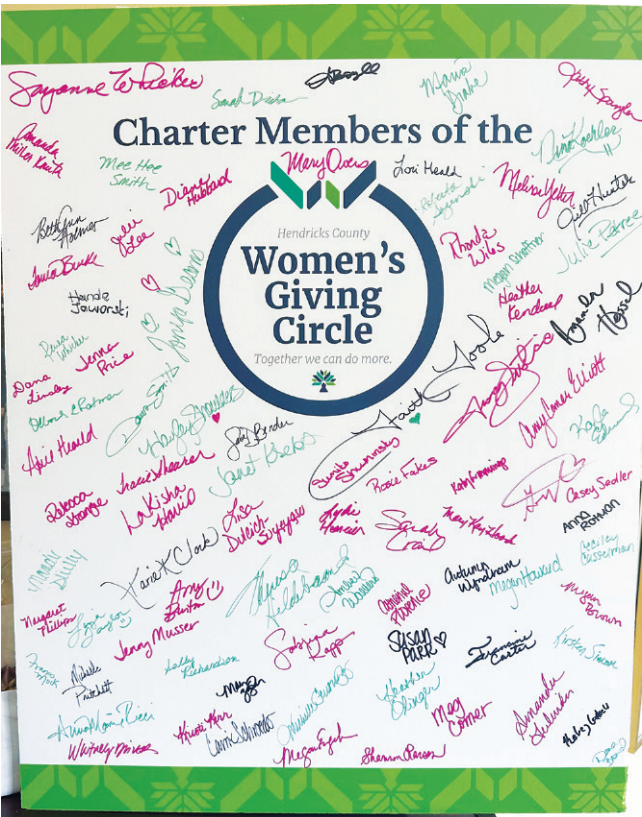


Hendricks County Women's Giving Circle Making History



Hendricks County Community Launches Sisterhood of Giving

By: Renee Bowman

The inaugural meeting of the 2025 Hendricks County Women's Giving Circle had all the energy you might expect of a newly-formed group when they met Wednesday, March 5, at the Whipple Pavilion at Washington Township Park.

After months of planning by the steering committee, it was time to live out the mission statement:

"The Hendricks County Women's Giving Circle (HCWGC) is a women's philanthropy group, a program of the Hendricks County Community Foundation (HCCF). This group is designed to provide financial support for local nonprofit organizations while encouraging philanthropy and community engagement among women in Hendricks County."

Frances Mock, Director of Community Relations at the Hendricks County Community Foundation, shared the original goal for the group was 100 members, but now with 174 members, the Hendricks County Women's Giving Circle might have the largest number for a first-year initiative in Indiana. Around 150 women were present Wednesday night.

Financial Support

Members of the HCWGC each contributed \$300 upon joining. In addition, several members gave above and beyond that amount. All of those funds added up to a whopping \$52,600. After fees were paid and a reserve set aside, the group will award \$45,000 in grants during its first year.

The funds will be distributed to non-profit organizations that support women and children in Hendricks County.

The application window closed on Wednesday, March 12. In a few weeks, members will utilize an online rubric to assess the applications of the vetted organizations. Top-scoring organizations will then make short presentations during the next three membership meetings in 2025.

Three non-profits will be awarded \$7,500, three will receive \$4,500, and the remaining three will be given \$3,000. The votes of the members will determine the funding levels. Grant winners will update the membership in one year on how the funds were utilized.

Philanthropy

While the group formed to pool resources, there was also a spirit of female empowerment during International Women's Month. Steering Committee member Tonya Geans opened the meeting with words of inspiration.

"Smart women rally...and get busy. We are building and making history." Geans also stated that women need to keep moving, keep educating, keep encouraging, and keep empowering.

In that effort, the members were given time to get to know each other as well. Karen Cravotta, a member from Plainfield, left the event grateful to be a member.



Tonya Geans and Frances Mock greet members of the Hendricks County Women's Giving Circle.

"I am excited for the opportunity to meet and work alongside other local women with a heart to fill needs close to home. This group seemed like a low commitment, high reward opportunity. Making small, significant changes locally is how things can improve on a much larger scale."



Members and guests enjoyed getting acquainted and networking during the Women's Giving Circle meeting, held in the Whipple Pavilion at Washington Township Park. A group photo of the current members of the Giving Circle was taken to record the historic event.

Community Engagement

Amy Comer-Elliott then interviewed Hendricks Regional Health CEO and HCWGC member Dr. Michelle Fenoughty in front of the group. Dr. Fenoughty answered questions about her own female role models and shared upcoming initiatives at HRH, including the focus on not just health, but wellness too.

With 40% of children now falling in the category of obesity, HRH is doing their part to help parents focus on childhood nutrition and movement.

Fenoughty shared that today's children are the first generation with a lower life expectancy than their parents. However, she left the group with hope, challenging the membership to use gratefulness to motivate and empower this philanthropy.

"With the resources in the room, there is no limit to what we can do."

An opportunity to join the Hendricks County Women's Giving Circle will occur later in 2025. The next gathering of the HCWGC will be on June 4, 2025 from 5:30-7, location pending. For more information, visit hendrickscountycf.org.



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