Letter from the President:

These last two years with VGIF have been full of change for the organization, but our commitment to women and girls working to better their communities has never wavered.

To understand where VGIF’s members and supporters get their passion for grassroots development and women’s empowerment, you need look no further than these pages. This Annual Report provides so much energy and inspiration in just a few of the stories from our grantees. These women ARE changing lives. I am honored to have played a part in supporting their work and hope you too encounter that incredible spirit in your experiences with VGIF.

Transitions generally involve some introspective work - work the leadership of VGIF has not shied away from. As part of the 2016 - 2018 Strategic Plan, we took some time to look at our structure as a Board and committed to changes that will ensure our organization’s bright future. We will continue to examine central governance components such as our size, our financial structure, and our governing documents so that we can develop resources and establish stability as a grant-making organization for years to come.

As we approach our 50th anniversary in 2019, we are not only looking eagerly toward our future but appreciatively at our past. VGIF is committed to honoring the dedicated women who worked hard to make the organization what it is today. We are excited to commemorate their legacies through celebrations and naming opportunities, like with our Erna Hamberger Society of donors.

Since this is my final year as president, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many people involved with VGIF - Board members, committee members, donors, staff (past and present), Carrie Callagher and Emily Forhman - for working so diligently for VGIF and for providing me with friendship and support throughout my tenure. It has been an amazing experience for me. With your continued interest in and support of VGIF, I know we will continue to help others make a better world.

Sincerely,

Vision

VGIF envisions a world where gender equality prevails & where women and girls can access or create opportunities for themselves.
Letter from the Executive Director:

If there was still a doubt in anyone’s mind, 2016 and 2017 made it undeniably clear that the future is female. With more women being elected, educated and heard than ever before, we saw the incredible power that comes from speaking up and declaring that it is time for real change.

VGIF is no exception. When I was hired as Executive Director in November 2016, I saw an organization with an amazing vision: a world where women and girls are able to take the lead in creating the change they want to see in their own lives and within their own communities.

In the past two years, VGIF has worked to make important progress that will allow us to fund more projects and create greater impact. The VGIF Board, staff and community implemented structures allowing us to increase productivity and shorten our grants process timeline. We welcomed a new team of staff members, installed a new grants management software, and readied the organization to begin a new strategic planning process in April 2018.

All the while, I’ve been continually inspired by our grantees’ stories of achievement. In 2016 and 2017, the women we funded installed water systems in drought-ridden areas, provided vital medicine and examinations to their pregnant neighbors, encouraged girls to pursue careers in science, and taught single and unemployed moms to sew.

Though these changes are happening in communities that aren’t often on the world stage, VGIF’s supporters and the women and girls leading our projects represent a universal truth: when our rights are at risk, women help other women and deserve to be part of the solution.

As we approach a new year, VGIF will continue working to become the most effective organization we can be by asking our grantees, our Board members, and our community: How can we do more? With the organization’s nearly 50 years of expertise in the underfunded landscape of grassroots development, I feel confident in VGIF’s ability to become a leader in the field of women’s empowerment.

Sincerely,
Why Small Grants?

The benefits of grassroots funding - or the funding of people within the communities directly affected by a problem - are numerous and well documented:

1. **Better Outcomes:**
   When people designing and leading a project are intimately familiar with the social structures at work, their plan will be better tailored and more effective.

2. **Sustainability:**
   Grassroots organizers have personal and permanent connections to the communities they represent, so they are more motivated to commit to outcomes that last.

3. **Lower Costs:**
   Giving control to grassroots organizations immediately eliminates the high costs of travel, accommodations, etc. so often employed by larger NGOs.

4. **Self-Sufficient Communities:**
   With grassroots grants, community members benefit from the process as well as the outcomes. Project leaders learn new skills, identify larger problems at work in their neighborhoods, and create change that they choose and they believe in.

A 2012 study looking at 70 countries over 4 decades, found that the mobilization of independent women’s groups had a more direct connection to positive change in communities than almost any other factor, including wealth and political movements.
With small grants, the women VGIF supports create significant impact in their communities. In just one year, some of our most recent grantees were able to:

- **Give 175 solar cookers** to women at risk of rape when collecting firewood in Somalia.
- **Screen 210 pregnant women for fistulas**, uterine problems, STI’s and pelvic infection in India.
- **Provide 20 pigs and 2,000 chickens** to 40 women in Uganda - along with training on how to farm and raise livestock to best generate income.
- **Train 98 single mothers in dressmaking**, empowering them to leave jobs as sex workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- **Help 15 women earn elected positions in their community** - tripling the number of women in leadership roles in Mkukula, Malawi.
- **Give 1,000 bundles of sweet potato vines and 5 irrigation pumps** to help 242 vulnerable women and girls make a living in Tanzania.
- **Administer computer and graphic design training courses to 15 women with severe spinal cord injuries** in Kenya. The women secured jobs in social media, branding and writing.
- **Provide legal aid and psychological support** to 55 Syrian refugees who were victims of rape in Turkey.
In the grant cycles ending in 2016 and 2017, VGIF invested $801,759 to directly affect the lives of more than 26,500 women and girls through 81 one-year projects and 22 multi-year projects in 30 countries.
The Rural Women’s Empowerment & Development Organization (RUWEDO) initially formed with the mission of teaching widows in rural Kakamega how to farm more sustainably.

But as project organizers spoke with participants, they learned of a more troubling threat to their community: rampant sexual violence against female students, which the under-funded schools were unable to stop.

The VGIF-funded project’s leaders sprang into action - training 30 paralegals to educate girls on their legal rights and defend survivors of gender-based violence in court.

These paralegals have since taken on many critical cases. Their legal victory representing a 15-year-old girl who had been raped and impregnated by a neighbor sent a clear signal to the community that assault would no longer be tolerated.

“These girls have no one to protect them. The work is hard, But we can’t stop.”
- RUWEDO Paralegal

30 paralegals trained to represent child survivors of violence and sexual assault.

2,000 girls educated on women’s health and how to protect themselves from gender-based violence.

60 single moms provided with materials and training to plant kitchen gardens.
Forum for Africa Women Educationalists (FAWEZI)

Zimbabwe

$22,500 grant, over three years

Only 19% of female students in Zimbabwe pursue degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

So when hundreds of girls in the Tafara district began joining VGIF-sponsored science clubs, attending a new science camp and competing in regional STEM competitions, their male peers told them “a girl will never go anywhere with these things.”

Only one year into their VGIF funding, FAWEZI participants have already proved them wrong.

Hundreds of girls have joined science clubs across the district. One of them - a bright student named Tatiana - invented a low-carbon cooking stove that won competitions at the district, local and national levels.

VGIF Project #1604

The best part is how science can make you see the world in a different way.”

- Tatiana,
A student whose participation in FAWEZI’s science club led to her representing Zimbabwe at the UN Climate Conference in Paris

300 girls attended a new science camp. It was such a success that...

4 additional schools have already signed up to attend camp next year.

6 schools developed STEM clubs and action plans to encourage girls to pursue math and science.

Working for an EDUCATION
El Pozo de Vida

Mexico

$22,500 grant, over three years

When Lorena received death threats from the notorious MS13 gang, she and her husband were forced to flee El Salvador - leaving jobs, friends and two young children behind.

When they arrived in Mexico, the couple willingly turned themselves in to immigration, where they were confronted by an inefficient processing system, vague instructions, and little insight as to how or when they would be able to reunite with their family.

The VGIF-funded “Dream” program was there to help, providing clinics, therapy and one-on-one guidance to help detained female migrants navigate the complicated and intimidating process of seeking safety in a new country. Dream volunteers explained all of Lorena’s options to her - ensuring that her children will be brought to safety sooner.

2,777 detained immigrants attended sexual violence prevention sessions, cultural adaptation workshops, and therapeutic counseling as they arrived in the detention centers or prepared for deportation.

57 victims of human trafficking identified by Dream volunteers, informed of their rights and connected to resources for seeking asylum and aid.

215 army officers trained to identify and protect victims of human trafficking.

“As immigrants, we think we don’t have any rights - that we can’t demand anything.

But VGIF gave us tools to act.”

- Lorena,
Detained Immigrant who was helped to reunite with her children.
Working for HEALTH & WELLNESS

VGIF Project #20315
Public Health Ambassadors Uganda (PHAU)

Uganda
$7,500 grant, over one year

Grace used to **miss a week of school each month because she couldn’t afford sanitary pads** and was afraid her classmates would make fun of her if she bled through her clothes.

But when VGIF sponsored PHAU’s project to provide washing facilities, pads and health classes for girls in five Ugandan schools, Grace’s attendance dramatically improved.

Grace is now the president of her school’s PHAU club. When her classmates need help, they can turn to her.

- **300 girls** received reusable pads that they otherwise couldn’t afford.
- **1,497 girls** attended health classes to learn how to best take care of their bodies.
- **10 teachers** received training to support girls and combat stigma surrounding menstruation.
- **5,000-liter water harvesting tank** installed at a school that previously had little access to water.

“I learned to respect myself, take care of my body, and support other girls younger than myself.

We shouldn’t have to miss school because of the way our bodies work.”

- Grace,
PHAU health club President
In September 2017, Program Director Jenna Wallace embarked on a site visit trip to 10 project locations across Kenya and Uganda.

Site visits enable VGIF to create stronger relationships with our grantee partners while learning about the local context where projects are taking place, gathering feedback on our grant-making, and identifying new partnerships.

“Spending time with the women who are designing and implementing these projects, it is so clear that VGIF’s commitment to empowering women leaders is well-founded.

These are dedicated and determined women who will ensure that their communities are more equal and safe for women and girls.”

- Jenna Wallace

VGIF Program Director
### Revenue and Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and Grants</td>
<td>$123,367</td>
<td>$176,661</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Events, net of expenses</td>
<td>$2,031</td>
<td>$197,752</td>
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<td>Dividends and Interest</td>
<td>$569,586</td>
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<td>Realized Gain (Loss) - sale of investments</td>
<td>$1,075,161</td>
<td>($484,680)</td>
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<td>Foreign Taxes</td>
<td>($5,129)</td>
<td>($9,597)</td>
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<td>Investment Management Fees</td>
<td>($83,498)</td>
<td>($89,721)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue &amp; Support</strong></td>
<td>$1,681,518</td>
<td>$320,358</td>
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Contributions & Grants to VGIF rose 43% from 2016 to 2017.

### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$996,439</td>
<td>$780,552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management and General</td>
<td>$238,072</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$106,169</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$1,340,680</td>
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2017 Expenses

### Change in Net Assets

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Before unrealized gain on investments</td>
<td>$340,838</td>
<td>($702,538)</td>
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<td>Unrealized gain on investments</td>
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<td>Change in Net Assets</td>
<td>$510,196</td>
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**NET ASSETS**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning of year</td>
<td>$16,777,225</td>
<td>$17,287,431</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of year</td>
<td>$17,287,421</td>
<td>$18,590,940</td>
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* The 2017 numbers are unaudited.
2016 and 2017 were years of transition for VGIF – moving staff leadership from a part-time Interim Director to a full-time Executive Director.

One of the first steps our new Executive Director undertook was a full review of VGIF’s financial situation. She proposed, and the Board agreed, that a smaller number of grants would be awarded in 2017 while financial statements and a new grant making software were updated and upgraded.

In 2018, VGIF will return its one-year grant making budget to previous levels and has budgeted to award $285,000 to grantees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Gifts of $10,000 or more in a year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth S. May Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia Cocheron Gildersleeve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erna Hamburger Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambassador Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Champion Level</td>
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<td>Virginia Cocheron</td>
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<td>Dagmar McGill</td>
<td>Virginia Maynard</td>
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<td>Mayer Brown LLP</td>
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<td>Louise McLeod</td>
<td>Shireen Lee</td>
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<td>Carolyn Donovan</td>
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<td>Barbara Carey</td>
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<td>Nancy Vang &amp; Fay Kittleston</td>
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<td>Jacqueline Shahzadi</td>
<td>Joyce Prudden</td>
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<td>Karen Cullen</td>
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<td>Jewell Hanna</td>
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<td>Helen Dunsmore</td>
<td>Lynn Hapchuk</td>
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<td>Raime Leeby Muhle</td>
<td>Maggie Ford</td>
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<td></td>
<td>James P. McLoughlin, Jr.</td>
<td>Maureen Friar</td>
<td>Margaret George</td>
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<td>Jeri Rhodes</td>
<td>Jane Schukoske</td>
<td>Marie W. Powers</td>
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<td>Camille Macdonald-Polski</td>
<td>Myrna Brown</td>
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<td>Carolyn Cowgill</td>
<td>Sema Faigen</td>
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<td>Edith Allison</td>
<td>Edward P. O'Keefe</td>
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<td>Nancy Scheer</td>
<td>Valerie Dell</td>
<td>Dr. Fay C. Weber</td>
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<td>John McInerney</td>
<td>Kelli Monahan</td>
<td>Ella &amp; Howard Iams</td>
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<td>Michaela Walsh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shruti Kashikar</td>
<td>Dorothy Krug</td>
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Thank You to Our Supporters! 2017
### Virginia Cocheron Gildersleeve Society

Gifts of $5,000 or more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary McGovern</td>
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<td>Florine Swanson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eileen Menton</td>
<td>Donna Connor</td>
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### Erna Hamburger Society

Gifts of $2,500 or more

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diane Trombetta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margery Sullivan</td>
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</table>

### Ambassador Level

Gifts of $1,000 or more

<table>
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<td>Christine Schmitz</td>
<td>Gerlinde Sarkar</td>
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<td>Claire Stein</td>
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<td>Alice Bartelt</td>
<td>Helen Dunsmore</td>
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<td>Maggie Ford</td>
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<td>Marcia Goffin</td>
<td>Bonnie Lincoln</td>
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<td>Camille Macdonald-Polski</td>
<td>Schneider Electric</td>
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<td>Louise McLeod</td>
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### Champion Level

Gifts of $500 or more

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<td>Dana Wright</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Eleanor Wall</td>
<td>Ella &amp; Howard Iams</td>
<td>Yvonne Condell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2016 & 2017 Donors
Gifts of $500 and below*

A Joyful Bird
AAUW Baltimore, The College Club
AAUW San Jose
AAUW Birmingham (MI)
AAUW Casas Adobes Tucson*
AAUW Citrus Heights, American River*
AAUW Fort Myers / Lee County*
AAUW Kalispell
AAUW La Palma-Cerritos*
AAUW Louisiana
AAUW San Ramon
AAUW Tehachapi Mountain
AAUW Toledo
AAUW Virginia
Sachiko Abe
Jennifer Adkins
Regenboog Advies*
Amanda Aikman
Catherine Aks*
Lina Allen
Nora Anderson
William & Jane Antheil
Aoki Reiko
Evelyn Aremu*
Mildred Asmah
Alyce Athanasion
Ann Austin
Honor Baird
Heather Baker
Joyce Baker*
Tobi Balma
Norioko Ban
Ranjana Banerjee
Susan B. Barley
Diana Barlow
Fiona Barron*
Matthew Bartlett
Elizabeth Bashore*
Liz Bathgate
A. Lee Battershell*
Florence Baturin
Marcia Baugh
June Beamer
Judith Beck*
Patricia Behenna
Dian Belanger
Phyllis Belcher
Dr. Ans van Berkel*
Babette Bierman
Sharon Bigot*
Gloria Blackwell*
Dianne Blais*
Jeanine Blake
Esther Blaskovich
Catelin Blowers
Josephita N. Boddie
Pamela Bone
Barbara Bonsignore*
Joan Borders
Dawn Boulanger*
Simone Bouterse
Leslianne Braunstein
Jan Bray
Ryan Brett
Betsy Brown*
Walter Burgess*
Stephanie Busby
Tracey Calvanico
Erica Campisi
Frank T. Caprino, Sr.
Catherine Catano
CFUW Montreal Lakeshore*
CFUW Portage La Prairie
Sally Chamberlain*
Meg Chappell
Miriam Chatinover
Sung Ho Choi
Mary Lou Christensen*
Janice Chung*
Frances Clarke
Jeanne Clarke*
Hannah Cline
Michele Cohen
Sondra Cohen
Yvonne Condell
Cheryl Corwin
Jane Costanzi*
Heather Cousins
Janet Crampton*
Patricia Crane
Frances Cressman
Anne Creveling
Lori Cross*
Karen Cullen
Evelyn Cumming*
Pamela Daves*
Robert L. Davis
Karen De Vore*
Denise Decker*
Shirley DeFries
Eileen DeHaro
Valerie Dell
Geeta Desai
Chrystal Desmond
Lynda Dexheimer
Swaran Dhawan
Shubanjali Dhawan-Gray
Martha DiCicco*
K. Dorio
Annette Doskey*
Francoi Doss
Jane Doughty
Lois Margaret Drake*
Phyllis Driver
Marjorie Dunaway*
Mary Duval*
Jeanne and Breck Eagle
Jaya Earnest
Katherine Eaton*
Kimberly Edgar*
Diane Edwards
Patricia Ehret*
Bonnie Eisenberg*
Elisabet Eklind
Maria Ellis*
Margaret Ellis
Linda Engberg*
Liana Engie*
Jason Ewart
Jacqueline Evangelista
Rebecca Fairchild*
Carole Farina*
Joyce C. Farruggia*
Sandra Featherman*
Mariana Fernandez
Lee Winocur Field*
Karen Fischer*
Lisa Fleming
Virginia Fleming*
Delores A. Flynn
Katherine Forer
Betty Forhman
Marilyn Forsstrom*
Rae Frampton
Sandra Gail Frayna
Debbie Fremer
Jane Frymire*
Pauline Fuus*
Ella & Howard Iams
Chikeko Ichikawa
Manuel Infantes
Arlene Inglis
Mario Ippolito
Lorraine Isaacs
Marion Isidoro
Dorothy Jacobs
Judith Jaggard
Patty Jantho
Sharada Jayagopal
Beverly Johnson
Carol Johnson
Rochelle Johnson
Dorothy Joslin
Judith Kaho
Katie Kaku
Shruti Kashikar
Maneesha S. Kelkar
Patricia Kennedy
Ingrid Ketcham
Patricia Khan
Mayako Kikuchi
Marion Kilson
Margaret King
Karen Kirkwood
Fay Kittelson
Nancy Knaus
Gabrielle Knight
Michiko Kondo
Amanda Krantz
Sarada Krishnan
Dorothy Krug
Noriko Kubota
Audrey Kuehler-Oostra
Katharine Landon
Kathleen Laurila
Raime Leeby
Alice W. Leeds
Audrey Leef
Carol Leimas
Jerry Li
Mr. & Mrs. William Lieser
Alyssa Lindsay
Barbara Link
Hank Aldort & Wendy Lipshutz
Sally Little
Shelley and Mark Livingston
Louise Lockhart
Ingeborg Löetterle
Joyce Ann Luckfield
Virginia Lyttle
Janet MacDonald
Carolyn Macrae
Evelyn Mafeni
Yumiko Makishima
Shila Marek
Jessica Martin
Mary Mathews
Eiko Matsuda
Kazuko Matsumura
Janet Matwiyo
Elizabeth May Trust
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