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Women for Women giving circle awards \$15,000 grant

Springfield, IL – The *Women for Women* initiative at the Sangamon County Community Foundation has announced the recipient of its second annual grant award. Sangamon County nonprofit organizations were invited to submit grant proposals in June of this year for the competitive grant to support programs for women and girls.

The 2009 grant award for \$15,000 was presented to **Sojourn Shelter and Services, Inc.** to support the shelter's economic empowerment program: **Realizing Your Economic Action Plan (REAP)**.

The REAP program is a comprehensive financial education program for women ages 15-35 with a special emphasis on battered women. These weekly groups will provide the education, skills and hands-on experience many women need to achieve financial self-sufficiency.

Sojourn will use trained facilitators to implement the REAP program, which focuses on specific skill achievement such as creating household budgets, balancing checkbooks, understanding credit reports and working with financial institutions.

"The Community Foundation is pleased to see the growth and impact of the *Women for Women* initiative in just two years", said John Stremsterfer, executive director of the Sangamon County Community Foundation. "The members have already granted \$25,000 to support programs for women and children in Sangamon County through their personal contributions and endowment fund."

In addition to the grant announcement, *Women for Women* also presented two awards to local women who go above and beyond to foster positive change in the lives of others through their involvement, action and dedication. The 2009 "Women Helping Women" award recipients are: Vicki Potter, Asbury's Children's Supper Hour and Faith Sanderson, Sangamon County Regional Office of Education.

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Potter is the director at Asbury's Children's Supper Hour, which supports single working moms with its free program of meals and child care to bridge the after school gap. This is the 26th year Asbury Methodist Church has been providing this ministry to their east side Springfield neighborhood. Potter grew the program to four days a week, reaching over 270 of Springfield's most underprivileged children through a warm, healthy meal every afternoon and caring adults to look after them.

Sanderson has 20 years experience working with at-risk families and children. She has advocated for and protected the rights of homeless students in Sangamon County for the last 11 years as the homeless education liaison at the Regional Office of Education. In addition to serving on many local social-service committees and councils, Sanderson also developed and facilitates a summer reading and math program for suspended, truant and homeless children.

Women for Women is a special initiative at the Sangamon County Community Foundation which began in 2007. The members create a "giving circle" where annual contributions are pooled together to create a permanent resource for grantmaking in Sangamon County for issues effecting women and girls. The Chair of the *Women for Women* Steering Committee is Karen Hasara. Other members of the Steering Committee are: Virginia Conlee, Dr. Mary F. Loken, Dr. Anne Morgan, Judith G. Stephens, and Lisa W. Stone.

Local nonprofits can apply for the competitive grant award from *Women for Women* in the summer of each year. Charities should watch the Sangamon County Community Foundation website for the next round of applications, or sign up online to receive alerts when funding opportunities are available throughout the year. The website is **www.sccf.us**.

The Sangamon County Community Foundation is a resource for charities and donors in Sangamon County whose mission statement is "connecting people who care with causes that matter."

*The mission of Sojourn Shelter and Services, Inc. is to build a community free of violence through service, leadership and education. For more information, visit **www.sojournshelter.org**. If you are a victim of domestic violence, call Sojourn's 24-hour hotline at 217-726-5200 or 866-HELP4DV.*

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