Grant helps African-American girls reduce anxiety

By Stephanie L. Langguth
Assistant Director of Advancement Communications, Kent State University

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the United States, affecting 40 million adults nationwide. While many studies indicate higher rates of anxiety and depression in African-American women, those studies also indicate their rate of seeking treatment is significantly lower than average.

Now, with the help of a grant from the Women’s Endowment Fund, Kent State University faculty members have developed an innovative app to help African-American teenage girls manage their stress.

The app is part of the Sisters United Now (S.U.N.) program, a culturally infused intervention designed to help black girls ages 12-15 learn coping strategies for stress and anxiety.

Through the program, girls create a vision statement for themselves and replace the lyrics from a favorite popular song with the words from their statement.

After they record their song, the girls can play it back via the Build Your Own Theme Song app. When they are stressed, they listen to their song to push out negative thoughts and replace them with their own positive words.

“There are so many more stresses now for adolescents and teens,” said Kent State psychology graduate student Kallie Petitti. “Adding personally meaningful words to their favorite song makes the song so much more powerful. The girls would light up when they listened to their song.”

The S.U.N. program was designed to help African-American teen girls learn strategies to manage their stress and anxiety.

Forum sparks discussion on critical women’s issues

On Oct. 13, dozens of non-profit leaders, community volunteers and city officials gathered for the Women’s Endowment Fund’s biannual Forum on Women and Girls, which brings area thought leaders together to discuss some of the most pressing issues facing women and girls in Greater Akron.

With sessions ranging from “The Dark Side of the Internet” to “Police and Women: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know,” the forum offered valuable insight into a wide range of issues affecting women and girls in our community.

Forum committee member Katie Smucker pointed to the women in law enforcement panel as one of the standout sessions of the day, saying, “The audience was inspired by the panelists’ candid responses to their questions. It was a great example of the forum providing its participants with a unique experience, as well as an open environment to learn and be heard.”

Learn more about the compelling topics discussed at the forum and view photos at www.akroncf.org/Forum2015.
The Women’s Endowment Fund board is excited to share with you our new vision statement, which we adopted at our annual planning meeting in September:
- The Women’s Endowment Fund uplifts women and girls in Summit County by funding programs that encourage economic empowerment, safety from violence, and health and wellness.
- By cultivating and sustaining donor relationships, we will actively grow the fund to serve the needs of women and girls in Summit County.
- Our vision is to be a leading advocate for women and girls and to collaborate with others to promote philanthropy to serve their needs.

We appreciate all of the input from our donors, grantees and past board members who completed our survey, which the WEF Advisory Board, under the leadership of Barb Greene and Laurie Zuckerman, used to create our new Vision for the Future. The board is also working on our first strategic plan, which will enable us to continue to enhance our donor relationships and grow the fund to better serve the needs of women and girls.

In October, the Women’s Endowment Fund welcomed community members to our biannual forum, which facilitates dialogue on issues critical to the needs of women and girls and helps to shape our future grant-making priorities. This year’s grant-making process is now in full swing, and grants will be announced in February for programs that support social change for women and girls in the areas of economic empowerment, safety from violence, and health and wellness.

We also welcome new board members Gizelle Jones, Margaret Jordan and Marcy Venarge. We are excited to add them to the advisory board and appreciate the talents they bring to help us advance our mission and enhance our community outreach.

Thank you for your ongoing support of women and girls, now and forever.

Cindy Johnson, president
Women’s Endowment Fund

Save the Date
Dec. 31, 2015
Year-End Giving Deadline
Last-minute gifts of cash to the Women’s Endowment Fund can be made online through midnight on Dec. 31 at www.akroncf.org/give/WEF. For gifts of appreciated stock, transfers should be initiated by Dec. 22 to ensure year-end processing. View our stock transfer instructions at www.akroncf.org/stocktransfers or see all the ways you can give at www.akroncf.org/WEWaysToGive.

March 10, 2016
Annual Dinner
Save the date for our next “For Women, Forever” annual dinner. This signature event will feature Steve and Jeannine Marks, founders of the Akron Marathon. Be among the first to get details about the dinner by registering for our e-news at www.akroncf.org/WEFnews. Corporate and individual sponsorship opportunities range from $1,500 to $10,000. The $10,000 exclusive presenting sponsorship includes tickets to a special meet-and-greet reception with the speakers, among other benefits. Learn more and become a sponsor now at www.regonline.com/ForWomenForever.

From the President

WEF welcomes new board members

Gizelle Jones
Executive Director
Jewish Family Service of Akron Ohio

Margaret Jordan
Business Development Manager
BDO

Marcy Venarge
Community Volunteer

Read their complete biographies at www.akroncf.org/WEFboard.

See what else is happening in our community or add your own nonprofit event at www.akroncf.org/AroundAkronCalendar.
Mother’s Day gifts to WEF honor special women

In 2015, 144 donors celebrated Mother’s Day with gifts totaling $13,129 to the Women’s Endowment Fund. Your generous gifts will empower women and girls in our community forever. Below are the mothers, grandmothers, aunts, sisters and friends you honored with a gift in their name:

In memory of:
Peggy Allen, Elsie Beattie, Winifred Bishop, Thelma Breaux, Jacqueline Cook, Dorothy Critchfield, Dave’s Mom, Mary Ann Del Medico, Marie McDonald Esselstyn, Ramona Ferguson, Lucille Fladung, Virginia Garland, Emma Garofalo, Rosanna Garofalo, Agnes Gorbach, Claire Hawkins, Theresa Haynes, Louise Hewell, Lucille Hollinger, Doris Hudson, Dianne Jones, Clare W. Kaufmann, Georgia King, Theresa Kloska, Karin Newman Krueger, Anna Kuhn, Beatrice Laatsch, Nina Carmela Lombardo, Patricia J. Lombardo, Denise Luntz, Pauline May, Beatrice McDowell, Eloise Menendez, Cynthia Mernagh, Gerry Meyer, Anna Mae Miller, Vada Nida, Eileen G. Raffkind, Gwen Reiter, Alma Reuben, Helen Enid Reuben, Filomena Riccilli, Anne Dirickson Rider, Twahia Washington, Phyllis Schreiber, Patricia McCormack Sheets, Ruth Thiergartner Sherman, Helen Stallings, Dorothy Storm, Ann Tutt, Dorothy Tyndall, Mary Waller, Mary Harper Watkins, Margaret Willett

In honor of:

See a complete list of people who gave to this year’s Mother’s Day campaign at www.akroncf.org/WEF MothersDaygifts.

This holiday season, give the gift that always fits

As the holidays approach, consider giving your loved ones a meaningful gift that will last forever. A gift to the Women’s Endowment Fund in their name is the perfect way to honor a friend, family member, or colleague while making a lasting difference in the lives of local women and girls. Give online at www.akroncf.org/give/WEF.
The Women’s Endowment Fund is an affiliate of Akron Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public charity.

**WEF Advisory Board Officers**
Cindy Johnson, president
Sherry Neubert, vice president
Kathy Booth, secretary
Kendra Philon, treasurer

**WEF Advisory Board Members**
Sandy Auburn, Eve Belfance, Diane Bray, Diane Evans, Barb Greene, Laura Hnat, Gizelle Jones, Margaret Jordan, Jackie McDermott, Dianne Newman, Char Reed, Debra Shifrin, Katie Smucker, Capt. Sylvia Trundle, Marcy Venarge

We strive for accuracy in our mailings. If you find any errors on the address label above, please call 330-376-8522 or send an email to kashby@akroncf.org.

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**Memorial & Tribute Gifts**

For gifts received March 1, 2015, to Sept. 30, 2015

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<th>Memorial gifts for:</th>
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