FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I reflect back since our last newsletter, I am amazed by how much we have accomplished. Yet, beyond the daily tasks (and many Zoom meetings), we have been able to reflect as a team on how far our grantee partnerships have evolved. And, more importantly, how far they will take us into the future. When I talk to the women leaders in our programs, I am filled with hope. They are diverse, brilliant, kind, and brave. They have the skills to create solutions that will change their communities and an organization (Women First) to support them as they do so.

Women First’s transformation in recent years has been fundamental to the mission of the organization. As I reflect on the last year and look to the next, I am reminded that the need for supporting effective funding models working on gender equality is more critical than ever. Advancing gender equity requires a determined effort across fields and organizations, from nonprofits to funders, government agencies, companies, and financial institutions. We look forward to continuing to advocate for, with, and alongside all girls and women everywhere as we work to create a more gender-equal future.

None of this would be possible without the support of our loyal donors, so thank you for being part of the Women First Family. We appreciate your sacrifice to help impact our global community and wish you and your loved ones all the best during the holiday season and coming New Year!
RECENT HAPPENINGS

Women First is proud to announce our new Director of Programs - Consultant, Madonna Kendona. Based in Accra, Ghana, Madonna is an international development expert with a background in economics, women’s rights, philanthropy, ethical fashion and social entrepreneurship. We invite you to read her impressive bio available on our website.

“I’m really excited to join Women First because I get to be a part of implementing our unique approach to funding women’s economic empowerment where it is most needed: at the grassroots level.” Welcome, Madonna!

A special shout out to Board Member Noelle Silberbauer who hosted the “Fashion, Food, & Fundraising” event on September 17 in Paramus, NJ. The afternoon was a great success bringing in a crowd of over 90 women for a fall fashion show and delicious lunch at the Capital Grille. The proceeds will benefit Women First’s grantees as they journey into our 2nd stage of support, creating strategic business plans that will impact their programs and communities.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: JULIE HOBBS

Julie Hobbs joined the Women First board in 2020 and serves as the Chair of the Audit Committee. Julie brings over 20 years of financial and legal expertise to Women First and is currently a Managing Director at Morgan Stanley in the Legal and Compliance Division. She lives in Connecticut with her husband of 26 years, has a daughter in college, and enjoys spending time with her three dogs. A lawyer by trade, Julie’s outstanding compliance experience is a guiding force for Women First.

Julie’s incredible personal journey as an ovarian cancer survivor ignited her passion for philanthropy. Julie knew how lucky she was to be afforded top medical care during her cancer battle and understood the stark contrast between the care available to her and what might be available to other women living in the global south. She is drawn to Women First because she understands that creating financial independence for a woman is life-changing. If a woman is struggling financially, she is far less likely to be proactive about her health. Being financially empowered gives women the confidence needed to change their situations - they become problem-solvers and are proactive about taking care of themselves, their communities, and their children.

“Economic Empowerment is the key,” said Julie, “it allows women to support and advocate for themselves.”

Women First grantee partners live and work in some of the most difficult environments on earth — communities where COVID-19 is only one of many life-threatening issues. And yet, less than 2% of donor funding reaches the grassroots groups we partner with, despite evidence showing that the mobilization of these groups has a more direct influence on positive change to society than almost any other factor. Learn more about how you can help Women First continue to support our grantee partners and the women, girls, and trans people they serve.

www.womenfirstfund.org/donate

All donations are fully tax-deductible by United States Federal Law. EIN: 23-7068080.

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