



Grant Partner Profiles

QUALITYstarsNY

Throughout the country, states have developed and implemented Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) in response to research that has proven that young children experience positive life-long effects when exposed to excellence in early childhood. Systems of accountability have been instrumental in maximizing the use of state resources in order to prepare children for success in school and life, evidenced by greater school outcomes, less remediation, higher graduation and job placement rates, and reduced crime rates. The federal government has acknowledged the role that quality rating and improvement systems make and it stands ready to invest in states that demonstrate an ability to implement these approaches.

In January 2010, New York State embarked on a field test of its Quality Rating and Improvement System – QualityStarsNY. In the initial phase, approximately 200 programs from 13 communities across the state participated in a field test. There were eight participating centers in the Buffalo community. The range of services to low-income families in these participating centers ranged from 1% to as high as 96%. The field test data is being analyzed and the next bridge phase of the project has been developed.

The WNY Women's Fund has awarded a \$35,000 grant for the bridge phase to support the current 8 local centers in the program as well as to provide capacity for 8 new centers. The grant will continue and expand the work of the field test.

The funds will support local centers but will be leveraged by public funds, private funds and in-kind contributions of more than \$900,000.

To learn more about QUALITYstarsNY visit <http://qualitystarsny.org>

Structures in Science

WNY Women's Fund sponsored for the second year **Structures in Science** held at the **Buffalo Museum of Science**. Eighteen rising 5th and 6th grade girls from the **Charles Drew Science Magnet School** participated in a unique hands on science program that is a collaboration between Buffalo Public Schools, University at Buffalo and Buffalo Museum of Science.

Denise Luka, Principal for **PS 59 Charles R. Drew Science Magnet School** explained the goal of the program, "Girls typically shy away from science, but this program gives them the opportunity to get excited about the opportunities in fields related to science and what the future holds," she said. "During activities such as a frog dissection, some of the girls focused on 'cutting open the body or chopping off of the legs,' but other girls went beyond the 'wow' factor and were engaged in learning about the functionality of the organs and the inner workings of the frog. This year it has been interesting to watch the varying levels of proficiency of the girls," said **Luka**.

One participant, **Cemone Winfrey**, stated that her favorite program experience was visiting the Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research headquartered at the University at Buffalo. "We saw how the strings made the building shake like there was an earthquake," said eleven year-old **Winfrey**. "And I learned to unplug electrical things during a storm because the electricity can start a fire". When asked if she had any thoughts about a future career in science, **Winfrey** joked, "I think I'll become a mad scientist." Then off she went to join the rest of her group who were getting ready to launch rockets that they had built in their previous class.

As a reward for perfect attendance in the program, four girls were invited by Robby Takac of the Goo Goo Dolls to visit their Buffalo recording studio and record a song. The girls worked with studio manager, Justin Rose to create lyrics, record vocals and learn the science behind mixing the sound into the finished product. Special thanks to Mr. Takac and the studio staff at GCR Audio for this amazing opportunity.



742 Delaware Ave.,
Buffalo, NY 14209

The vision of the WNY Women's Fund is a community in which all women have the opportunity to thrive.

The Fund is a collaborative effort between the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County and the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo.

Pathways Challenge Holiday Party

The WNY Women's Fund would like to thank Sue Militello, Amy Costanzo, Lisa Levin and Suzanne Liolos for hosting an amazing holiday party on December 17th, with more than 150 guests at the Militello home, to benefit the Fund's work.

We greatly appreciate their enthusiasm, efforts and generosity. More than \$15,000 in funds were raised, and the net proceeds will be matched one-to-one by the Pathways Challenge Fund.



Amy Costanzo, Sue Militello, Suzanne Liolos and Lisa Levin

Thank you to all those who supported the 2010 Challenge Fund. If you are interested in hosting a party in your home or club to benefit the Women's Fund, please contact Monique Watts at Monique.watts@uwbec.org or call 716.887.2616.



Pathways To Progress Challenge Update

The work identified in the *Pathways to Progress* report as critical to create opportunity for women and girls in our community needs your support. The WNY Women's Fund Board of Directors believes so strongly in the need for this critical work, that they personally donated \$150,000 to create a Pathways to Progress Challenge Fund.



Over the past few months, the community has shown that they too believe in the importance of this mission by stepping up to the challenge and donating more than \$150,000! Thank you to those who made a gift and helped us reach our fundraising goal. If you have not done so, please consider making a donation by visiting www.wnywomensfund.org.

Welcome Jennifer Buffet to Buffalo!

In 2008, Ms. Buffet and her husband Peter were awarded the Clinton Global Citizen Award for their visionary leadership and sustainable, scalable work in solving pressing global challenges. Barron's Magazine recently listed her as one of the top 25 philanthropists. Barron's Magazine also notes, "The Buffets are using their share of Warren Buffets' philanthropic legacy to transform the lives of women and girls in developing nations, as well as improve the educational system at home. They've helped women in Bosnia, Congo and Iraq get skills and business training, and they've funded anti-violence programs. In all, they've reached some two million people."



Jennifer Buffet

We are thrilled to welcome Jennifer Buffet to Kleinhans Music Hall on June 29, 2011 at 5:30pm.

Winter/Spring 2011

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

2011 What She's Made Of

Join us for an evening with NoVo Foundation Founder and President, Jennifer Buffet. The NoVo Foundation is deeply committed to providing women and girls the opportunities to overcome obstacles such as violence, poverty and discrimination. The Foundation believes that women's ability to make a strong impact on family and community can translate on a global level and works to provide them with the necessary resources to empower them to create a culture conducive to collaboration and partnership.

Wednesday, June 29, 2011
5:30 p.m.
Kleinhans Music Hall

For additional information or if you are interested becoming a sponsor for the event, please contact our office at 716.887.2616 or by emailing Monique.watts@uwbec.org.

Pathways Task Force Update: Affordable, accessible, quality child care

Why Child Care as an Area Of Focus:

- 72% of single, low-income mothers (earning 200 percent of the poverty level or lower) with children under age six were employed in 2008
- In Erie County, child care subsidies were allotted to 5,916 children per month although there are nearly 13,000 children under the age of five living in poverty according to the most recent Census. Even for those eligible for subsidies, child care costs can be cost-prohibitive
- Child care costs in WNY are amongst the highest in the nation averaging between \$9,200 and \$10,700 per child/year in Erie. For a woman making slightly more than the subsidy cutoff (175% of the federal poverty line), child care costs would consume more than 40% of her family income

Currently in WNY:

- There exists no uniform standard or system to access, measure or improve programs. Though over 2,000 child care providers (centers and family day care providers), have met New York Department of Child and Family Services minimal regulations in order to be licensed or registered, these regulations are minimal. Only 1% of local child care providers have achieved national accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children – a marker of high quality
- There is limited advocacy locally around child care

Benefits of Quality Child Care and Early Intervention:

- Promote healthy cognitive, behavioral and emotional development in children
- Create stability in employment – mother's with reliable child care are significantly more likely to stay on the job than those without regular care
- Return more than 7x on each dollar invested

Recent Child Care Developments at the Fund

The voice of women and girls must be clearly heard in the conversation around the need for increased child care affordability. To that end, the Fund:

- Participated with a diverse group of collaborators to host press conferences and create awareness of the need within our community.
- Met with government officials – including the Commissioner of Social Services and have documented our concerns in writing to the County Executive and the Commissioner.
- Researched accessibility by mapping the locations of child care programs to families to show that the vast majority of families in Erie County live within five minutes of a child care facility.
- Will continue to work to increase public awareness for the needs around child care by convening stakeholders ranging from business leaders, providers, and funders.
- Will advocate for a statewide policy goal for a family receiving child care subsidy dollars to spend no more than 10% of family income on child care and for access to high quality child care for all families.
- Has made a \$35,000 grant to QUALITYstarsNY pilot program for 2011 (see additional information on Grant Partner Profiles)

Letter from the Executive Director

We begin 2011 at the Women's Fund with incredible momentum and energy. Based on the findings of Pathways to Progress, a comprehensive analysis of the conditions confronting women and girls in our region released a year ago, the Fund is targeting three specific areas:

- Affordable, accessible, quality childcare (see sidebar with more information)
- Excellence in out-of-school time programs
- Education and training linked to jobs that will provide economic security for women and their families

In each area, the Fund has created Task Forces led by community volunteers with deep knowledge and expertise. Funding and advocacy priorities are being determined and significant progress has been made.

The Fund believes that only by changing the structures and systems that work within communities can significant improvement for low income women and girls be achieved. The work is incredibly challenging and complex, but critical to our community's growth and development.

As I meet donors to the Fund, I am inspired by their passion for providing opportunities for low income women and girls. That passion was matched with their philanthropic investments this past year meeting the Board's Challenge Fund. Together, the Board and the Community have raised over \$300,000 to support the Pathways to Progress initiative. Thank you so much for your continued support!

Make a Special Gift

If you are looking for a unique gifting opportunity, please consider making a contribution to the WNY Women's Fund in honor of someone you admire. It is a special way to pay tribute to family and friends. For your convenience, the WNY Women's Fund is now accepting on-line donations. Please visit our website at www.wnywomensfund.org and click on our "Make A Donation" button for more information. As always, thank you for your continued support!



Brigid Doherty

2010 "What She's Made Of" Celebration

The 2010 "What She's Made Of" Celebration with Emmy-Award winning journalist, Cokie Roberts, was a tremendous success! The event was co-chaired by Melissa Nowak and Lisa Walsh and coordinated by a fabulous committee. In addition, we would also like to thank our Honorary Chairs - Sue and John Hoskins. More than 500 guests gathered at Kleinhans to hear Ms. Roberts, raising more than \$140,000 - a 33% increase in revenue from last year! We are extremely grateful to Ms. Roberts, who graciously donated her services and who shared her stories and perspectives on the need to focus resources on women and girls. We would also like to express our gratitude to Jodi Johnston, host of WGRZ Daybreak who was a dynamic emcee for the program.

We would like to thank our Presenting Sponsor BlueCross BlueShield, Platinum Sponsors M&T Bank and New Era Cap Co., Inc., and our Crystal Sponsors CTG, Sue and John Hoskins, R&P Oak Hill and MorganStanley SmithBarney, as well as our many other sponsors and

advertisers. Thank you to everyone who donated their time and efforts to make this event a success, including our media and in-kind sponsors, WBFO 88.7, WGRZ Channel 2, Buffalo Spree, Martin Group, LAMAR and Cumbo, Inc.

Additional Sponsors: Delaware North Companies, Melissa & James Nowak, AJ Baynes Group, Hodgson Russ LLP, Hudson Advisors Services, Inc., NOCO, Gaines Kriner Elliott LLP, Ellen E. Grant, PH.D. and William J Miller, Hurwitz & Fine, P.C., Independent Health, JVL Management Company, Kavinoky Cook LLP, Lougen Valenti, Bookbinder & Weintraub LLP, Sally Marks, Patrick P. Lee Foundation, Phillips Lytle, Rich Products Corporation, Saldanha Family, Summer Street Capital Partners, Uniland Development Company, Univera Healthcare.

To see event photos and video, visit our website at www.wnywomensfund.org.



Lauren Floss, Cheryl Howe, Cokie Roberts, Laurie Kalman and Marcy Mychaskiw



Lisa Walsh, Cokie Roberts, Brigid Doherty, Melissa Nowak

Community Partnership Highlights

"The Junior League of Buffalo has been in program development for the past year and a half, and the Pathways report was vital to our vote in November. The League's membership has voted to positively impact the single mothers living in poverty in our community. We're grateful to the Womens Fund for developing the Pathways to Progress, not just for our internal use in program development, but to further educate our members on the our focus area of Families at Risk."

Beth Montague; President, Junior League of Buffalo

"It is so critical that the entire community understands the need for supporting Buffalo's children outside regular school hours. The Buffalo Public School district has partnered successfully with the WNY Women's Fund and the Buffalo Museum of Science over the past two summers in providing this support, specifically in the encouragement of young women in the fields of math, science and technology. The work with the Out of School Time task force allows us to take the lessons learned, collaborate with like minded colleagues, and develop a standard for high quality after school options. This work strengthens, not just the Buffalo schools, or the work of the Women's Fund, but the entire community."

Amber M. Dixon; Executive Director of Evaluation, Accountability, and Project Initiatives, Buffalo Public Schools

2010 Fall in Fashion

Once again, the Fall in Fashion Luncheon was a sell out! The event was held on November 5th to benefit the WNY Women's Fund. Thanks to the hard work of Co-Chairs Alison Keane, Michele Lee and Kristin Somers, there were sensational items to bid on in the ticket raffle, including an exquisite Chanel jacket, a lush Hermès cashmere shawl, and a great variety of other high-end designer items, including handbags, jewelry and spa services. Tony Walker & Co. was there to showcase their Temple St. Clair collection of jewelry, Diamond Cutters of WNY presented their collection of Ruth Gregg Jewelry, and Joan Hornig Jewelry (Philanthropy is Beautiful) was there with a collection of unique pieces.

The Buffalo Club hosted this year's gathering of more than 300 women, serving cocktails during the raffle, followed by a delicious lunch of Forest Mushroom Bisque, and a Sweet Potato and Sage Dauphinoise, with colorful table centerpieces by Maureen's Wholesale Flowers. During the meal, the guests were treated to a fashion show, with lovely volunteer models from the Fall in Fashion Committee and young ladies from Buffalo Seminary, all wearing gorgeous clothing from ADAM and Tony Walker & Co., accompanied by music from Maximum Sound Entertainment, with hair and makeup done flawlessly by Chez Ann Salon. The entire event was a marvelous combination of fundraising and fun, as everyone celebrated the achievements of the WNY Women's Fund, and looked forward to many similar successes in the future.



Guests at the 2010 Fall in Fashion event



Guests at the 2010 Fall in Fashion event

If you would like to receive our e-newsletter electronically, please send an email to monique.watts@uwbec.org.

Corporate Partner: First Niagara

On Friday, November 5, at the ninth annual Fall in Fashion fundraising event, in front of a sell-out crowd, a special runway appearance was made by First Niagara Corporate Communications Director, Helen Tederous. To keep in the spirit of the fashion theme, Ms. Tederous and bank representatives presented the Fund with a \$50,000 donation wrapped in a designer Tiffany Box.

"First Niagara is an important partner in our mission to provide resources for the 17,000 single moms living in poverty in our community," said Brigid Doherty, Executive Director for the WNY Women's Fund. "The commitment of corporate leaders such as First Niagara will help us to remove roadblocks faced by these women and help them to become economically self-sufficient."

Donor Outreach Events:

On September 22, the WNYWF hosted a luncheon, and a presentation of the Pathways to Progress report, at the Country Club of Buffalo. More than 90 women gathered to hear the updates on the work of the Fund and Pathways to Progress. Thank you to the Donor Outreach Committee and special thanks to Alex Montante and Kristin Bauer for co-chairing the luncheon.

On December 8, the final Breakfast Series event of the year was held at LeMetro Bakery & Café in Williamsville.

Dianne Avery, professor at the University at Buffalo School of Law spoke to over fifty people on occupational sex-segregation, laws prohibiting sex discrimination and providing equal pay for equal work. The presentation explored the challenges faced by single mothers in the low-wage workforce. Thank you to Ms. Avery and to Margery Nobel, Women's Fund Board Member for organizing this event.



Guests at the CCB Luncheon