

The Bulletin

By [Jaclyn Diaz](#)

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5 nonprofits awarded grants for supporting the empowerment of women

WOODSTOCK - In celebration of five organizations which support the empowerment of young girls and women, the Northeast Connecticut Women and Girls Fund doled out a number of grants Sunday night.

The five nonprofits were awarded grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and total \$12,500 - the largest awards in the three years since the group's inception. Last year's awards totaled \$10,000.

Receiving grants were: Access Community Action Agency for its Women Inspired: Next Steps program that supports low-income women who want to start or grow their small businesses; United Community and Family Services and its Plainfield women's support group; Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group and its Healthy Girls, Strong Women program; United Service Inc. and its healthy relationship advocate certification course; and the Westcott Wilcox Elderly Residential Housing Strength in Movement initiative.

Grant recipients are chosen based on who exemplifies the Women and Girls Fund's core mission of empowering women and girls to make positive decisions, promote healthy relationships and reduce domestic violence, and who helps advance family economic security and help women enter or re-enter the workforce

Donna Grant, co-chairwoman on the organization's Steering Committee, said the end vision of the group is simple.

"We want to continue empowering our young women to be strong and healthy," she said

The event was held for the second year at the Taylor Brooke Winery in Woodstock. The guests in attendance were treated to wine tastings, food and performances by Woodstock Academy students and The Little Theatre on Broad Street's spoken word performance of "Pretty!"

The four Women and Girls Funds across the state have an endowment of \$2.9 million and have awarded a total of \$1.3 million in grants to more than 300 organizations over the years.

The foundation was started in 2013 by 50 founding donors. According to the website, the Northeast Women and Girls Fund seeks to remove the inequities that block women from self-sustainability and to improve the quality of life for all women and girls in the towns of Brooklyn, Canterbury, Eastford, Hampton, Killingly, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Sterling, Thompson and Woodstock.

Ruth Crocker, of Mystic, chairwoman of the Women and Girls Fund of Southeastern Connecticut, said the Northeast group has done a great job every year since it began.

"They are filling a big need up here," she said. "They are really helping people find the resources they need."

By supporting these programs, Grant said the overall vision for women in the community can be achieved.

"Our vision is to have a community support women and girls ... so they can grow up to be leaders that take our community to the next level," she said. "We are creating leaders for tomorrow."

Last year's recipients were Access Community Action Agency, which received \$3,800 for its small business program, and the Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group received \$4,700. The Arc of Quinebaug Valley also received \$1,500 last year to provide women and girls with disabilities to acquire personal safety training and skills.



Laura Crosetti, co-chairwoman of the Northeast Connecticut Women and Girls Fund, speaks Sunday night during an event awarding grants to five nonprofits. [Jaclyn Diaz/NorwichBulletin.com](#)

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