Healthy, empowered girls grow into capable women who build strong communities.

That was the central message of the 2013 Forum on Women and Girls hosted by the Women’s Endowment Fund Oct. 3. The biannual forum drew more than 150 community activists, nonprofit directors, volunteers and professionals together to discuss the most pressing issues facing women and girls in greater Akron.

Panel discussions on economic empowerment, safety from violence, and health and wellness all led to a similar conclusion: We can make a big difference in the course of a single generation. The work our community is doing now to build girls’ self-esteem, improve infant mortality rates, change the mindset of people in poverty, and stop domestic violence will have lasting effects on the next generation of women and their daughters.

This potential was especially evident during the health and wellness panel, during which Robyn Cutler of Girls on the Run of Greater Summit discussed how her program equips young girls with the confidence and strength they need to overcome the challenges of middle school and beyond.

Fellow panelist Chris Yuhasz, who oversees the maternal depression program at Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, said she often sees women on the other end of the spectrum who didn’t get the support they needed as teens. However, by helping new moms overcome their depression and learn effective parenting skills, they have the opportunity to create a promising future for the next generation.

Together, these two programs – which both received grants from the Women’s Endowment Fund this year – are creating a continuum of healthy women and girls in our community. The ultimate goal is to help healthy girls become healthy women who have healthy babies.

“If we’re going to break the cycle of poverty, we have to start when girls are young,” Yuhasz said. “It has to be a two-generational approach with both kids and their parents.”

Our community needs to find creative solutions to help women get out of poverty, said the United Way’s Donae Ceja during the economic empowerment discussion. Simple shifts in corporate policies – such as flexible start times to accommodate employees who use public transportation –

Above: Robyn Cutler, center, describes the confidence Girls on the Run inspires in its participants. “You can be the last girl, you can be the first girl – you still count,” she said.

Left: Amanda Deighen, a student at Archbishop Hoban High School, asks if there are any programs like Girls on the Run for older teens. “Everybody is so vulnerable in high school,” she said. “There’s a need for programs that help girls build self-esteem and a positive body image.”
From the President

Save the Date

Nov. 15
Grant Deadline
Grant applications are now being accepted for nonprofit programs that focus on the health, safety and economic empowerment of local women and girls. Learn more about using the new online application system at [www.akroncf.org/apply](http://www.akroncf.org/apply), then access the WEF application at [www.akroncf.org/applyWEF](http://www.akroncf.org/applyWEF).

Nov. 17
Girls on the Run 5K
Join Girls on the Run of Greater Summit for its 5K run, the capstone event of its 10-week after-school program for girls in third through fifth grade. Supported by the Women’s Endowment Fund, this program teaches girls about self-esteem, healthy living and positive choices. The 5K is open to the community. Join the girls as they run, walk and skip to the finish line by registering online at [www.gotrgreatersummit.org](http://www.gotrgreatersummit.org).

Dec. 31
Year-End Gifts
Akron Community Foundation staff will be in the office until 5 p.m. on Dec. 31 to assist you with gifts to the Women’s Endowment Fund. See all the ways you can give at [www.akroncf.org/WEFwaystogive](http://www.akroncf.org/WEFwaystogive). For gifts of appreciated stock, transfers should be initiated by Dec. 20 to ensure year-end processing. Get our stock transfer instructions at [www.akroncf.org/stocktransfers](http://www.akroncf.org/stocktransfers).

Be first to get WEF news

Are you passionate about the Women’s Endowment Fund? Then register for our e-news. You’ll be the first to get event invitations, announcements, and news affecting women and girls.

It’s easy: Just go to [www.akroncf.org/WEF](http://www.akroncf.org/WEF), enter your email address, then select “Women’s Endowment Fund News.”

The Women’s Endowment Fund offers a variety of ways to be involved in our community, from engaging local leaders at our forums and socializing with like-minded ladies at special events to honoring significant women in your life with a gift at the holidays. But there are many other ways to plug in. Contact Renee Scherick at 330-436-5612 or rscherick@akroncf.org to learn more.

I am truly honored to be the new president of the Women’s Endowment Fund. Women’s issues have been a passion of mine since I went off to college, and I am thrilled to be able to pursue that passion through the Women’s Endowment Fund.

At the same time, I am humbled by the task to fill the shoes of Tracy Carter, who has done so much for the fund in the last four years as president. Without Tracy, there would have been no endowment campaign at all, much less such a successful one. We are greatly indebted to her. I will do my best to honor that legacy and make her proud.

Having just completed our endowment campaign, we are looking toward the future and working to keep the momentum of that campaign alive as we begin our third decade.

We are working on a stewardship plan to keep our donors informed and engaged. Our donors are what keep the fund going, and we want to make certain they know their faith in us is well placed.

Communications is another key area we plan to focus on in the coming year. During the endowment campaign, we learned we are not as well known as we want to be. As a result, we are working on developing a communications plan that will engage not just those who are familiar with the Women’s Endowment Fund, but also those who are not.

We are particularly aware of the need to engage younger members of the community, and we plan to strengthen our outreach through social media channels.

Finally, we are also reaching out to the community to find volunteers for all of our activities. We are looking for individuals who share a passion for our cause and are willing to give of their precious time to help further that cause.

If you or anyone you know might fit that description, please contact us at 330-376-8522.

Have a wonderful fall season,

Kathy Booth, president
Women’s Endowment Fund

Kathy Booth, president
Women’s Endowment Fund
New members bring valuable expertise to board

The Women’s Endowment Fund welcomed three esteemed community leaders to its advisory board in June. Laura Hnat, Kendra Philon and Judy Read all accepted three-year appointments to the board.

Laura, a Cleveland Heights resident, is the system director of development for the Summa Foundation. Throughout her 20-year career as a professional fundraiser, Laura has helped raise more than $100 million for nonprofit organizations. She is particularly skilled at maximizing the talents and resources of other women, making her an ideal addition to the fund’s Stewardship Committee, which she will chair.

Laura was first introduced to the Women’s Endowment Fund when she was invited to serve as a guest member of the Grants Committee. She said the large number of deserving programs competing for limited funding sparked her desire to join the board and help grow the fund’s endowment.

“As a board member, I hope to be able to impact the amount of money we can give away,” Laura said.

Laura is an active volunteer in the community, currently serving as the immediate past president of the Ohio Association of Healthcare Philanthropy board.

She previously served on the boards of the Austen BioInnovation Institute in Akron, Western Reserve Planned Giving Council, and the United Way of Summit County Women’s Leadership Council. Laura is also the former president of the board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals North Central Ohio Chapter.

Joining Laura on the board is Copley resident Kendra Philon. Kendra is a certified public accountant and manager for Meaden & Moore, where she specializes in nonprofit services.

She was inspired to join the Women’s Endowment Fund board after witnessing the success of the endowment campaign, which raised more than $2 million for the fund’s 20th anniversary in 2013.

“I was so impressed to see a group of women come together to raise that money, I just thought, ‘I want to be a part of that,’” Kendra said.

As a young professional, Kendra hopes to help other young women grow as philanthropists and get involved with the Women’s Endowment Fund. She currently serves as vice chair of the United Way’s Young Leaders Society and is a volunteer for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Summit, Medina and Stark Counties.

Finally, serving alongside Laura and Kendra will be Judy Read, a lifelong Akron resident and celebrated community volunteer. A founding donor of the Women’s Endowment Fund, Judy said she is delighted to now serve on the advisory board.

She and her husband, Roger, were leading contributors to the endowment campaign and are passionate about the fund’s mission.

“I feel very strongly that women are extremely important in our community and need to be both supportive and supported,” Judy said. “That’s exactly what this fund does.”

Judy is the former chair of the United Disability Services board and Akron Community Foundation’s Distribution Committee. She brings extensive knowledge of the community to her role as a Women’s Endowment Fund board member.

Judy, Kendra and Laura will all be valuable assets to the fund, said advisory board President Kathy Booth.

“I am absolutely thrilled to have these women come on our board,” Kathy said. “They represent both long-standing commitment to the community and brand new folks wanting to start out and show their commitment. The skills and talents they bring will be extremely helpful to us going forward.”

Meet our advisory board officers

Kathy Booth
President

Cindy Johnson
Vice President

Jackie McDermott
Secretary

Sherry Neubert
Treasurer
Congratulations to “For Women, Forever” campaign co-chairs Karen Lefton and Dianne Newman, who both received prestigious awards this year for their role in successfully raising more than $2 million for the Women’s Endowment Fund.

Dianne, the 2013 Akron ATHENA Award recipient, was honored Sept. 18 at the fifth annual Women’s Leadership Day Celebration at Fairlawn Country Club.  

She was selected for her vital work in shaping the Women’s Endowment Fund and nonprofits like the Akron Art Museum, where she serves as board president. As the co-founder of Shifrin Newman Smith Inc., Dianne was also recognized for her business acumen and for creating a supportive workplace environment for women.

In Dianne’s honor, luncheon proceeds totaling $1,500 will benefit women and girls forever through the Women’s Endowment Fund.

Earlier this year, the Leadership Akron Alumni Association named campaign co-chair Karen Lefton the recipient of its 2013 Distinguished Leader Award.

The award recognizes a Leadership Akron graduate who has made an extraordinary contribution to address a critical community issue.

Karen accepted the award in June at the Association of Leadership Programs national conference.

In addition to both chairs, WEF founding mother Marie Covington is also being recognized for her service. She will receive the Lieberth Community Vision Award in November.

Marie was selected by Leadership Akron for her longtime service to the community, including her role in founding the Women’s Endowment Fund and helping the fund reach its campaign goal.

She will be honored at a special breakfast at 7:30 a.m. on Nov. 7 at the John S. Knight Center. For more information about the event or to purchase tickets, visit www.leadershipakron.org/lieberth.

Congratulations to all three women for their well-deserved recognition. The Women’s Endowment Fund is grateful for the integral part they each have played in the fund’s growth and success.
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Continued on page 6
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Continued from page 5

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The Women’s Endowment Fund capped off its “For Women, Forever” campaign to raise $2,013 million for women’s and girls’ programs at its annual dinner March 13. **Clockwise, from top right:** Campaign co-chair Karen Lefton looks on as GAR Distribution Committee member Kathryn Dindo announces a last-dollar grant from GAR Foundation to push the campaign over the top; keynote speaker Fawn Germer applauds the Women’s Endowment Fund for its permanence; WEF board members celebrate a successful campaign. Read more about this momentous occasion at www.akroncf.org/WEFcampaignrelease.