Program Selection Team aims to excite and inspire members

Twice a year, a dozen or so erstwhile volunteers roll up their sleeves and dig into the process of selecting the grantee programs we will support for the next six months. Geographic diversity, program diversity, sustainability are all part of the mix - along with inspiration and experience. Instinct and “gut feelings” have a place but checks and balances prevent us from succumbing to “bright, shiny object” syndrome. With the help of Dr. Maggie Aziz, DFW program director, I’ve opened the curtain to give our members and donors a look at the hard work that uncovers the inspiration. Read the blog post.

Dr. Maggie Aziz role has "dream job" and DFW

Dr. Maggie Aziz is leaving her current position as program director with Dining For Women to accept a tenure-track position as an assistant professor of sociology at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Aziz plans to remain with DFW in a consulting capacity and will help complete the current grant cycle, to assist with the hiring of a new program director and to be a part of the transition. The Board of Directors and Dr. Aziz are also developing an ongoing role that can be mutually beneficial.

"If there had been any way for me to do both things I would," said Dr. Aziz. "I love the organization, I love my work and I love my team, but the position offered me an opportunity I just could not pass up." She added: "I am very glad that we are going to come up with a way where I can continue to be involved and participate in Dining for Women."

Since Dr. Aziz joined DFW last September, she has made significant changes in the grant process, elevating it to align with professional grant-making standards, increasing its visibility to qualifying organizations and streamlining the process.

"We are both excited for Maggie to have this career-affirming opportunity, but saddened to not have her in our orbit every day," said Board of Directors Chair Barb Collins. "Keeping her involved in some capacity and bringing her expertise to our continuous improvement plans will be a great benefit to the organization."

Featured Program

RAIN for the Sahel and Sahara
RAIN introduces Dining for Women to an overlooked nomadic people desperately trying to eke out a living in a changing environment with a fickle climate in a harsh, remote part of the world where most NGOs don’t go. It also features a small NGO with a determined founder who - on a visit - saw the plight and pluck of the nomadic people and, when she learned there was no government or NGO to help them educate their children, founded RAIN.

Over the next 13 years, Bess Palmisciano and her small team have managed to help this population find clean water, create gardens, grow crops, raise herds and improve their schools. Through a mentoring program that helps the women, school girls, and schools, RAIN brings added hope for the future of their people.

Dining for Women will help expand RAIN’s Learning and Earning Programs (LEGS) which empowers nomadic women to improve their own economic status and create educational opportunities for the girls in their community. RAIN offers education, income generating activities, mentoring, and economic development training to support a vulnerable nomadic community in this poor and remote rural area of Niger.

Milestones

Rockland, MD
Merle Steiner and Peggy Bare, Rockville, MD, chapter co-chairs presented the grant check to meeting in June. Lee Crane Wood, Center Board of Directors, and Anne Secretary, accepted the grant check DC, offices.

Haddonfield, NJ
10 new members got together in lat meeting of the Haddonfield - Giving chapter. Led by Chapter Leader Beth learned a great deal about fistula an Foundation. Members were engaged bring a friend next time. Way to go,

Quincy, IL
Happy one year anniversary to the Quincy, IL, chapter led by Carolyn Stevenson and Mary members attended the meeting and dinner. They were joined by their mentor, Anne Capestrain.

DONATE
Learn more about RAIN and how DFW's grant will be used
Download the Chapter Leader Talking Points
Look ahead: Download the second six months of 2014 program flyer
Climate change, money endanger nomadic life

The nomadic lifestyle presents many challenges. RAIN addresses the issues of empowering women and educating girls in these environments. But the nomadic tribes of Africa are also possibly the first real victims of climate change.

Droughts, corporate land grabs and more are also dramatically impacting the life and livelihoods of these pastoralist people.

Read more

Founder’s interest grew from 2000 tour of Niger

Founder Bess Palmisciano met and talked with desert nomadic parents while touring northern Niger with friends in 2000. She saw the poverty, the lack of resources, the shortages of food and necessities. On returning home, she searched to see if there were organizations that were working to help these people.

Coming up empty, she decided to do it herself and founded RAIN in December 2001.

Read more

An oral tradition of a nomadic people

Recipes are hard to find for Niger because most are passed down from mother to daughter and are never written down.

What is apparent is that Niger’s desert and frequent droughts make it hard to find fresh produce. Much of the country’s dishes are made from millet - a drought resistant and versatile grain.

Tea is the most common drink, served in an elaborate and touching tea ceremony.

Read more

Dining for Women is going to Burma (Myanmar)!

Join us on a magical adventure to a country that has just recently opened its doors to tourism. We’ll meet the inspiring young women of Girl Determined, and see how this program addresses the differing needs of the girls in Mandalay, Yangon, and two smaller villages. We’ll also explore the highlights of the country, including the mesmerizing temples of Bagan and enchanting Inle Lake with its floating gardens and multiple ethnic tribes.

**Trip dates:** Jan. 19-Feb. 2

**Estimated cost:** $3650-$4100 plus $300 donation to DFW, not including international airfare

**Deadline to apply:** July 15

Learn more about the trip and apply!

Follow the blogs

Most of us won’t get a chance to go on one of these exciting adventures, but that doesn’t mean...
Most of us won't get a chance to go on one of these exciting adventures, but that doesn't mean we can't enjoy them vicariously. Each trip has bloggers and photographers who bring the experiences home to you. In her blog post this month, Travel Program Director Patricia Andersson, explains how to the blogs are tagged and searchable on our website.

**New volunteer needs for leadership**

Our needs for new volunteers and leaders are always evolving and there are a couple of exciting new opportunities.

The Mid-Atlantic region is looking for assistance in public relations and communications. This position would also support fundraising efforts for the 13th Month campaign and other opportunities in the region.

**Apply**

The Central Region leadership is planning for its successors and hoping to train new leadership over the next few months. This is a great opportunity to learn from the current team and manage through events including a regional conference. Desired qualities include flexibility, energy, creativity, organizational skills, and team leadership.

If you live in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio or Tennessee, and feel that you’re ready to step up, contact Mary Liz Jones.

**Apply**