

## Our Work

# *Women's Philanthropy Institute*

Since 1997, the Women's Philanthropy Institute (WPI) has unleashed the potential of a rapidly growing population of women interested in the joy and power of giving. WPI, which became a part of the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University in 2004, engages and assists donors, those who serve philanthropists, such as development officers and financial advisors, and those who study philanthropy, including research scholars, educators, and students.

WPI's comprehensive approach focuses on donor-centered education to broaden the base of philanthropy; research to better understand donor motivations, rationale, impact, and effectiveness; and the dissemination of essential information and research. WPI's view of women's philanthropy is value-neutral and inclusive—it spans the spectrum of women's philanthropy from women donors to women engaged in philanthropy as volunteers, professionals, fundraisers, and leaders of family foundations.

Experiences with thousands of women across the country demonstrate the impact of education that helps women identify and examine their philanthropic values and achieve their goals for their giving. Workshops using personal and group exercises that guide women on this journey of discovery help donors become more strategic and effective in their philanthropy, often unleashing additional financial resources for the causes that they support.

Working in collaboration with the Center's research team, the Lake Family Institute on Faith & Giving, and The Fund Raising School, WPI is uniquely poised to help women donors be more informed, strategic, and effective in their philanthropy.

## Why It Matters

Women's philanthropy is emerging as one of the key trends changing the course of society today. The pioneering and creative actions of women philanthropists have always been essential. That strong tradition, combined with women's new financial clout, creates new forms of philanthropy capable of responding to the great challenges facing the nation and the world. Women will play an increasingly prominent role as donors. Whether they inherit much of the anticipated intergenerational transfer of wealth over the next 25 years or earn wealth as a result of their business roles, women will fund change and innovation to solve some of the world's most pressing issues.

With these changes come new opportunities to engage women in philanthropy. Women bring fresh financial and intellectual capital to philanthropy and with it new models such as giving circles and women's funds. However, more must be learned about these collaborative approaches in order to increase and shape their impact on our communities.

Do these new forms of philanthropy have the resources and the ability to effect social change? Are they fundamentally different from traditional philanthropy? How does traditional philanthropy view this movement, which has grown exponentially in recent years? How does women's philanthropy differ from men's? WPI is a catalyst for the academic and research-oriented exploration of such questions about this field. Further understanding of the motivations and giving patterns of women will enable more women to engage in meaningful dialogue about strategic philanthropy.

- The Women's Philanthropy Institute (WPI) consults with and provides technical assistance to organizations around the world that are interested in engaging women in philanthropy. WPI also acts as a clearinghouse for information about women's philanthropy, and helps individuals and organizations network and link to one another, thereby strengthening the fabric of this rapidly expanding movement.
- WPI serves nonprofit organizations, United Ways, colleges and universities, giving circles, professional associations, foundations, and national organizations with local affiliates, as well as other groups committed to encouraging and expanding women's philanthropic initiatives. Programs and training for organizations such as the Topeka Community Foundation, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Dallas Women's Foundation, and the University of Florida have provided women with the knowledge and tools to focus and leverage their gifts for change.
- More than 100 organizations around the country have contracted with WPI and its facilitators to lead workshops, facilitate peer learning groups, and give public lectures. Programs such as *Every Woman a Philanthropist*; *Values*; and *Developing Your Philanthropy for a Better World* introduce key concepts, teach women how to engage in transformative philanthropy, and inspire them to be catalysts for action. The energy created in these gatherings meets the needs of nonprofits' constituents in powerful, unique ways.
- The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and WPI collaborated on *Rich Conversations: (Re)Defining Women's Philanthropy*, a national conference held in 2007.
- WPI reached more than 1,100 individuals in the last year through its ongoing programs.
- The Center's 18th Annual Symposium, *Women and Philanthropy: Gaining Momentum*, in August 2005 sold out six weeks prior to the event. For two days, more than 300 scholars, philanthropists, and fundraising practitioners explored the current status of women's philanthropy, critically analyzed the strides that have been made over time, and further developed a vision for the future.
- The 2006 volume of *New Directions in Philanthropic Fundraising: The Transformative Power of Women's Philanthropy* was inspired by the symposium and gives readers access to important research and helpful dialogue.
- In a recent workshop, one woman said she was amazed at how much she could learn about her own giving from one exercise and a short conversation with the woman seated next to her. She came away with ideas for changes she wants to make in her giving.
- WPI and the Center on Philanthropy currently collaborate with a researcher from Virginia Tech University in a first-of-its-kind, groundbreaking study. The study examines the impact of participating in giving circles on members' knowledge of, attitudes toward, and engagement in philanthropy and civic life.

To learn more about the Women's Philanthropy Institute at the Center on Philanthropy, please contact Andrea Pactor, Program Manager, Philanthropic Services at 317-278-8990 or 317-274-4200.