Grant provides healing space for victims of violence

By Katie Smucker, co-chair, WEF Grants Committee

For most of us, “shelter” is a word that conjures up images of home, safety and solace. For those who find the courage to flee violence in their home, shelter becomes a place to rebuild and find hope.

Soon, Akron will have a beautiful facility where women and children seeking a new beginning can find just that. The new Battered Women’s Shelter, fittingly named the Hope & Healing Survivor Resource Center, will provide a place where women can go for protection and support when their home becomes unsafe.

This year, a grant from the Women’s Endowment Fund will renovate and fully furnish a residential suite where countless individuals seeking safety from violent relationships will rest and rebuild.

There will be many comfortable rooms in the new shelter, but this one will forever bear the Women’s Endowment Fund name, reminding everyone who comes to rest there that the women of this community care about them.

“You can just feel the spirit of hope and positivity in the atmosphere,” said one Grants Committee member. “It is such a privilege to be able to make a lasting impact for victims of domestic violence through this grant.”

See the full list of agencies that received a combined $85,000 in grants this year at www.akroncf.org/WEFgrants.

Mentors play key role in empowering women at work

As the newly appointed chief information officer of a Fortune 150 company, Goodyear’s Sherry Neubert knows what it takes to be a leader.

She oversees nearly 1,000 professionals all over the globe and is responsible for transforming the information strategy for one of the world’s leading tire companies.

Sherry takes this responsibility seriously, which is why she is committed to using her leadership experience to mentor other women and help them build a successful career.

“I believe that women who have ‘made it’ have a duty to share what they have learned with other women and help them reach their full potential,” Sherry said.

Helping women reach their full potential is a goal shared by the Women’s Endowment Fund, which has made economic empowerment one of its core grant-making priorities.

By supporting leadership training and mentoring programs for female professionals, the Women’s Endowment Fund helps cultivate future leaders and ensures a new generation of women can follow in Sherry’s footsteps.

“For me, the most successful leaders are authentic and true to themselves, irrespective of gender,” Sherry said. “You have to establish your own true north and set the course.”

Read the full story and find out why Sherry calls herself an “unlikely leader” at www.akroncf.org/Neubert.
Save the Date

April 30
Mother’s Day Gift Deadline

Don’t miss your chance to give a Mother’s Day gift your mom, aunt, sister or friend will cherish forever. Through April 30, you can make tribute or memorial gifts in honor of the special women in your life. Donations are fully tax deductible and will benefit women and girls in Summit County forever. Cards are mailed the first week of May. Give online at www.akroncf.org/give/WEF MothersDay.

June 11
Raising Charitable Children

Akron Community Foundation and hosts David and Cheryl Venarge will welcome author Carol Weisman for a discussion on family philanthropy. Join us as we learn about the joy and importance of engaging our children and grandchildren in giving. For more information, contact Delinda Herman at dherman@akroncf.org or 330-436-5613.

Oct. 13
Forum on Women and Girls

You’re invited to participate in a discussion about the most pressing issues facing women and girls in our community. At this biannual forum, panels of experts will talk about the changing health needs of women at each stage of their lives. Conversations will help shape WEF’s future grant-making priorities. To get your invitation, register for our e-news at www.akroncf.org/WEFnews.

Spring is a busy time for the Women’s Endowment Fund. We just celebrated another successful annual dinner. Oh, what a night that was thanks to Kathleen Kennedy Townsend! Thank you to all who came out, sponsored and otherwise supported our event. The evening was so energizing and inspiring.

We are also in the middle of our annual Mother’s Day campaign. This year, we added an exciting social media component that will increase awareness and attract more donors. After all, everyone has special women who have made a difference in their life, and what better way to recognize their importance than to give a gift that keeps on giving?

I encourage you to participate by making a gift and proudly wearing the temporary tattoo we will send you in return. It’s the only tattoo guaranteed to make your mom smile!

In addition, we are beginning to update our 2015 Vision Statement. We will be asking for input from past board members, donors, grantees and committee members through an online survey. We have two board meetings scheduled to review your feedback and develop a vision statement that will lead us forward. Our plan is to have the statement completed by June.

Finally, my term as president is coming to a close. Let me say what a privilege it has been to lead this marvelous group of women dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls throughout our community. I see such a bright future for the Women’s Endowment Fund. The very best is yet to come!

Kathy Booth, president
Women’s Endowment Fund

Plug in and get involved

Are you passionate about the issues affecting local women and girls? Do you want to make sure your voice is heard? Register for our e-news and be the first to know about the news and events impacting women and girls in Greater Akron.

As an e-news subscriber, you will be the first to be invited to events where you can engage local leaders, socialize with like-minded ladies, and be inspired by national speakers. Also, be the first to know about funding deadlines, volunteer opportunities and other ways to plug into the Women’s Endowment Fund.

Register today: Just enter your email address and select “Women’s Endowment Fund News” at www.akroncf.org/WEFnews.
Celebrate Mother’s Day with a special gift to WEF

Are there women in your life who have inspired or encouraged you? Perhaps it’s a dear mother, teacher or friend who has made an unforgettable impact.

This Mother’s Day, consider honoring those special ladies with gifts in their name to the Women’s Endowment Fund. Your gifts will support women and girls in our community forever – a fitting tribute to the women who have made a lasting difference in your own life.

Each woman you honor will receive a beautiful Mother’s Day card telling her of your gift (but not the amount).

Donations ultimately support the Women’s Endowment Fund’s grantmaking, which to date exceeds $735,000 to deserving nonprofit organizations.

Your gift of:

◊ $100 will improve the self-esteem of three middle school girls through an empowerment program that focuses on building positive friendships.

◊ $50 will educate seven teenage girls about the warning signs of an abusive relationship and help prevent teen dating violence.

◊ $25 will help a young woman who has been abandoned or abused learn to make healthy decisions and become self-sufficient.

Honor the special women in your life at www.akroncf.org/give/WEFMotherDay.

Memorial gifts for:
Gene Amick by Sylvia Davis
Lucille Hollinger by Mark Dalton
Kathryn Hunter by Anonymous
Jonathan Kuhns by Ilene & Robert Shapiro
Mary P. O’Leary by Anthony O’Leary
Selma Smith by Dr. Cynthia Rudick
Linda Snyder by Evelyn Unger

Tribute gifts for:
Jody Bacon by Sandra R. Smith
Kathryn Booth by Joan Booth
Chemstress Consultants by Ilene & Robert Shapiro
Elizabeth Dalton by Mark Dalton
Bonnie Estep by Dr. Ernest Estep
Lorraine Fair by Michelle Fair

Barbara Greene by Susan Vogelsang
Sherry Neubert by Laurie Zuckerman
Herb & Dianne Newman by Matthew D. Newman
Scott A. Newman
Debra Shifrin by Sherry Hellman
Sylvia Trundle by Kay Hine
Honorable David & Melissa Zuckerman by Marilyn & Landon Zuckerman

Laurie Zuckerman by Iris Klein Caston
Rita Johnson
Laurie Zuckerman & Steve Johnson by Marilyn & Landon Zuckerman

Show your #THX2MOM

Once you’ve made a gift in honor of the special women in your life, we encourage you to publicly thank them by sharing a photo of yourself wearing our custom-designed #THX2MOM temporary tattoo. Check out some of the people who have taken their own tattoo selfies and learn how you can participate in this fun social media campaign at www.akroncf.org/WEFMotherDay.

For gifts received Oct. 1, 2014, to Feb. 28, 2015

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Honor the special women in your life at www.akroncf.org/give/WEFMotherDay.
More than 300 community leaders, volunteers and philanthropists gathered March 12 to celebrate at the Women’s Endowment Fund’s “For Women, Forever” dinner. This year’s event featured author and political trailblazer Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, the first woman lieutenant governor of Maryland.

Top left: Townsend shows off her #THX2MOM temporary tattoo with the fund’s founding mothers. Top right: Summit County Councilwoman Sandra Kurt (left) and Dr. LaDonna Jessie BlueEye greet Townsend during the reception. Bottom left: Event Chair Debra Shifrin thanks the many sponsors of this year’s event. Bottom right: Townsend speaks about the importance of women taking power seriously: “If you’re prepared, you can grab it.”