

May 2011

Time to Vote — Cast Your Ballot by May 9!

Member Voting: It's Our Gateway to Giving!

Each SOS member gives generously — from membership dues and committee service, to inviting new members and participating in educational endeavors. This open-hearted giving allows SOS to thoughtfully and diligently grant funds annually to agencies serving the St. Louis community. **In the same way, member participation in voting is a continuation of our giving to agencies in need.**

SOS has a compelling 2011-12 ballot of 19 deserving agencies. The Letters of Inquiry and Site Visit teams conscientiously developed the ballot, entrusted as stewards of member contributions.

A grantee once described how receiving an SOS grant opens doors for future funding because SOS has developed a first-class reputation in the St. Louis philanthropic community for our rigorous vetting of grant candidates. SOS also takes pride in its transparent, democratic process: *one member, one vote*. This is your time to VOTE and be heard.

Vote from home — electronically or by paper ballot. Ballots, agency summary

Please vote by mail or online by May 9, 2011.

reports, website logins and voting instructions will be sent by email and postal mail no later than April 29. Please look for your ballot, and be sure to check your firewall. (Instruct your computer to welcome messages from SOS.) **The voting period ends on May 9.**

Please vote only once. Choose either electronic or paper ballot. Paper ballots must be postmarked no later than May 9. For technical assistance, contact: **Elaine Queathem** at 314-283-0006 or equethem@yahoo.com, or **Parker McMillan** at pbmcmillan@gmail.com or 314-780-6929. For general voting questions, contact: **Felice Joyce** at 314-991-9060 or felice.joyce@gmail.com, **Laura Friedman** at lfriedman.stl@gmail.com or 314-725-7172, or **Linda Grayson** at graysonlc@aol.com or 314-367-9989.

www.soswomensfund.org

SOS Annual Meeting & Grants Award Celebration

When: Thursday, June 2, 2011
 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Where: Sheldon Concert Hall,
 Kemper Atrium
 3648 Washington Blvd.
 St. Louis, MO 63108

Speaker: Deborah Godwin, associate director of the St. Louis Community College Foundation. Representatives from each grantee organization will be on hand.

RSVP to: Gwen Wesley by May 27 at 314-971-0674 or gbcwesley@sbcglobal.net

2011-2012 Grantee Ballot

- Aim High St. Louis
- Almost Home
- The Belle Center
- Christian Activity Center
- Gateway EITC Community Coalition
- Gateway Greening
- Gateway to Hope
- HopeBUILD
- The Little Bit Foundation
- Let's Start
- Lydia's House
- Project Backpack
- South Side Day Nursery
- St. Louis ArtWorks
- St. Louis HELP
- St. Louis Internship Program
- Vincent Gray Academy
- Volunteers in Medicine
- The Walker Scottish Rite Clinic



Gateway to Hope



St. Louis Internship Program



South Side Day Nursery



Spotlight: Our Grant-Making Process

200-Plus SOS Members Collaborate for Impactful Community Giving

How do 200-plus women come together each year to grant sizable funds to area agencies? This Q&A has the answer.

What is SOS' grant-making process?

First, SOS issues a community-wide invitation for Letters of Inquiry (LOIs) from interested agencies. Our LOI volunteers review submissions and then shortlist groups to invite submission of full grant proposals. Next, SOS volunteers assess proposals and financial statements submitted by each agency. Volunteers then conduct site visits. All SOS members receive a summary of each group under consideration, and an all-member meeting is held to answer questions about the candidates. A vote is taken at that meeting to decide which agencies will appear on the final grantee ballot.

How great is our community's need?

For the current grant cycle, SOS received 124 LOIs requesting \$4,321,752. This more than triples last year's request of \$1,179,285 from 88 agencies.

How does SOS process LOIs, and in what areas does it focus?

LOIs are reviewed by volunteer teams. They use SOS granting guidelines, discussion and debate to select agencies to submit proposals. For the current grant cycle, SOS focused on agencies that support health (2), art (1), education (11), environment (1) and social service (11), totaling 26 area nonprofits.

What is the purpose of the proposal, site visits and financial review?

The proposal provides more in-depth organizational history, and the grant's intended purpose, including the specific activities the grant monies will be used

for, the population to be served, the goals and measurable objectives of the program, how the agency will measure effectiveness (long- and short-term), and a three-year financial history. Applicants also list current funding sources and board members. Volunteer teams review the proposals and visit each site.

During site visits, we ask questions raised by the proposal narrative and financial review. We meet and evaluate staff, board members and clientele, too. We look for agencies that most closely align with our mission, focus and values.

The ballot is complete. Now what?

Once approved, the ballot is sent by email and postal mail to every member, along with website login and voting instructions, and a summary of each agency. Our prized value of SOS is one person, one vote. We work hard to prepare information for each member so she can be an informed voter. Please vote one time, online or by mail, no later than May 9! Our annual grant awards celebration will be June 2, 2011.

Where does our money go?

Last year, SOS gave \$200,000 to 15 organizations. The grants ranged from \$5,000 to \$25,000. SOS grants funds to agencies whose annual budget is no more than \$1.5 million. Our funds make a significant impact. Our grantees run lean operations, and our dollars meet critical community needs.

I can't read financials. Can I still help?

Yes! SOS has a Financial Review Committee that studies all financial records and provides a summary of each agency to the teams, along with questions to

ask on the site visit. A financial review workshop in the fall also prepares members to interpret data on the financial documents.

Do I serve on all three committees?

While each subcommittee (LOI, Site Visit and Financial Review) supports one another, they work independently. Members can serve on any one, two or all three!

How do I get involved?

Contact one of the Grant Committee co-chairs: **Laura Friedman** at lfriedman.stl@gmail.com or 314-725-7172, or **Linda Grayson** at 314-367-9989 or graysonlc@aol.com.

This year, 43 members generously donated time and talent to review 124 LOIs and assess 26 proposals, visiting all 26 sites. Each person gave about 20 hours of her time, totaling 880 volunteer hours. What a tremendous effort!

Thanks to SOS Grant Committee!

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Amy Peck Abraham | Julie Moran |
| Terry Bernstein | Ilene Ordower |
| Carol Claypool | Elaine M. Queathem |
| Meg Coghlan | Marilyn Ratkin |
| Leslie Corey | Nancy Rodney |
| Lynn Dole | Nancy R. Sachs |
| Jane A. Eiseman | Shelby Schagrin |
| M. Ann Ferguson | Sandra Schlicht |
| Linda M. Finerty | Julie C. Schoettley |
| Gretta Forrester-Gaffney | Mary Schoolman |
| Laura Friedman | Victoria Sheehan |
| Nancy Gellman | Alice P. Sherwood |
| Debbie Gilula | Ann M. Sutter |
| Linda Grayson | Peggy Walter Symes |
| Judith A. Harris | Tracey Temanson |
| Laure B. Hullverson | Susan C. Thomson |
| Melissa Jones | Pamela F. Trapp |
| Felice Joyce | Gwendolyn J. Wesley |
| Janet J. Jump | Jean W. Wolff |
| Susan Lipstein | Heather Wood |
| Parker B. McMillan | Kathy Zorica |
| Mary Moog | |

President's Message

By Vicki Sheehan



Thank you SOS!

What a wonderful five years SOS has had! Yes, this year we will celebrate our fifth round of generous grants to the St. Louis community since our founding. And in 2011, we will give more in a single year than ever before. We are grateful to those women who joined Shelby Schagrin in founding SOS.

On May 9, we will honor 91 founding members with a special event. We have 26 wonderful new members to SOS this year. Further, SOS is stronger than ever, as more women than ever are actively involved in our leadership. Take a moment this month to think back on the moment that you decided SOS was such a great idea that you wanted to be a part of it, too!

For many of us, the decision to join SOS comes simply. I recall thinking, "If there is a group of women who are joining together as equals to make grants to our community in the most effective way they can, that is important. I want to be a part of that." I was honored to join such a worthwhile effort.

When I joined SOS, I did not realize all of the opportunities that would be open to

me, as they are to all members. I had no idea what amazing women I would meet and how much I would learn from them. And our grantees — they are led by creative visionaries in our city undertaking amazingly effective charitable efforts to meet the most critical and urgent needs! Before SOS, I had never heard of "social entrepreneurship." I had not thought about "impactful giving." Twenty years ago, I did not anticipate how much women would someday control charitable dollars. What an interesting community we have built in SOS!

SOS members are outwardly-focused. They care about the community. They want to understand how to be effective philanthropists. They bring all kinds of experiences and education to the table in order to discuss with passion and wisdom how best to deploy our funds and manage our organization. They are open

to new people and new ideas. They are driven women doing important things. These are the women with whom I want to spend my time!

Thank you for the opportunity to lead this great organization for the past two years. After my turn as SOS President ends in June, I look forward to future SOS involvement and activities. We have many strong leaders in place to take us forward. I love working with you all, and I consider SOS the most worthwhile effort that women can undertake in our community. Our example itself has an impact. It says that we, as women, are capable of making great things happen in St. Louis when we work together. And we have!

Yours in Spirit!
Vicki Sheehan

A Social Hour for Social Issues

Most parents look forward — with eager anticipation — to the day their child will have full independence. However, some parents face increased worries when their developmentally-delayed or -disabled child graduates from the traditional school system, after which there is little support. While parents do their best, they cannot supply all of their adult children's social and residential needs.

Pathways to Independence Executive Director **Craig Strohbeck**, and St. Louis Life Executive Director **Andy Conover**, resident **Chris Trulaske** and Board Member **Jeanne Trulaske**, recently offered insight into the issues facing the developmentally-disabled and their families.

Pathways to Independence, online at www.pathways2independence.com, helps clients improve social skills needed for successful employment and personal relationships. Activities, educational programs and outings provide outlets and instruction in important "life skills." Classes include conversational techniques, cooking and more.



(From left) Pathways to Independence Executive Director **Craig Strohbeck**, St. Louis Life Board Member **Jeanne Trulaske**, St. Louis Life Executive Director **Andy Conover**, St. Louis Life resident **Chris Trulaske** and SOS President **Vicki Sheehan**.

St. Louis Life, online at www.stlouislifeline.org, is a facility for adults age 19 and older where residents achieve independence with support from staff and peers. Founded by the late **Rob Trulaske**, whose son **Chris Trulaske** has Down Syndrome, St. Louis Life allows residents to work, volunteer or take classes in the community. Each resident has an apartment and access to help with daily living activities. Chris spoke on the importance of his friends and family. He feels he "has a life" and speaks about his job and duties with pride.

Welcome to Our New SOS Members!

SOS welcomes six new members through April 2011! Please extend a gracious welcome to the following:

Cathy Cortright
Claudia Joyce
Melinda Klinghammer
Patricia K. Lazaroff
Cynthia Medart
Sally B. Schnuck



Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund
c/o Greater St. Louis Community Foundation
319 North Fourth Street, Suite 300
St. Louis, MO 63102

Please add the email address,
soswomensfund@soswomensfund.org,
to your email address book to be sure
you receive all regular SOS communications
and that it is not sent to SPAM filters.

*SOS gratefully acknowledges the
donation of newsletter services by
Casey Communications, Inc.*
www.caseycomm.com

SOS Impact: Every Bench Holds a Story at St. Louis HELP

St. Louis Health Equipment Lending Program (HELP) collects new and used home medical equipment, refurbishes and sanitizes it, then loans it out (at no cost) to those in need. Many donations, ranging from canes and wheelchairs to tub benches and shower stools, come from individuals who have lost a loved one and find comfort in helping others. Through this community sharing, HELP addresses medical, therapeutic and psychological needs.

Recently, two sisters who had lost their mother came to drop off their equipment. Crying as they unloaded this final "letting go," they also found solace in knowing the equipment would be put to good use. An 88-year-old man caring for his wife, suffering from Alzheimer's, came in at the same time to return a shower stool he had borrowed because it was too small for her. He needed a tub transfer bench he could not afford to purchase. One of the items the sisters had just donated was a tub trans-

SOS Celebrates Five Years & Founding Members

Five years ago, **Shelby Schagrin** founded SOS to unite women philanthropists in informed, collective giving for the betterment of St. Louis. The idea flourished! SOS was pioneered by 113 women, each committing to annual, equal giving. Since 2006, our membership has



Photo courtesy of St. Louis Health Equipment Lending Program.

fer bench. He was so grateful, he began to cry, and so did the two sisters. It was a perfect "win-win."

Our \$17,500 SOS grant in 2010-11 provided funds to pay part of an operations manager's salary, to double hours devoted to collecting donated equipment, and contributed to buying both a used cargo van to collect heavy donations and a Hubdub machine for equipment cleaning and sanitization. To learn more about St. Louis HELP, or donate items, visit the organization online at www.stlhelp.org.

doubled as we reach the milestone of **nearly \$1 million** in grants to organizations that are improving our region. To honor these pioneers, the Board and SOS Membership Committee will host a celebration for our founding members on May 9.

SOS Honors Our Founding Members

We honor the 91 SOS Founding Members who remain active today

Anne Adderton	Patricia K. McKinnis
JoAnn Arnold	Parker B. McMillan
Susan P. Bartlett	Laurie W. Miller
Barbara Beracha	Kelly Mittleman
Susan S. Block	Elizabeth E. Mueller
Joanne M. Boulton	Barbara R. Nikolychik
Lisa S. Boyce	Alise O'Brien
Judy Child	Ilene Ordower
Sally S. Cohn	Mina Overton
Patricia L. Cole, M.D.	Gayle B. Palmer
Sherry B. Delo	Suzanne Siteman Phillips
Lynn Dole	Ronna M. Pohlman
Deborah Dolgin	Jan E. Poneta
Ida H. Early	Dorte Probststein
Jane A. Eiseman	Elaine M. Queathem
Carol Evers	Marilyn Ratkin
M. Ann Ferguson	Dana Romeis
Alison N. Ferring	Nancy R. Sachs
Sharon Fiehler	Rosella H. Samson
Linda M. Finerty	Janet B. Sanders
Norma Fitzwater	Shelby Schagrin
Margretta V. E. Forrester	Annie C. Schlafly
Irene Z. Fowle	Sue Schlichter
Gretchen E. Freund	Mary Schoolman
Marguerite Garrick	Lily T. Seymour
Catherine S. Gidlow	Victoria Sheehan
Barbara B. Goodman	Alice P. Sherwood
Carol Goralnik	Nancy Siteman
Bethe Growe	Ruth L. Siteman
Marilyn Gunthner	Francine Smith
Judith A. Harris	Valerie J. Snyder
Kathy Hays	Daisy B. Spitzer
Cheri Hoffman	Elaine M. Theisen
Cheryl A. Holman	Susan C. Thomson
Michelle Isserman	Pamela F. Trapp
Felice Joyce	Debbie von Doersten
Janet J. Jump	Carol H. Wall
Constance Kahn	Davin S. Wenner
Madhavi Kandula, M.D.	Gwendolyn J. Wesley
Lisa G. Kraner	Valarie Wilson
Nancy Kranzberg	Carolyn Wolff
Diane Gershman Levine	Jean W. Wolff
Susan Lipstein	Susan Wolff
Joan H. Markow	Lisa Orden Zarin
Christy Marshall	Deborah Zimmerman
Susan B. McCollum	