



Washington Area Women's Foundation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lisa Kays
202-347-7737

Washington Area Women's Foundation Announces Local Nonprofit Winners of 2007 Leadership Awards

Winners Picked by Local Volunteer Leaders; Public to Vote Online for Favorite

WASHINGTON, D.C., – FAIR Fund trains teachers, police officers, and D.C. public school students identify and help local children coerced into prostitution. Nueva Vida helps Latina cancer patients find quality medical care. And The Women's Collective, a local nonprofit led by HIV-positive women, helps women and families with HIV/AIDS get health care and services.

Those are three of the eight local nonprofits recently selected to receive Washington Area Women's Foundation's 2007 Leadership Awards, each carrying \$10,000. The eight organizations are located in Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia, Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

From February 1 to 15, the public will get to vote online for its favorite nonprofit. The winner will receive an additional award of \$5,000. To cast a vote, go to TheWomensFoundation.org.

Washington Area Women's Foundation is the only donor-supported public foundation that works to improve the lives of low-income women and girls in the region and to increase philanthropy by all women.

A committee of about 40 volunteers – lawyers, business owners, international development specialists and employees from local companies – selected the Leadership Award winners through a participatory grant-making process. Four teams of volunteers, who are donors to The Women's Foundation, researched 61 nominated nonprofits through phone interviews and site visits. After narrowing the list to 15 organizations, the volunteers met to select the best eight. Staffers from The Women's Foundation oversaw the selection process, but the volunteers directed it.

“The Leadership Awards is one of our most popular programs because it gives donor volunteers a chance to try their hand at grassroots grant-making,” said Phyllis Caldwell, president of Washington Area Women's Foundation. “The Awards program seeks out and recognizes outstanding nonprofits taking on enormous challenges and improving the lives of women and girls.”

The 2007 Leadership Awards recognize nonprofits whose work improves the health and safety of low-income women and girls. The awards focus public attention on these programs and help them gain additional funding and grow.

Washington Area Women's Foundation chose to focus on health and safety because the need is so great and because improving health contributes to women's economic security. The

District has the highest incidence of AIDS of any other state and a rate 10 times the national average. About 14 percent of women in the region are uninsured. In D.C., 46 percent of women did not receive prenatal care in the first trimesters of their pregnancies, more than triple the national average. And in the overall region, the infant mortality rate remains above the national rate.

The award winners are:

Ascensions Community Services

Ascensions helps children and families in D.C.'s Wards 7 and 8 rise above past and current difficulties to a place of renewed wellness, competency, and stability via holistic psychological interventions. Because Ascensions believes mental health is often overlooked, it focuses on stress, depression, and decision making. <http://www.2ascend.org/>

A Wider Circle

A Wider Circle empowers children and adults to break the cycles of poverty and poor health throughout the Washington metropolitan region. <http://www.awidercircle.org/index-1.html>

DC Abortion Fund

The DC Abortion Fund is improving the health and safety of women and girls in the Washington metropolitan region by covering the gap between what they can afford and the cost of an abortion. <http://dcaf.nnaf.org/>

Divine Images Network, Inc.

Divine Images, Inc. works with at-risk youth and their families living in Ward 8 to strengthen and enhance their community, and to prevent violent crime, substance abuse, and dropping out of school. <http://www.divineimagesnetwork.org/>

FAIR Fund

Fair Fund engages youth, especially younger women, in civic activism to prevent sexual assault, human trafficking, and domestic violence in their own lives and communities. It operates internationally and in D.C. <http://www.fairfund.org/>

Nueva Vida

Nueva Vida supports, informs, and empowers Latina cancer patients in Maryland, D.C., and Virginia and helps them to advocate for and access quality medical care. <http://www.nueva-vida.org/index2.htm>

Pregnancy AID Center

Pregnancy AID Center serves low-income, uninsured pregnant adolescents and women in Prince George's and Montgomery counties and in the District. The center offers counseling, support, family planning services, emergency food and adoption assistance, among other services. <http://www.pregnancyaidcenter.com/html/>

The Women's Collective

The Women's Collective in D.C. serves women and families living with or at risk for HIV/AIDS by providing case management, counseling, HIV testing, emergency financial assistance and family social activities, among other services. It is led by women with HIV and their allies. <http://www.womenscollective.org/>

####

Washington Area Women's Foundation makes empowerment and economic security a reality for women and girls in the Washington metropolitan area. Our mission is to enrich the community by engaging

women in philanthropy, offering grants and operational resources to non-profit organizations and serving as a regional voice for women and girls.

For more information, visit www.TheWomensFoundation.org