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Mary's Pence announces 10 new grantees

St. Paul, Minn. – Mary's Pence

Mary's Pence has selected 10 new grantees across the U.S. and Latin America who are working for systemic change that improves the status of women.

Mary's Pence funds organizations where women create economic security for themselves and others, educating the broader community about justice issues and building community organizations where people experiencing injustice can organize and amplify their voices for social change.

Since 1987, Mary's Pence has granted more than \$1,500,000 to fund over 500 women's projects for social change in 15 countries across the Americas. Funding for Mary's Pence comes primarily through individual donors. Grants are selected by a committee comprised of volunteers, board and staff.

"Our newest grantees are creating lasting change in their communities by touching the lives of those experiencing injustice, including those who have landed in prison and immigrants new to this country," said Katherine Wojtan, Executive Director of Mary's Pence. "Women working for the benefit of women is the common thread, and by banding together in their communities they have the skills and strength to reach their goals."

Artistri Sud

Temuco, Chile / Quebec, Canada

Artistri Sud is a Canadian charity that microfunds female artisans in hopes of breaking the cycle of poverty. They work mainly with the Mapuche women of Chile to create a sustainable income out of the products they sell. Since receiving their first Mary's Pence grant in 2014, *Artistri Sud* has continued to build capacity for women's leadership development and economic empowerment through its Social Entrepreneurship Training and Train-the-Trainer programs. The women of *Artistri Sud* problem-solve in groups and spend some of their earnings towards the nutrition and education of young girls, who are often marginalized in the developing world.

Awamaki

Ollantaytambo, Peru / Savannah, Ga.

Awamaki centers its mission in rural Peru. Since 2009, it has given Andean women and families access to higher income by recycling the profits from artisan products back into local businesses and community. The hand-woven textiles, knitwear and spun products

are sold both within the women's communities and in the United States through partner retailers. *Awamaki's* third grant from Mary's Pence will help the organization send two of their Peruvian staff to present their cooperative model at a U.S. symposium on the textile industry in Savannah, Ga. At the symposium, *Awamaki* staff will share their knowledge of women's cooperatives and experience as indigenous artisans with an international audience.

Center for Women in Transition

Little Rock, Ark.

CWIT prevents recidivism by helping formerly incarcerated women transition back into society. Founded by a Catholic sister, *CWIT* staff mentors the women personally, teaches life skills classes prior to release, and supports them in completing education and finding steady employment once they re-enter society. The program empowers women and girls to advocate for themselves. In February 2016, *CWIT* expanded its life skills education program to include over 100 incarcerated teen girls. Since 2005, *CWIT* has helped over 2,000 women through its collaboration with community organizations and the judicial system, which often releases women to *CWIT* for probation in lieu of prison.

Genesis

Oakland, Calif.

A three-time Mary's Pence grantee, *Genesis* was created in 2007 to advance economic, gender and racial equality in the San Francisco Bay Area. Faith congregations and unions serve as the project's main stakeholders and decision-makers, and together they have successfully implemented measures such as the Youth Bus Program in a county where no public school transportation is provided. Among their current goals are campaigns to make criminal justice policies more restorative and better funding for programs aimed at people with disabilities. This Mary's Pence grant will be used to train women with developmental disabilities in advocacy and the process of voter registration.

Kinship Care Campaign

Cincinnati, Ohio

The Contact Center's *Kinship Care Campaign* is a community-based, women-led organization that deals mainly with economic and social justice issues pertaining to kinship care. Kinship care is a foster care alternative in which non-parent relatives and close family friends raise children. Funding for kinship guardians is disproportionately low. Kinship Care's current advocacy is focused on changing laws to ensure that caretakers, mainly women, who are raising relatives will receive the same financial support as foster care providers.

MAYA Organization

Pittsburgh, Pa.

MAYA (Me And You Always) began as a full-service adoption agency that provided counseling for incarcerated pregnant women who put their children up for adoption. Their experience of the prison system led them to expand their services to include pro-

bono counseling for any women incarcerated in Pennsylvania's Allegheny County Jail. Every week, women attend individual 60-minute counseling sessions to address issues of loss, trauma and addiction. Counseling is available after the women are released to ensure continued progress and maintain previously achieved goals. *MAYA* aims to replace recidivism with community reintegration.

New Sanctuary Movement – Mujeres Líderes

Milwaukee, Wis.

NSM was started in 2007 in response to a challenge to publicly stand in solidarity with immigrants. *NSM* works for immigration reform and organizes immigrant communities and allied faith communities to support families facing separation due to deportation. Women often become the sole heads of households in the U.S. when their husbands are incarcerated or deported. The Mary's Pence Grant will fund a series of leadership trainings called *Mujeres Líderes*, or Women's Leadership, that will provide immigrant women with the communication and organizing skills they need to bring about systemic change in the U.S. immigration system and in their communities.

Wishwas

Queens, N.Y.

Wishwas works with Bangladeshi women in Queens, New York to help reduce the cultural barriers of a new country by providing the space for women to work together weekly at a local community center and receive training in running a cooperative business. *Wishwas* offers vocational skills and training to women who have few job opportunities and are not involved in the making of financial decisions within their households and communities. *Wishwas* cooperative training empowers women who may be victims of domestic violence or emotional abuse. The primary goal is to create self-sufficiency in the women and increase their recognition in the community as financial contributors and valid decision-makers.

Welcoming the Stranger

Warminster, Pa.

Welcoming the Stranger provides immigrant and refugee populations with educational and training opportunities. Their mission is focused on the Christian value of welcoming strangers into one's community. Funding from Mary's Pence will support a class on work skills and language improvement in a large immigrant community. Lessons are personalized to best meet students' needs, including practical lessons, such as navigating the healthcare system, applying for credit, and interviewing for jobs. Students form networks, working together as a community. *Welcoming the Stranger* education classes offer students, the majority of whom are women, economic empowerment and a voice in the education and healthcare of their children.

Workers' Rights Center

Madison, Wis.

The *WRC* was created by the *Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice* after an investigation into the working conditions of Latino/a immigrants. The mission of *WRC* is to help recover unpaid wages, fund basic worker training in multiple languages, and

provide training in self-representation, leadership, and organizational skills in order to foster individual and collective action. A grant from Mary's Pence will allow the *WRC* to form an advocacy and support group for Latina workers, who deal with wage theft and discrimination at work, and immigration issues at home. The group will be a space for women to share challenges and organize to take action in their community.