

New Garden Project Helps Women, Families

A new garden project in St. Cloud will give women in transition and low-income families the resources and tools they need to grow quality food.

The Central Minnesota Sustainability Project received a \$7,500 grant this spring from the Women's Fund at the Central Minnesota Community Foundation to help make the Maine Prairie Garden & Market a reality in the Diocese Park in St. Cloud. The Women's Fund provided \$33,700 to community projects focused on empowering women and girls. The Women's Fund has awarded about \$500,000 grants since its inception in 2002.

"There are hundreds of women and children living in surrounding apartments that do not have access to healthy food, especially fresh, chemical-free produce," said Katrina Pierson, chair of the Central Minnesota Sustainability Project, which started the garden in May.

The Women's Fund grant allows the Central

Minnesota Sustainability Project to provide a stipend to a master gardener who will provide counsel on growing techniques and facilitate hands-on education for immigrant women and their children.

"The grant will ensure access to land for low income families that would otherwise not have the opportunity to grow and eat healthy, chemical-free foods," Pierson said.

The Project plans to provide free seeds, compost and garden space for two African immigrant women's groups as well as local families. Leaders hope to incorporate a farmer's market on-site where gardeners can sell their produce and other artisan goods to the local community.

"Growing and selling their own food will give women in transition a greater confidence and sense of dignity," Pierson said. "The program will provide myriad benefits, including greater food security, economic opportunity,

equal opportunity to participate in an informal economy, improved outlook and mental health and relationship-building among cultural groups."

Learn more about the garden project at sustainmn.org.



Mark Your Calendars!

Women on Stage - Broadway Our Way

Featuring: The Cast of Dolly Parton's 9-5, the musical

When: Monday, July 18

Time: 5-9 p.m.

Where: College of St. Benedict, St. Joseph

Tickets: Visit CommunityGiving.org or call (320) 253-4380

Benefit: Women's Fund, supporting programs that empower women and girls.

Women's Fund Awards \$33,700

Women's Fund

The Women's Fund recently awarded \$28,500 to five other local projects. Recipients are:

- \$6,000 to Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center for empowering girls
- \$5,000 to St. Cloud Hospital for Senior Helping Hands Peer Volunteers
- \$5,000 to American Red Cross Central MN Chapter for scholarships for Certified Nursing Instruction
- \$5,000 to Boys and Girls Club for SMART Girls
- \$5,000 to Visual Arts Minnesota for Older Women Artist Project

Julianne Williams Fund Grants

The Julianne Williams Fund, a part of the Women's Fund, awarded an additional \$5,200 in grants to three projects that promote building of self-esteem, safety, confidence and overall empowerment of girls and young women through the use of physical activities. They are:

- \$2,700 to the Girl Scouts of MN and WI Lakes and Pines for Girl GROWTH Outdoor Education and Camp Programming
- \$2,000 to Anna Marie's Alliance for Bel Clare Estates Girls Outreach
- \$500 to Stearns History Museum and Research Center for the Working White House Children's Project

Women's Fund

The St. Cloud Times/STYLE Magazine is a proud supporter of the Women's Fund and its mission.