

# The Women's Fund

of the Community Foundation for South Central New York

March 2017

## Grants Help Mothers, Infants Get a Better Start

*While caring for a newborn is never easy, some women face extra-tough obstacles during pregnancy and after.*

Mothers and Babies Perinatal Network (M&BPN), a nonprofit with offices in Binghamton and Norwich, works on many fronts to promote healthy pregnancies and births and support families with young children. Twice in recent years, the Women's Fund has funded programs at M&BPN to help new mothers who face especially difficult challenges.

In 2009, using a \$2,250 grant from the Women's Fund, M&BPN held a series of programs for health care professionals on perinatal mood disorders, including moderate, mild and severe depression.

"Our goal was to provide education to health care providers throughout the region, to help them better understand the incidence of this, both prenatally and postpartum, and to do a better job of identifying

it," says Sharon Chesna, chief executive officer at M&BPN. Attendees learned about appropriate screening tools and about resources in the community, including mental health providers and social workers, for patients who needed additional help.

The sessions included advice about medications that are safe for women to take while they're nursing, Chesna said. They also stressed that obstetricians, midwives, pediatricians and other providers can often treat prenatal or postpartum depression themselves, without referring the mother to a psychologist or psychiatrist.

"If you do these screenings, this can go a long way toward helping to reduce the incidence of this problem and to catch it before it becomes extraordinarily serious," Chesna says.

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## DON'T WAIT TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT! 2017 Women's Fund Annual Breakfast



PETER BREGG

**Margaret Trudeau**—former First Lady of Canada, mother of current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and a noted mental health advocate—will give the keynote speech at this year's Women's Fund Annual Breakfast on Thursday, June 22. Seats are bound to sell out quickly, so make your reservation today.

Trudeau's keynote speech, "Changing My Mind," will tell the inspirational story of her life, from becoming a prime minister's wife at a young age, to the loss of a son and her former husband, to living with bipolar disorder. She tirelessly shares her personal stories to remind others of the importance of nurturing the body, mind and spirit.

Canadians fell in love with Pierre Elliott Trudeau's beautiful bride when he brought her to the world stage as the youngest first lady in the history of the country. Yet, as time went by, Margaret was unprepared for public life, and plagued by mood swings. After three sons with Pierre, the marriage ended. She then remarried and had two more children. But the tragic loss of her son Michel in a skiing accident, and the passing of Pierre Trudeau a few years later, were too much to bear, and she became severely ill.

Today, Margaret Trudeau has rebuilt her life once again. Now, she brings her formidable life story to the stage in her quest to help others, sharing her message of resilience with the goal of helping to inspire others and to erase the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

Trudeau is the author of four books. Her latest, *The Time of Your Life*, offers women an inspirational and practical approach to creating a healthy, happy, secure and satisfying

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## Women's Fund Leadership

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# Women's Fund Leadership Committee Welcomes New Members

*Please join us in welcoming two new members to the Leadership Committee: Ann Machlin and Amy Szostak.*

Ann came to this area from Long Island to go to school and, in her words, "never really went home." She is a retired clinical affiliate at Ithaca College and a speech / language pathologist. Active in a variety of nonprofit organizations and women-oriented charities, Ann has been involved for many years at the state and local level with Delta Kappa Gamma, Binghamton Rotary, Binghamton University Forum, WSKG,

Anderson Center, Tri Cities Opera, Broome County Arts Council and the Women's Fund.

Amy moved to the Greater Binghamton area in 2015 from Rochester, N.Y. Since her arrival, she has been actively involved in the community and in community organizations, including the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, Binghamton Rotary, Binghamton University Forum and the Community Foundation for South Central New York's grants panel. Shortly after relocating here, Amy started her own women's group, Transplants and Local



*Ann Machlin*



*Amy Szostak*

Ladies (TALL.) Many local nonprofits, including the Women's Fund, have benefited from TALL's monthly events. Ms. Szostak works as a site acquisition specialist for Network Building & Consulting.

## Mothers and Infants *continued from page 1*

In 2015, the Women's Fund awarded M&BPN \$6,000 for the Community Linkage for Addiction and Parenting Support (CLAPS) program. CLAPS provides counseling and other services help to new mothers who struggle with substance abuse or addiction.

When a woman uses addictive drugs or takes methadone therapy while pregnant, her newborn will go through withdrawal. Afterwards, these babies are harder to manage than the

typical newborn—more prone to crying, resistant to bonding and harder to soothe. This creates extra stress for the new mother.

"Think of a mom who has been struggling with her own recovery," Chesna says. "Our concern is that this is going to push her into relapse." That will make it even harder to care for her child.

To help mothers in this situation, M&BPN sends a community health worker

(CHW) to meet with women in several venues, including a counseling program run by the Broome County Drug Court and the methadone clinic program at United Health Services (UHS). Women who want help can meet one-on-one with the CHW to discuss any problems they have obtaining safe housing, food, medical care, transportation to care and other basics. The CHW helps the women connect with the right resources and follows up

to make sure they're getting the help they need.

Once the baby is born, the women may join a program from M&BPN called Baby Basics, which focuses on parenting essentials. "We also help them to understand that their baby may not follow all the rules, and we tell them how to deal with this more irritable baby," Chesna says. If the mother agrees, the CHW can work with her and the baby in the home.

The grant from the Women's Fund allowed the CHW—a part-time employee—to add five extra hours per week to her schedule during a pilot period, when M&BPN offered the program in Broome County. As of late 2016, the program had provided aid to 21 women, Chesna says. "If we have helped one mom avoid relapse, that's enormous for her personally, for the community overall and for the health and well-being of that baby."

## 2017 Women's Fund Annual Breakfast

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future. She sits on the Executive Advisory Board of the UBC Mental Health Institute as a community advocate.

Guests will also hear from the Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier (MHA ST) about WellLinked, the new online resource that connects women in our region with mental health resources that best fit their need. Plans to develop WellLinked grew out of a study conducted by the Women's Fund, and in 2016 the Fund and the Community Foundation jointly awarded MHA ST \$47,000 to develop the system.

**Tickets to the program, including a full breakfast, are \$45 per person.**

Thursday, June 22, 2017

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 June 15, 2017 to reserve your seat.

Visa/MC accepted by phone.