

The Women's Fund

of the Community Foundation for South Central New York

March 2018

Who Runs the Women's Fund?

A Look at Some of Our Volunteer Leaders

Members of the Women's Fund share a powerful sense of commitment. "How can you *not* become passionate about helping women and girls in our area?" asks Whitney Racketta, who chaired the Women's Fund's Leadership

Committee in 2017.

Common cause aside, the people who lend their strength to the Women's Fund are a varied group, and they arrive through many different channels. Here are some of the volunteers who keep the Women's Fund running and growing.

Jennifer Small, now vice chair of the Leadership Committee, joined that body in 2013. Small is chief operating officer at the Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment (AVRE) and its former director of development. She learned about the Women's Fund through her connections in the nonprofit world and soon

started to attend the annual breakfasts.

At one of those events, a card soliciting volunteers for the Fund became Small's entrée into the Leadership Committee. "I checked off a box, and they reached out to me," she says.

One of the things Small likes best about the Leadership *continued on back*



DON'T WAIT TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT!

14th Annual Women's Fund Breakfast

We are thrilled to announce that this year's keynote speaker will be Maureen Corrigan!

Maureen is America's most trusted and beloved book critic. Her distinctive voice is at once incisive and accessible, like a well-read friend who always sends you home with a good book to read.

For more than twenty years Maureen has been the book critic for NPR's Fresh Air. She is also a columnist for *The Washington Post* and The Nicky and Jamie Grant Distinguished Professor of the Practice in Literary Criticism at Georgetown University, where her courses are very popular. As a lecturer she's been described as "brilliant," "hilarious," "passionate" and "eloquent." She is the author of two books of her own: *Leave Me Alone I'm Reading*

and *So We Read On: How the Great Gatsby Came to Be and Why it Endures*, which was named one of the ten best books of the year by *Library Journal*.

Aside from her writings for *The Washington Post* and *The Village Voice*, Maureen has also written reviews for *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The Nation* among others. She is an associate editor of and contributor to *Mystery and Suspense Writers* and the winner of the 1999 Edgar Award for criticism. She has served as a juror for the Pulitzer Prize in fiction.

Thanks to early-bird sponsors Coughlin & Gerhart, LLP; Cushman & Wakefield-Pyramid Brokerage Company;

Tickets to the program, including a full breakfast, are \$45 per person with a VIP option for a book signing and meet and greet with Maureen for \$60.

Thursday, June 7, 2018

The Holiday Inn, 2 Hawley Street, Binghamton

Sign-in begins at 7:30 a.m.

Breakfast buffet starting at 7:45 a.m.

Call 607-772-6773 by May 31 to reserve your seat.

Credit cards accepted by phone and online.

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Women's Fund Leadership

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Our Leaders *continued from page 1*

Committee is the effective way it operates. “It’s certainly not surprising that we have so many amazing women in the community,” she says. “But when you work closely with them, it’s overwhelming—the amount of work we’re able to get done, the amount of money we’re able to raise.”

She’s also pleased that the Women’s Fund has earned such strong recognition and support. “I don’t think I’ve ever had a negative response—or even a neutral one—when I’ve brought it up, whether to encourage someone to donate or to come to the breakfast,” she says.

Racketa, a senior career advisor at Binghamton University’s School of Management, came to the Leadership Committee through an initiative to bring younger women into the fold. She was 25 in 2011 when Diane Campbell, a friend of Racketa’s mother who was

nominating chair at the time, invited her to join.

“The Leadership Committee runs seamlessly,” Racketa says. That’s thanks in part to the support it receives from the Community Foundation’s staff, but also because of the varied assets committee members bring to their work. “Everyone is passionate about the mission, and we play to each other’s strengths,” she says.

“But I think the most important thing about the Leadership Committee is how nimble it is,” Racketa adds. “It addresses the most pressing needs of the time for women and girls.”

A few years ago, for example, committee members heard about some aspiring business owners who wanted to join the Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP) at SUNY Broome but couldn’t afford the program fee. “With a \$150

scholarship, we were able to help a couple of women to get involved in that and start their own businesses,” Racketa says.

Rita Chirumbolo Ernstrom was one of the founding donors who helped get the Women’s Fund up and running in 2002. “I was excited about a group of women whose purpose was to make a difference for girls and women in our own community, and also to demystify the concept of philanthropy,” says Ernstrom, a business consultant and interior designer.

Ernstrom joined the Fund’s Grants Committee and eventually became its chair. Then she stepped away for a few years to focus on her volunteer work with other community groups, such as the Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways and Binghamton University’s School of Social Work.

Ernstrom continued to support the Women’s Fund as a

donor, and a couple of years ago she joined the Development Committee. She recently moved to the Leadership Committee.

In the Fund’s early days, it was a thrill to be part of a pioneering organization, Ernstrom says. Today, she finds it exciting to work with a diverse and dynamic group of women to bring the Fund to \$1 million by 2020.

In addition, the Women’s Fund now has the opportunity to energize a new generation of women and show them they can have a voice, Ernstrom says. Young women are comfortable with raising money through new vehicles such as GoFundMe, she says. And the recent women’s marches certainly demonstrate the power of the rising generation. “But the real work begins once you get home,” she says. “It takes continually showing up, continually committing to the work.”

Welcome to New Leadership Committee Members and a Fond Farewell to Old Friends

Welcome!

Melissa Klinko is a regional communications manager for Excellus BlueCross BlueShield. Melissa has more than 20 years of communications and media relations experience. Prior to Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, she served as the media relations coordinator for Lourdes Hospital. Melissa lives in Vestal with her husband and daughter and serves on the Board of Directors for the Southern Tier AIDS Program.



MELISSA KLINKO

management, health policy and community relations. Tina has also served as a member of the Boards of Directors at the Southern Tier AIDS Program and Tri-Cities Opera, Advisory Board member and volunteer at Lourdes Hospice and volunteer at New Life Ministries in Vestal and Endicott.

Rita Chirumbolo Ernstrom was a founding donor of the Women’s Fund, and served on and headed the Grants Committee for many years. After working for over 20 years as director of programs and development in the non-profit sector she started her own antique, consignment, and estate dispersion business. In addition to serving on the Leadership and Development Committees of the Women’s Fund, Rita gives volunteer and support time to the BU Art Museum, the Girl Scouts, P.A.S.T. and Roberson Museum and Science Center.

Jacquelyn Newman grew up in Endwell and attended Union-Endicott schools. She then studied mechanical engineering, earning a BS from Bucknell University and an



JACQUELYN NEWMAN

MA from Binghamton University. After more than 20 years in the aerospace industry, Jacquelyn now works as an administrative assistant in the Faith Formation/ Youth Ministry office at the Church of the Holy Family in

Endwell and has been a volunteer at Mercy House since it opened. She and her husband of 26 years, Peter, have raised their three sons in homes in Binghamton, Endicott and Endwell.

Farewell!

After six long years of commitment to the Women’s Fund, and therefore to all the women and girls we serve in the region, we say good bye and thanks to **Whitney Racketa** and **Cory Jacobs**. Their dedication to our mission and hard work on behalf of the Fund are deeply appreciated!



CHRISTINA DOLAN

Christina Dolan works as a Project Manager in Strategic Planning at UHS. Previously, she spent the bulk of her career in the New York State Senate, specializing in operations, grants