



Fond du Lac Area  
**Women's Fund**

## Dear Friends of the Fond du Lac Area Women's Fund:

Over my lifetime, I have always found wonderful women to be my role models and mentors, many of whom turned into deep friendships.

My earliest friendship dates to 60 years ago; it began on the playground learning to twirl baton when I was 10 and met Mary Jean, my first real girlfriend. We no longer twirl our batons together; however, we continue to support one another as we walk through life.

Starting the Fond du Lac Area Women's Fund in 2003 was no different. It began with friendship. Ginny Gilmore lived down the road, and we walked – literally - for years together in the early mornings before our workdays. In our conversations, we shared about what we most cared about. We both wanted a better world for women and girls.

Ginny was friends with Sandy Roehrig, who was friends with Sheli Sadoff, and thought we should all meet. We met over coffee and in our sharing about what we cared about, we found common ground. This coffee conversation among friends grew into the creation of the Fond du Lac Area Women's Fund.

Over the past 17 years, the FDLA Women's Fund has had many outstanding women join in a collective effort to continue that first vision of caring. Many long-lasting friendships have been made through Board and committee volunteerism, problem-solving and valuing each person's contribution.

The year 2020 will be etched in our memories forever. It has been a year of great challenge and apprehension for ourselves, our families and our nation. We've been reminded how critical it is to have close, positive relationships for our wellbeing and survival. We know more than ever, we cannot go it alone.

## We need each other.

For the FDLA Women's Fund, 2020 marked the first time the Power of the Purse Luncheon was canceled. This was a significant decision, as this event raises 40% of the annual budget. This revenue loss has meant pivoting and addressing the most immediate issues.

The Board and the Executive Director stepped up and embraced this time of change. One of the first steps was to contact the four founders and invite them to contribute their ideas. Another step was to reconnect through a Zoom meeting with as many former Board members as possible.



## EMERITI BOARD CHALLENGE GRANT

**Former and present members  
of the Fond du Lac Area  
Women's Fund have joined  
hands in friendship to commit**

# \$14,000

**in matching grant dollars to  
challenge the community to do  
the same.**

**What does that mean? For every  
\$1 you give, their gift matches  
it, essentially doubling the  
impact.**

*Please see the back side for ways  
your gifts will be used in 2021, as  
well as a list of Fond du Lac Area  
Women's Fund Emeriti Board  
members who've committed to  
this grant challenge.*

As any one of us women know, when we are in crisis, we call our girlfriends for support and encouragement. The strong foundation that was laid over many years through women's friendships remains evident. In the phone calls I made to former members, I heard enthusiasm and an eagerness to contribute to the ongoing and future success of the FDLA Women's Fund.

## Now, it's your turn to step forward in friendship.

As the FDLA Women's Fund closes out the challenges of 2020, we look to you – our community – to join us in investing funds necessary to support local women and girls into 2021 to:

- Retool ongoing components of Phase I of Fond du Lac Says No More initiative related to awareness-building and education through Project Table Talk and Green Dot Bystander Intervention Training sessions conducted virtually
- Restart Phase II of FDL Says No More by holding focus groups of local men to discuss their solutions for ending domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse countywide
- Expand work regarding diversity, equity and inclusion, focusing first on internal evaluation of our agency, while also pursuing partnerships focused on serving all women and girls equitably
- Strengthen collaboration with local grant recipients through continued funding of their projects/programming that supports our mission
- Explore how to become greater stakeholders in women's health issues, especially those linked to mental health and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

Looking back over the past 17 years of the outstanding work of the FDLA Women's Fund, I am proud to be part of the story of caring for women and girls. It is humbling to see one's dream come true.

## Please join me in continuing this dream for the women and girls of Fond du Lac County!

With gratitude and hope,

*Valerie Thibaudéau Graczyk*

2020 Woman of Achievement  
and one of the FDLA Women's Fund Founding Mothers

# THANK YOU TO OUR MATCHING GRANT DONORS!

**Ginny Gilmore  
ValeShavana Talbertrie  
Graczyk  
Sheli Sadoff  
Janelle Anderson  
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