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## WOMEN'S FUND OF GREATER OMAHA

# NEWS



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- Dates for Fall Luncheon, Ready To Run Announced
- 2009 Grant Applications Available Online
- Ready2ServeOmaha Web Site Matches Volunteers with Agencies
- Crown Program Benefits from Women's Fund Grant

### Our Mission

The Women's Fund of Greater Omaha examines issues and conducts research to provide informed support for initiatives that improve the lives of metropolitan area women and girls.

## Ready To Serve Prepares Participants for Community Board Service

Nearly 190 participants took part in the inaugural Ready To Serve board training workshop Feb. 3 and Feb. 10. The workshop came about as a result of Women's Fund research that showed women are underrepresented in the leadership ranks in our community and that service on non-profit boards is an effective way to develop leadership skills.

Community leaders who took part in Ready To Serve provided insight on how boards operate and focused on members' responsibilities.

"The workshop provided foundational learning to help participants understand what it means to be on a board and what role a board member plays," said Sara Masters, Ready To Serve committee chair.

In addition to covering the basics, workshop leaders shared real-life examples of their board experiences. Presenters encouraged participants to join boards in which they believe in their mission, as serving goes beyond attending monthly meetings.



"Ready To Serve is meeting a need to make the metro Omaha area better for everyone by getting people, especially more women, involved with community organizations," Masters said.

The majority of participants said they plan to seek opportunities to serve on a non-profit board. Participants will be surveyed later this year to find out how they have applied the knowledge gained from the workshop - for instance, have they joined boards, or have those persons already serving accelerated their participation on boards and gained more confidence?



*Panelists at the Ready To Serve workshop include, from left, Maryanne Stevens, Penny Parker, Ruth Henrichs, Kathy Bigsby Moore and Teri Teutsch.*

Participants gave the workshop high marks - a 4.3 average on a 5-point scale.

"Overall, this was fantastic," one participant said. "I learned so much. The speakers were great, and they were very inspirational."

Plans are under way to hold a second Ready To Serve workshop. To be notified when registration opens, send your name and contact information to [info@omahawomensfund.org](mailto:info@omahawomensfund.org).

The Women's Fund thanks Mutual of Omaha, Ready To Serve program sponsor, and the Kiewit Foundation, which provided funds for the course materials, along with media sponsors Metro Magazine and KMTV.

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**Ellie Archer**

*Did you know that the Women's Fund is the only remaining source of funding dedicated exclusively to the needs of Omaha's women and girls?*

## Message from the Director

These are tough times. We hear the message constantly, sometimes to the point of full-blown "recession fatigue". As we experience our personal assets shrinking in value, the natural inclination is to want to run for cover until a brighter day.

What's important to remember is that for many people the notion of a brighter day is almost impossible to imagine. This is especially true for the legions of women right here in Omaha who are stuck in an endless cycle of poverty - who struggle for survival even in the best of economic times.

As part of a current research project, the Women's Fund recently held a series of focus groups with representatives from agencies that serve women and girls and some of their clients. We were struck by the compelling stories of individual hardship, as well as the collective desire of the service providers to work together addressing problems.

It was sobering to realize the vital role the Women's Fund plays in the community. The project clearly illustrates our unique mission: Do the homework necessary to accurately pinpoint need. Convene people to encourage collaboration in addressing problems. Provide the resources to help develop practical solutions.

Did you know that we are the only remaining source of funding dedicated exclusively to the needs of Omaha's women and girls? Whether an agency is serving the hungry, victims of domestic violence, girls acquiring critical life skills, single mothers working toward home ownership, or women in need of job training, they can turn to the Women's Fund for help.

When times are tough, women suffer the most. They are the first to lose jobs and health insurance. In fact, the National Women's Law Center reports that unemployment for women who head households is up an alarming 54 percent in the last year. That's why, even though occasionally we'd like to run for cover too, we stay in the battle.

Your charitable dollars are no doubt limited right now. That's why it's more important than ever to direct them where they will have the greatest impact. With a gift to the Women's Fund, you are doing just that.



## Ready To Serve Was a Team Effort

*Continued from page 1*

**Special thanks to these respected community leaders who gave their time to serve as presenters and panelists:**

- Anne Camp, Non-Profit Association of the Midlands
- Dick Schenck, Wells Fargo
- Anne Steinhoff, Steinhoff and Associates
- Kathy Bigsby Moore, Voices for Children
- Ruth Henrichs, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska
- Penny Parker, Camp Fire USA
- Maryanne Stevens, College of St. Mary
- Teri Teutsch, MediBadge Inc.
- Sara Woods, University of Nebraska at Omaha
- Celann LaGreca, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska
- Christine Johnson, Mutual of Omaha Foundation
- Nick Taylor, Fitzgerald, Schorr, Barmettler and Brennan
- Laurie Ruge, Deloitte and Touche
- Kirstin Case-Penrod, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- Lyn Ziegenbein, Peter Kiewit Foundation
- Bob Braun, Lozier Corporation
- Jane Clifton Miller, Gallup
- Deborah Keating, First National Bank
- David Brown, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce

**Thanks also to these outstanding committee members:**

- Sara Masters, chair
- Anne Branigan
- Christine Johnson
- Celann LaGreca
- Sarah Lukas
- Kathe Oleson
- Kirsten Case-Penrod
- Jennifer Richardson
- Sara Woods



*Ready To Serve presenters included, from left, Celann LaGreca, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska; Sara Woods, University of Nebraska at Omaha; and Christine Johnson, Mutual of Omaha, who talked about "apprehensions of a new board member."*

## Women's Fund of Greater Omaha Board of Directors

- Sara Woods, President
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- Shelley Wedergren, Secretary
- Larissa Johnson, Treasurer

- Anne Branigan
- Senator Pam Brown
- Cynthia Buettner
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- Debbie Fraser
- Amy Haddad, Ph.D.
- Deb Hendrickson
- Sandra Maass
- Kathy Mallatt
- Sara Masters
- Karen Prewitt
- Marcia Shanahan
- Thomasina Skipper
- Maryanne Stevens, RSM. Ph.D.



*Anne Steinhoff of Steinhoff and Associates talks about resources available for board members during the workshop.*

## Crown Program Helps Families Work Toward Home Ownership

A Women's Fund grant is helping Holy Name Housing Corporation's Crown Program provide affordable housing for families in North Omaha neighborhoods. The program rents single family homes to low-income persons willing to work toward home ownership.

"A desire for home ownership and a demonstrated willingness to address obstacles to owning a home is the focus of tenant selection and dictates the management services offered to the Crown Program tenants," said Gary Batenhorst, president of Holy Name Housing Corporation. Services might include individual counseling, financial literacy education, workshops on home ownership responsibilities, and home maintenance education.

Since its inception, the program has developed 84 single family units for the Crown (credit to own) program. Seventy-five percent of the current tenants are women, and 14 of the 23 Crown Program graduates are single women who purchased homes, primarily in North Omaha.

Tenants who graduate from the program receive assistance with identifying and purchasing an affordable home. A portion of the tenant's monthly rent is put into a fund to help with the cash requirements of purchasing a home.

During the current fiscal year, Holy Name hopes to construct 12 Crown units to help meet the waiting list of applicants, and to identify additional vacant lots and/or substandard houses that could be developed as additional Crown units.



The Crown Program rents homes to families willing to work toward home ownership.

Grant Applications Available Online

### Women's Fund Relies on Research to Direct Donor Dollars

As you look for the best way to allocate your charitable dollars, consider supporting the Women's Fund. With one donation, you'll reach multiple organizations meeting the most critical needs of women and girls in the Omaha area.

The Women's Fund doesn't just fund programs - we conduct research to identify the most pressing issues here in our own community. This research guides the Women's Fund as it seeks grant proposals from community agencies and allocates program dollars.

**Community initiated grant applications are due May 20. For more information on the grant process, see the Grants page on the Women's Fund Web site at [www.omahawomensfund.org](http://www.omahawomensfund.org).**



Contributions to the Women's Fund make a big difference in our community. Please send a donation of any amount to the

**Women's Fund**  
**7602 Pacific Street, Suite 300**  
**Omaha, NE 68114**

donate online at  
[www.omahawomensfund.org](http://www.omahawomensfund.org)

or call  
**827-9280** to charge to your credit card.

## Women's Fund Profile



**Sara Masters**

*"If you are going to be involved in a board, pick one that you have a passion about."*

## Sara Masters Draws on Experience to Lead Ready To Serve

While listening to speakers at the recent Women's Fund Ready To Serve workshop, Sara Masters thought back to when she served on her first board -- and how beneficial this training would have been. "Everything that was discussed was something I learned through my experiences serving on boards," she says.

"Ready To Serve participants will not have to do as much on-the-job training as I did," she says. "They will be able to jump in with both feet and contribute immediately."

Since being asked to join the YWCA board at age 29, Masters has gained considerable experience through serving on nine other boards, including the Women's Fund board. It was a natural fit, then, for her to chair the Ready To Serve committee that planned the workshops.

Workshop attendance underscored the need for this type of training. The planning committee originally hoped for 50 participants, and 190 people registered for the two-afternoon program. "With the workshop held on two afternoons, there was a risk people would not come back on the second day if their needs were not being met," Masters said. "From the evaluations after the first afternoon, we learned people were finding great value in it, and they wanted to come back for part two. That's another indicator of Ready To Serve's success."

Masters is vice president at Wells Fargo, where she has worked for 30 years beginning in the management development program. Her team focuses on leadership and management development for mid- to senior-level

managers in 39 states. Prior to this, she was director of human resources for Nebraska.

"At Wells Fargo, we believe that we can only be as successful as the communities we serve," she said. "That's why the company encourages team members to get involved and give back to the community."

While Masters just joined the Women's Fund board in 2008, she's no stranger to the organization. Nearly two decades ago when it was created, Masters was asked to make a contribution, and she did. "At the time, it sounded like something I could believe in and it focused on what was important to me," she recalls. Over the years, she kept tabs on the organization, thinking one day she would get more involved. With several other board terms coming to an end, she had that opportunity.

Masters currently serves on the Oak Hills Country Club board and chairs several church committees and boards.

"If you are going to be involved in a board, pick one that you have a passion about," she says. "Match your talents to the organization's needs and look for ways to make a difference."

Over the years, Masters has found that serving on up to three boards at a time is manageable with working full time and enjoying life. She and her husband Jim have two sons, John, who works with Northern Trust Bank in Chicago and David, who is a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In her free time, she enjoys golf and traveling.

## Finding Volunteer Leadership Opportunities Is Just a Click Away

In the age of social media, the [Ready2ServeOmaha.org](http://Ready2ServeOmaha.org) Web site is making it just as easy to find a volunteer leadership opportunity as it is to locate your high school classmates.

Individuals register and fill out a volunteer profile, and nonprofit organizations post openings for leadership opportunities, such as positions on committees, councils, advisory boards and board of directors. Once registered, individuals can browse through volunteer opportunities and agencies can search for potential candidates for openings.

Ready 2 Serve Omaha went live last fall, and since then it's seen a steady increase in the number of registered users.

"Ready 2 Serve levels the playing field, providing opportunities to individuals of all backgrounds and experience levels to serve, while ensuring that our community's nonprofits have access to new talent to help them grow," said Kirsten Case-Penrod, director of the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Council (YPC). Ready 2 Serve Omaha is a program of the YPC in partnership with the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha.

As of mid-March, 101 agencies and 344 individuals had registered. Using the site is easy, Case-Penrod said. "You just create your profile, and once it's approved, you can begin searching."

Often, women, young professionals, minorities lack a pathway to become involved with nonprofit organizations. Creation of the Ready 2 Serve Web site helps meet a need Women's Fund research identified - the lack of leadership opportunities for women in Omaha. Serving on boards and councils is a great way to develop leadership skills, and the registry ensures more individuals have access to this opportunity.

Omaha has hundreds of nonprofit organizations that need help. If you're looking for a way to get involved with leadership positions, register at [www.ready2serveomaha.org](http://www.ready2serveomaha.org). Organizations also are encouraged to register and post volunteer leadership opportunities.

**Ready 2 Serve Omaha**



## Mark Your Calendars

**Thursday, Oct. 1**

**Women's Fund Fall Luncheon**

Featuring Audrey Nelson, communications expert

Everything in the office boils down to communications, and Nelson will speak to both genders about the importance of understanding women's and men's communication styles.

**Saturday, Oct. 10**

**Ready To Run workshop**

Learn about running for elected office from experienced female politicians

# 'Smart Women, Smart Money'

## Conference Is May 8



The free "Smart Women, Smart Money" conference hosted by the Nebraska State Treasurer's Office on May 8 is especially timely given the current economic conditions.

U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis said recently that the recession is especially hard on women, who earn less money than men for the same work. She cited a U.S. Census Bureau figure that shows women make 73 cents for every \$1 earned by men.

"These are women, these are families with mortgages, grocery bills, prescriptions and other health-related costs they have to face," Solis said at a recent ceremony in California honoring women.

"These are women and families that want to retire. These are women and families that deserve economic security."

The 2009 Nebraska women's financial conference will be held from 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at Embassy Suites in LaVista. The day's agenda is packed with information and motivation to help propel participants into the world of "smart money."

Breakfast, lunch and all materials are included at no charge. Registration is required and is available online at [www.moneycounts.org](http://www.moneycounts.org).

The Women's Fund is a sponsor of the event.

## How does the Women's Fund bring about change?

Identifying and researching major issues impacting the lives of women and girls in the Omaha area.

Educating the public on these issues.

Funding initiatives that benefit the women and girls of our community.



## Thanks for Your Support

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### Benefit the Women's Fund

## Surf the Internet and Shop Online

Search the Web with Yahoo-powered GoodSearch. Simply go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and select "Women's Fund of Greater Omaha" as your charity. Follow the easy instructions to add GoodSearch to your browser's tool bar. The Women's Fund benefits each time you use GoodSearch.

Go to GoodShop.com and shop at more than 600 merchants, including Amazon, Best Buy, Lands End, Office Depot, Barnes & Noble and more. A percentage of each purchase will be donated to the Women's Fund.



## Gifts

The Women's Fund thanks those who have given generously to honor or memorialize family and friends:

### In Memory of:

Gina Dunning  
Rosemarie Elsasser

Betty Rogert  
Genie Sheaver  
Marian Walsh

### From:

Claudia Martin  
Celann LaGreca  
Carolyn Field Pandis  
Nancy Jacobson  
Maureen Holstein  
Ellie Archer  
Joyce Carleton  
Sharon Carleton

### In honor of:

Jo Ann Kozeny  
Phyllis Labellarte  
Ellie Archer's leadership  
Jeannie Schabloske

### From:

Larry Good  
Tina Labellarte Price  
Penny Parker  
Laura Schabloske

## Bright Future • Make a Gift

Do your friends have enough "stuff"? Honor their special day or your relationship in a meaningful way. Make a gift to the Women's Fund in their name!

Donations may be sent to the  
Women's Fund of Greater Omaha  
7602 Pacific Street, Suite 300  
Omaha, NE 68114

or donate online at [www.omahawomensfund.org](http://www.omahawomensfund.org)

## Today's Omaha Woman Magazine

Help support the Women's Fund mission by advertising in Today's Omaha Woman. The magazine's objective is to educate readers about issues the Women's Fund has found through its research to be important to area women.

For more information, please contact Carrie Kentch at 341-7323, ext. 118.



## Did you know?

In the last decade, the number of women in elected positions in Douglas County declined from 34% to 29%.

[www.omahawomenwork.org](http://www.omahawomenwork.org)



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