generations by making a bequest to the Women's Foundation of Minnesota through your will.

For more information, call Romaine Scharlemann, senior gift planner, at 612-236-1814, or toll-free at 1-888-337-5010.



# A Legacy Gift for Future Generations

WHEN KAREN FINNEY'S HUSBAND PASSED away, she knew she wanted to create something that would honor and preserve his memory and the passion he had for technology education for African American students. Robert Finney had a successful career in computer technology at Digital Equipment Corporation, Microsoft and EMC2, and was a loving spouse and father to a son and daughter.

Using the memorials that were made in his memory, Karen and their two children established the Robert Finney Technology Fund to provide scholarship assistance for post-secondary, non-traditional students of African descent in the field of technology.

"I chose the Women's Foundation, with the approval of my children, because it exhibits the type of social values that are important to our family," said Karen. She continues a busy life of work and church activities, deepening her commitment to philanthropy and community needs along the way.

She is actively involved with the Presbyterian Church as a member of the regional and national committees of Self Development of People, a program that makes grants to help people become self sufficient.

"We wanted to honor my husband's memory in an active way – not just with a headstone. Through our Donor Advised Fund at the Women's Foundation, we will



*Karen Finney and her children established the Robert Finney Technology Fund at the Women's Foundation in February 2007.*

have a positive impact on students who might not otherwise have the help they need to succeed. That means a lot to my family," Karen said. □

## NEW TRUSTEES

**Kim Borton**, Minneapolis, is Program Manager for the Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. She is a candidate for a Master of Public Policy degree at the Humphrey and holds a bachelor's in Business Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Kim serves on the Center for Democracy and Citizenship's Advisory Committee and is a member of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy.

**Saanii Hernandez-Mohr**, Minneapolis, is Midwest Regional Program Manager for Hispanics in Philanthropy, a transnational network of grantmakers. Previously, Saanii co-managed Firefly Community Solutions, LLC, and served as associate community liaison for Northwest Area Foundation, where she focused on program initiatives in tribal and rural Latino communities. She holds a bachelor's in American Studies, with an Ethnic Studies focus, from Carleton College, Northfield.

**Tara Mason**, White Earth Reservation Callaway, Minn., is Director of White Earth Human Services. She holds bachelor's degrees in Sociology and Indian Studies from Bemidji State University and is a candidate for a Master of Social Work from the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Tara is chair of the Johnson O'Malley Indian Education Committee in Detroit Lakes, serves on the Callaway Community Council, and is a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe.

**Catherine McBride**, Faribault, is Chief Development Officer for The Science Center, Maltby Nature Preserve. She has 25 years in financial services, 15 as a stockbroker and financial planner. A board member of the Northfield Area Foundation, Girl Scout Council of Cannon Valley, and ArtOrg, Catherine is founding president of WINGS (Women in Northfield Giving Support), a women's philanthropy helping women and girls reach their full potential.

## NEW STAFF



**Amy Cram Helwich**, St. Paul, is Development Director. She holds a bachelor's in Political Science from University of Wyoming and a master's in Public Administration from University of Pittsburgh's Graduate

School of Public and International Affairs. A Foundation volunteer since 2004, Amy most recently was Development Director for Children's Safety Centers and Growth & Justice, and Director of Foundation & Corporate Relations for Big Brothers Big Sisters.



**Sida Ly-Xiong**, Roseville, is Associate Director of Research & Evaluation, expanding the Philanthropy Fellowship she's held since 2006. She has a bachelor's in Environmental Studies and Biology from Macalester College, St.

Paul, and a master's in Public Policy from the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. Sida is a board member of the Hmong American Partnership.

## RETIRING TRUSTEES

*In gratitude, the Women's Foundation thanks the following retiring trustees—and past board chairs—for their service and strategic leadership: Karen Diver, Blanche Hawkins*



**Women's  
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of MINNESOTA

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CHANGE SERVICE  
REQUESTED



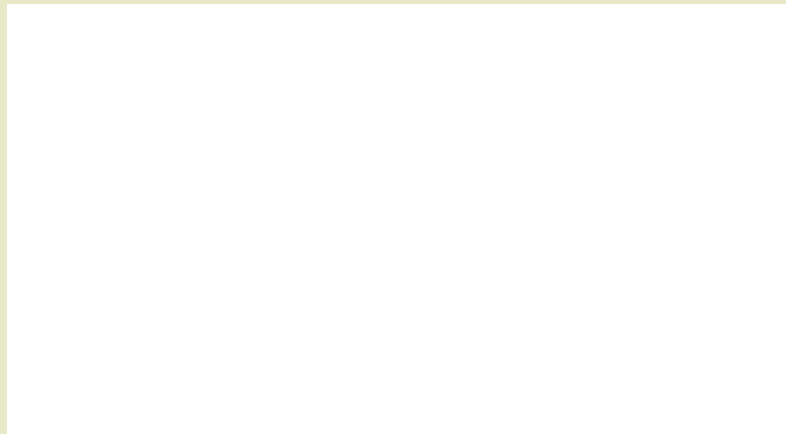
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(l-r) Amalia Anderson, project manager, Main Street Project, 10/18/06; Ann DeGroot, executive director, OutFront Minnesota, 11/29/06; Janis Lane-Ewart, executive director, KFAI Radio, 2/21/07; Karen Diver, chairwoman, Fond Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, 3/21/07.

## UPSTART A SUCCESS

MARCH MARKED THE END OF ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL year of UPSTART, the Women's Foundation's community lecture series. This year's amazing women leaders addressed issues related to political representation, human rights, economic justice and women's leadership in the Latino, LGBT, African American, and Native American communities. Next UPSTART is June 20! Check out [www.wfmn.org](http://www.wfmn.org) and these pages for future details! □



(l-r) Lee Roper-Batker, Foundation president, and Ruth Hayden, this year's Joint Dinner keynote speaker.

## 2007 Joint Dinner of the Women's Professional Associations

HEARTFELT THANKS TO THE 13 WOMEN'S Professional Associations who, for the seventh year, raised funds for the Women's Foundation at its annual Joint Dinner on March 8, 2007. Many thanks to guest speaker, Ruth Hayden, a nationally renowned financial consultant, educator, and author. Hayden's address, "Living and Giving: The Financial Stages of a Woman's Life," was a

huge hit with the audience of nearly 400 Twin Cities businesswomen. Special thanks out to event lead sponsor, General Mills, and top sponsors Wells Fargo Insurance Services, Ceridian, Delta Dental, GMAC RFC, Health Partners, U.S. Trust, RBC Dain Rauscher, State Farm, Goff Investment Group, and Thomson West. Next year's Joint Dinner will be March 13, 2008. □