



## Women Leaders in Philanthropy

OAK PARK-RIVER FOREST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## Established 1995 Background

Throughout history, women have changed the course of human events. They often have done this by thinking ahead to a preferred future—a world of possibility, of what can be rather than what is. They invest in people, build traditions, expand democratic beliefs and practices, and grow community over time.

We have these women right here in Oak Park-River Forest. In fact, two women—Nancy Follett and Ann Pepper—helped resuscitate our own Oak Park – River Forest Community Foundation. In 1958, the Foundation was born of many men and women who were planning ahead, investing in Oak Park and River Forest. They wanted to preserve the community and pooled their resources to make that possible. The Foundation was managed out of a lonely drawer in a bank for several decades. In 1986, Nancy Follett was elected president of the board and immediately worked to shift the Foundation’s focus to become more active as a service to local social impact organizations, aiming to address long-term needs. Follett then recruited Ann Pepper as the Foundation’s first executive director.

In 1995 Women Leaders in Philanthropy was founded by Nancy Follett and Chatka Ruggiero to help build the unrestricted endowment of the Foundation so pooled resources could be invested in the community over time.

### MISSION

The mission of the Women Leaders in Philanthropy is to inspire, educate and respond to the needs of the community through philanthropy.

### VISION

The vision of Women Leaders in Philanthropy is to empower and cultivate, and recognize women as philanthropic leaders and volunteers within their communities.

### GOALS

To enhance philanthropy of the Oak Park – River Forest Community Foundation by

- reinforcing bonds and social networking
- providing philanthropic education for the next generation of women leaders
- supporting social impact organizations and causes



## HISTORY & MILESTONES

- Founded in 1995
- Between 1995 and 2006, members contributed more than \$1.8 million to help develop the unrestricted endowments (Grantmaking and Operational) of the foundation.
- New member pledges supported *Communityworks* Campaign between 2007-2012, and members contributed \$319,775 to the *Communityworks* Endowment Fund.
- New member pledges support Future Philanthropists Program from 2012 to 2015, and members contributed \$61,700 to date to the Future Philanthropists Endowment Fund.
- Women Leaders in Philanthropy celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> year in 2015.
- In 2015, Women Leaders in Philanthropy created a new Fund for sustaining and new members to pool their contributions. All members vote for causes to support annually, drawing from this Fund. In 2015, members contributed \$42,000 (distributing \$21,000 to selected causes). In 2016, members contributed \$72,000 (distributing \$36,000 to selected causes), and in 2017, members contributed \$91,000 (distributing \$45,500 to selected causes).
- Membership has grown to over 90 members (from 34 in 2007).

## FUNDS

**OPRF Grantmaking Endowment Fund** allows the OPRF Community Foundation to make grants to community organizations through a competitive request for proposals.

**Communityworks Endowment Fund** supports 3 priority areas as determined by the community: 1) Environmental Sustainability, 2) Success of All Youth, and 3) Community Leadership.

**Future Philanthropists Endowment Fund** provides annual funding for the junior cohort of the Future Philanthropists Program (a two-year program for select high school juniors and seniors) so that they can learn and determine how to award \$25,000 in grants to local programs that incorporate youth leadership.

**Women Leaders in Philanthropy Fund** supports causes annually voted by the members.

## MEMBERSHIP

To become a Women Leader in Philanthropy, a woman must donate a minimum of \$5,000. An initial gift of \$1,000 can also be made, with a pledge to donate a minimum of an additional \$1,000 in each of the following four years. Women can sponsor another woman to become a new member.

