

Celebrating Women's History Month: Honoring Women's Impact in Philanthropy

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As Women's History Month begins, it's a fitting time to reflect on the remarkable contributions of women in shaping our communities through philanthropy. At the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, we take pride in recognizing and celebrating the pivotal role women play in driving positive change and fostering inclusive, thriving communities.

Research consistently highlights the profound influence of women in the realm of philanthropy. Studies indicate that women not only give more frequently to charitable causes but also tend to be more generous in their contributions compared to men. In a study conducted by the [Women's Philanthropy Institute at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy](#), it was found that:

"Women use ... [charitable] tech platforms more than men and give more than men. Women also tend to give more than money, using their time, expertise, advocacy, and networks, to apply all of their resources to work for good. Emphasizing an expansive definition of philanthropy resonates with women donors. Women tend to give a greater number of small gifts, and sometimes give strategically." [Women Give 2020 Executive Summary](#)

Expanding the meaning of philanthropy

The impact of women's philanthropy extends far beyond monetary donations. Women bring unique perspectives, experiences, and skills to the table, enriching the philanthropic landscape. Whether it's addressing issues related to education, health care, environmental sustainability, or social justice, women are at the forefront of driving meaningful change and creating lasting solutions to some of our most pressing challenges.

In southeast Michigan, the Community Foundation has been privileged to witness the incredible impact of philanthropic women as well as women-led initiatives and organizations dedicated to uplifting our communities for decades. From supporting underserved populations to promoting arts and culture, women-led philanthropic efforts have been instrumental in fostering resilience, equity and joy across our region.

- [Women like Birth co-founder Leseliey Welch and her team](#), who are addressing maternal health disparities.
- [Nonprofits such as the Macomb County Rotating Emergency Shelter Team](#) that helps women and children experiencing homelessness achieve independence.
- [Endowments like the Women's City Club of Detroit Fund](#) which support a range of causes including professional development for immigrant women, treatment services for female survivors of human trafficking and vocational and literacy programs for economically disadvantaged women.
- [Philanthropists like Elizabeth Wight](#) who gave the first bequest to the Community Foundation upon her passing in 1986 that continues to support the hearing and visually impaired of southeast Michigan to this day.

Honoring the women of the past, supporting the women of today and tomorrow

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let's honor the trailblazing women who have paved the way for progress but also amplify the voices and contributions of women in nonprofit organizations and philanthropy today. Together, we can continue to work toward a future where every individual, regardless of gender, has the opportunity to thrive and make a difference in their communities.

At the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, we remain committed to supporting and being guided by women in philanthropy, and we invite you to join us in this journey of impact and transformation. For stories of women-led change and opportunities to support the endowed grantmaking fund for women-focused organizations and programming, visit cfsem.org/support-women.