The structure and functioning of the grant allocations process are crucial. They must and do reflect the core values of the Fund.

Since its founding in 1984, the Boston Women’s Fund has made grants to hundreds of organizations in the Boston area, based on a set of principles that distinguishes us from many other funding agencies.

BWF’s priority is to support community-based groups run by and for women and girls, organizing on their own behalf to create a society based on racial, social and economic justice. Major constituencies are women and girls with the least access to societal resources, especially low-income women, women of color, lesbians, transgendered women, women with disabilities, older women and girls.

In 1998, 14 years into the founding of the Fund, BWF expanded and clarified its grantmaking criteria, to include the principles of building community, developing grassroots leadership, and educating for social justice.

The structure and functioning of the grant allocations process are crucial. They must and do reflect the core values of the Fund. Allocations Committee decisions and the decision-making process must address power imbalances of the larger society by including grantees and their constituents in decision-making. In addition, successful grant applications are required to meet a series of relevant standards. Allocations Committee members are carefully trained to evaluate each application in four major areas:

1. **Focus on gender-specific social change.**
   - Is the organization directed or run by women and girls and is it made up of people who are identifying their own issues?
   - Is the focus on women or girls who have the least access to resources?
   - Is there strong focus on addressing the root causes of issues?
   - Is there a clear vision of how the organization/project can affect long-term change?

(continued on page 6)
Message from the Board of Directors

Dear Boston Women's Fund friends and supporters,

Along with the majority of election polls, political pundits and mainstream news outlets, we had anticipated commemorating the shattering of the highest glass ceiling in the United States with this edition of our newsletter. Instead, November 9th greeted us with unexpected election results which caused uncertainty and dismay among our constituent groups.

Many progressive organizations quickly turned their post-election attention to state and local affairs. At BWF, we simply got back to work with an increased sense of urgency. Thirty three years of experience has taught us that durable change will come when there is a groundswell of grassroots support spearheaded by communities most impacted by issues of racial, economic, political and social injustices.

Many are also curing the “election blues” by donating time and money to address issues important to them. We ask you to consider BWF when making your philanthropic decisions. We are resolute in our determination to continue our support of women- and girl-led organizations and ask you to generously donate to supporting the leadership development of women and girls. This month we are excited to announce that we have awarded $40,000 to 6 grantee organizations (see page 4-5).

Next year, we intend to double the total amount we award in grants and we need your help to accomplish this goal. This season we are posing a unique challenge to our community. We are launching a "4 weeks to $200K" a crowdfunding campaign with the goal to fundraise $200K by the end of the year.

We are planning several public events in early 2017. BWF will engage in critical conversations about feminism and social change movements post election including a discussion about the National Women’s March taking place in Washington DC on January 21st, 2017 and a similar action taking place at the Boston Common. We are also hosting the pilot year of the Boston Girls Empowerment Network (BGEN), helping to build the network of women and girl-serving organizations. Through our Organizing Institute, we will work to support our grantees and their communities who might feel under threat due to immigration status, ethnicity, religion and identity. Community is how we, as women and girls, have always gathered our strength and that is something that is woven into the fabric of BWF.

We are equally energized about the future of BWF and the work ahead. We are confident in our ability to adapt to today’s challenges to ensure another 33 years of success in supporting women and girls. We ask you to join us on this journey. Together with you, we look forward to continuing to build on the rich legacy of the Boston Women’s Fund in 2017.

Thank you for all that you do and we wish you a Happy 2017!

We found heartwarming anecdotes from donors; one penned a handwritten note declaring that in lieu of buying Christmas gifts, she was donating the $75 she would have spent on gifts to BWF; another donor in 1984 (11 years old) pledged to increase her annual gift to $1. We also found detailed notes on the everyday cadence of running a nonprofit, videos of events and candid pictures of grantee partners.

We are energized by the very rich history evidenced in our archives: by our generous donors, large and small; by the accomplishments of our grantee leaders and by Board members, volunteers and staff who have performed the hard work of setting policies, making grantee decisions and getting the work of BWF done.

We are equally energized about the future of BWF and the work ahead. We are confident in our ability to adapt to today’s challenges to ensure another 33 years of success in supporting women and girls. We ask you to join us on this journey. Together with you, we look forward to continuing to build on the rich legacy of the Boston Women’s Fund in 2017.

Thank you for all that you do and we wish you a Happy 2017!
Starting in September 2016, I have had the honor of inventorying and organizing the records of the Boston Women’s Fund for donation to the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

The Schlesinger Library collects and makes accessible documents regarding the lives of activist women and women-centered civic institutions from all geographic locations and time periods. One person whose collection is also housed at the Schlesinger Library is Kip Tiernan, the late social activist, who in addition to being a founder of BWF, also left behind a legacy of multiple social change organizations in greater Boston. The Fund’s collection are not only an important contribution to the legacy of one of our founders, but are a great expansion of the founders library’s holdings. BWF was the first grant giving organization in Massachusetts that focused on women and girls, making it a unique and historic institution.

Organizing the records was not an easy task; there were 25 boxes and a few file cabinets of business records. Some of the boxes had already been sifted through once by the generous volunteer efforts of Gay Harter, a long-time supporter of BWF, who earlier in the year spent one-day-a-week coming into the office and reviewing the documents. Still more work had to be done in order to fit the guidelines for submission established by Schlesinger.

The Schlesinger Library specified that they wanted to receive administration records (board meeting notes and minutes, allocations committee papers, and fundraising information), grant applications, and public relation materials. This final category includes pamphlets, posters, newsletters, videocassettes, and annual reports, all of which contributed to the public face of the Fund. With regards to the videos, we are currently looking into ways to digitize these files for posterity.

I learned a great deal about the power of the women and social justice movements in Boston throughout the process of organizing the materials. As I organized the Board and other meeting minutes up until 2009, I saw how the organization grew and expanded over time. We also found detailed notes on the everyday cadence of running a nonprofit with a passion for fulfilling our mission, videos of events honoring leaders in our community, and candid pictures of our grantees in action. I enjoyed reading the first board meeting minutes and seeing how forward thinking and influential the founders were. The first grant donations seem miniscule compared to what the Fund awarded in subsequent years.

Some of my favorite records documented the Take a Stand events, which brought prominent feminists to speak at the Fund. We found an autographed picture of three Take a Stand awardees: Gloria Steinem, Angela Davis, and Wilma Mankiller. The Women of Color Fundraising Institute (WoCFI), a program from 1997 to 2004, were a reminder of what could be accomplished when a strong group of women come together. It educated women of color working at the grassroots about fundraising and business strategies. These records were a challenge to organize, as I had no prior knowledge of the Institute. However, in the future researchers will be able to learn about how the Institute, a gem of program, empowered women of color in Boston through its curriculum and programming.

Throughout the process of organizing the materials, I learned a great deal about the power of women. I have always considered myself a feminist and have been involved in feminist causes. However, handling these materials only inspired me to do more. As I read about the different organizations that benefit from the Fund, I am in complete awe of their power and resilience through tough economic, political, and social times. By donating the Fund’s records to the Schlesinger Library, the story of these powerful and courageous women will be preserved over time. The lives and struggles of women and girls, who are so often left out of the historical record, will become a part of our collective memory.
The Boston Women’s Fund (BWF) awarded $40,000 in grants to six grassroots organizations this year. All six are past grantees to the Fund, with a common focus on leadership development in their communities. BWF believes that women and girls must be leaders within all movements if progressive change is to occur.

**Association of Haitian Women In Boston**
Dorchester, MA $5,750
AFAB supports Haitian immigrant women as they adjust to life in the United States. AFAB hosts conferences, forums and workshops that engage and educate the Haitian community for the purpose of organizing for empowerment.

**AFAB**
AFAB will use its grant award to establish a leadership and capacity building program in 2017. The program will bring together younger women from the Haitian community and will work to develop the skills necessary for them to become formal and informal leaders in their community.

**Beantown Society**
Jamaica Plain, MA $7,500
Beantown Society works to end youth violence in Jamaica Plain by transforming youth people’s oppression, rejection, neglect, and depression into youth power, and thereby bring about transformation at the individual, community, and societal levels.

Beantown Society will use its grant to support She Rise Up, a leadership development project focused on poor and working-class young women of color who are most affected by multiple systems of oppression. She Rise Up centers women’s justice and power in its programming and workshop.

**Boston Tenant Coalition**
Boston, MA $5,000
The Boston Tenant Coalition works with local grassroots partners and public housing tenant advocacy groups to promote affordable housing in Boston and trains Latina leaders who may run for and serve on resident or tenant task forces.

The Boston Tenant Coalition will use its grant to support its Boston Housing Authority Tenant Leadership Initiative. The initiative will organize, build policy advocacy programs and trainings for low income and public housing communities.

**Brazilian Women’s Group**
Allston, MA $5,750
The Brazilian Women’s Group promotes the empowerment of Brazilian women and the Brazilian community in the Boston area.

BWG works to encourage members in their community, particularly women, to better serve their communities and to protect their rights in the United States.

The BWG will use its funding to support its general operations.
The City School, Inc
Dorchester, MA $8,000
The City School develops and nurtures the power of youth to work toward building a just society by providing creative education, critical thinking, leadership development, action and service, and promoting understanding and relationships across different groups of students.

The City School is using its grant to support the eight to ten young women in Pathways to Change, a leadership development and violence prevention after school program.

Women Encouraging Empowerment, Inc.
Revere, MA $8,000
Women Encouraging Empowerment Inc. (WEE) works to educate, advocate, protect and advance the rights of immigrants, refugees, and low-income women and their families through organizing, leadership development, and service delivery.

Women Encouraging Empowerment will use its funding to hire a part-time Arabic speaking woman community organizer for its Immigrant Women Support Initiative, thereby doubling the organization’s capacity and ability to serve an additional two-hundred women and families and to facilitate their integration into their communities.

“The Boston Women’s Fund (BWF) awarded $40,000 in grants to six grassroots organizations this year. All six are past grantees to the Fund, with a common focus on leadership development in their communities.”
2. Impact.
Will participants be imparted with increased skills, increased civic involvement or increased access to the political process? Does the project provide leadership opportunities for the target population? Is there a clear plan for measuring the impact or effectiveness of the program?

3. Organizational capacity and sustainability.
Are the board and staff diverse? Do board and staff reflect the targeted constituency? Does the organization or project have a strong base in the communities in which the work is being done? Is there evidence of collaboration-building with other programs and agencies? Is there a clear record of meaningful impact? Is there a clear plan for leadership training and development of participants and members?

4. Budgetary and fiscal sustainability.
Does the organization have a plan to diversify funding sources? Does the budget clearly reflect and make possible the project as described? Does the budget take into account the unique needs of working women and girls such as provision for childcare, food, transportation, stipends?

Allocations Committee members are required to read grant applications carefully and to evaluate specifically in these four areas. The initial Allocations Committee meeting consists of committee member presentations on each application, followed by a discussion that includes identifying additional information desired. Next, each applicant organization is visited by two Allocations Committee members who pose the questions raised by the Committee and observe the organization on its own turf. Finally, the Allocations Committee reconvenes to hear the reports and recommendations of members who made the visits. After thorough discussion, the Committee votes applications up or down and determines the grant amount. Occasionally, decisions are made to support organizations in the early stage of their development. In the past, maximum grants have been $15,000.

It should be noted that the tone of discussions is always positive and supportive of the work being done in the community; committee members are eager to support as many promising groups as possible.

Some examples of funding, that illustrate these principles include:

- **The Boston Tenant Coalition**, which works with local grassroots partners and tenant advisory groups to promote affordable housing in Boston.
- **The Brazilian Workers Center**, formerly known as the Brazilian Immigrant Center, a grassroots organization whose mission focuses on the training, advocacy and organizing of immigrant workers.
- **The City School and its Rose from Concrete Program**, a leadership development program working with young women around social issues that directly affect them.

Over the years, BWF has also initiated programs to expand the base of communities we work with. In 1997, the fund initiated a girls’ empowerment program, called the Young Sisters for Justice, which was intended to bring girls from low-income communities of color, one of the fund’s main constituencies, into the grantmaking process. One major aim was to create a local base of skilled organizers within this age group who might later apply for grants.

Also in 1997, BWF began the first of a series of organizing institutes, where grantee groups would come together to share their own knowledge about social justice organizing practices. One goal of the institutes has also been to provide technical assistance to projects seeking grants.

As BWF moves forward, we are committed to reaching new constituencies for our grantmaking efforts, as well as maintaining our relationships with many of our past grantees."

“*As BWF moves forward, we are committed to reaching new constituencies for our grantmaking efforts, as well as maintaining our relationships with many of our past grantees.*"
The Boston Women's Fund is supporting both the national and the local marches. We are ensuring that the women working at the grassroots are front at center, especially at the Boston march.

The National Women’s March for America will take place on Saturday, January 21st, the day following the Presidential Inauguration of Donald Trump in Washington DC. On that day, women in different cities across the U.S. will be standing together in a show of solidarity against the sexism, racism, Islamophobia and Xenophobia, that has been on display by the incoming Presidential administration. On the same day, Boston will be hosting a sister march on the Boston Commons.

The national march got off to a rocky start, reflecting the organizers’ inexperience in putting together such a large event. Concerns were centered around the march being centered on middle-class white women to the exclusion of women of color. Since these hiccups, the national committee brought on three new co-chairs Carmen Pérez, Linda Sarsour and Tamika Mallory, who are working to organize it.

Our futures as women are more connected than we think. Women will not break glass ceilings without a swell of support from the grassroots. With this in mind, we ask that you please be on the lookout for additional information on events taking place in Boston leading up to the march and events following the march. When you support the Boston Women’s Fund you join a collective group of women, donors and community organizations working to create a better Boston for all.

* * * A N N O U N C E M E N T * * *

BWF is considering making bus arrangements for individuals in the Boston area interested in heading down to DC for January 21st. If you are interested in attending the National Women’s March for America, please email us at info@bostonwomensfund.org

“The Boston Women’s Fund is supporting both the national and the local marches. We are ensuring that the women working at the grassroots are front at center, especially at the Boston march.”
Welcome to our new Board members!

We have recently expanded our Board and are pleased to announce the addition of four Board members to assist us in our mission.

Chi Bahk is a public health professional with expertise in utilizing technology and big data for health intelligence. She worked in student advocacy and social programming during her student life. She is a graduate of the Harvard School of Public Health and is currently employed by Booz Allen Hamilton.

Hajar Logan has more than 14 years consulting experience advising small businesses in disadvantaged communities in business planning, marketing and organizational development.

Nicole Peterkin is a Financial Advisor, author and speaker. She founded Peterkin LLC, a financial planning firm that provides financial planning services to a wide range of customers. Nicole has a strong commitment to community, service and philanthropy and is a frequent speaker at industry and community events.

Antonia Roberts is passionate about the empowerment of women from marginalized communities. She has been a member of several non-profits and volunteer organizations. While living in Washington DC, Antonia worked at the College Board where she focused on training educators and counselors to bridge the college education gap.