

EARLY
1999

An idea is born!

An article about Colleen Willoughby and the Washington Women's Fund piqued Courtenay Wilson's curiosity, and she approached Ann Baker, Doris Carson, Helen Lane and Delores Weaver with the idea of a women's giving circle. Each had been a trustee of The Community Foundation, so they spoke to Foundation President Andy Bell, who was very supportive.

2001

Women's Giving Alliance is formed

After much dialogue between The Community Foundation and Colleen, Women's Giving Alliance was officially formed as an initiative of The Community Foundation. Each of the five founders set out to get 10 friends to join. By year-end, they had 163 members, exceeding their goal by a factor of 3.

2002

The work begins

Courtenay Wilson was selected as the first president of WGA, and the first grants were awarded.

2004

WGA underwrites first research

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WGA, under the leadership of Sandy Cook, undertook its first community research project, and published a report entitled "Voices Heard."

2005

WGA surpasses 200 members

WGA ended the year with more than 200 members. Sandy Cook became the second president.

2007

WGA initiates Neighborhood Connectors

Neighborhood Connectors were introduced to the membership, creating a smaller neighborhood group feel, and facilitating better communication. Joan Van Vleck was elected president.

2009

Legacy Memberships are introduced

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Legacy Memberships, the brainchild of President Barbara Harrell and Nina Waters, President of TCF, were introduced.

2010

WGA Endowment reaches milestone

Endowment reaches \$1 million.

2011

WGA adopts Mental Health as a single focus

Under President Susan Schantz, WGA became the first women's giving circle to adopt a single area of focus for grantmaking: Improving the mental health of women and girls in Northeast Florida.

2012

'Stronger Voices, Better Lives' is published

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In honor of its Tenth Anniversary, WGA updated its research, releasing an Executive Summary entitled "Stronger Voices, Better Lives."

2014

Creation of the Delores Barr Weaver Fellowship Program

Julia Taylor, the sixth President, announced the creation of The Delores Barr Weaver Fellowship Program to attract women under 40 to WGA. The membership climbed to 335, officially doubling the number of members since inception.

2015

Helping lead a wider circle of giving

Under president Paula Liang, a giving circle in Central Florida modeled its legacy program after WGA, and WGA became a founding member of the Florida Women's Funding Alliance, an affinity group of the Florida Philanthropic Network.

2016

WGA conducts 3rd generation of research

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"Voices of Hope" is published as part of the groundwork for transitioning to a new focus area. WGA members traveled to Tallahassee to speak to legislators about creating a pilot network of social services for children rescued from sex trafficking.

2017

Shift to a new focus area

WGA finished five years of making grants to improve the mental health of women and girls in Northeast Florida. Driven by research and member input, WGA announced a new focus: Breaking the Cycle of Female Poverty. WGA also hosted the sixth national forum for the Women's Collective Giving Grantmakers Network.

2018

WGA's 15th Anniversary Year

Under President Ellen Wiss, WGA launched its new focus on Breaking the Cycle of Female Poverty. The first IWPR commissioned research report was released on the Status of Women in Florida. Membership grew 15%, including the launch of the Delores Barr Weaver 4Sight Program to attract women age 40 and under.

2019

Grants calendar altered based on agency feedback

Under President Mary Pietan, WGA continued its focus on Breaking the Cycle of Female Poverty. The grants calendar was changed to announce grants in May, rather than October, aligning with many NFP's fiscal year. WGA published the Final Impact Report of WGA's Mental Health Strategic Focus (2012-2018).

2020

Resiliency as WGA and grantees confront pandemic

COVID-19, stay-at-home directives, grim economic consequences (especially for women), and racial unrest made for a challenging year. Both the agencies we work with and WGA were successful in pivoting to the new reality; Zoom, DEI, and trust-based philanthropy entered our vocabularies.