

# NEWS

**The Women's Fund**

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## Program Poises Women for Success

**W**hen you want an employer to see you as the perfect choice for an open position, there's nothing like a new set of clothes and a haircut to make you look and feel the part.

Thanks to a \$2,250 grant from the Women's Fund, the Family and Children's Society (F&CS) can now give women with mental health diagnoses tools for polishing their images as they apply for jobs. F&CS is using the grant to buy gift cards that women can spend on interview clothes, plus vouchers for a local hair salon.

"Having this grant has been a godsend," says Pamela Foley, supervisor of the Vocational Incentive Program at F&CS. "It can increase the likelihood of a positive first impression with a potential employer when someone goes in with a new interview outfit and has her hair styled professionally." A fresh look can also

increase self esteem, she says.

The Vocational Incentive Program helps individuals who have mental health diagnoses obtain and maintain employment. When a client is referred to the program, staff at F&CS assess that person's needs and background, identify the challenges they face and then help them with job-seeking skills and tools.

### The Vocational Incentive Program helps individuals who have mental health diagnoses obtain and maintain employment.

"We'll do anything from starting a resume to helping them with cover letters and reference sheets," Foley says. Staff can also refer clients to local organizations that offer free computer classes, so they can upgrade their software skills, plus learn to use job search sites and navigate employers' web sites.

F&CS expects that the Women's Fund grant will help level the playing field for women in the

*continued on back*

## 16th Annual Women's Fund Breakfast

**Keynote speaker: Jami Floyd**

Broadcast journalist and Binghamton University graduate Jami Floyd will speak on "Women and Politics" at the annual Women's Fund Breakfast, held this year on Thursday, June 25 at the Doubletree in Binghamton.

Floyd is the local host of "All Things Considered" on WNYC radio in New York City and legal editor in the WNYC newsroom. A graduate of Berkeley Law School, she has taught at Stanford Law and served as a legal analyst for San Francisco's KPIX Radio during

the O.J. Simpson trial. Moving from teaching to reporting, Floyd worked for CBS News and ABC News in New York and then hosted a daily legal and political talk show, "Jami Floyd: Best Defense," on Court TV.

Floyd has won many awards, including the Gracie, two Tellys, the Maggie and two Cine-Golden Eagle Awards for journalism. Among the most memorable interviews of her

## REMEMBER TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT!

career, she counts conversations with Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich and Myrlie Evers-Williams, widow of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers.

*Many thanks to our signature sponsor for the breakfast, M&T Bank! And thanks to our other early bird sponsors, Coughlin and Gerhart, LLP; Cushman & Wakefield-Pyramid Brokerage Company; John and Martine Bordages; Dannible and McKee, LLP; Davidson Fox Certified Public Accountants; Excellus BlueCross BlueShield; Fischer Group at Graystone Consulting-Marc Fischer; Greater Binghamton Obstetrics; Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways; Hinman Howard and Kattell, LLP; William H. Lane Inc.; Levene Gouldin & Thompson, LLP; NBT Bank; Sentry Alarms; Shumaker Consulting Engineering and Land Surveying, D.P.C.; SUNY Broome Women's Institute; Visions Federal Credit Union; and Warren Real Estate.*

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

**Thursday, June 25, 2020**

**The Doubletree, 225 Water Street, Binghamton**

**Sign-in begins at 7:30 a.m. Breakfast buffet starts at 7:45 a.m.**

**Call (607) 772-6773 by June 15, 2020 to reserve your seat.**

**Visa/MC accepted by phone or online [www.donorswhocare.org](http://www.donorswhocare.org)**



# Poised for Success

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program. “We found that the interview process can present significant obstacles for many people, especially those who lack resources to purchase appropriate clothing or to have their hair styled,” Foley says.

In the past, the Vocational Incentive Program has provided vouchers and referred clients to thrift stores, or to community programs that offer clothes for free or at a low cost. “When they go there, they often find a lack of appropriate choices,” Foley says. The stores may carry outdated styles, or they might not have the right professional-looking clothing in a woman’s size. “It’s all hit or miss when those types of programs are available,” she says.

“People lend each other clothing,” Foley adds. “But how much better is it going to feel when they can try on a new outfit and purchase something specific to the type of job they’re going for?”

Based on suggestions from the program’s clients, F&CS has bought gift cards to Boscov’s, T.J. Maxx and Kohl’s. It has also made an arrangement with Station 45, a salon in downtown Binghamton, to bill the program for clients’ haircuts.

One woman who took up the offer for clothing and a haircut called Foley in late December to report that she’d just been hired. This woman came to the program after a plant closing eliminated her old job. Armed with an updated resume, she attended a couple of job fairs, wearing the new outfit she’d purchased with help from the program, and sporting a new haircut. She connected with several employers. “One of them signed her up for an interview on the spot,” Foley says.

The woman went to the interview and then, on Foley’s advice, sent a thank you note. The employer followed up with a second meeting, and then made an offer.

In some cases, F&CS may also use the grant to support other needs—perhaps helping with transportation to an interview, or adding minutes to a cell phone plan so a woman can make and receive calls related to the job hunt.

Foley says she hopes the Women’s Fund grant will inspire partnerships with other community groups to help keep the gift card and voucher program going over time. “It’s great to have these success stories that we can share, now and in the future, as we develop the program.”



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## CHANGES AT THE WOMEN’S FUND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

### Join Us In Welcoming New Members and Thanking Long-Time Supporters

**Rachel Priest** is a lifelong Binghamton area resident. After graduating from Hofstra University, Rachel returned to the Binghamton area, where she has worked in real estate, local government and the nonprofit sector. She feels privileged that her current role with Rural Health



**RACHEL PRIEST**

Network of South Central New York allows her to contribute to the mission of advancing the health and well-being of rural people and communities. Rachel lives on Binghamton’s West Side with her husband and son and has loved seeing our community thrive and become more vibrant over the past few years. She enjoyed serving on the Special Events Committee of the Women’s Fund last year and looks forward to getting more involved with the wonderful work that the Women’s Fund does for women and girls in our community.

**Jackie Stapleton-Durham** is the Director of Education at WSKG Public Media. She is a graduate of Binghamton University (B.A. ’03, M.S. ’08) and Broome Leadership Institute (’19). She and her husband, both lifelong residents of this region, are happy to be raising their



**JACKIE STAPLETON-DURHAM**

two young children here, as well. Jackie is passionate about community, education and children, and she is thrilled to be involved with the Women’s Fund and the many ways it supports girls and women.

Heartfelt thanks to two long-time and dedicated members who are rotating off the Leadership Committee, **Amy Howard** and **Roberta Melville**. Best wishes and gratitude for all you have done to enhance the lives of women and girls in the region.