



Maine Women's Giving Tree Quarterly Review

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Maine Women's Giving Tree, PO Box 1065, Brunswick, ME 04011 mainewomensgivingtree.org

News Notes from Co-Presidents

Bianca Chambers, Lynn Lockwood

Member News: A warm welcome to our newest members: Annie Miller, Woolwich and Patricia Vaughn, Topsham. It is with disappointment that we note the resignations of Marjorie Platou and Marcia Marks.

Don't forget to visit our informative new Members' Section on the MWG website for the latest information including updates, members' calendar, minutes, etc. If you are not able to login, contact Anne Barnes or Lisa Burke.

2017 Membership Survey

Susan Mikesell, Chair: Strategic Planning Committee

The membership of the Maine Women's Giving Tree was queried at the end of year to assess their thoughts on future planning for the organization. 49 members responded, a remarkable 70% return. Ten questions were asked covering membership, funding and grants. The Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the results and made recommendations. A summary of the findings follows.

The first five questions were directed to membership. Each question allowed for the respondent to rank choice her answers. Even though there were four or more choices, one or two were chosen more often for all five.

- Most of the respondents (40) chose "providing grants locally" for their reason for being a member of The Maine Women's Giving Tree. "Pooling dollars for others" came in second. These responses confirm that our philanthropic mission continues to be the primary incentive for membership.
- Respondents identified contributing money and reviewing grants as their most meaningful way to participate in The Maine Women's Giving Tree.
- 46 members identified email as their primary choice for communication. The new members only area on the website was not fully activated at the time of the survey so it is not clear if we would have more members comfortable with this choice once they became familiar with it.
- The members supported the ideas for expanding and diversifying membership first by providing networking opportunities for younger working women and then with articles in newspaper and informational neighborhood teas/coffees.
- The respondents were also asked about committee involvement. It appears that members want to hear more from those currently involved with committees either in a one to one conversation or presentations to the membership about the work of the committee and the value it has brought those involved members.

The sixth question asked members how they wanted to learn

about the organizations in our communities that might be applying for grants. The rank order responses to this question were more spread out than for any of the previous five suggesting that more than one approach would be valuable. Here is the list in descending order:

- Educational Presentations from organizations that have expressed an interest in us;
- Articles in our newsletter;
- Membership on grants committee or grant reviewer;
- Members presenting about organizations they think the other members should know about;
- and finally, an event where members could talk to several organizations in an informal setting.

The last four questions covered fund raising and the grant process.

- Most of the respondents chose the increase of membership as the method to increase the dollar amount available for grants. This is our current method.
- Most members also did not want to change the method we use to determine monies available for any give grant cycle, the balance we have on December 31 prior to grants being awarded.
- Members wanted us to continue to limit our grants to the current service area, Maine residences of our members.
- Finally, the membership would like to have some involvement in the focus for grant requests.

The Strategic Planning Committee (Anne Taft, Diane Field, Jane Covey, Nancy Hallett, Susan Mikesell) wants to thank all the membership for their participation in this survey. Your time and effort will allow your organization to better meet your needs and the needs of the organizations in our communities that address women, children and families.

MWGT March 7 Education Meeting

by Karen Tcheyan, Secretary

Winnie Chan, Education Committee Coordinator, introduced our visiting speakers, Patricia Kimball, Executive Director and Chris Wolff, Elder Advocate and Outreach Coordinator from Elder Abuse Institute of Maine (EAIM), and Christina McAnuff, Executive Director and Kristina Jenkins, Director of Philanthropy from Olympia Snowe Women's Leadership Institute (OSWLI). Two fascinating presentations followed.

Elder Abuse Institute of Maine:

EAIM, founded in Portland by a public health nurse in 1995, has functioned largely as a volunteer organization until recently. Its mission is to "promote the awareness and prevention of elder abuse through training, collaboration with other agencies and professionals, outreach and advocacy." In 2009, EAIM received

a grant from the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, to develop transitional housing options and support services for elder victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. In 2011, it opened Martha's Cottage in Portland as a transitional housing facility for up to three women. A second Martha's Cottage was opened in Lewiston/Auburn in 2016, but subsequently has closed due to financial constraints. A new facility has been opened in Brunswick, accommodating two women at a time. There are only a couple comparable programs to the Martha Cottage model in the US.

While Maine has a robust system of shelters statewide, EAIM recognized that older people do not want to go to shelters. For years, EAIM worked to design and create a housing alternative. Martha's Cottage offers that alternative, a place with a calming and supportive environment. Referrals come from ERs, law enforcement, other family crisis agencies, faith organizations and neighbors. Women can stay up to two years, but seldom does anyone stay that long. When women arrive at Martha's Cottage, they begin to feel safe, sleep securely and see that they can have a new future free of abuse. After their stay at Martha's Cottage, women transition to other housing situations, including subsidized housing or living with family members.

EAIM is a small organization that has grown carefully and strategically. Currently, EAIM has three paid staff, plus one Vista volunteer, that serve about 100 clients a year. For every ten calls EAIM receives, one comes to Martha's Cottage. The organization is now building a volunteer program and ambassador program to inform communities about elder abuse and care.

To quote our speakers, "Elder abuse is an abuse of the soul, and the work is hard, deep and tragic."



Living Room of Martha's Cottage

Olympia Snowe Women's Leadership Institute

OSWLI was founded by Senator Snowe when she decided not to run for reelection in 2012, she turned her attention to focusing on the needs of women and girls in Maine. She founded the OSWLI in 2015 with the mission to "elevate the confidence and aspirations of high school girls by helping them build leadership, collaboration and problem solving skills needed to become successful in their lives, families, careers and communities." Evidence-based research showed that girls between middle and high school were losing confidence relative to boys. Girls were participating less in class and in sports, and applying less for leadership roles. Interestingly, similar findings were found among women in mid-level professional positions.

OSWLI identified mentoring by other women to be a powerful and effective intervention. The program attracts and recruits women mentor volunteers, representing various professions and interests, through Olympia Snowe's personal networks, Chambers of Commerce and local organizations.

The program is now operating in high schools across the state. Five girls are selected from each school to work with their mentors from sophomore through senior year of high school. The program relies on the referrals of guidance counselors and freshman leadership teams, and retention rates are high. The first class of Olympia Snowe graduates from Olympia's home county of Androscoggin will complete the three-year program in June 2018.

Spotlight: Membership Committee



One role of the committee is to welcome new members and make sure that they receive MWGT's basic foundational materials: bylaws, member roster, recent newsletters; and to keep data current for all members. Recruiting potential members and retaining existing ones are also responsibilities. Several events are being planned for 2018 to attract new members. The Committee welcomes input from current members on improved ways to keep all members engaged and active as they wish to be. Committee members are Chairperson Lili Ott, Lisa Burke, Abbie Mott, Jane Covey and Sandy Neiman. If interested in joining this committee, please contact Lili Ott.

Calendar of Events: *Please save these important dates!*

Wednesday, **May 16**, 11:30 – 2pm, Member's Business Meeting, Holden Frost House, the Highlands, Topsham

Wednesday, **June 13**, 4 pm – 6 pm, Seventh Annual Annual awards Reception, Morrell Room, Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick

Wednesday, **September 19**, 11:30 – 2 pm Annual Membership Meeting, Location TBA

Wednesday, **October 10**, 4:45 pm – 6 pm, Education Meeting-Susan Grites Price on Generous Genes: Raising Caring Kids in a Digital Age, Morrell Room, Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick

**2018 Grant Fund Achievement
as of April 2: \$14,000**