

## **The WGA Impact Team Interim Report**

**September 2016**

In January 2015, the Women's Giving Alliance (WGA) Steering Committee created the Impact Team to complement the work of Grants' Decision and Evaluation Teams. Its charge was to:

- Measure the overall impact of WGA's mental health grant making and develop a blueprint for future focus area impact studies.
- Update WGA research on the status of women and girls in Northeast Florida.
- Create and pursue a transparent process for shifting WGA's focus area.
- Implement processes to continue impact assessment.

### **Background**

The Women's Giving Alliance was established in 2001 as an initiative of the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. Its mission: "To inspire the women of Northeast Florida to be strategic philanthropists and to improve the lives of women and girls through collective giving."

In its first 15 years, WGA has grown from 163 members in 2001 to 390 in 2016, including 37 Legacy members. It has awarded grants totaling more than \$4.5 million to 42 agencies and initiatives and has created an endowment of \$2.4 million.

In 2011, WGA decided it could have greater impact by focusing its grantmaking on one issue for several years. Based on research, mental health was chosen as the focus, beginning with 2012 grants. The goal was to create systemic change by combining its grant dollars and collective voices so that each woman and girl has the opportunity to have the support she needs to live a satisfactory life.

Specifically, WGA committed to the following objectives:

1. Through WGA's dedication to research and outreach, members understand why mental health is important to women and girls in Northeast Florida.
2. WGA grants provide financial support for efforts to increase access, awareness, systemic reform, funding and innovation to assist women and girls with mental health issues.
3. Through workshops and other resources, members have an opportunity to learn how to advocate as individuals for mental health issues and other public policy topics that are important to them.
4. Through advocacy and the fostering of collaborative efforts among agencies and mental health professionals, WGA raises sufficient awareness about the importance of mental health to women and girls that the need for increased public funding is apparent to decision makers.

## MEASURING IMPACT

### Methodology

The Impact Team began its work by assessing WGA's impact as it relates to the stated goal and objectives outlined above. The team has conducted a thorough review of the information available – internal and external, quantitative and qualitative – to determine how WGA's focus on mental health has made a difference thus far. (Please note - this is an ongoing process as there are still several outstanding mental health grants and new ones will be awarded in the fall of 2016.)

### Findings

***Objective 1: Through WGA's dedication to research and outreach, members understand why mental health is important to women and girls in Northeast Florida.***

The Women's Giving Alliance recognizes that research is fundamental to identifying and understanding the key issues facing women and girls in Northeast Florida. To effectively address these issues through focused strategies in education, advocacy and grant making, WGA has conducted three significant studies since its inception in 2001, captured in the following reports:

- 2004, *Voices Heard... Women and Girls Speak*
- 2012, *Stronger Voices... Better Lives: Moving women and girls forward*
- 2016, *Voices of Hope: Cracking the code on some complex issues*

Each of WGA's research studies has provided in-depth data and analysis to inform and guide WGA initiatives and grant making for greatest impact. (This research is available online at [www.wganefl.org](http://www.wganefl.org))

It was the 2012 study that inspired WGA to pursue the single focus on mental health, due to statistics like these:

- Florida is the fourth largest state and ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in per capita spending for adult mental health/substance abuse.
- Northeast Florida receives the lowest per capita mental health resources in the state.
- A 2006 study on the status of the local mental health system concluded: "The mental health system is fragmented, unresponsive to client needs and serves less than 20% of those with even the most severe mental illnesses."
- Women and girls are more likely than men and boys to suffer from the most common mental disorders: depression, anxiety and related physical complaints. And a woman's depression lasts longer than a man's.
- The cost of services shuts out those who are uninsured, and many private plans provide limited coverage.

In addition, WGA learned that:

- Community-based outpatient programs focused on prevention and intervention provide a cost-effective means of reaching women and girls before their problems escalate. Increasing capacity at such outpatient programs offered an opportunity potentially to prevent the need for treating more serious problems with expensive long-term medications and in-patient treatment. In short, those programs could provide the most return for WGA's investment.

## **MEMBER AWARENESS**

With WGA's focus on mental health, a dramatic increase has occurred in opportunities for member awareness. It is evident in the number of events with a mental health focus and in the findings of the Member Survey taken in late 2014, both delineated below in greater detail. Anecdotal evidence also demonstrates increased member awareness. For example, 17 WGA members participated in the Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (JCCI) study on mental health, itself sparked by the community interest aroused by WGA's focus.

### ***Events***

As of July 2016, every member of the Women's Giving Alliance has had multiple opportunities to learn about mental health issues. Seven all-member luncheons (four Member Forums and three Annual Meetings) provided insights into aspects of mental health awareness, treatments, access to care and care systems. Nine Education events were open to all members and guests; of those, five were site visits to agencies with mental health programs funded by WGA. The Advocacy Committee held two all-member sessions to educate members how to advocate. They also presented at a neighborhood Connector meeting.

Twenty Connector events since February 2012 featured presentations about mental health. At least eight other Connector events focused on philanthropy and impact. (Exhibit A)

In addition, during the second year of the mental health focus, either president Julia Taylor or Grants co-chair Peggy Schiffers visited each one of the nine neighborhood Connector groups to discuss the focus area and solicit members' input about how we might direct our grants.

### ***Member Survey***

The results of the 2014 Member Survey indicate a high level of member awareness of mental health issues and support for directing our grant making focus on those issues. Response rate was very good, at 35.5%. Our members are dedicated to our mission to improve life for women and girls: 98% cite that as the primary reason for joining and remaining a member. They also overwhelmingly indicated their satisfaction with our grant making. When asked about future focus areas, after WGA is reasonably satisfied with the impact of its focus on mental health, a surprising number wrote at length about the ways in which the mental health issues of women

and girls are implicated in issues like poverty and justice system involvement. (See [www.wganefl.org](http://www.wganefl.org))

***WGA Committees: Steering Committee, Grants Leadership Team (GLT), Decision Team, Evaluation Team and Impact Team (as well as others)***

Members who have participated on these WGA committees have learned a significant amount about mental health issues affecting women and girls in Northeast Florida, the organizations that provide service to meet these needs, overall philanthropy and grant making. For example, over the last two years, the mandatory training for the Decision Team members included a session on mental health.

This exposure has had an impact on these committee members, including their understanding and appreciation for the complexity of the issues and the strategies to address them, their personal volunteering and private philanthropy. It also has strengthened their bonds as women working collaboratively to address needs.

In addition, at least 12 WGA members have been actively participating on the JCCI Mental Health Implementation Task Force, working “to execute the recommendations from *Unlocking the Pieces: Community Mental Health in Northeast Florida*.”

***Objective 2: WGA grants provide financial support for efforts to increase access, awareness, systemic reform, funding and innovation to assist women and girls with mental health issues.***

## **GRANTS**

WGA grants allowed the grantee agencies to develop new programs to address the mental health needs of women and girls.

In the last four years, WGA’s two-year grants to 14 agencies providing mental health services for women and girls totaled \$1.5 million. When 2016 grants are ratified in October, the total for mental health grants will be \$1,936,656. Agencies were selected from about 20 proposals each year. Some have received consecutive grants for a total of four years of funding.

WGA’s mental health grants:

- 2012-2014: Total of \$316,656 - PACE Center for Girls, Volunteers in Medicine, Women’s Center of Jacksonville, I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless.
- 2013-2015: Total of \$340,000 - Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center, Betty Griffin House, Starting Point Behavioral Healthcare.
- 2014-2016: Total of \$453,000 - BEAM, RestorHer, Hubbard House, The Way Free Medical Clinic, the Women’s Center of Jacksonville.
- 2015-2017: Total of \$395,000 - Barnabas Center, Gateway Community Services, Mental Health America of Northeast Florida, Rethreaded, I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the

Homeless.

- 2016-2018: Total of \$432,000 - Betty Griffin House, Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center, Hubbard House, Jewish Family and Community Services, Volunteers in Medicine, as well as funding for the Impact Study Grant. (Ratification is expected October 26, 2016, at the WGA Annual Meeting.)

Mental health programs provided by most of these agencies focused on specialized populations such as homeless women, low-income women and girls, single mothers, female veterans, victims of sex trafficking and victims of domestic and sexual assault. Ten grants funded programs for women; two grants funded programs for girls, and four were targeted to help both women and girls. Two grants were for training for mental health professionals in evidence-based, gender-specific practices.

The first seven grants (awarded in 2012 and 2013) are complete. Most of them focused on trauma-informed and gender-responsive care. All of the agencies have exceeded their goals, successfully expanding access to mental health services and shortening wait times. The completed grants, totaling \$656,656, provided services to more than 2,250 women and girls through individual and/or group counseling. These grants provided agencies the flexibility to admit clients regardless of income, age or payment class, such as women with children. All agencies provided client services at very low or no cost to clients. The grants provided start-up funds for credentialed staff, training resources and new technology and assessment software to enable client-based treatment plans to optimize outcomes. At least two agencies were able to supervise and train student interns to meet their licensing requirements, thus increasing the supply of mental health professionals. Beyond the funding, these grants encouraged and enabled collaboration among agencies to provide systems of integrated care including mental, physical and supportive services, often called “wrap-around” services.

Most of the agencies have indicated they are committed to assuring the sustainability of these services. Some have embedded them in their organizations, recognizing that removing the services would be seriously detrimental to their clients.

Two agencies, PACE and the Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center, successfully established unique models of service that are being replicated by other local, regional and national organizations.

Grants awarded in 2014 and 2015 include the expansion of services through clinical supervision of master's degree level interns and practicum students; mental health as a part of wrap-around services for low-income mothers; training in evidence-based protocols that integrate gender-specific therapies for trauma and substance abuse, and training in trauma-informed care. One grant is for researching and analyzing the needs of women veterans to develop a system of care with gender-specific solutions. The Evaluation and Impact teams will monitor the progress of these two-year grants to their conclusion.

Please see the following exhibits:

- Evolution of the Grants (Exhibit B).
- Highlights of WGA Grant Making Impact on Mental Health Services 2012-2105 Report (Exhibits C1, C2, C3, C4) on the first seven grants that have been completed. Ten agencies have grants still outstanding and more mental health grants will be proposed for ratification at the WGA Annual Meeting in October 2016.
- Evaluation Team Closing Report Summaries for 2013-2016 Grants (Exhibit D).

***Objective 3: Through workshops and other resources, members have an opportunity to learn how to advocate as individuals for mental health issues and other public policy topics that are important to them.***

The Advocacy and Education committees of WGA have pursued several strategies to educate and inspire members to advocate for causes they care about. These strategies were outlined in their “Five-Point Star of WGA Advocacy” (Exhibit E):

- Conducting Research to Understand Problems.
- Educating Members for Individual Action (including “The Power of One,” “The Power of the Post,” “I’m an Advocate, Not a Lobbyist” and “Beyond Grantmaking”).
- Education to Spread the Word, Inspire to Action (including numerous site visits by members to agencies).
- Funding Advocacy for Systemic Change (working collaboratively with local agencies).
- Funding Programs Through Grants.

From December 2012 to June 2014, several WGA leaders presented 21 talks to approximately 500 people. The audiences were members of WGA and 12 community organizations. The talks were about WGA, its 2012 research (*Stronger Voices*) as well as how to advocate personally (“The Power of One”). Since then, another two Advocacy events have occurred, educating WGA members about sex trafficking. (Exhibit F, Speakers Bureau Summary)

An Advocacy Toolkit is available on the WGA website along with slides and a YouTube video on “The Power of One.”

Members of the Advocacy committee and other members of WGA successfully wrote to and visited Florida legislators in support of Open Doors, a \$3 million effort to create a model for providing social services, including mental health services, to children rescued from sex trafficking. Staffs at both the DeBros Barr Weaver Policy Center and The Children’s Campaign expressed their gratitude to WGA, along with the opinion that the line item in the state budget would not have been approved without WGA’s support.

***Objective 3: Through advocacy and the fostering of collaborative efforts among agencies and mental health professionals, WGA raises sufficient awareness about the importance of mental***

***health to women and girls that the need for increased public funding is apparent to decision makers.***

## **News Coverage**

Examining both “mentions” in the news and data available on state and federal funding, it is evident that WGA has had an impact by raising awareness about mental health issues facing women and girls.

The *Florida Times-Union* online database using the criteria “mental health” showed 83 articles during 2012-2016. The number of articles per year has increased, with the most marked increase from 2013 to 2014. The breakdown is one article in 2012; 10 articles in 2013; 30 articles in 2014; 26 articles in 2015; and 16 articles through the first seven months of 2016, including specific coverage of WGA grants. When searching “Women’s Giving Alliance,” the number of articles from 2011 to 2016 is 59. Each year the number has increased, from seven articles in all of 2012 to 14 articles through the first seven months of 2016.

In 2015, Julia Taylor, WGA past president, was honored with a prestigious EVE award from the *Florida Times-Union*, lauding WGA’s work on mental health. The editorial page noted, “It is interesting to see how a group of smart people put their intention into action to solve a problem.”

The *Florida Times-Union* and its editorial staff have been strong supporters of the mental health initiative. (At [www.wganeff.org](http://www.wganeff.org), see “WGA In the News.”)

## **Additional Voices**

In 2014, JCCI added its voice with its inquiry into the state of mental health in Northeast Florida. Supported by Baptist Health, the study was completed and JCCI is in the implementation phase. Other organizations that were active participants include United Way, National Alliance on Mental Health, Mental Health America of Northeast Florida, Lutheran Services Florida-Health Systems, Partnership for Child Health, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office and several smaller organizations.

The state-funded Managing Entity (ME) for the 23 county area of Northeast Florida is Lutheran Services Florida-Health Systems (LSFHS), headquartered in Jacksonville. MEs are tasked with managing the effective, efficient administration of state funds for substance abuse and mental health services for the uninsured. MEs play a key role in identifying potential system improvements. The Florida Association of Managing Entities meets regularly with state legislators, oversight agencies and civic groups to share expertise, raise awareness and advocate for change in funding and treatment for the mentally ill.

Mental health and substance abuse services in Florida received increased funding in part due to federal block grant increases. The legislature granted permission to fund \$39.6 million of the federal block grant for mental health and substance abuse services. Of that amount, \$22 million

are non-recurring funds that must have been spent by June 30, 2016. The Northeast Region, covered by LSFHS as the ME, received \$6.5 million. Since state-by-state rankings are not available after 2013, Florida remains in 49<sup>th</sup> place. And from what is known so far, Northeast Florida still receives the fewest dollars per person in the state. (See Advocacy section for funding updates in 2016.)

The Jacksonville System of Care Child Mental Health Initiative funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) began in 2010 and is funded through 2017. It focuses on systemic change for children's mental health care. The local program director, Gary Blau, spoke at the 2013 WGA Member Forum on systems of care, commending Jacksonville on the leadership of the philanthropic community in addressing the need to find solutions.

In April 2015, stakeholders in the criminal justice and behavioral health systems in Jacksonville convened to discuss issues and services provided, identify gaps and develop priorities individually and collectively to improve the system. This initiative is now called the Jacksonville Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health Collaborative. One of its goals is to create a central mental health receiving facility.

Community interest and involvement in education for mental health service providers have increased substantially. For example, the WGA-funded Women's Services Coalition is preparing its fourth education session. LSFHS created a state-wide training network to raise the skill level of service providers. The Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center (also a WGA grantee) lists on its website ([www.seethegirl.org](http://www.seethegirl.org)) agencies dedicated to helping girls with specific issues. Additionally, the Policy Center is offering internships to develop the next generation of advocates for girls. WGA co-founder Delores Barr Weaver, along with her husband, Wayne, collaborated with Baptist Health to produce a series of public service announcements designed to break down the stigma of mental health issues.

### **Public Policy Advocacy**

In February 2016, WGA president Paula Liang was asked by Roy Miller, executive director of The Children's Campaign, to write a letter, on behalf of WGA, to Governor Rick Scott in support for Open Doors, a first responders network for sexually exploited children. In March, several WGA members traveled to the state capitol in Tallahassee to advocate for Open Doors funding of \$3 million. In April, the Voices for Florida appropriations request to pilot Open Doors was approved by both the House and Senate and signed by Governor Scott. Funding provides an allocation of \$500,000 from State General Revenue with Trust Funds identified at a level over \$2.5 million. The Trust Funds require an application to the Office of the Attorney General. That application is under review. This statewide service network of first responders for survivors of human trafficking -- conceptualized and co-authored by the Delores Barr Weaver

Policy Center and The Children's Campaign -- will mark a milestone in the Justice for the Girls reform movement.

The Children's Campaign's Roy Miller said, "Recognition and funding by the Florida legislature and being given the opportunity to apply for Trust Funds were bolstered significantly by the efforts of the Women's Giving Alliance. Their personal visits at the capitol and letter writing were integral to the progress being made this year. Citizen voices as evidenced by the WGA do make a difference."

In addition, some WGA members individually participated in the JCCI mental health implementation committee that helped formulate advocacy priorities for Northeast Florida, and some members advocated individually for increased funding for mental health. In an email (March 10, 2016) Denise Marzullo, executive director of Mental Health America of Northeast Florida, reported on progress:

*Good evening! I just could not wait until tomorrow to share some really great legislative updates from Tallahassee! As we established at the Florida Mental Health Summit, we began this session with three key priorities: increased funding, ARNP prescribing privileges and codifying mental health court. I am so proud to share with you that we have achieved ALL three. We have taken some major steps this year together, but it is not over yet. We now await the Governor's signature. I will keep you posted!*

*The 2016 budget includes **\$53 million** in new dollars for mental health.*

The governor signed these bills and the funding was approved.

### **From the direct service providers**

During the course of each grant, the Evaluation Team meets with agency representatives to monitor progress, explore any barriers faced by the programs and gather information to advance our collective education regarding the variables surrounding mental health service delivery.

The Grants Leadership Team supplements these findings annually with a focus group of leaders from the funded agencies. From these resources we learned:

- **WGA Impact** is multifaceted and much appreciated by its grantees. At its June 2016 convening, grantees commented that WGA has made a difference in the following ways:
  - WGA research has helped the community prioritize on what is needed.
  - WGA "started the ball rolling."
  - WGA elevated awareness and education about the issues, including media attention.
  - WGA energized organizations to review their work.
  - The focus on women and girls has made an overwhelming topic more manageable.

- WGA increased capacity within organizations by grants for hiring dedicated mental health staff and for training interns. Having mental health professionals in the organization impacts the entire staff.
  - WGA also increased capacity by funding professional development.
  - WGA increased the number of trauma-informed counselors; now training is being expanded statewide.
  - WGA funding helped create a national model for women veterans.
  - WGA recognized there are multiple ways to address mental health issues through both prevention and intervention.
  - WGA encouraged and funded agencies to pursue new therapy models and nontraditional interventions.
  - WGA increased coordination and collaboration among agencies.
  - WGA is a partner, listening to and responding to agencies needs.
  - WGA helped increase mental health focus and funding in the community.
- **Access** continues to be an issue for women needing mental health services. A lack of systemic coordinated response is one factor. Our grantees found that when they collaborated with each other, access to services increased. Also a “no wrong door” policy can increase access. Other reasons for limited access are lack of funding and long wait times. The demand for mental health services exceeds what is available in Northeast Florida. Denise Marzullo, of Mental Health America for Northeast Florida, expressed her gratitude to WGA this way: “The Women’s Giving Alliance recognized the need for improved quality of care for the mental health of women and girls in Northeast Florida and responded in a significant way. The value they placed on mental health combined with the research and program support has created long lasting, sustainable changes to the mental health care system. Women and girls are now healthier and have the tools necessary to successfully cope with their mental illness thanks to this intelligent, hard-working, caring group of women.”
  - **Multi-faceted issues.** Women and girls needing mental health services often face multiple issues. She may seek mental health services for one issue, then through psychosocial assessments and evaluative clinical inventories, counselors are able to identify other concerns. Common issues experienced by women include sexual and domestic violence, childhood sexual assault, substance abuse, trauma, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. Other circumstances that affect the mental health of women include access to quality medical, vision and dental care, child care, safe and affordable housing, transitional housing, jobs with a living wage and transportation availability. Furthermore, women with criminal histories experience additional barriers.
  - **Advocacy** for increased mental health resources continues to be a need in Northeast

Florida. Although the First Coast Girls Initiative provides advocacy and support for girls' services, participants in the agency focus groups identified that a local system-wide "champion" or advocate for increased awareness and resources is still needed. Nonprofit agencies have limited resources and also regulatory restrictions. Consequently, advocacy and education with the Florida legislature are limited. At a recent convening of mental health grantees, WGA heard many ways it might pursue advocacy to improve mental health services.

- ***Innovative intervention.*** Programs funded by WGA use innovative intervention modalities based on the presenting needs of clients. The use of trauma-informed practice is on the rise as research provides evidence that a multi-dimensional approach is needed to respond to the complicated issues related to trauma. The use of integrated therapy practices such as yoga, art therapy, movement therapy, bibliotherapy, music therapy and other expressive therapies is a growing focus for work with women and girls who experienced trauma.
- ***Girls continue to be at risk.*** Practitioners have discovered that strengthening the bond between mothers and daughters is an increasing focus when working with girls. Additionally, girls need continuous exposure to intervention strategies in order to realize desired outcomes.
  - Service providers report that middle school age girls are vulnerable and one third consider suicide.
  - The needs of refugee girls are not being addressed.
  - Girls are exploited through sex trafficking, sexual assault and intimate violence.
  - Teenage pregnancy continues to be a factor in inner city high schools.
- ***Systemic reform*** is needed to address several issues that affect the community as a whole. Moreover, these issues are directly related to the mental health of women. Areas in particular where long-term solutions are needed include:
  - Increased community awareness regarding mental health in order to help reduce stigma.
  - Increased training opportunities for service providers.
  - Access to affordable housing.
  - Access to affordable childcare.
  - Access to reliable and affordable transportation.
  - Access to employment that pays a living wage.
  - Access to educational opportunities.
  - Women and girls centered community.

(See Exhibits G1, G2 and G3 Convening minutes from 2016, 2015, 2014)

Finally, our support of our grantees produced some unexpected outcomes. The work of the Betty Griffin House with female veterans increased the awareness of the Florida National Guard regarding domestic and sexual assault. This collaboration between the local National Guard and Betty Griffin House was the impetus for the development of a statewide protocol between the Florida National Guard and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Furthermore, St. Johns County increased awareness regarding available services for women.

## ***OTHER AREAS OF IMPACT***

### **Client Stories**

Occasionally, grantees provide clients' stories about how their lives have improved as a result of services they received. These are representative of the very personal impact that WGA has had on individuals.

(See Exhibit H, Mental Health Grantees Clients' Success Stories, June 2016, and see [www.wganefl.org](http://www.wganefl.org) for many more.)

### **The Grants Process**

The grants decision and evaluation processes have changed and improved each year. The decision process was modified to begin with selection of a "short list" from a letter of interest in response to a request on WGA's website. Volunteer readers and a grants finance committee were added to the review process. All Decision Team volunteers are required to attend mandatory training to assure they understand the issues being addressed, the RFP process, and how best to evaluate the agencies through their grant applications and site visits. The focus of the requests continues to be refined each year as we learn more about the community, the needs and the agencies involved. Coordination has improved between the Decision and Evaluation teams so that each team knows the concerns and questions of the other. Evaluation documentation has become more targeted.

### **Mental Health Focus Capstone Grant Pilot Project**

#### ***Effective Outcome Management: Learning, Applying and Sharing Best Practices***

Effective evaluation strategies to assess the efficacy of mental health programs for women and girls continue to be a large gap in the Northeast Florida nonprofit sector. Agencies and funders alike acknowledge the need for effective program evaluation—ultimately to assess how grantees are improving lives. WGA is a leader among funders regarding evaluation. The Evaluation Team meets with grantees and reviews data produced from the funded program. Grantees report that this interaction is positive. Furthermore, agencies recognize that evaluating services to identify needed changes is helpful to service delivery. However, both WGA members and its grantees recognize that the current level of evaluation is limited by the lack of expertise and/or organizational capacity to manage to outcomes.

Findings from the focus groups, as well as research conducted in 2012-2013, note the lack of evaluation capacity in the local nonprofit sector. Funders often require some type of evaluation but do not fund these efforts. Evaluation capacity limitations include a lack of functional program evaluation designs/methods, insufficient time, insufficient financial resources, insufficient human resources and limited ongoing collaborations. (Exhibit J, Gail Patin, *Program Evaluation in the Nonprofit Sector*.)

WGA-funded programs are doing substantive work by addressing the unique mental health needs of women and girls. Ultimately, increased evaluation capacity and improved evaluation strategies will help grantees tell their stories of hope and healing and should ultimately lead to greater funding from additional sources.

As a result of these findings, based on a proposal by the Impact Team, the WGA Decision Team has recommended a “capstone grant” to fund a pilot project to support building this capacity within WGA’s mental health grantees. Members will be asked to ratify this grant with the other mental health grants at the WGA Annual Meeting. (Exhibit K)

## **NEW RESEARCH**

Members of the Impact Team, under the leadership of Sandy Cook, worked to update research into the status of women and girls in northeast Florida. Heather Downs, Jacksonville University assistant professor of sociology, assisted in the collection of data on which to base their findings.

At the WGA Member Forum on March 2, 2016, Sandy Cook and Scott McGehee presented the research findings of the Impact Team. The publication “*Voices of Hope: Cracking the code on some complex issues*” was distributed to WGA members. In addition, the WGA website offers greater depth of information (by levels of increasing complexity) all the way to links to the original sources. This research identifies four key issues facing women and girls in Northeast Florida, shares best practices here and elsewhere and outlines potential effective steps forward to help WGA craft grant making strategies to have the impact it seeks.

## **TRANSITIONING FROM ONE FOCUS AREA TO ANOTHER**

Prior to the Member Forum, WGA Connectors hosted neighborhood gatherings to highlight the process by which WGA is transitioning from its focus on mental health to another issue. After presentation of the research findings in March, the process continued as below:

- Three “focus groups” in May provided members the opportunity to share feedback on the four key issues identified.

- The Impact Team considered and presented a recommendation for a new focus area to the Grants Leadership Team based on the following criteria as well as member feedback through the focus groups and the 2015 Member Survey:
  - Appealing to membership.
  - Demonstrated need based on research.
  - Opportunity to have a lasting impact.
  - Ability to collaborate with other community partners.
  - Ability to leverage our assets/use other forms of capital.
- The Grants Leadership Team discussed and approved a recommendation for the WGA Steering Committee.
- The WGA Steering Committee discussed and approved the new focus area.
- The Steering Committee will present the recommendation at the WGA Annual Meeting in October for ratification by the WGA membership -- Break the Cycle of Female Poverty: Intervention and Prevention.
- Assuming that the membership ratifies the recommendation, the 2017 grant cycle will fund organizations that work to address the new issue.

(Exhibit L1 Member Focus Groups Detailed Agenda, Exhibit L2 Member Focus Groups Guidelines, L3 Member Groups Handout, Exhibit M New Focus Area, and Exhibit N Transition Template for future transitions)

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Every WGA member has had ample and continuing opportunities to understand the need for and the issues that complicate mental health service access for women and girls in our community. Each member also has had opportunities to learn she can be an individual advocate for issues that are important to her, and WGA has provided many of the tools, resources and training to facilitate and inspire her to action.

WGA started its focus on mental health with the knowledge that it was a broad term covering a large number of complex issues. WGA began its grant making with a focus on increasing counseling services. Then it pursued a strategy to refine its focus on mental health as it learned more about the need, the agencies involved and how WGA could most effectively utilize its resources. This learning led to grants that have been more targeted to needs and opportunities to make a real difference. Collectively, these mental health grants have primarily focused on increased access for individual and group therapies and counseling, efforts to increase the number of trained staff (including gender-specific, trauma-informed care) and efforts to target underserved populations.

WGA's grant process has continued to evolve to become more effective, efficient and impactful. WGA leaders understand the value of learning and adapting to new information.

For instance, looking ahead, the Impact Team has learned that WGA needs to identify in advance what its goals and objectives are for its focus area and then measure its progress against them. Based on the new focus area and the relevant research, the Grants Leadership Team will design its future Requests for Proposals with this in mind so as to better “manage to outcomes” for greater impact.

WGA needs to do a far better job of maintaining records of speeches, meetings and events with a user-friendly way to access them. Until now, the record keeping has been fragmented and inconsistent.

In this regard, the Evaluation Committee will take over the role and responsibility for collecting and synthesizing the impact of WGA grants. In addition, WGA committees (e.g. Advocacy, Membership, Connectors) will collect and record information about their own activities for archival purposes.

The Impact Team will have responsibility for synthesizing this information periodically into organization-wide impact reports.

The Impact Team also is responsible for the research that underlies our grant making. A plan for intermediate and major research updates is being designed.

The Impact Team will continue to work on developing partnerships to pursue the Capstone Grant Pilot Project to improve outcome management for its mental health grantees and, ultimately, for the nonprofit sector.

Finally, early in the process, the Impact Team realized that its work is ongoing:

- WGA will always want to know what its impact is whether in mental health or other focus areas.
- WGA needs to update its research regularly to be current and relevant so as to inform all WGA activities.
- WGA will likely transition from one focus area to another approximately every five years; thus it is wise to prepare for and facilitate that process.

With this in mind, in September 2015, the Grants Leadership Team approved the establishment of the permanent Impact Team to join the Decision Team and the Evaluation Team as part of the Grants Committee. The Impact Team co-chairs participate in and work collaboratively with the Grants Leadership Team.

As Dr. Laura Lane, chief operating officer at JCCI, said, “By taking a deep dive into mental health, WGA got the attention of a lot of other stakeholders, and started a community conversation that is ongoing and showing results.” However, the need for access, awareness, funding and solutions continues.

By virtue of its attention to mental health, WGA has educated and inspired its members and other stakeholders in the community to join us in our efforts to decrease stigma, find solutions and increase funding.

By using all its capital – social, moral, intellectual, reputational and financial -- WGA will continue to work with its community partners (members, agencies, funders, collaborators, community leaders, government officials) to improve the lives of women and girls in northeast Florida.

Respectfully submitted,

**The Impact Team:**

Kiki Karpen, Co-Chair

Gail Patin, Co-Chair (2015)

Scott McGehee, Co-Chair (2016)

\* Martha Baker

Dale Clifford

Sandy Cook

Nancy Dreicer

+ Jan Healy

Kay Leary

\* Paula Liang

Peggy Schiffers

Sharon Simmons

+ Isabelle Spence

Marion Tischler

+ Barb Wenger

\* Ellen Wiss

+ Grants Leadership Team Co-Chairs

\* WGA Steering Committee

***We encourage you to keep in mind these words from Dale Clifford, member of the Impact Team: “The Ripple Effect” – from 2011 and still relevant today.***

Founders of the Women’s Giving Alliance believed that a group of women could pool their dollars, expertise, and commitment to produce lasting improvements in the lives of women and girls in northeast Florida. As WGA approaches its fifteenth anniversary, we have done exactly that.

We are justifiably proud of that record, but how can we assess the impact of our grants? We have numbers galore: dollars granted, girls and women served by programs, agencies which have received grants, funding and agency partnerships we have fostered, number of members in WGA. None of these figures tells the whole story; nor do all of them combined.

To understand WGA's impact, we ask two questions: who is better off? What is the historical trajectory of our body of work as a whole, including its ripple effects?

To judge who is better off, we listen to the stories of girls and women helped by WGA grants. Many pull at our heartstrings by introducing us to an individual, yet also point to the larger strategic issues WGA grants have addressed. For example, a group of grants designed to help girls "age out" of foster care into successful independent living has moved beyond those individuals to draw the attention of dependency agencies and officials to the gender-specific needs of girls as they become independent women. This has the potential to reform a system and thus serve an entire target population.

What is the historical trajectory of our body of work? In its first year, WGA funded a seminal study of the needs of women and girls in northeast Florida. Based on its findings, we identified four fields of interest within which we have focused grants strategically, responding to immediate critical needs while aiming, long-term, to effect systemic change. Over the years, our repertoire of grant making strategies has expanded to include not only direct service programs but also (more recently) unrestricted operating support – as in the case of our long-time community partner, the Women's Center – and coalition-building to foster civic engagement around specific initiatives, such as Justice for Girls: Duval County Initiative. From that grant, in particular, we have learned that systemic reform requires advocating for policy and legislative change. As a result, this year we began exploring new ways for WGA and individual members to participate in that essential component of producing long-lasting impact.

Assessing a *body* of work—impact over time and across fields of interest-- must take into account what we call "ripple effects" – the unintended consequences that flow from all of WGA's programs and grants. When members learn to be more effective philanthropists, they can, in turn, educate and inspire their families, friends, and colleagues. This learning comes from hands-on involvement in grant making—through our committee structure—and through our ever-expanding menu of educational programs. WGA members who learn about the needs of women and girls in our community and the programs available to address those needs often are inspired to add personal contributions to current strategic grants, as did two anonymous donors this year. In another case, when a Discretionary Grant request couldn't be funded because it did not meet this year's criteria, a "generous WGA donor" wrote a check to support a fishing trip for foster-care girls. (And many of you, of course, give directly to organizations without our knowledge.)

We will never know all of the ripple effects of our growing body of work, but we can be confident that WGA is indeed making a lasting and measurable effect on the lives of girls and women through the myriad ways you as individual members and we as *women together* act to make a difference in our community.