Leadership Letter

I always enjoy listening as a member describes AAWGT to a guest. Recently, one member described it quite simply as “…a group of empowered, informed women who pool their talents and dollars to make a difference” – quite a succinct description. I was particularly struck by the inclusion of the word “informed”. Yes, we are very intentional about the greater good unleashed by combining our dollars – but we also take seriously our desire to make informed decisions in leveraging those dollars. At a recent Membership Committee meeting, Missy and Marie said that we “give and learn” – a nice play on words of the old admonition to “live and learn”.

These past 3 months have continued to be a testament to our efforts to both give and learn. Our Grants Committee and Reviewers have been busy examining and assessing our 2013 grant applications and are now preparing for site visits to clarify the inevitable questions that arise. The Post Grants Committee continues to tirelessly support, visit, and evaluate last year’s grantees, to make informed assessments of performance and impact, demonstrating that our commitment goes beyond just giving the dollars. And -- the Education Committee has educated and engaged us in an amazing, and incredibly well-attended, two-part series on Affordable Housing and Homelessness in Anne Arundel County that included a bus tour with the experts! Be sure to read more about all of these “giving and learning” activities as you peruse this newsletter.

Karen and I also invite you to join us on the evening of April 10th at our Spring Membership Open House, to be held this year at Historic London
Town and Gardens. This is without a doubt the time to bring guests and introduce them to all that AAWGT is about. The Spring Open House also offers another opportunity to “learn” – to meet, converse, learn about, and develop lasting friendships with the wonderful, empowered women who make up AAWGT.

Join us as we Give and Learn and Enjoy!

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<tr>
<th>Julie Schuelke</th>
<th>Karen Smith</th>
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Circle Highlights

AAWGT Goes on the Road to Examine the Challenge of Affordable Housing and Homelessness in Anne Arundel County

Nearly 50 AAWGT members and guests participated in the March 13 fact-finding bus tour exploring how and why affordable housing continues to be such a critical problem in our community. On the way to Arundel House of Hope in Glen Burnie, AAWGT’s Education Assistant Chair Mary Grace Folwell, an attorney specializing in affordable housing, and Mary Grace Chacos-Faircloth, a D.C. native and 20-year Annapolis resident who is a licensed Commercial Real Estate Broker and presently works as a Business Performance Advisor for Insperity, provided an overview of the history of and contributing factors to the county’s shortage of affordable and public housing.
Arundel House of Hope Executive Director Mario Berninzoni then took the group on a tour in Glen Burnie of four of its housing units, including a mix of permanent residences where chronically homeless people can live indefinitely; temporary housing for non-chronic homeless looking to turn their lives around; and the new Patriot House, which provides transitional housing and services for veterans who need help getting back on their feet. Residents pay rent of up to 30 percent of their income, which may range from $75 up to market rate. Berninzoni noted that all of the housing is close to Ritchie Highway, which offers the only public transportation in the area. “Most people don’t want more public transportation in Anne Arundel County,” he said. “They want less.”

After a stop at Arundel House of Hope Day Center, Mary Grace Folwell moderated a ‘trivia quiz’ on affordable housing as the group traveled back to the Wiley H. Bates Heritage Legacy Center for lunch and a discussion. Next, Kathleen Koch, Executive Director of Arundel Community Development Services (ACDS), which spearheaded the Wiley H. Bates Heritage Park project, outlined the work that went into creating this unique $26 million community facility that includes the Legacy Center dedicated to preserving the history of Wiley H. Bates High School (1932-1966), formerly the only high school for African Americans in Anne Arundel County; 71 apartments for low- and medium-income seniors; the Annapolis Senior Activity Center; and the Bates Boys & Girls Club. She also explained the role of ACDS, which is a private, nonprofit corporation that acts as Anne Arundel County’s housing and community development agency. ACDS works to create affordable housing opportunities within the county and provides support services such as homeownership counseling, job training and child care programs to those most in need.

Annapolis Housing Authority CEO Vince Leggett next told the group about the challenges and successes of the Housing Authority, a multi-million dollar housing corporation that has a significant impact on the city of Annapolis. “There is a tremendous shortage of affordable housing in Annapolis,” Leggett said. “We house 2,000 people and 4,000 people flush the toilets every night,” he said, presumably referring to the unofficial count of residents. “We have 1,000 people on the waiting list.” The Housing Authority manages 800 housing units in five different areas within the City of Annapolis, including four for families and one for seniors. It also operates the Section 8 housing voucher program, in which 400 families are blended into housing throughout the greater Annapolis community. Leggett cited Pathways to Opportunity as his signature program, in which the Housing Authority brings together affordable housing, economic development and supportive services like job training and computer skills and offers them to participants in its housing programs.

The eventful day concluded with an optional tour of the senior residences at the Bates Heritage Park. Many thanks to Maureen Cavaiola, Mary Grace
Folwell, Bronwyn Belling and the Education Committee for the incredible amount of hard work they put into creating this amazing learning experience!

Videotape of the session can be found [here](#).

*Photos above feature from the left AAWGT Education and Program Chair Maureen Cavaiola (she didn't actually drive the bus); Madelyn Schaefer - member, Mario Berninzoni - ED Arundel House of Hope, Bess Langbein - CFAAC, Meri Gibbs - CFAAC guest; members and guests continuing the discussion during a stop.*

**Sixth Annual Leadership Event featured Ritu Sharma, President of Women Thrive Worldwide**

Annapolis resident Ritu Sharma, the Co-Founder and President of Women Thrive Worldwide, was the featured speaker at AAWGT’s Sixth Annual Women and Leadership Event, “Connecting to the Global Community: Lessons from Abroad.” Fellow Annapolitan and Baltimore Sun columnist Susan Reimer asked insightful questions that led to a fascinating dialogue on how improving the lives of women and girls living in poverty can make the world a better place. The event was held at the Boys and Girls Clubs on February 13, in part to help celebrate International Women's Day, which took place on March 8.

Women Thrive Worldwide is a global organization that cooperates with locally based women’s groups, often in the most troubled parts of the world, and advocates for change to promote opportunity, economic prosperity, and freedom from fear and violence for women. The organization brings the voice of these women and girls to decision makers in Washington, which often includes bringing to DC the women themselves to serve as their own powerful advocates. A watchdog organization, Women Thrive also independently monitors US government actions and funding for programs that help improve women’s lives around the world. The organization accepts no government funding in order to remain an independent advocate for women in poverty.

Founded in 1998, the group’s first success was persuading Congress to dedicate a portion of the $200 million Hurricane Mitch relief package to local women’s groups in Honduras and neighboring countries. Ms. Sharma exclaimed, “It was easy!” Thus encouraged, they have continued to build on this approach.

Although they work with women’s groups, Ms. Sharma stressed that solving the problem of poverty should not be placed entirely on women’s
shoulders but should also involve the men. Their involvement is important! Many women already work 17 hour days and simply can’t do any more.

In an effort to better relate to the women her organization serves, Ms. Sharma has traveled on multiple occasions to poverty ridden countries, most recently Sri Lanka, and lived for up to a week on $1 a day, an income similar to many Women Thrive is trying to help.

Although there are many causes for concern, Ms. Sharma tries to stay optimistic. For example, while the situation in Afghanistan is distressing, she believes the years in which the Taliban was suppressed have led to a better educated generation of young women and men, who have tasted freedoms and are going to strongly resist efforts to turn back the clock. Similarly, the situation in Muslim countries “is much better than we have been led to believe,” since young women and men in recent years have developed a much more enlightened perspective.

On the home front, she said that new Secretary of State John Kerry has pledged continued support for programs supporting struggling women around the world, although it will be hard to find a stronger champion of these issues than former Secretary Hillary Clinton. Ms. Sharma also noted that the gridlock in Washington is the worst she has ever seen. However, she said that Congress has to pass appropriation bills, and foreign aid makes up less than .5% of the Federal budget, yet makes a large impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world. Women Thrive and other interested parties will continue to make this case as forcefully as possible to those responsible for making these decisions.

Ms. Sharma applauded AAWGT for the work we do, and looks forward to getting more involved in the giving circle and the issues that affect women and families locally. When asked if she had any suggestions for AAWGT, she encouraged us to stay committed, keep on believing in what we are doing, and enjoy what we are doing as well. She clearly lives by this philosophy, and we were all encouraged and inspired by her attitude, accomplishments and mission. View photos from the event here. To view videotape of the presentation, click here.

**Grants in Action**

Members of Anne Arundel Women Giving Together are invited to attend a mini-field trip **Tuesday, April 9th**, beginning at **3:00 p.m.** at **Meade Middle School** to see one of our 2012 "Grants in Action." Creating Communities guru Rob Levit will be showcasing his grant, led by mentors Barbara Blanco and Kashonna, another mentor for the 12 to 15 students
enrolled in this exciting after school program. The entire presentation will be about one hour. There will also be a small exhibit of finished works done by the students. The purpose of this grant is to offer economically disadvantaged and vulnerable students aged 8 to 17 an arts-based alternative education opportunity involving photography, Adobe Photoshop and personal interaction skills, all under the guidance of a qualified instructor.

Meade Middle School is on 26th Street, right off of RT. 175 in Ft. Meade, MD 21076. If you go to the school's website, there is a Google map with easy directions. The school is NOT on the base property, so there is no need to go through any guard station. It takes about half an hour to drive there from the Annapolis area. As the room can hold a maximum of 20 visitors, please register early if you plan to attend. There is plenty of free parking. **Please arrive prior to 3:00 p.m. to check in with the front desk.**

To register click [here](#) - Limited to 20 registrants. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Evans, Vice-Chair of Post Grants, at [PGEC@givingtogether.org](mailto:PGEC@givingtogether.org).

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**Welcome to New Members**

A warm welcome to the newest members who joined our circle and are making a difference in our community!

Kathleen Flynn, Marsha Gill, Lois Kelberman, Suzanne Lord, Sally Iadarola, Helen Krone, Debbie Schilling and Marilyn Sweetser.

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**Upcoming Events**

[Register Online](#)! Simply visit givingtogether.org and look for the event under upcoming events. All events are open to members and guests unless noted otherwise.

**Tuesday, April 9, 3:00-4:00PM**
**GRANTS IN ACTION (Members Only)**
**Meade Middle School**
**26th Street, Fort Meade**
Join with other members to see our grant money in action! Creating
Communities guru Rob Levit will be showcasing his grant. Presentation will last approximately one hour. There will also be a small exhibit of finished works done by the students. Limited to 20 registrants.

**Wednesday, April 10, 6:00-8:00PM**  
**MEMBERSHIP OPEN HOUSE**  
**Historic London Town and Gardens, Edgewater**  
Do not miss this opportunity to connect with friends - old and new - at our annual Spring Open House. We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to invite and introduce your friends to our giving circle and the important work we do!

**Monday, April 15, 6:30-8:00PM**  
**MARKETING & COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE MEETING**  
The M&C Committee would love to have new members come to share ideas and learn about how the circle communicates the good works we do to the greater community. For more information or to RSVP for the meeting, e-mail Diana Rode at [marketing@givingtogether.org](mailto:marketing@givingtogether.org).

**Wednesday, April 17, 7:00PM**  
**BOOK GROUP**  
**Cinderella Ate My Daughter**  
For more information, contact Cele Brown at [bookgroup@givingtogether.org](mailto:bookgroup@givingtogether.org).

Committee News

**EDUCATION**

The Education Committee is beginning to plan for the September and November 2013 programs. September will focus on Teen Pregnancy Trends and how the trends impact the lives of women and families in Anne Arundel County.

**Women’s Health in Anne Arundel County is the topic for November.**

The committee has discovered that our members often have the expertise or networks that can frame out and prepare for the level of programming that we all want and expect for better outcomes for our grant making, philanthropy and community outreach.

Consider adding your talents and connections to our fall programs. While we have fun discovering our learning objectives and developing a program for all members, more importantly we learn from each other and
that is an immeasurable and priceless outcome!

Finally we will be planning a more focused survey as well as a brainstorming session to get membership input for next year’s programs. Please let us know if you want to help with either of these essential and fun activities!

Email us as education@givingtogether.org.

EVENTS

The Events Committee is in need of several new members to expand their logistics team. The Events Committee works closely with each meeting’s host committee to coordinate logistics and details such as venue selection, set-up and clean-up, food and beverages, any special requirements such as AV needs, etc. The Events Committee is also looking for new affordable venues in the area which would fit 75-100 people. Anyone with access to community locations, please contact Noelle Richmond at events@givingtogether.org.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Marketing and Communications Committee is working to expand our marketing power, and is interested in adding new members. We could use help with writing articles for the web and newsletter, help keeping our website up to date, help keeping our facebook page fresh, and more. Training available! For more information, attend our committee meeting on Monday April 15th at 6:30PM at the home of Diana Rode, Marketing and Communications Chair. To RSVP for the meeting or to send questions/suggestions, e-mail marketing@givingtogether.org.

MEMBERSHIP

As many of you know, the Spring Open House at London Town on April 10th from 6:00-8:00PM is a great opportunity to introduce AAWGT to friends and colleagues who might be curious about what we do. That gathering is primarily social, but we do share information about how the organization functions and why we have enjoyed being members. It’s fun, folks are bound to see someone they did not realize was a member, and it’s a great way for those who are new to Annapolis to become involved and meet interesting and engaged women.

Bring as many friends as you can gather and don’t overlook those who may not be “wired”. While we do much of our business online and via e-mails, we encourage members who prefer mail and the phone to join us as well. Each new member is assigned a buddy and that person will make sure that important news reaches members who are not computer comfortable.
The Membership Committee is **always** happy to send information to prospective members or to discuss AAWGT with them. Just send us an e-mail at membership@givingtogether.org or give us a call at either of the numbers listed below.

*Thanks for your help in spreading the news about AAWGT to your friends and other prospective members.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missy Attridge</th>
<th>Marie Brockhurst</th>
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<td>410-280-6655</td>
<td>410-703-8335</td>
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**Help Wanted**

**Volunteers needed to make lunches for the Light House Shelter**

Participating in a lunch making session for the Light House Shelter is a great way to get to connect with other giving circle members for coffee, conversation and good deeds. Volunteers gather once a month at the home of an AAWGT member to make 70 sandwiches to feed our less fortunate neighbors. The host purchases the provisions ahead of time. Those present share the costs of supplies (about $25 per person). Members are more than welcome to bring a friend to see our giving circle in action! Upcoming dates include:

**Monday April 8** at the home of Evie Rentz, Annapolis

**Wednesday May 15** at the home of Prue Clendenning, Edgewater

If interested in volunteering to help, contact Karen Davis at kluciadavis@hotmail.com.

*[Check out our Website!](#)  [Like us on Facebook!](#)*