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CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS:

Deepening the Circle's Grants Pool

The Steering and Membership Committees of the Baltimore Women's Giving Circle are excited to announce a new corporate sponsor initiative.

The working group behind this initiative discovered that the BWGC was the largest giving circle of its size without a corporate sponsorship program. The group concluded that the BWGC should seek money from corporate giving funds to grow its grant pool and membership. The BWGC's reputation for careful vetting of small- to medium-sized local nonprofits and focus on nonprofits serving women and children make it a strong contender for corporate funds.

According to the Women's Philanthropy Network of LA, charitable giving to women's and girls' organizations represents a tiny share of overall giving (1.9% in 2018). This statistic, combined with a description of the Circle's successful vetting (and follow-up) protocols, could spur local corporations and businesses to focus their giving on nonprofits serving women and girls in the Baltimore area.

The initiative is voluntary and initially focused on BWGC members who work for corporations with a matching gift program that will match or increase the amount of the employee's membership dues donation. Businesses contributing to the BWGC have the benefit of recognition from a group of more than 450 women.

Thanks to member Susan Hovanec, the Circle has its inaugural sponsor, The Winslow Group at RBC Wealth Management. The BWGC is grateful for their trailblazing generosity.



**Wealth
Management**
The Winslow Group

Please contact membership@thebwgc.org if you have any questions about how you can participate. The Circle hopes to grow this program with your help.

Letter from the Co-Chairs



Greetings, Circle members,

2023 is off to a great start, and we are immensely grateful to all our members. We come from different experiences, careers, and even generations – but all pull together for the success of our Circle and the city and county we call home.

The Steering Committee is thrilled to announce that the BWGC will offer three financial levels of membership – \$600, \$1,200, and \$2,500 – starting in July 2023. Asking women to make a meaningful gift through a tiered structure will, we believe, increase the number of members, increase total monies available for grantmaking, and create a more economically diverse membership body. Stay tuned for more information.

We are in the thick of the 2023 grants process. 84 readers reviewed 92 applications, and voting for grantees to be funded is now underway. See page 6 of the newsletter for more information on the status of voting and when the winning grantees will be announced.

Thanks to all who made the March Full Circle such a success. What an interesting program! If you missed it, click here: [Hearing and your Brain](#).

The Conversations Initiative Team of the REDI committee held a compelling panel discussion about data and its potential to impact funding. Read about it on page three of the newsletter and watch it by clicking here: [Data that Makes a Difference](#).

Under “Donate” on the website, members and friends can now find all three funding options to support our work. Thanks to our past Co-chairs, Martha Cukor and Susan Perl, for ensuring this access. To view, [click here](#).

We want to understand the “ripple effect” of Circle membership. Have you made a donation to an organization you learned about through the BWGC, volunteered, joined a board, or connected in another way? These are ripple effects, and we want to capture these ties. Stay tuned for more on this topic. Contact bwgcchair@thebwgc.org.

All the best for a happy and healthy spring,

Ann & Salli

Ann and Salli

REDI (Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)

CONVERSATION INITIATIVE

The first REDI Conversation Initiative team event was also the first Circle event open to members of the public. Held virtually on February 23, 2023, the theme was “Data that Makes a Difference: Listen to Those who Know” with speakers Cheryl Knott (Interim Director and Research Manager, Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance), Odette Ramos (Baltimore City Councilwoman, District IV), and Scot Spencer (Associate Director, Local Policy, Annie E. Casey Foundation). They discussed the collection of relevant community data and how it can be applied to policy- and grant-making. Dawna Cobb moderated the session and the Q&A that followed.

Seventy-one people tuned in, including 49 Circle members and 22 members of the public. All registrants received a follow-up email that included the [YouTube link](#).

Thanks to planning committee members Phyllis Kolman, Leslie Glickman, Peggy Cohen, Susan Sachs Fleishman, Hannah Pickworth, and Crickett Woloson, moderator Dawna Cobb, and technical guidance from the Circle’s administrative assistant, Lisa Calixto.

Watch for details of the second Conversation event, coming in May.

Grant Learning Lab

After a positive response to the 2022 membership survey, the Steering Committee asked the REDI Committee to explore a pilot grant-making project now known as the Grant Learning Lab.

A team consisting of three respected community leaders and two Circle members is exploring ways to use the concepts of participatory grantmaking and trust-based philanthropy to create an experimental grants process to grant the \$25,000 designated for the Lab. The lab is not meant to replace the Circle’s successful traditional grants model but to be an opportunity to explore ways to encourage participation from small, often overlooked nonprofits that meet our mission. Stay tuned for more updates.



Thanks, Jane!

Calling on her many years as an organizational development consultant, Jane Berkow led more than 20 women through several discussions about proposed changes to the Circle’s mission and values statements and the creation of a proposed vision statement. From designing the agendas, framing the questions, and leading the discussions, Jane helped the group reach a consensus on proposed language that will soon be shared with the entire Circle.



March Full Circle

“Hearing and Your Brain” was the food for thought at the March Full Circle meeting at Church of the Redeemer. Johns Hopkins researcher Jennifer Deal, PhD, an epidemiologist who focuses on dementia, shared insights into hearing loss and aging with 72 Circle members and more on Zoom. Deal said that most hearing loss is gradual, and the problem is clarity, not volume. This makes it more difficult to understand speech, which can lead to other problems. There also appears to be an increased risk of dementia for people with hearing loss. Deal said a randomized study is wrapping up that is testing if hearing aids plus therapy and other measures to treat hearing loss can help prevent dementia. Click here for a link to the talk: [Hearing and Your Brain](#).

April Dubois, owner of A Sweet Situation LLC and a former BWGC grantee, catered a light lunch. After the meeting, she took the leftover food to share with her community; Susan Grisser took the St. Patrick's-themed flowers to UEmpower-Food Project, which provides 450 meals a week in the West Baltimore area.

JENNIFER A. DEAL,

Assistant Professor

Epidemiology, Gerontology

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

COMMITTEE PROFILE:

Grantee Connect

The purpose of Grantee Connect is to facilitate learning and networking among BWGC grantees. Starting out as a subcommittee under Post Grants in 2008, it was designed to foster relationships among past and present grantees and increase members' understanding of the organizations and their impact.

Today, Grantee Connect is a full-fledged committee whose signature program is the Grantee Forum, a twice-a-year event that brings together all alumni and currently funded grantee partners for a morning of learning and connecting. Topics have included “Partnerships for Success”, “Board Development”, and the upcoming “Raising Funds Creatively,” to be held May 16. Grantees choose the topics for discussion at each Forum.

True to its beginnings, Grantee Connect remains a place “by grantees for grantees”, with Circle members involved only as facilitators of the free flow of ideas among peers. Between Forums, Grantees can easily communicate with each other through the Grantee Connect email group. Click here to view last fall's [Grantee Connect Forum](#) on our YouTube Channel. Interested in learning more about the Forum? Please contact us at granteeconnect@thebwgc.org.

Social Media: Spelling Out the Strategy

The Circle has been on social media since 2012 with Facebook. In 2018, the BWGC uploaded its first YouTube video, and two years later, the Circle joined Instagram. The Social Media subcommittee is looking into adding a LinkedIn account.

BWGC's social media goal is to:

1. Promote the Circle's mission of collective impact;
2. Recruit members;
3. Increase visibility of the Circle; and
4. Promote the Circle's strategic priorities.

The Circle will promote grantees on its social media channels as follows:

1. In relation to our collective impact, not the grantees themselves;
2. To highlight the Circle's work to encourage philanthropy by women;
3. To raise the visibility of the Circle; and
4. To promote what the Circle DOES for grantees, rather than the grantees themselves, i.e., networking and education through Grantee Connect.

Tune to YouTube!

Since the first Circle YouTube video was posted in 2018, the collection has grown to 63.

There are 34 videos available to the public, such as Full Circle meetings, all of which can be found on the BWGC YouTube Channel. The remaining 29 are "unlisted" and available only via a unique link.

- 18 recordings of committee/subcommittee meetings (in lieu of minutes);
- Two social media basics "classes" on navigating Facebook and Instagram;
- Six Grants-related orientation sessions for grant readers or Circle members to be able to vote; and
- Three open-forum Circle meetings covering the original REDI conversation series when the concept of changing the mission/vision along REDI lines was discussed.

If you would like a link for an "unlisted" video, contact Communications@theBWGC.org.

Philanos Get to Know Philanos

Philanos is an international network of women's giving circles. BWGC is an affiliate and will be one of six host circles for the Philanos national conference Nov. 5-7 in Baltimore. Philanos offers resources that Circle members can access by contacting the Circle Archivist archivist@thebwgc.org.

Committee Reports

POST GRANTS

The BWGC Post Grants liaisons establish and maintain relationships with Grantees through site visits and review of midyear reports. By the time the Midyear Report milestone is achieved, Post Grants liaisons have built a connection with their grantee partner and have a good indication of Grantee progress. This year, all 26 midyear reports were on time with almost no concerns expressed. Liaisons attribute this in part to the return of in person site visits and the opportunity to develop interpersonal relationships that encourage issues to be resolved early. Of the 26 Grantees, 11 are first-time recipients, defined by the Circle as “grassroots organizations”, with five or fewer employees and budgets of approximately \$250,000.

GRANTEE CONNECT

For the first time in three years, the Grantee Connect Forum will be held in person on May 16.

The program, offered twice a year for all BWGC grantees and Grantee Connect Committee members, will focus on fundraising. And not just any fundraising strategy, but “raising funds creatively”.

The Committee asked a group of grantee partners to suggest topics for the forum. They were eager to learn more about out-of-the-box fundraising methods. The Forum will feature Grantees sharing their fundraising strategies, then give the other Grantees in attendance imaginary scenarios, enabling them to develop their own creative ways to meet their funding needs.

GRANTS

Since January, the Grants Committee has been hard at work reviewing applications, conducting in-person site visits after two years of visiting applicants virtually, and holding meetings to decide which of the 92 grant applicants to recommend for funding to the entire Circle membership.

The 2023 Grantees will be announced at the May 17 Full Circle meeting.

2023 – 24 Funding Round: Voting Status and Timeline

Voting for 2023-24 grantees is now underway and will be completed on April 23. If you did not register to vote and complete a voter training session, you are ineligible to vote for grantees in the current funding round. The winning grantees for 2023-24 will be announced at the May 17 Full Circle meeting.

The meeting will be hybrid, so please plan to attend in person or virtually.

VOTING TIMELINE:

Round 1 Voting: April 6 – 16

Round 2 Voting: April 19 – 23

Winners Announced:

May 17 Full Circle meeting

New Member Meet & Greet

On March 9, new BWGC members met at The Wine Collective for a wine and cheese tasting welcoming them to the Circle. They chatted with Steering Committee members and enjoyed wine, cheese, conversation and pinxtos, snacks from the Basque country of northern Spain. Approximately 20 people attended the event.



Welcome to the Circle's Newest Members

Deborah Baer Jennie Boyce, Patricia Fuller, Carole Glowacki, Heather Johnson,
Mara-Lee Khouzami, Nancy Paige, Linda Weinberg

Calendar of Events

April 13	Circle Study: "Rocking the Classroom" - Arts Integration in Baltimore Classrooms
April 27	Prospective Member coffee hour event
May 3	Affordable Housing bus trip
May 16	Grantee Connect Forum
May 17	Full Circle meeting

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Opportunities to Help Current and Former Grantees



Martha's Place, which borders Baltimore's Sandtown-Winchester and Upton communities, is a Maryland state-certified recovery program for women overcoming substance abuse and homelessness. It seeks facilitators for Wellness Wednesdays (4-4:45 PM) and volunteers to help clients with grocery shopping and medical appointment as well as for all phases of its Friends and Family Cookout, which will take place in August. For information, contact Jasper Nance (443-728-8402).



Helping Up Mission | Center for Women & Children offers women and children (0-3 years) a secure, home-like environment where they can recover and rebuild their lives, inside and out. They are looking for female volunteers 18 and over to help in workforce development, kitchen, library and community outreach. Contact volunteer coordinator Andi O'Connor (aoconnor@helpingupmission.org or 410-415-9957).

If you decide to volunteer for any of these organizations, please let us know!

Send your name and the name of the group you will be volunteering for to: granteeconnect@thebwgc.org and to postgrants@thebwgc.org.

Upcoming Member Survey

In May 2022, Circle members participated in an all-member survey that helped the Steering Committee make plans for the 2022-23 year. Thank you! Because last year's survey was so successful, we are planning a short Member Survey to be distributed by email in mid-May. PLEASE PARTICIPATE! Your thoughts, ideas and comments are very important and much appreciated.

Thank you to our contributors:

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